



Philippines: Climate Justice needs Human Rights

Six years of reconstruction after Typhoon Yolanda

By Astrud Lea Beringer

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The Philippines is one of the most affected countries by the climate crisis. Especially livelihoods of the poorest population groups are threatened by extreme weather events. Six years after Typhoon Yolanda devastated the Philippines, many survivors have rebuilt their lives, with little or without any government assistance or international aid. At the same time, the reconstruction process has shown numerous anomalies. Big corporations have benefited from the vulnerability of the typhoon victims, even with the support of the state. This is exemplified by the situation of Sicogon Island where a real estate giant is trying to acquire the whole island while threatening fundamental human rights.

Losers of climate change

Global solidarity for achieving climate justice has increased in the past years. New social environmental movements such as Fridays for Future or Youth for Climate have been decisive. Despite growing awareness for the climate issue, conditions of those countries which are hit the

hardest by the impacts of climate change have not significantly improved. According to German Watch's climate risk index, the Philippines ranked fifth among the ten most affected countries by extreme weather events between 1998 and 2017. Every year, about 19 typhoons traverse the island state. The devastating destruction Super-Typhoon Yolanda (internationally known as Haiyan) caused in the Philippines in November



*Devastations
after Super-Typhoon
Yolanda on the Island
of Sicogon in 2013.
(Photo: FESIFFA)*

2013, emphasizes the bitter reality of years of failed global climate policies and national social policies.

The recent global climate conference, the UN Conference of Parties (COP25) in Madrid in December 2019, raised – especially for representatives from the Global South – new hopes for effective measures which accelerate the target of reducing global CO2 emissions as laid down in the Paris agreement of 2015. The results, however, were widely disappointing and – according to environmental organizations – merely “much ado about nothing”. Binding obligations were missing.

On December 25, 2019, Typhoon Ursula (internationally known as Phanfone) raged over the Philippines, moving along the same path as Typhoon Yolanda. First reports estimated about 77,832 displaced people, 431,586 destroyed houses and a total economic damage of up to 3.43 billion Pesos (about 60 million Euros). The devastation caused by Typhoon Ursula made clear that concrete global actions are urgently needed to prevent more serious climate change impacts.

New life prospects

Super-Typhoon Yolanda has not only cost the lives of over 6,000 Filipin@s but also displaced about four million people. Government reports

count 1,140,322 destroyed houses while the World Bank states an overall damage and loss of 571.1 billion Pesos (about 103 million Euros). In the past years, national and international humanitarian organization, such as Caritas and Red Cross, as well as numerous Philippine grass-roots organizations have done an impressive work for the reconstruction after Yolanda. Thousands of Yolanda survivors have re-started their lives and created, with national and international support, new prospects. For example, the reconstruction program of the Philippine Red Cross and its partners completed over 80,207 newly built houses by the end of 2019. Moreover, NASSA/Caritas Philippines handed over about 33,253 newly built houses to typhoon survivors in nine provinces in 2018. Approaches for reconstruction varied in terms of quality, depending on organization and applied concept.

The Pope Francis Village project in Tacloban City in the province of Leyte represents a leading example for successful and inclusive disaster reconstruction. The project was supported by different organizations and implemented by Development and Peace (DNP). The project used a community organizing approach by involving 3,000 typhoon-affected people in the planning and construction process of their houses. Using participatory approaches in all project implementation or reconstruction steps can be time-consuming, especially in the event of a crisis when immediate actions are required.

Thus, the participation process of humanitarian assistance usually includes only community consultations and dissemination of information.

In February 2019, 263 out of 566 planned houses were completed. The project aimed to be finished by the end of 2019. In comparison to the government housing units, which are located about 30 kilometers outside of the city and at the coastline, the Pope Francis Village is situated only seven kilometers away from the city boundaries. The close distance to Tacloban City secured the traditional livelihoods of the affected people as fishermen*fisherwomen at the coast and in the cities. In addition, the project aims to provide land titles to the affected people for their new houses. The affected people also took part in workshops, for example regarding the design of the community and their houses, as well as in trainings that aim to educate them about their civil rights and rights as typhoon-affected people. Eventually, the Philippine Government contributed 1.76 million Canadian Dollars (about 1.21 million Euros) towards the project. Even though the Pope Francis Village was implemented at a slow pace, the affected people owned their rehabilitation and the reconstruction process and, hence, became central agents of the project.

