

**MEDIA ADVISORY
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A global legal action on behalf of the youth and of future generations

(Bantayan Island, Cebu, The Philippines – April 22, 2013)

On Earth Day, April 22, youth leaders from all over the world, backed up by top litigation lawyers, converged in Bantayan Island, Cebu. Together, they launched a series of socio-political and legal actions to compel to the present generation to take action act on the impacts of climate change.



School of the SEA (Sea and Earth Advocates), Bantayan Island, Cebu, in the Philippines.

Climate change is an issue of intergenerational justice and equity. Frustrated by the failure of the present generation to take meaningful action to address the climate crisis, the youth are fired to assert their right to a safe and healthful future by using the power of the law.

Road sharing movement in the Philippines

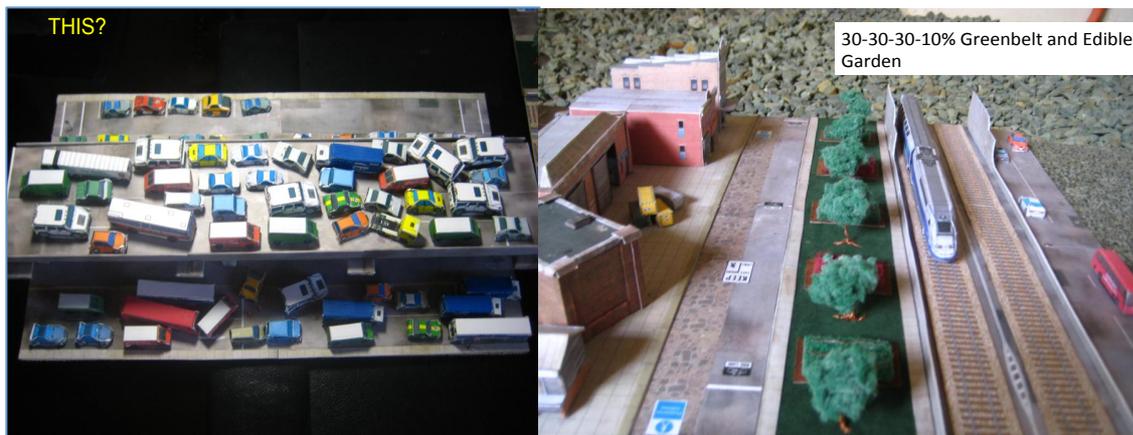
For ground-level action, Filipino youth leaders launched the filing of petitions for the Road Sharing Movement. This movement calls on the Philippine Government to transform the road and transportation system from the present car-based system to one that is fairer and more people-friendly.



Youth of Bantayan Island, Cebu, filed a petition to the Municipal Council to share the roads of the town of Sta Fe in Bantayan Island. Seen here are the children who filed in the Municipal Hall of Sta. Fe, with their local and international lawyers, among them Brook Meakins (US), Stephen Leonard (Australia) and Selyna Pereis of Sri Lanka.

Using a little known law on people's initiative, young Filipino leaders, backed by their lawyers, will file petitions to directly propose their local governments to pass an ordinance. The proposed ordinance calls for the sharing of the road space: At least one-half of roads

will be used only for path-walks and bicycle lanes, and the other half for a good public transport system.



From a car-based system (left) to one where at least half of the road is devoted to wide sidewalks, bike lanes, and edible gardens (right). The other half will be dedicated to an efficient public transportation system.

Other petitions in twenty-four barangays all over the Philippines in Metro Manila cities, in the Visayas (Dumaguete and Cebu), and as far away as Coron, Palawan and Kidapawan in North Cotabato in Mindanao were also filed by residents of said barangays. The barangays were all petitioned by their residents to share the roads to put up wide and all-weather sidewalks and bicycle lanes. It is estimated that only 2 per cent of the people in the Philippines have motor vehicles. Yet these motor vehicles have been given all of the road space, leaving hardly any space for the 98% of the Filipinos who have no motor vehicles. “Those who have less in wheels must have more in roads,” said the organizers.

The team of youth leaders and their lawyers are also sending out a Nationwide Notice to Sue to the Philippine Government addressed to the Climate Change Commission (CCC). The CCC is the sole policy-making body of the government tasked to coordinate, monitor and evaluate the programs and action plans of the government relating to climate change. Since its establishment in 2009, the CCC has failed to pass any policies to reduce fossil fuel emissions especially from motor vehicles.

International acclaim

Top Filipino lawyers Tony Oposa, Sig Fortun, Golly Ramos, Gen Tadaba, Beryl Desabelle, Rica de Guzman, and a team of young lawyers, were joined by international environmental lawyers Brook Meakins, Durwood Zaelke, John Boyd of the US, Selyna Pereis of Sri Lanka, Stephen Leonard of Australia, among others.

“We congratulate the Filipino people for once again showing the world the way of a peaceful revolution. This time, they are leading a revolution of the mind,” said Durwood Zaelke, Founder of the Center for International Environmental Law and Director of the International Network for Environmental Enforcement.

“Involvement of the youth is of critical importance to addressing these issues for the purpose of ensuring our environmental treasures are protected for future generations,” says Australian lawyer Steve Leonard, an expert on climate change impacts on world heritage sites.

Intergenerational justice

In the coming months, youth from around the world will call on governments, corporations, and international institutions to protect the climate in the name of present and future generations. The voices of youth will unite, compelling these decision-makers to address the intergenerational justice dimensions of climate change and holding them accountable for their actions and/or inactions.

Brook Meakins, representing the International Climate Legal Action Team, said, “This may seem like a small pebble that was tossed into a pond. But the ripples that it will create will start a wonderful wave of change that the young of the world can learn from and perhaps, emulate.”

“Today, the youth of the Philippines, backed by their international supporters and top lawyers, have launched a peaceful revolution ... of the mind. This revolution will be waged with only the sword of reason, the firepower of the Law, and the violence of an idea whose time has come,” said Filipino lawyer Tony Oposa, a co-convenor of the event and member of the International Climate Legal Action Team.

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For more information, contact:

Mr. Lito Arlegue

lito_arlegue@cald.org

+63.922.883.9594

Atty. Brook Meakins

bmeakins@me.com