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**ASEAN MEMBER STATES' NATURAL DISASTER APPROACH:
A DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF AMS SPEECHES PERFORMED
IN INTERGOVERNMENTAL FORA AND CONFERENCES**

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ACCEPTANCE

This thesis titled “ASEAN Member States’ Natural Disaster Approach: A Discourse Analysis of AMS Speeches Performed In Intergovernmental Fora and Conferences” is hereby accepted by the Faculty of Management and Development Studies, U.P. Open University, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Master of ASEAN Studies.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Lorena Jean D. Saludadez is a college instructor at Southwestern University-PHINMA and University of the Philippines Visayas, where she teaches social sciences subjects. She completed her BA Political Science at the University of the Philippines Cebu in 2019. Her academic interests include ASEAN and Southeast Asia, natural disasters, climate change, and sustainable development.

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***Dedicated to those who tirelessly fight
to secure a better climate future for all***

ABSTRACT

Multiple hazards intersect in the Southeast Asian region, making it extremely susceptible to natural disaster occurrences. Due to the significant loss of life, livelihood, and infrastructure ASEAN Member States (AMS) experience, Southeast Asia has been placed under careful scrutiny by the international community. Existing literature generally have a critical discourse on the region's approach to natural disaster management. Although these criticisms are valid, they are devoid of the contextual realities faced by the region. Throughout the discussions, the "voice" of the AMS is muted. This research, therefore, is interested in uncovering this muted voice by emerging the AMS discourse in their natural disaster approach. This study answered the following questions: (1) How is natural disaster in the ASEAN region discursively constructed? and (2) What are the consequences or outcomes arising from the construction of "natural disaster" in the ASEAN region? In its analysis, this study utilized discourse analysis as operationalized by Gee (1999). Language and thoughts are inextricably intertwined. As such, examining discourse is one way of affecting and accessing social reality. Through analyzing AMS speeches performed in intergovernmental fora and conferences, this research uncovered three distinct themes in the AMS' discourse on natural disaster, (1) *Climate Change and Natural Disaster Events are Intertwined*, (2) *Southeast Asia as the Victim*, and (3) *the West as the Offender*, and their corresponding consequences, (1) *Southeast Asia sees the International Platform as a Space Where They Need to Lobby their Natural Disaster Experience*, (2) *Southeast Asia as a Constrained Actor in Dealing with Natural Disaster*, and (3) *Southeast Asia is Seeking Accountability from the West*. The results of this study suggest the need for stronger consensus-building with the international community in seeking accountability from the West for the natural disaster challenges they have created.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Rationale

Natural disaster is one of the most pressing experiences that severely affects the Southeast Asian region. Recognized as a “hotspot” for global natural disaster occurrences, the susceptibility of the region to multi-hazard exposure could be credited to the interplay between the region’s geographical and climatic conditions. Coupled with the region’s existing socio-economic conditions, Southeast Asia becomes the intersection of multiple layers of vulnerability.

Southeast Asia is situated along the boundaries of the Indo-Australian, Eurasian, and Philippine Sea plates, which creates significant seismic activities along its territory (Whelley et al., 2015, p. 1). Being in the Pacific Ring of Fire makes the region predisposed to geophysical risks including eruptions, earthquakes, and tsunamis. It was estimated that there are approximately 750 active and potentially active volcanoes waiting to wreak havoc in Southeast Asia (Whelley et al., 2015).

Making matters worse, weather conditions also do their fair contribution in increasing disaster risks in the region. As explained by Santhanasamy (2021, p. 15), the climate and wind systems in Southeast Asia result in the frequency of hydro-meteorological disasters, including droughts, cyclones, floods, and even landslides. Climate change will further exacerbate these risks by resulting in more intense heat waves, heavier precipitation, and sea level rise (Santhanasamy, 2021, p. 35). With these overlapping factors, to say that the Southeast Asian population may face hazards as a regular occurrence is an understatement.

Historical events and their accompanying statistics have long proven that these disaster risks should not be underestimated:

Cyclones. Back in 2008, Myanmar experienced what was referred to as the “deadliest tropical cyclone in SEA history” (Santhanasamy, 2021 p. 17). Statistics merely provide a glimpse of the tragedy experienced in Myanmar – 140,000 deaths, 2.4 million people affected, and over 4 billion USD in damages (Santhanasamy, 2021, p. 17; Bayhon et al., 2018). It took over three years post-disaster to rebuild more than 16,000 houses, 25 schools, and 20 rural centers (Santhanasamy, 2021, p. 17). Another catastrophic natural disaster took the form of typhoon Haiyan, which hit the Philippines back in 2013. Typhoon Haiyan was said to have “completely flattened” parts of the country (Santhanasamy, 2021, p. 17). Data recorded over 7,300 people killed, 16 million people affected, 4 million people displaced, and a total of 10 billion USD in total damages (Santhanasamy, 2021, p. 17; Bayhon, Kurniawan, and Shea, 2018).

Floods. Vietnam has been a victim of several floods back in 1999. Statistics show that the floods claimed 622 lives, affected 3.5 million people, and caused damages of over 2.4 billion USD (Santhanasamy, 2021, p. 20). The damages were spread to over 11.5 thousand hectares of rice paddy, 500 bridges, 3,000 km of roads, 41,000 houses, and 500 hospitals and health centers. In Thailand, 66 provinces (or 5.5% of the country’s total landmass) were affected by record-high flooding back in 2011. Throughout the year, the country experienced 813 deaths, 9.5 million affected, and a total of 40 billion USD in damages (Santhanasamy, 2021, p. 20).

Landslides. Southern Leyte in the Philippines experienced what was dubbed as the “deadliest single landslide disaster to occur worldwide in almost two decades” (Santhanasamy, 2021, p 21). Reports from the disaster say that residents were originally evacuated due to poor weather conditions since the 10th of February 2006; however, due to “improving weather conditions,” residents began returning to their

homes on the 16th, a day before the landslide occurred (Santhanasamy, 2021, p 21). The landslide took 1,126 lives and displaced over 19,000 individuals. Entire communities were buried – including homes, schools, government and business establishments, and health centers. This was not the first landslide experience in the country. Several years back, in 2000, almost people were killed and almost 3,000 people were also affected by the so-called Payatas Landslide (Santhanasamy, 2021, p. 21).