Failed state-led reconstruction

The implementation or completion of the state-led housing reconstruction program remains problematic. Thousands of typhoon-affected people are still living in temporary houses or tent camps which they created in the meantime, independently and with limited resources. In 2016, three years after Yolanda, the responsible National Housing Authority (NHA) completed

about 15% of the planned 205,128 houses under the Reconstruction Assistance on Yolanda (RAY) program and merely half of it three years later. A major reason for the slow implementation was the lack of suitable land for the planned post-disaster housing within the boundaries of the affected cities. On one hand, this was related to increasing land prices tenfold due to speculation after Yolanda as well as a lengthy administrative process for land conversion from agricultural to construction land. On the other hand, the centralized and highly hierarchically-structured bureaucratic system heavily delayed the procurement due to obligational approvals from different government offices. In contrast, however, local and international NGOs who were supporting the post-disaster reconstruction were able to act with greater independence. Thus, they could work more effectively and faster than the national authority.

A further issue represents the substandard quality of the completed houses. Major reasons were corruption and competition for building material and skilled construction labor among national and international relief organizations. After Yolanda, there was a shortage of construction materials such as cement, steel bars and roofing materials, contributing to increasing prices. Contractors received only up to 245,000 Pesos (about 4,299 Euros) per housing unit from the NHA. High construction costs and the tight budget resulted in a lack of quality. In addition, local and international NGOs with a more flexible budget wooed away local construction labor.

The Coalition of Yolanda Survivors and Partners (CYSP) is an alliance of 163 community partners and ten NGOs. The alliance calls the new NHA housing units “dancing” houses which are substandard, prone to collapse, and have insuf-



Houses of the national reconstruction program after Typhoon Yolanda in Culion, Palawan, showing deficiencies or which remain incomplete. (Photo: CYSP/DNP)

ficient connection to the electricity and water supply system. Moreover, resettling typhoon survivors to distant places inland deprived many of them of their essential livelihoods at the coast and in the cities. High transportation costs made commuting between home and work very costly. Additionally, the disaster recovery and housing reconstruction pushed them even deeper into extreme poverty. Based on official statistics, these conditions resulted in only 23% of the completed houses having actual occupants in 2018. Many survivors moved back into temporary houses which are often situated in unsafe coastal areas.

CYSP advocates the participation of affected communities in the state-led reconstruction process and demands for more transparency and accountability with respect to the spending of funds for the reconstruction program. CYSP documents the flawed implementation of the program, presents the stories of affected communities and organizes public forums and conferences in order to voice their problems. Eventually, CYSP's efforts resulted in the House Committee on Housing and Urban Development filing legal cases against contractors and government officials.

In Busuanga on the island of Coron, the CYSP reported in 2019 that the NHA housing reconstruction was yet to start. In Greendale, about 12 kilometers north of the city of Tacloban in the province of Leyte, beneficiaries of the NHA program informed CYSP that drinking water supply is inadequate. Once the water delivery contract with the city hall expired, affected communities were forced to purchase expensive potable water on their own. Moreover, public transportation from and to the city of Tacloban is not only costly but also irregular.

According to estimates from CYSP, numerous survivors were excluded from the state-led housing reconstruction program. For example, CSYP counted about 97 households in the district of Pampango in Tacloban who did not qualify for the NHA reconstruction program because they were “merely” tenants of destroyed houses. In addition, the government displaced many farmers who lost their land to the resettlement of Yolanda survivors from unsafe coastal areas. CYSP also supports the claims of typhoon-affected farmers. After Yolanda, many farmers were threatened with eviction due to lack of landownership titles. On top of that, they were not entitled to receive state support benefits for the rehabilitation of their agricultural lands.

Climate justice needs human rights

Reconstruction after Typhoon Yolanda also emphasized the importance of securing land tenure and settlement rights of rural and poor population groups in the Philippines. Especially, the completion of the 31 year-long implementation of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program could mark a turning point in terms of climate change resilience and poverty alleviation. This is where discussions on climate justice in the Philippines should start. Mary Robinson, former United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and first woman President of Ireland, considers climate justice a moral argument. Climate justice focuses on people rather than the melting of ice-caps and greenhouse gas emissions. It is about those people who are most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change despite having contributed least to the causes of the climate crisis. Climate justice links human rights and development to safeguard the rights of those vulnerable. Climate justice advocates an equitable and fair share of burdens and benefits of climate change among countries of the Global North and Global South.

