

6th ASEAN CHIEF JUSTICES' ROUNDTABLE ON ENVIRONMENT

Princesa Garden Island Resort and Spa, Puerto Princesa City,

Palawan, Philippines

November 10-13, 2016

**OPENING REMARKS OF MS. DEBORAH STOKES
(VICE-PRESIDENT FOR ADMINISTRATION
AND CORPORATE MANAGEMENT)**

The Honorable Maria Lourdes Sereno, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the Philippines, Honorable Chief Justices, Justices, and judges from **ASEAN member countries**, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

On behalf of the Asian Development Bank (ADB), I warmly welcome you to the 6th ASEAN Chief Justices' Roundtable on Environment.

I would like to sincerely thank our partner, the Supreme Court of the Philippines, for their support in organizing this Roundtable.

Asia is the only region in the world that has roundtables such as this, involving Chief Justices coming together.

And ADB is proud of the role we have played in supporting this regional initiative.

Given its uniqueness, we have had several international development institutions reach out to us as they seek to establish similar efforts in other parts of the world.

The credit, of course, belongs to you.

This project would not have been successful without the continuing support of all **10 Supreme Courts in the ASEAN region**, through the leadership and pioneering spirit of the Chief Justices.

This year's Roundtable includes a focus on climate change.

With the groundbreaking Paris Agreement entering into force exactly a week ago, it is very timely to have a discussion on climate change and its implications for ASEAN judiciaries.

The objectives of the Paris Agreement will not be achieved if each state's obligations under the agreement fail to become domestically enforceable policy.

Indeed, domestic judiciaries will be playing an essential role in the development and enforcement of climate change law.

More than this, you will be at the frontline in defining a new area in law—one that encompasses a broad range of policy questions, including - just to name a few - sustainable development, urban and rural planning, taxation, disaster management, green investment and finance. Constitutional questions will also be raised.

It is very clear that judiciaries will have an important role to play in shaping how countries address climate change.

This year's Roundtable also seeks to further strengthen the relationships among Chief Justices which have been cultivated over the last six years.

This is why the Philippine Supreme Court and ADB have included in the program a session on the role of judicial networks in promoting mutual assistance.

We hope this discussion will help you to consider how to institutionalize the Chief Justices' Roundtable within the ASEAN framework.

I wish to again welcome you to the 6th ASEAN Chief Justices' Roundtable on Environment.

ADB is delighted to host all of you in the beautiful island of Palawan, and we are grateful for the leadership you have shown.

I am confident that the discussions over the next two days will be robust and frank, and arguments will be well-considered, demonstrating once again your leadership role in addressing environmental issues.

Thank you very much.