Earthquakes. In 2006 and 2009, Indonesia fell victim to two major earthquakes over magnitude 6 in Yogyakarta and Sumatra, respectively (Santhanasamy, 2021, p. 24). The first earthquake led to the death of over 6,000 individuals, destruction of 60,000 houses, and damages to property amounting to over 3.1 billion USD. 3 years later, three consecutive earthquakes which were measured to be at magnitude 7.6, 6.2, and 6.8 struck Sumatra coast (Santhanasamy, 2021, p. 24). This led to damages of roughly 2.2 billion USD; broken down, this accounts to damages to over 121,000 homes, over 3,000 classrooms, and over 100 health facilities. The event left over 250,000 families homeless (Santhanasamy, 2021, p. 24).

Tsunamis. Most of the tsunamis recorded in the region occurred in Indonesia. Despite occurring less frequently, the impacts of these events are extremely high. Per event, ASEAN faces an average of about 22,500 fatalities (Santhanasamy, 2021, p. 25). The deadliest tsunami recorded in history was caused by the Sumatra-Andaman magnitude 9 earthquake back in 2004 (Santhanasamy, 2021, p. 26). This event claimed the lives of over 225,000 people, with almost 170,000 of these deaths coming from Indonesia. Damages from the event cost almost 6.45 billion USD. The first tsunami wave to hit Sumatra was estimated to be over 100 feet in height. In 2018, Indonesia (specifically Sulawesi), became a victim to another major tsunami triggered

by a 7.4 magnitude earthquake. The event led to over 4,000 people losing their lives and 200,000 left affected (Santhanasamy, 2021, p. 26).

Account of Losses. According to the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) (2020, p.1), disasters in Southeast Asia present a worrying trend as damages are turning out four times higher than previous estimates. In terms of economic losses, data estimates show a total of 86.5 billion USD are being lost annually due to natural disasters. In GDP losses, an average of 7.1% of GDP in Mainland Southeast Asia is being lost to natural disasters, whereas Maritime Southeast Asia experiences a 2.8% GDP loss (UNESCAP, 2020, p. 3). The damages brought by natural disasters extend beyond the economic losses. Annually, natural disasters threaten the lives and security of Southeast Asians. Estimates show that over 62% of the region's population resides in high multi-risk areas (UNESCAP, 2020, p. 13). While the wealthier residents have the capacity to move to less hazardous areas, the poorest individuals are becoming repeated victims to natural disaster events. Data suggests that poverty and inequality greatly exacerbate disaster risks and threatens to bring 13 million people down to levels of extreme poverty by 2030 (UNESCAP, 2020, p. 13).

As emphasized by the UNESCAP (2020, p. 8), the disasters experienced and its effects "reveal the need to step up disaster risk reduction to cope with new extremes and uncertainty." The risk scape in Southeast Asia is heavily changing for the worse. Southeast Asia is, as referred to as by the World Risk Report, "where high exposure meets high vulnerability" (Radtke and Weller, 2021, p. 46). Given the prevalence of the region's natural disaster experience, natural disaster is indeed a topic worth exploring.

Research Context

On the 16th to the 17th of December 2021, Super Typhoon Rai, or what was locally referred to as “Odette” made landfall within the Philippine Area of responsibility. This disaster event brought torrential rains, violent winds, landslides, and storm surges which caused severe and widespread damages to all affected areas (UNHCR, 2022, p. 2).

Although my city was not in the trail of the storm, my brother, who was residing in Cebu City, was one of those affected. On the evening when the Odette made landfall, I spent the time conversing with my brother on the phone until he eventually lost coverage. He was extremely distraught, and he requested that I keep him company as he was waiting for the weather in his area to stabilize.

Being a political science student in my undergraduate years, I was already greatly aware and concerned about the issues of natural disasters. In fact, I was already informed of the extent it harms vulnerable groups – the fisherfolk, urban poor, and farming communities, to be specific. However, having a family member being exposed to the same conditions have bolstered my interests and concerns. As I was deciding on a thesis topic a month later, I knew I wanted to undertake a study relating to natural disasters. While the experience above is a personal narrative, other members of the ASEAN community surely have similar and possibly even worse encounters.

In Brunei Darussalam, the increasing global temperature has led to longer dry seasons and intensified El Niño cycles (Shahriar et al., 2019, p. 1 - 2). This has made the country susceptible to forest fires. In an incident in 2019, Brunei faced continuous forest fires that razed 161 hectares for a four-day period, from March 15 to 18 (Abu

Bakar, 2019). The Ministry of Health warned the public to stay home until the haze cleared due to possible health effects, such as cough, eye irritation, runny nose, especially for those with asthma, lung problems, and heart diseases (Othman and Idris, 2019).

Indonesia has also seen a worrying trend of stronger, bigger, and more frequent tropical cyclones. According to Maulia (2021), in the onslaught of typhoon Seroja, over 128 people were killed by flash floods and resulting landslides. The growing intensity of the country's tropical cyclone experience is being attributed to the worsening climate change conditions.

In Malaysia, landslide has become a common occurrence. Just in March 2022, more than a week of heavy rainfall resulted in a landslide in the outskirts of Kuala Lumpur (AHA Centre, 2022). A total of four people perished and a couple thousand were forced to evacuate (AHA Centre, 2022). Worsening weather conditions are expected to rock the country as a result of the worsening climate emergency.

The recent years have also been alarming for Singapore. The effects of global warming has led to the sea level rising at a worrying speed, and the risks of storm surges and floods become all the more imminent (The Strait Times, 2022). Given that 30% of Singapore is less than 5 meters above sea level, the country's coasts are in danger of being completely inundated (The Strait Times, 2022).

For members of the Mainland Southeast Asia along the Mekong River such as Myanmar, Thailand, Lao PDR, Cambodia, and Vietnam, flooding has also become a way of life. Just in 2020, flooding along the Mekong has affected and displaced almost a million people and killed no less than 70 people (ECHO, 2020).