A petition of a group of Filipino citizens and civil society organizations prompted the Philippine Human Rights Commission to initiate an investigation against 47 corporations, including Shell, BP and Chevron, in 2016. The alliance accused the corporations for having made a significant contribution to climate change while violating human rights and, thus, claimed accountability for their actions. In 2018, the Human Rights Commission conducted several Fact Finding Missions as well as public hearings in Manila, London and New York. Finally, the commission announced during the COP25 negotiations in Madrid, that the investigation found the 47 corporations, or so-called “Carbon Majors”, clearly responsible for having contributed to anthropogenic climate change and that they could face legal consequences. Even though legal responsibility for climate damage is not covered by current international human rights laws, the “Carbon Majors” still carry a moral responsibility.

To overcome climate crisis, climate justice represents an alternative to the private sector's “proposals for solution”, which are instead shaped by neoliberal and profit-oriented interests. These proposals include programs such as

REED+ and Clean Development Mechanisms but also climate change adaptation initiatives such as the construction of hydroelectric power and solar plants for the generation of clean energy or the cultivation of cash crops for the production of biofuel. However, those measures in the name of Climate Action cause numerous human rights violations which are reflected in forced evictions of affected communities, the loss of traditional livelihoods or increasing food prices.

One example is the controversial construction of the Kaliwa Dam in the provinces of Rizal and Quezon. The project area includes the territory of about 5,000 indigenous communities and, subsequently, would result in the resettlement of those affected communities. According to local environmental organizations, the construction would also lead to permanent and irreversible implications for the environment and biodiversity of the Sierra Madre region, and increase the risk for heavy flash floods in the downstream areas. Despite massive resistance of indigenous communities and NGOs, the Philippine Government issued an environmental clearance certificate for the contested project in October 2019. Opponents of the project accuse the government of corruption and fraud in order to advance the project. President Duterte justifies the 12.2 billion Pesos (about 21.5 million Euros) construction project with an increasing water scarcity in Metro-Manila which reached sharp limits in the summer of 2019. Duterte rejects alternative suggestions and wants to enforce the construction project at all costs.

In the course of adaptation measures and disaster reconstruction after Yolanda, the resettlement

in the Philippines were justified by the creation of a more climate-resilient living environment for affected people. Through the introduction of the “No Dwelling Zone” policy in 2013, the government prohibited affected people to build houses within 40 meters starting from the flood mark to the coast in order to protect them from further flooding and storm surges. The government planned to resettle almost one million Filipino@s living in high risk areas at the coasts. Even though the measure protected them from storm surges, without any alternative source of income the risk of experiencing severe poverty was exacerbated. NGOs such as the Philippine Think Tank IBON strongly criticized the government’s resettlement plan. While small businesses located in the forbidden zone had to close down, large hotel facilities such as the Oriental Hotel in Palo in the province of Leyte were excluded from the evictions.

Despite its intention to provide protection to affected people, the “No Dwelling Zone” is not a measure that respects climate by all accounts. The history of displacement and land expropriation related to disasters, caused by extreme weather events or human induced conflicts, has repeated itself several times: For example, tenants in rural and urban areas in Pakistan and India were prevented in the course of an earthquake from rehabilitating their rental rights in 2005. Fishing communities in Sri Lanka were forcibly resettled in “safer” areas after a Tsunami destroyed their houses in 2004. Subsequently, the government converted the affected fishing villages at the coast with support of the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank into tourism areas.



Boat ride to the Island of Sicogon. (Photo: Astrud Lea Beringer)

Raul Ramos, President
of FESIFFA, protests
against corporate greed
for profit.
(Photo: FESIFFA)



Disaster capitalism and land grabbing

Making profits through disasters is the strategy of the powerful and rich to make money out of disaster capitalism, as Journalist Naomi Klein argues in her book *“The Shock Doctrine”*. Especially those people with unregulated land ownership issues and who were affected by Yolanda were again victimized by disaster capitalism and land grabbing. These situations were in particular rendered possible due to the close collaboration between state and private corporations: A large number of Yolanda survivors without land tenure or property rights were excluded from the NHA housing reconstruction program beforehand. Instead, private corporations were mandated to “look after” the reconstruction and thus able to exploit the vulnerability of the people. Unfair financial offers towards affected people as well as harassments enabled land grabbing and eviction.

One example is the island of Sicogon in the province of Iloilo: Before Typhoon Yolanda, survivors were already fighting for their land rights. After Yolanda, the situation exacerbated again. Sicogon exemplifies the implications for the local population caused through lack of pro-poor laws, a weak judicial system and corruption as well as an influential private sector en-

croaching on disaster rehabilitation. It is clear that even in times of crisis making profits is more important to the government than a just rehabilitation serving small-scale fishers and farmers.

