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Headline: Duterte calls for greater digital literacy to address pandemic woes, climate change

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FILE PHOTO President Rodrigo Duterte during his UN address last Sept. 21, 2021

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MANILA, Philippines — President Rodrigo Duterte on Thursday called for “greater” public-private collaboration in order to address inclusion and sustainability challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and climate change.

According to an Office of the President (OP) statement, Duterte made his appeal via teleconference during the 2021 Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Business Advisory Council (ABAC) dialogue with economic leaders.

Duterte pointed out key areas of collaboration with ABAC, such as promoting digitalization and literacy in rural communities, forming a national Social Protection Floor (SPF), and “facilitating developing economies’ transition to a low-carbon economy.”

“This will help increase the economic productivity of marginalized groups under the new normal,” Duterte was quoted as saying, referring to the importance of improving digital literacy to help vulnerable groups to be included in the digital economy.

He further raised the need to “establish the necessary infrastructure for accessible, stable and affordable energy supply in remote communities” to facilitate digital inclusion efforts.

Meanwhile, the President said that creating a national SPF could “address the gaps in the social protection programs that were exposed during the pandemic.”

An SPF will assure a set of social security benefits for everyone to include informal sector workers and the so-called gig economy workers.

Duterte further renewed his call for a “sustainable, scaled-up and predictable support” like climate finance, technology transfer and development, and capacity building to address climate change.

The president said that assistance from developed nations to developing economies would help in adapting and diminishing the adverse effects of climate change.

“In the interest of climate justice, we need these to transition to climate-smart development and adapt to and mitigate the worsening effects of climate change,” he said.

The chief executive likewise noted the significant contribution of the council to the Asia-Pacific’s COVID-19 pandemic response.

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Duterte participated in the APEC economic leaders meeting online which is held from November 11 to 12.