Looking at the different experiences across the ASEAN region, it became clear that the prominence of natural disaster in Southeast Asia could not be denied. That

said, as a scholar in the field of ASEAN Studies and as an ASEAN resident, the knowledge of how these disaster events impact reality made me acknowledge that this is an avenue where I, as a researcher, can contribute to the existing studies in the field. This is done in the hopes of possibly adding to the discussions that will help in advancing and addressing the experience of natural disaster within the region.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Several studies examined, assessed, and scrutinized the ASEAN Member States' natural disaster experience. In this review, I studied the perspectives and discourses surrounding Southeast Asia's natural disaster experience as forwarded by previous studies. At the center of these studies are the Non-ASEAN Critical Discourses and at the margins are the ASEAN Member States' Natural Disaster Discourse; thus, the need to bring the Discourse at the margin to the center.

At the Center: The Non-ASEAN Critical Discourses

Given that Southeast Asia is among the most disaster-prone regions in the world, it comes as no surprise that the bulk of studies across the different themes – Climate Change and Natural Disasters, Risk Assessment and Awareness, Prevention, Mitigation, and Adaptation, Preparedness and Response, Recovery, and Knowledge and Innovation Management – are centered on critically reviewing the region's natural disaster response. While there are Global Perspectives on Climate Justice, these are not articulated within the context of the ASEAN region. Across literature pertaining to the AMS' natural disaster management, there is a common agreement on how the region has not been doing enough to properly address its vulnerability to natural disasters. Criticisms have been directed towards both ASEAN and its member states.

Climate Change and Natural Disaster. In discussing natural disasters, climate change can no longer be removed from the conversation. In the study by van Aalst (2006, p. 5), he provides evidence to establish the relationship that exists between climate change and natural disasters. However, prior to building these connections, the author first attempted to provide an overview of the phenomenon of

climate change. According to him, anthropogenic climate change or what is commonly referred to as “global warming,” is mostly caused by the increased concentrations of greenhouse gases in our atmosphere (van Aalst, 2006, p. 5). The accumulation of greenhouse gases can mostly be attributed to the carbon dioxide emitted through the burning of fossil fuels such as coal and oil – an anthropogenic activity that first took prominence during the industrial revolution (van Aalst, 2006, p. 5). Now, in the contemporary period, those industry-driven, carbon-intensive activities, along with the current shifts in global agriculture, land usage, and emissions, have led to a sharp increase in the world’s average temperature.

The way these sharp changes in the global temperature can have varying effects and manifestations in day-to-day life. However, at the most basic, the changes would lead to the rise in sea level, weather variability, weather extremes, disruptions and imbalances in the hydrological cycle, difficulties in adapting for both flora and fauna, and more (van Aalst, 2006, p. 7 – 8). In the case of human systems, the impacts will really depend on how well different societies are able to adapt to the changes. What is certain is the fact that the current phenomenon of climate change opens the entire world to a whole new range of “extremes” that it is already currently dealing with and will continue to deal with in the future.

As enumerated by the author, a wide variety of disaster events now pose a threat to the world – including increased intensity of droughts, heatwaves, wildfires, unpredictable atmospheric phenomena (such as storms, thunderstorms, tornadoes, hailstorms, and lightning), and flooding (van Aalst, 2006, p. 8 – 9). These are only a few of the perceivable threats, with more threats that may arise in the future.

Banholzer et al. (2014, p. 21) also supports the assertions by van Aalst (2006). In their study, the authors also predicted increases in the intensity of wind speeds in

tropical cyclones, droughts, heat waves, droughts, and consequent floodings and landslides as a result of these unpredictable weather events. Due to these worsening climate conditions, the study recommended developing knowledge of vulnerability and exposure to inform adaptation, mitigation, and disaster risk management measures (Banholzer et al., 2014, p. 43). With the rising urgency around these disaster events, disaster risk management should now be one of the important considerations taken into account into every decision-making process.

While the two previous studies cited focuses on the “projections” of what are expected to happen with the worrying disaster trends, the study by Islam and Khan (2018) tries to see reality on the ground and how the intensifying effects of natural disaster and climate change are being felt by Southeast Asia. It was shown through the said study that several challenges interact within Southeast Asia. The dynamics of the socio-economic, cultural, political conditions, and geographic location of the region generates several threats that have resulted in human casualties, loss of shelter, economic losses, etc. (Islam and Khan, 2018, p. 12). Because of this, the region overall is projected “to suffer more from climate change in the years to come, with the impact likely to be worse than the global average” (Pachauri and Reisinger, 2007, as cited by Islam and Khan, 2018, p. 3).

With the worsening conditions of climate change and the natural disasters that come along with it, one of the largest issues identified by the study is the lack of “resilience” among Southeast Asian communities in dealing with these rising threats (Islam and Khan, 2018, p. 21). That being said, the authors have forwarded several policy recommendations to the region to help them in their adaptation initiatives. These suggestions include establishing a framework for mapping and monitoring of environmental “hotspots,” adopting proactive development policies, promoting an

integrated environmental policy within the Southeast Asian region, focusing on community resilience and adaptation, implementing community-focused interventions, strengthening environmental protection and post-disaster rehabilitation, and more (Islam and Khan, 2018, p. 21).

Risk Assessment and Awareness. When assessing natural disasters and the potential risks they bring, researchers have always viewed this in the backdrop of climate change. Natural disaster risk could no longer be examined separately from the effects of climate change as any projection of natural disasters will always have to consider the accompanying intensifying effects of climate change.

In a study by Ding and Beh (2022, p. 2), the researchers utilized the Environmental Performance Index (EPI) to understand ASEAN's position vis-à-vis countering climate risks. Here, it was revealed that there are several overlapping risk factors that need to be considered in the region. The environmental performance of ASEAN countries falls 11.02 points behind the general average (Ding and Beh, 2022, p. 7). This just goes to show that the environmental performance and adaptive capacities of the region is extremely lagging. These have severely negative implications, especially considering that three ASEAN countries are ranked among the most affected by greater economic damage and fatalities from extreme natural disaster events (Ding and Beh, 2022, p. 1).