The acting Philippine president Rodrigo Duterte demands climate justice from the countries of the Global North, the major contributors to climate change. Duterte advocates an adoption of binding sanctions which should punish infringements on the defined policy, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. However, Duterte forgets that climate justice also means improving living conditions of those people who suffer most from climate change impacts in order for them to create more climate-resilient living conditions. In the Philippines, this especially means secure land tenure and settlement rights for vulnerable groups.

Greed for profit instead of solidarity – Sicogon Island

Build Back Better was the name of former President Benigno Aquino III. (2010–2016)’s promising Yolanda reconstruction campaign (RAY). However, the campaign’s target to create a more stable future for typhoon-affected people was clearly missed. On the 1,163 hectare island of Sicogon, Aquino’s reconstruction program exacerbated the struggle of survival instead.

For the first time in history, the government collaborated with private corporations in the reconstruction process. One of the most powerful real estate companies of the country, Ayala Land (hereafter: Ayala), was responsible for the rehabilitation of the small island. The situation today shows that typhoon, destruction and the subsequent reconstruction, as well as the related emergency situation of the people served the company in maximizing its profits in form of a tourism project. Sicogon demonstrates how the collaboration of the state and a company in times of a disaster can cause further displacement, increase poverty and human rights violations.

About 1,500 families on Sicogon Island have already been struggling for their right to land, housing, food and water for years. Yolanda has not only destroyed about 95% of their houses and fishing boats but also exacerbated a lengthy land rights dispute with the private company Sicogon Development Corporation (SIDECO).

Based on a joint venture partnership of SIDEKO and Ayala, the vulnerable situation of the islanders was used to influence the unsolved land ownership issues on the island in favor of SIDEKO and to benefit the tourism project. After Yolanda, both companies prevented any kind of humanitarian assistance such as building materials and food from reaching the island. Only on the insistence of a village head on Sicogon, the local government agreed to provide a one-time rice delivery in December 2013. After one month, Ayala and SIDEKO merely offered two options to the typhoon-victims : Either they take a one-time payment of 150,000 Pesos (about 2,628 Euros), leave the island and never return, or they take 5,000 Pesos (about 88 Euros) and relocate on the mainland, once new houses were constructed. Out of need, over 200 families accepted the “unfair” offer.

David meets Goliath

Despite facing extreme starvation after Yolanda, about 784 families who belong to the local community organization Federation of Sicogon Island Farmers and Fisherfolks Association (FESIFFA) rejected the offer of the two companies. The families did not want to be evicted from their homes and pit themselves against one of the most influential corporations of the country. Despite threats of physical harassments, the families bravely countered the illegal prohibition of the two companies to rebuild their houses and fishing boats independently.

Amelia de la Cruz, Vice-President of FESIFFA, reluctantly remembers that time, as she explains in an interview. She was full of fear when she had to face the armed security guards of the two companies because of her delivery of building materials. FESIFFA's second application for land distribution of the 334.65 hectares agricultural land was already approved under the national agrarian reform program in 2004. During this time, harassments and physicals threats through SIDEKO also started. SIDEKO's security guards frequently raided their houses and fired warning shots. One day, when Amelia travelled to the mainland – as she described – 35 security guards surrounded her house with the intention to evict her family. Her daughter was brave enough to confront the armed men. They shot three times in the air. Since then, Amelia's daughter's hearing ability has been reduced.



Security personnel from Ayala and SIDEKO are patrolling on the Island of Sicogon in September 2014. (Photo: FESIFFA)

Empty promises

Sicogon's clean spring water, fertile agricultural land and rich fishing grounds offer approximately 6,000 residents of the three villages the necessary grounds to maintain their sustainable livelihood. Obtaining land tenure ownership titles is essential to them in order to assert their right to food, water and housing. In 1919, the Supreme Court has already guaranteed sufficient space to the people of Sicogon for their community, i.e. plaza, school, cemetery and streets. This order was the basic condition for the previous landowner to obtain the land title for 809 hectares of land (70% of the island). Until today, the government and the companies ignored the order.

