

GMA pushes concrete actions vs climate change

MACTAN, Cebu – President Arroyo gave a renewed push for concrete actions against climate change, this time warning that the Philippines might lose some of its 7,100 islands if the actions needed to address this problem are not taken right away.

Two days before her trip to Manado, Indonesia for the one-day Coral Triangle Summit, the President addressed the local government officials, non-government organizations representatives and other environment stakeholders in Regions 6, 7, 8 and the Visayas to emphasize the need to face the problem of climate change head on.

As the country's self-designated climate change czar, President Arroyo pointed out that the Philippines is suffering just as much as the countries that contribute a lot to climate change even

By **MARVIN SY**

though its contribution to the total activity is less than one percent.

The President argued that the Philippines might even suffer more because it is an archipelago.

"If climate change were to reach its tipping point, Florida may lose some coastlines, but we may lose entire islands," the President warned.

She noted that the changing weather patterns have affected the country, particularly with the emergence of super typhoons which lead to widespread destruction of property and the deaths of hundreds of people at a time.

"Humanity started climate change, it's humanity that can stop climate change," the President said in her speech before the One Visayas summit on climate change at the Imperial Palace Waterpark Resort

and Spa here.

Mrs. Arroyo said that the solutions already exist and what has to be done is to act on these immediately.

"We need not overstress that climate change is bad for the economy, especially bad for the Visayan economy, whose future is eco-tourism. So we don't have much time, but we should find comfort in the thought that solutions exist today," the President said.

"The sooner we fix it, the cheaper it will be," she added.

Some of the solutions for the country are very simple.

The President emphasized that the solid waste management act, clear air act and clean water act would all have to be implemented and enforced strictly to reduce harmful emissions that contribute to climate change.

Mrs. Arroyo said that there should be greater focus by the local government units on the use of materials recovery facilities in their respective areas in order to extend the life of the sanitary landfills.

"The decision to avoid dangerous climate change does not rest in future but in today's national, local businesses and hotels, national and local governments and businesses and hotel industry," the President said.

"The environment can't take a backseat to economic development," the President added.