However, beyond these poor environmental performance statistics, the study revealed greater problems beyond mere non-compliance of proposed and agreed upon climate change mitigation initiatives. Looking at the economic structuring of Southeast Asia, the AMS are heavily reliant on carbon-intensive growth (Ding and Beh, 2022, p. 2). Despite the perceived economic benefits, this has cascading negative impacts including food insecurity, adverse health impacts, population

displacement, and even death (Ding and Beh, 2022, p. 1). The region, quite literally, lives and dies through its extensive resource extraction activities.

Although evidence has shown that these economic activities will fuel problems for the region, improving conditions is not necessarily the priority of the ASEAN member states (AMS). Countries with higher GDP were found to have better environmental performance, as reflected by the EPI (Ding and Beh, 2022, p. 7). This emphasizes that an improvement in environmental standards is more likely to be expected when a country achieves a certain level of development (Ding and Beh, 2022, p. 7). Provided that the Southeast Asian region is composed of the developing world, environmental initiatives are given lower dedication.

This attention deficit towards risk and disaster awareness is shown in the lack of government investments towards relevant risk forecasting and modelling. Data on fault characteristics, soil mapping, flood risk mapping, and topographical mapping is not as commonly available among Southeast Asian countries (Loh, 2005, p. 234). That said, projections on risks and losses are highly dependent on expert opinions and their projections based on models developed by developed countries (Loh, 2005, p. 235). Even then, models from developed countries may also be irrelevant due to differing realities from those faced by the ASEAN countries. As an example, several models tend to perceive typhoon risk and losses based on wind damage; on the other hand, Southeast Asian typhoon risks are heavily brought by flood damage (Loh, 2005, p. 235).

Low data coupled with the governments' low attention to climate disaster risks also led to low levels of public awareness, concern, and perception (Loh, 2005, p. 3). These sentiments were echoed in the study by Herdiansyah et al. (2020). The said research attempted to determine the extent of disaster awareness in Tanjung Anom

District of Mauk, Indonesia. Reality on the ground shows that there are low levels of awareness among residents, despite awareness being quintessential in disaster response (Herdiansyah et al., 2020, p. 2).

Risk identification, therefore, is generally guided by minimum knowledge and maximum ignorance. That said, there are different compounding vulnerabilities when it comes to risk awareness at the community level.

Prevention, Mitigation, and Adaptation. Prevention and mitigation is another important part of a holistic disaster response. While widespread prevention initiatives rely largely on a holistic environmental agenda, it is impossible to completely avoid environmental degradation, especially since a certain extent of irreversible destruction has already taken place. Thus, initiatives are now heavily skewed towards preventing the magnification of environmental consequences through adaptation. As explained by the IPCC (2001, as cited by Francisco, 2008, p. 8), adaptation refers to actions that are taken to address expected impacts. Thus, when discussing prevention and mitigation, “adaptation” becomes a primary concept in discussion.

There are many components to create a successful adaptation strategy. As described by Nguyen and Salamanca (2016, p. 1), these include an effective (1) political leadership, (2) usable science and data to inform decision-making, (3) institutional structures for adaptation planning, (4) stakeholder involvement and implementation, (5) finance for planning, (6) activities and evaluation, and (7) public support. When these components are efficient, the best adaptation strategies can be formulated and implemented.

In a study by Francisco (2008), among the primary objectives was to assess the opportunities to control and minimize the adverse impacts that come with natural disasters in Southeast Asia. The study revealed that adaptation strategies are often

categorized as (1) reactive or (2) anticipatory. Reactive refers to measures that try to mitigate risks that already exist; whereas, anticipatory refers to initiatives that aim to curtail risks that may soon arise (Klein, 2002, as cited by Francisco, 2008, p. 9). In the different examples of initiatives presented, it was shown that there is no shortage in options when it comes to adaptation strategies. In fact, with the potential of drawing ideas from around the world, there is generally an endless pool of adaptation ideas. As stated by Francisco (2008, p. 9), “there is no dearth of knowledge” in both technologies and practices. This reveals that the problem generally lies not with the availability of “ideas,” rather, on the capacity to execute on these ideas.

This reveals that a general lack of resources is what prevents adaptation. While agreements and plans are easy to form, transforming these to concrete actions is a demand that Southeast Asian states could not afford at the moment. However, believing that adaptation could be set aside is a decision that will come back to haunt Southeast Asian states. Francisco (2008, p. 9) asserted this point by stating, “perhaps the question should be, what would it cost not to adapt?” The cost of failing to adapt will end up being exponential compared to the initial costs of investing to adapt. Unfortunately, governments of Southeast Asia are not too keen on addressing problems that will affect the region in the long term.

The study by Nguyen and Salamanca (2016, p. 3) revealed that different countries in Southeast Asia perceive the importance of adaptation differently. There are so-called (1) adaptation pioneers, (2) emerging champions, and (3) wait-and-see adaptors. Pioneers refer to those countries that see adaptation as an urgent need, emerging champions follow pioneers close behind, and wait-and-see adaptors simply tend to be complacent in forwarding adaptation initiatives (Nguyen and Salamanca, 2016, p. 3). Those most affected by natural disasters, such as the Philippines and

Indonesia are classified as pioneers, while those least affected tend to be those belonging to wait-and-see adaptors. The disparity in concern across the region is a problem because while only specific countries become victims of natural disasters, all countries in the region (and the world) contribute to the intensifying and worsening effects of calamities. That said, failures in having a genuine regional concern for natural disaster response will only cripple the region's capacity in dealing with these life-threatening issues.

Compounding on these national and regional issues, there are also several major sources of vulnerability that have not been addressed, effectively weakening the region's capacity to forward effective mitigation measures. According to Nguyen and Salamanca (2016, p. 4), poverty reduction, structural inequalities, and equity are on-the-ground realities that create "critical deficits" in adaptation readiness. This creates a convoluted problem that leaves the grassroots population virtually helpless when dealing with natural disasters.