In early 1980s, this land title was transferred to the wealthy Sarroza family. The attempt of the family company SIDEKO to convert Sicogon into a popular tourism destination, however failed. Based on the 1988 national land reform, the Department of Agrarian Reform designated about 335 hectares of SIDEKO's land as agrarian land in 2004 which should have been allocated to 256 farmer beneficiaries. In 2008, FESIFFA filed an application for free patents (legal rights of use) for two parcels of public land (Alienable and Disposable Land, 72 hectares) in order to secure the existence of their villages. The government has never processed their application. Since



Ayala's contested houses: They have been established based on the agreement with FESIFFA from 2014 but without their consent. (Photo: Astrud Lea Beringer)

2004, FESIFFA has applied in total four times for the Community-based Forest Management Program in order to foster sustainable management of the forest and to secure their right to water. The first three applications of FESIFFA were ignored. A resolution on the last application from September 2019 has yet to be issued.

The implications of the failed reconstruction after the typhoon made FESIFFA's long-lasting struggle for securing their livelihood more difficult. Through Ayala, SIDECO received the necessary financial recourses and political influence to turn Sicogon into a paradise for rich tourists. One year after Yolanda, high-ranking government officials forced FESIFFA to sign an agreement with Ayala and SIDECO. The agreement guarantees FESIFFA members 30 hectares of residential land, 40 hectares of agricultural land, 38 million Pesos for livelihood support and 76 million Pesos for land development as well as vocational trainings. A further condition of the agreement was that FESIFFA members give up their previous land claims and are prohibited from making any business with tourists. Even after five years, the promised lands and support services were in name only. Ayala and SIDECO emphasize that they have already built 50 houses on three hectares of land and spent initial funds on vocational trainings. Whereas FESIFFA affirms that corporate commitments were not fulfilled in accordance with their interests.

Instead of implementing the reconstruction as defined in the agreement, Ayala and SIDECO rather focused on the development of their tourism project. Today, two hotel facilities are already operating, and an airport was established on the same spot where previously rice fields were situated. The Department of Agrarian Reform has already approved the two companies' application for land conversion of the almost 335 hectares of land in February 2016. As the agreement remained unfulfilled, FESIFFA filed a motion for revocation of the conversion order in August 2017. FESIFFA's motion was rejected in October 2019 as the government found that the agreement is already being implemented.

Numerous owners of large landholdings used the many loopholes of the national agrarian reform program, which is already being implemented for 31 years, in order to delay or prevent the distribution of their private lands to small-scale farmers. The reform has reached a state of limbo since its technical end on June 30, 2014. A formal continuation of the reform is not within sight. According to statistics of the Department of Agrarian Reform from 2018, about 410,322 hectares of private landholdings have yet to be distributed. President Duterte advocates a prompt completion of existing land rights disputes and ordered local authorities to achieve a zero-backlog by the of 2019. Nevertheless, the strong resistance from private landowners still hampers an actual reform completion.



Unfulfilled land right claim since 100 years

At FESIFFA's prodding, the Secretary of the Department of Agrarian Reform issued in March 2019 a Cease and Desist Order that stopped further developments on Sicogon until the land rights dispute is solved – an initial success in the battle against real estate giant Ayala. Since then, FESIFFA has intensified its social protests and mobilizations in Manila and on Sicogon. FESIFFA aims to create more public awareness of their situation with respect to Yolanda reconstruction and imminent land grabbing. Ayala achieved another victory through the rejection of FESIFFA's motion for revocation of the conversion order in October 2019 and, hence, continued the development of the tourism project. However, FESIFFA has not surrendered. Given the current conditions, they refuse to accept the agreement with Ayala and SIDEKO and continue to fight for the land distribution under the agrarian reform.

Moreover, FESIFFA refers to the Supreme Court order that was issued exactly 100 years ago in order to secure the people of Sicogon's settlements on the island, and demands the processing of their 2008 application for free patents.

In March 2019, FESIFFA filed criminal cases against government officials from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources who were accused of corruption and fraud. Instead of awarding free patents for the 72 hectares of public land to the people of Sicogon, the authority issued sixteen certificates of free patents for the two public parcels of land to individuals who are considered to have close alliances with Ayala and SIDEKO. Those individuals were neither residents of the island nor could they provide proof of property on the island within the past 30 years. These were essential conditions for the awarding of the certificates. Three years after the awarding of the certificates, the environmental authority admitted that they were illegitimate due to the usage of erroneous land maps.

FESIFFA's aim and demands remain unchanged: They claim free patent certificates or rights of use for the public land parcels and forest area in order to secure their livelihoods as well as to sustain the intact nature on Sicogon.

