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Headline: UNDP chief Helen Clark challenges Aquino on fight vs climate change

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Ten-year old Barbie Gonza receives a comforting hug from UNDP's Administrator Helen Clark in Tacloban City. The grade-four student of San Jose Central Elementary School shared the story of her survival from Typhoon Haiyan that claimed over 100 of her classmates. UNDP helped clear the debris from her school, which reopened two months after the crisis. Photo Credit: Joey Reyna/ UNDP

MANILA, Philippines—United Nations Development Program Chief Helen Clark on Thursday challenged President Benigno Aquino III to make a strong statement before the international community to combat climate change following the devastation of Super typhoon "Yolanda" (Haiyan) that claimed more than 6,000 lives.

"The voice of the Philippines is very important to let other countries act now on climate change. Climate change is not something that will hurt people someday, but is hurting people now," Clark said at a press conference on Thursday.

She said the country should be at the forefront to combat climate change and in leading other countries to act now.

She also urged Aquino to join the climate change summit in New York this September.

"It will be an important platform for President Aquino and the Philippines because you bring such direct experience of what climate change does," she said. She admitted she was impressed with plans on rehabilitation efforts of the government.

"The humanitarian relief, I can say, is very important. The plans look good to me. I am impressed by the planning..."

She said "the real challenge is the implementation."

"Livelihood is a very big issue," citing the people should be given livelihood to make rehabilitation speedy.

She recognized the victims are now building back.

"We can see how deep the scars are in the people's hearts. But we are also seeing recover. This is a tribute to the resilience of the people and the determination of the government," she said.

She said it is important for nations to deliver their promises of aid to the country.

“The world tends to forget sometimes,” she said.

She assured that the UNDP remains committed to support the Philippines in its recovery and rehabilitation efforts after the devastation of the monster typhoon.

“Whatever help that we can give to make things happen, we will give,” she said.

Clark is in a two-day trip to the Philippines where she we visited typhoon-ravage

Tacloban City Wednesday to check the ongoing rehabilitation efforts in the region.

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