Preparedness and Response. Previous natural disaster experiences within ASEAN have demonstrated the region's capacity to respond, especially in events of active disaster. From the myriad of experiences, experts have noted that the region's disaster mitigation is heavily skewed toward reactive than proactive measures.

In the study by Labbé, Fan, and Kemp (2013, p. 7), they examined ASEAN in action during the ill-fated Cyclone Nargis disaster in Myanmar in 2008. Cyclone Nargis was the deadliest ever recorded in the North Indian Ocean basin, where 140,000 individuals were killed, 800,000 were left homeless and more than 200,000 individuals were injured (Labbé, Fan, and Kemp, 2013, p. 7). Despite the losses incurred, the diplomatic traditions established in Southeast Asia led Myanmar to hesitate from accepting assistance from the international community. This context allowed for the

instrumental role that ASEAN played as a primary coordinating body in the Nargis disaster response.

ASEAN became the primary diplomatic gateway that facilitated the cyclone response efforts from the region and the greater international community towards the affected areas in Myanmar. This resulted in a two-tiered structure comprised of the (1) ASEAN Humanitarian Task Force - which contains the diplomatic and policy level body and (2) Yangon-Based Tripartite (ASEAN, Myanmar, and the United Nations) Core Group - which facilitate day-to-day response operations (Labbé, Fan, and Kemp, 2013, pp. 8 - 9). Through this cooperation, ASEAN was able to facilitate the unimpeded access of humanitarian aid and workers, with over 4,000 visas granted during the said period; not only that, the availability of resources, including technical expertise from Myanmar, ASEAN, and the international community has allowed the group to establish clear benchmarks to set goals and monitor the progress (Labbé, Fan, and Kemp, 2013, p. 9).

With ASEAN at the center, a “new model of humanitarian partnership” became visible in the Cyclone Nargis disaster response (Labbé, Fan, and Kemp, 2013, p. 9). It is a system that essentially provided a balance that fostered cooperation in spite of the region's established diplomatic norms and practices. In a sense, the Cyclone Nargis catastrophe became a test for ASEAN to demonstrate its relevance and capacity to influence events within the region. In this “baptism,” as referred to by then ASEAN Secretary-General Dr. Surin Pitsuwan (as cited by Labbé, Fan, and Kemp, 2013, p. 10), proved to be a “window of opportunity to make meaningful progress.” The cyclone in Myanmar allowed ASEAN to institutionalize its disaster response in the region.

While there was great enthusiasm for ASEAN's early disaster response, the latter years have revealed more of the inefficiencies that come with the region's approach. In his proposal for a developmental approach to ASEAN's disaster risk management, Loh (2005) pointed out several issues in the region's post-disaster response. As described, ASEAN is heavily focused on "loss financing" (Loh, 2005, p. 229). This means that the region's resources are mostly consumed by emergency aid and debt relief. This is, undoubtedly, an unsustainable and ineffective risk management approach. Such reactivity is "exhaustive" in a sense that it focuses too much on short term, instead of long-term responses such as adaptive development projects.

ASEAN's dominant emergency response approach compounds the issue of vulnerability in several ways. As elaborated by Gurenko (2004, as cited by Loh, 2005, p. 231), the post-disaster funding that Southeast Asian nations are reliant on for their disaster response typically has a significant delay prior to release. This greatly cripples government initiatives as efforts are stalled by the unavailability of funding. Secondly, it negatively reinforces upon the AMS that they could merely rely on assistance from the greater international community, instead of forwarding productive and proactive disaster mitigation responses (Gurenko, 2004, as cited by Loh, 2005, p. 231). Basically, the little incentive countries have to engage in active risk management leaves Southeast Asian populations unequipped to deal with catastrophic events.

Recovery. Another important component of natural disaster response is the transition from responding to the initial aftermath of the disaster to recovery and rehabilitation.

One of the notable cases of disaster recovery was the Typhoon Haiyan catastrophe that struck the Philippines back in 2013. The most affected area,

Tacloban, was reported to have been virtually “flattened” by the mixture of strong winds and extensive flooding in the area. As per the report from BBC (2013), the direct aftermath of the storm surge has left the area inaccessible – with little food, no potable water, and no electricity. Making matters worse, help had difficulties reaching the area due to damages to its roads, airport, and port (BBC, 2013). Surviving residents had to resort to looting as they struggled to find sources for their necessities.

Given the extent of damages in the area, its transition towards recovery is a strong indicator in the influence of ASEAN and its member states on post-disaster rehabilitation. As explained by Paragas, Rodil, and Pelingon (2016, p. 23), a disaster is considered to have moved towards recovery when the situation in the affected location normalizes and the primary needs of the people are met. In the case of Tacloban, it took a month before the city achieved some semblance of normality.

With the stabilization of Tacloban came the entry of UN Habitat and UNDP assistance, which conducted dialogues and consultations with the local government to address the following recovery areas: (1) shelter, (2) social services, (3) economic revitalization, (4) physical infrastructure, and (5) environment. The coordination between the local and national government and international organizations have resulted in the Tacloban Recovery and Sustainable Development Group, which facilitated a “participative framework” towards the rebuilding of Tacloban (Paragas, Rodil, and Pelingon, 2016, p. 23). There was an initial attempt to forward a multi-stakeholder approach, however, this coordination and cooperation soon waned as the UN Habitat moved beyond a mere “facilitating role” towards a leadership and planning role. Later on, differing views on the goals of the rehabilitation of Tacloban led to conflicts between the international organizations involved and the Philippines' national government. According to Edwin Corvera of OPARR (as cited by Paragas, Rodil, and

Pelingon, 2016, p. 27), while international organizations were oriented towards development plans, the national government wanted to stay within the bounds of merely replacing infrastructure that was damaged. That said, the difference in perspectives on what recovery entails became a major stumbling block that weakened cooperation and crippled the ability of the task force to implement their plans.