A breach of duty

Decades of violations of fundamental human rights have become almost the norm on Sicogon Island. When the people of Sicogon began to claim their land rights in the early 1990s, first harassments through the Sarroza family and

Amelia de la Cruz, Vice-President of FESIFFA, talks about the struggle for land on the Island of Sicogon. (Photo: Astrud Lea Beringer)



The majority of the islanders are dependent on fishery to secure their livelihoods. A fisher is mending a fishing net in the afternoon sun. (Photo: Astrud Lea Beringer)

their company SIDECO started. Since then, FESIFFA members live in constant fear of SIDECO's armed security guards. They are afraid to become victims of physical violence, especially when they oppose the sudden and illegal house raids by SIDECO. At the moment, FESIFFA asserts that about 200 security guards are stationed on the island. Human rights violations committed through SIDECO personnel have never been prosecuted.

The people of Sicogon are not against tourism but against tourism that threatens their basic human rights. Access to land is essential for the fulfilment of the right to food of the rural population. The government has failed to fulfill its obligation, as enshrined in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, to secure the right to land of the people of Sicogon through the distribution of private and public land. Even the right to water of the people of Sicogon is under threat. In the beginning of 2019, Ayala and SIDECO diverted, without holding a permit, the only source of drinking water located in the public forest land area to their hotel facilities. Instead of providing the islanders the needed humanitarian assistance after Yolanda, the responsibility for the reconstruction and rehabilitation of the people was

given to a corporation – again a breach of duty in the eyes of FESIFFA. In November 2019, FESIFFA filed a complaint against the government at the Commission for Human Rights in Manila. To date, an investigation is yet to be launched.

In addition, FESIFFA intensifies local social protests and prepares a complaint to the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food. The organization hopes that the abuses and human rights violations on Sicogon receive more attention and international support.

Meanwhile, Typhoon Ursula has devastated Sicogon again at the end of December 2019. Over 1,000 houses were destroyed as well as several fishing boats and fruit trees. Ayala's road expansion that blocked the natural waterway was likely to have tremendously contributed to soil erosions and, hence, to the destruction of houses. Similarly as six years ago, Ayala and not the state took over the responsibility for the provision of emergency assistance to the islanders. The company offered to donate two million Pesos for the reconstruction. FESIFFA rejected the offer and demanded assistance from the responsible government authority.

Outlook

Despite the daily nightmare, the islanders continue to fight for social justice and to stay on Sicogon. Land grabbing is a political issue, driven by economic interests. In a country where people have little confidence in an independent constitutional state, where the media landscape is controlled by big corporations and money influences political decision-making, a multi-million real estate giant such as Ayala has an easy way to oppress and manipulate the residents of a small island. The main problem is that the economic and political elites are in many instances identical in the Philippines and own a large and important portion of the media channels. Even though freedom of speech is legally defined in the Philippines, journalists live in danger if their reports contradict the elites' interests. Under these circumstances, marginalized groups have difficulties to gain media attention.

Climate change and its impacts are a global problem. The number of extreme weather events are increasing worldwide, not only in the countries of the Global South but also in industrial countries as the recent forest fires in Australia outlined. Stronger global awareness for responsibility is required as well as a concrete will to act from the government and the private sector. Binding international and national obligations are necessary to reduce the implications of climate change and to hold the biggest climate contributors accountable. In addition, more financial resources are needed for a change to renewable energy in the countries of the Global South. Controversial adaptation measures such as the construction of dams or the resettlement of people from risk areas have to be thoroughly examined as they often lead to environmental damage and human rights violations.

At the local level, a strong political will is required, which serves the general interest instead of indulging the maximization of profits. The difficulties shown in the aftermath of Super-Typhoon Yolanda emphasize how unprepared governments are for future climate crises. Secure land tenure and settlement rights are a basic prerequisite for climate-resilient livelihoods. Finally, the people who are most affected by the climate crisis should be more closely involved in political discussions.

Endnotes

- 1 Project partners were Caritas Canada, Caritas Philippines, Archdiocese of Palo, Redemptorist Congregation, and Urban Poor Associates
- 2 *Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines – National Secretariat for Social Action, Development and Peace, Agri-Aqua Development Coalition, Community Organizers Multiversity, Center for Environmental Concerns, Focus on the Global South, Freedom from Debt Coalition, Philippine Educational Theater for the Arts, Urban Poor Associates, and Rural Poor Institute for Land and Human Rights Services*
- 3 Haribon (2019): *Stop Kaliwa Dam*, <https://haribon.org.ph/stop-kaliwa-dam/>.

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