In the study by Telford and Cosgrave (2006) they also examined the events that took place in the recovery of Indonesia from the Indian Ocean Tsunami that occurred in December of 2004. While there was initial enthusiasm over the recovery promised by international organizations, non-governmental organizations, and the national government, this positive outlook soon died down due to poor results (Telford and Cosgrave, 2006, p. 76). In the conducted recovery assessment, common issues included poor-quality reconstruction – houses were rebuilt, but without concern for water and sanitation; schools were built in areas far from communities, and the fishing boats provided to the region's widely affected fishing communities were already unusable within 12 - 18 months (Telford and Cosgrave, 2006, p. 72 - 73). The rhetoric of "build back better" also guided the operations in Indonesia; however, regardless of such promise, the complex "recovery" issues such as vulnerability reduction and asset creation were never realized (Telford and Cosgrave, 2006, p. 73). Essentially, the promises of "improvement" settled and ended with "replacement" of previously damaged assets.

This contrasting outlook on how natural disaster management should be approached shows a lack of implementation of ASEAN's established rhetoric. In the 1994 World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction, the nations of the world agreed on the necessity to have a more holistic approach to natural disasters (Collins, 2013, p. 132). This generally mandates an understanding that the objective of recovery

is to “build back better” (Collins, 2013, p. 136). Despite ASEAN echoing these sentiments, its member states clearly, in practice, do not emanate the same goals. The focus primarily lies on merely replacing what has been damaged. This means that there is no genuine dedication to make communities and infrastructures more resilient in dealing with natural calamities.

Knowledge and Innovation Management. Natural disaster experience is one of the best sources of gaining a better idea on how to mitigate, prepare for, and address natural disasters. That said, many different studies have tried to see knowledge sharing and innovation in relation to natural disasters in ASEAN.

The study by Herdiansyah et al. (2020) tried to assess how the knowledge and experience from previous natural disasters have affected vulnerable grassroots populations. Reality on the ground has been discouraging as communities, despite being the most at risk when it comes to disasters, remain unaware on matters of disaster mitigation. Disaster mitigation, despite being an essential topic to be discussed, have not been provided formally to vulnerable grassroots populations.

This claim was supported by the study of Hoffman and Blecha (2020). They were able to reveal that both formal and informal forms of disaster risk analysis and mitigation education have barely reached the communities that need it the most. The grassroots level has not been capacitated or provided with the tools to understand how to deal with natural disasters. This reflects that there are also purveying issues in knowledge inclusiveness – where knowledge, which could have most benefitted vulnerable populations, are inaccessible to them.

This is extremely problematic, considering that lack of disaster education directly relates to higher levels of vulnerability (Hoffman and Blecha, 2020, p. 2). This shows vulnerability is a cycle that compounds upon itself. The lack of knowledge on

the grassroots level reveals a more systemic problem in building disaster resilience. As elaborated by Hoffman and Blecha (2020, p. 6), those of higher socio-economic status have more access to information on the direct and indirect effects of disasters. And with their financial resources, they are able to take initiatives to make themselves less vulnerable to these effects. Meanwhile, poverty-stricken families who are left unaware on the extent and possibilities of natural calamities, do not have the resources to inform themselves and protect themselves from natural disaster.

While there have been attempts at the local and national levels to improve knowledge to counter the effects of natural disasters, Hoffman and Blecha (2020, p. 6) emphasized the focus of governments on “disaster relief” is still ensuring that efforts remain extremely lacking. Given that natural disasters remain extremely unpredictable, generating effective scientific and well-researched preventive measures is still the best way to prevent loss of life, infrastructure, and assets in natural disaster events. The so-called reactive orientation of the ASEAN member nations is still crippling the ability of the region to innovate and adapt.

Global Perspectives on Climate Justice. Climate change is such a contentious issue in the global community. Setting the backdrop for this issue, Ikeme (2003, p. 200) explained that the climate issue assumes that climate change is caused by anthropogenic emissions of greenhouse gases. Because of the far-reaching and multifaceted impacts brought about by climate change and the corresponding natural disasters, discussions regarding “climate justice” is among one of the most complex global environmental issues to date. These controversies heavily revolve around the concept of “historical responsibility” (Sagar and Banuri, 1999, as cited by Ikeme, 2003, p. 200).

In the concept of historical responsibility, it is acknowledged that the recipients of the majority of the impacts of climate impacts are the developing countries, while the increased concentrations of greenhouse gases are heavily due to the activities of developed countries (Ikeme, 2003, p. 200). Additionally, while developing countries are more heavily at risk, they have limited capacity in dealing with climate hazards; on the other hand, developed countries with the resources needed to bear the burden of climate change are less threatened by its impacts and the greater onslaught of natural disasters (Ikeme, 2003, p. 200).

The major issues this now highlights are the distribution of impacts, responsibilities, costs, and benefits (Ikeme, 2003, p. 200). The Global South, or the recognized victims of the climate issue are said to emphasize on three elements in their understanding of environmental justice: (1) corrective or compensatory justice, wherein those who are responsible should provide entitlements to those who were affected by their actions, (2) distributive justice, wherein equal rights to greenhouse gasses emissions should be accorded, and (3) procedural justice, wherein fair procedures and an inclusive framework must be set in place in order to reach decisions (Ikeme, 2003, p. 200).

In another discussion by Schlosberg and Collins (2014), they expounded on the “climate justice” approaches such as the “historical responsibility approach,” “rights-based approach,” and the “human rights approach.”

As already previously discussed, in the “historical responsibility approach,” it is believed that some historical actions have led us to the current climate change issue (Schlosberg and Collins, 2014, p. 365). Consequently, because of their previous actions, they are now expected to take responsibility for the conditions they have created in the present as a sort of repayment or retribution (Schlosberg and Collins,

2014, p. 365). This idea is greatly backed by the developing and less developed countries who recognize that their vulnerabilities will further extend in the future; whereas the developed and industrialized countries who have caused these vulnerabilities will only continue to enrich themselves through their destructive practices (Schlosberg and Collins, 2014, p. 365). The focal point of the historical responsibility approach is the acknowledgement of a persisting “climate debt” owed by the developed countries to the rest of the world, thus their obligation to provide compensation and reparations for damage (Schlosberg and Collins, 2014, p. 365).

Another climate justice approach introduced is the “rights-based approach.” This perspective is concerned about development rights, which argues that no responsibility for mitigating climate change should be placed on all countries and all nations, as long as they have still not developed out of poverty conditions (Schlosberg and Collins, 2014, p. 365). This approach also alludes to the “common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capacities,” as articulated in the UNFCCC. It is believed that the developed countries who have caused the climate emergency are also the ones who could afford to right the wrong; hence, the greater responsibility placed in their shoulders in addressing the ongoing climate issue (Schlosberg and Collins, 2014, p. 365).

Lastly is the “human rights approach.” This argues that climate change violates basic human rights which accords all individuals the right to life, health, and subsistence (Schlosberg and Collins, 2014, p. 365). The current levels of consumption of fossil fuels and the worrying trends that make the world infinitely more dangerous in the future, therefore, violates the key basic human rights of people currently living in the world and those who will be born to it in the future. That being said, everyone

should be accorded with the “right to be free from climate change, its related impacts [,] and other forms of ecological destruction.” (Schlosberg and Collins, 2014, p. 365).

In studies on climate change and natural disaster examined, it is clear that these two phenomena could no longer be viewed separately. One heavily affects the other, especially in Southeast Asia, where multiple vulnerabilities are at an intersection. With the acknowledgement of these realities faced by the region, it was identified that there are still many opportunities to improve the region’s natural disaster approach. The studies encourage the region to take on a more proactive approach. This way, they may be able to build better resilience in the region.

In studies on risk assessment and awareness, it was uncovered that there is a lack of commitment and cooperation on the side of ASEAN and on the side of the government to truly acknowledge, assess, and disseminate climate risks and the effects it will have, especially in the long-term.

In studies on prevention, mitigation, and adaptation, it was revealed that while there are endless opportunities for adaptation, the basic components needed to forward a successful adaptation strategy are not present. There is no willingness from the regional and national arena to place resources into forwarding adaptation. The cost of adaptation must be shouldered by those who are most affected because they are the ones with reliable and consistent concern for disaster mitigation. Unfortunately, despite their interest in effective community-based mitigation and prevention, their inherent vulnerabilities make their capacity limited and their initiatives largely ineffective in mitigating massive loss of life and properties. There remains a visible disconnect in both levels of concern and resource transmission between the regional-national arena and the community or grassroots.

In studies on preparedness and response, it is said that ASEAN is heavily flawed when it comes to its natural disaster response and initiative. ASEAN is heavily top-down focus when it comes to responding to disasters, which leaves the ground more vulnerable and at risk as the primary victims of natural disaster. This demonstrates a dynamic wherein there is disempowerment occurring within the grassroots level.

In studies on recovery, the primary criticism of Southeast Asia and the ASEAN organization again resurfaces. ASEAN is again criticized for being unable to compel its member states to implement measures, despite its different declarations that attest to their dedication to forward developmental approaches to natural disaster recovery.

In studies on knowledge and innovation management, it is revealed that there exists several criticisms on how ASEAN and its member states have lacked in knowledge sharing and innovation initiatives. The responses of ASEAN have remained largely reactive to the consequences of natural disasters. This leaves the most vulnerable populations extremely disempowered when it comes to natural disaster events. These studies have highlighted the need for more inclusiveness and resources towards improving the knowledge surrounding the natural disaster experiences of Southeast Asia.

In the discussions on the global perspectives on climate justice, the perspectives regarding climate justice have been articulated. These discourses give a better perspective on pressing debates regarding climate change – such as roles and responsibilities. However, they also give a space for inquiry regarding which discourses the Southeast Asian region adheres to or if they have their own completely different perspective altogether.

The role of ASEAN and its capacity to forward effective change in the region has been repeatedly questioned by existing studies. Despite ASEAN adopting several international agreements that signal their dedication to improving the natural disaster response of the region, this rhetoric has not been translated to concrete actions (Loh, 2005; Ding and Beh, 2022; Francisco, 2008; Nguyen and Salamanca, 2016). Although there were instances where ASEAN was able to demonstrate its relevance early on, especially through its role in the Cyclone Nargis response, this “hype” for ASEAN’s “new diplomacy” soon died down when the regional organization began having difficulties in convincing its member states to adopt more progressive natural disaster responses. The regional norms that were institutionalized by ASEAN have been counterproductive as it has created the borders that made natural disaster response more difficult in the region.

The ASEAN Member States have also been recipients of harsh criticisms in their level of dedication to forwarding national disaster initiatives. Arguments have demonstrated that although the region is most affected by natural disasters, resilience building is not really the priority of the region. In the previous cooperation between different international organizations and the Philippines during the Typhoon Haiyan, for example, the Philippines was not willing to allocate resources towards developmental projects. Instead, the Philippine government was focused on merely repairing or replacing damaged structures. This so-called lack of genuine commitment became a hindrance to cooperation. Many studies have therefore attempted to point out to the ASEAN member states the cost of not building adaptive structures. In the long run, the lack of dedication coming from the AMS will only lead to more costs and losses.

Overall, the natural disaster response of ASEAN and the Southeast Asian governments were said to be lacking. The “reactive” nature of their initiatives means that the vulnerable communities are left to endure the full force and the direct aftermath of natural disaster as they await post-disaster relief. This kind of response is expensive, unsustainable, and counterproductive. Hence, there have been calls for a “developmental approach” to natural disaster response, wherein the goal is to proactively implement adaptive measures to address the intensifying effects of natural disasters. The dominant critical analyses established by previous researches therefore urge Southeast Asia to improve their approach to natural disaster.

At the Margins: ASEAN Member States’ Natural Disaster Discourse

Without discounting the contributions of previous studies in forwarding the region’s responses to natural disasters through critical assessments, it is important to acknowledge that, in these assessments, a voice has been left at the margins. The dominant discourses of pre-existing research on the region’s natural disaster approach criticize ASEAN and its member states using perspectives that are devoid of the region’s realities and framework.

Simply put, while the criticisms against ASEAN and its member states are all valid, it does not consider the context of the region.

Although the ASEAN norms are causing difficulties in making decisive and cohesive actions towards natural disaster management, the long history of ASEAN and its member states make it a necessary requisite to facilitate cooperation, consensus decision-making, non-interference, and sovereign equality all provide security to the ASEAN member states to ensure that they do not experience any incursions in their affairs, despite their dedication to participate within the group.

Without the security provided by ASEAN's diplomatic practice, the Southeast Asian may become even more reluctant to engage in forms of cooperation.

While natural disaster management is important to prioritize, especially with the increased exposure experienced by Southeast Asian states, the lack of a more holistic developmental approach could be a result of several overlapping systemic issues. Instability due to internal political conditions, socio-economic inequalities, resource extraction-intensive economic structure, to name a few, may result in difficulties that make it difficult for Southeast Asia to prioritize and address natural disaster in the same rigor as demanded by previous studies.

In a sense, previous literature provides critique in a seemingly "outsider" point-of-view. That being said, in between the discussions of these dominant discourses, we begin to ask, "where is the voice of the Southeast Asian region?" This discourse left at the margins creates a space for where a new Discourse is left to be uncovered.

Bringing the Discourse at the Margin to the Center: The Problematique

The familiarity Southeast Asia has to natural disasters is, quite frankly, unlike the experience of other regions around the world. Yearly, Southeast Asia incurs half of the entire world's natural disaster deaths (Caballero-Anthony, 2017, p. 22); and this statistic does not even cover those who were temporarily and permanently displaced and injured by natural disasters. Branded as the area "where high exposure meets high vulnerability," the Southeast Asian region has been under a microscope regarding their natural disaster approaches.

Criticisms from various studies pointed out the region's failure to implement a proactive, extensive, and long-term developmental approach to natural disaster (Loh, 2005; Ding and Beh, 2022; Francisco, 2008; Nguyen and Salamanca, 2016). And

while these criticisms were valid, these do not consider the contextual realities Southeast Asia experiences. In the dominant discussions on the region's natural disaster approach, the voice and the discourses of Southeast Asia themselves is not being heard or highlighted. Although there exists alternative global perspectives on climate change and natural disaster, this study's interest lies in identifying the region's own discursive constructions.

It is shown that "Discourses" always present themselves underneath a medley of social institutions, and what makes these Discourses relevant is how they affect or shape reality and the social life (Gee, 1999, p. 18). Issues are not merely represented by humans, instead, these are represented by Discourses formed throughout history, enacting our perspective on matters of society (Gee, 1999, p. 18). This means to say that discourse always has a relevant social consequence or effect. Discourse and the study of discourses serve a practical purpose as it enacts the perspectives of those who lived before us and will continue to exist and shape society beyond our lifetime.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH QUESTION AND RESEARCH FRAMEWORK: EMERGING THE DISCOURSE AT THE MARGINS

Research Question

In its attempt to examine phenomenon through discourses, this study adopted the view forwarded by Gee (1999, p. 1 – 2), “language-in-use is everywhere and always political.” This means to say that discourses uttered always have political underpinnings. The term “political” here does not refer to politics “in government” or the common perceptions of politics as mere “partisanship.” By “politics,” what is being referred to is “anything and anyplace where human social interactions and relationships have implications of how *social goods* are or ought to be distributed” (Gee, 1999, p. 1 – 2).

Discourses always allude to perceptions regarding the dynamics of power, status, and worth. Everything expressed, whether this be through written or spoken language, suggests on one’s perception of what the world is like and how the world functions. Politics, therefore, as stated by Gee (1999, p. 2), is part and parcel of using language. Politics finds its lifeblood through how embedded it is in discourse. It is through discourse that “social goods are created, sustained, distributed, and redistributed.” (Gee, 1999, p. 2). It is through discourses “that people are harmed and helped” (Gee, 1999, p. 2). With this, in examining discourses, it is always important to see and acknowledge it as something political. It is only through this framing do we fully recognize the extent discourse influences social reality.

In previous research endeavors examining the region’s natural disaster response, the dominant perspectives have been critical of the ASEAN and the AMS. Due to the lapses in the region’s mostly “reactive” response to natural disaster, studies

were questioning whether the region actually prioritizes or is even genuinely dedicated to its natural disaster management. Said criticisms, although valid, were done without consideration of the region's contextual realities. In the discussions on natural disaster in Southeast Asia forwarded by previous studies, Southeast Asia's voice in the discussion could not be located.

Discourse analysis is a useful analytical tool in providing a deeper examination of the premise set by previous studies because it, through its assumptions, gives great emphasis on how social context shapes discourse and, consequently, how discourse shapes social reality. As expanded by Willig (2014, p. 342), Discourse analysis concerns itself with the processes of discursive construction and their accompanying social consequences. That said, uncovering the discourses of Southeast Asia regarding natural disasters will help illuminate the social contexts that affect and possibly influence their experience of natural disaster.

This research generally aims to understand the Discourse of the ASEAN Member States pertaining to their natural disaster approach. Specifically, this research aims to answer the following questions: (1) How is natural disaster in the ASEAN region discursively constructed? and (2) What are the consequences or outcomes arising from the construction of natural disasters in the ASEAN region?

Research Framework

Discourse analysis is used in this study both as a theoretical, analytical, and methodological approach.

Discourse Analysis as a Theoretical Approach. Many individuals perceive language as a tool that merely serves the purpose of communicating information (Gee,

1999, p.1). However, in the application of discourse analysis as a theoretical background, broadening one's viewpoint on the purpose of language is necessary. The perspective that sees language as mere information transfer heavily downplays the impact language can have. In order to fully appreciate language and the significance of discourse, it is important to return to the philosophical assumptions that underpin discourse analysis and all other social constructivist approaches.

Discourse analysis believes that our knowledge or how we perceive the world should not be taken as "objective truths" (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002, p. 5). This means to say that while reality does exist, our interpretations and perceptions of reality are not to be taken as reality itself. Provided that reality is experienced by individuals in different ways, reality is only accessible to us through categories or in fragments and angles (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002, p. 5). That said, our knowledge and representations of the world are not necessarily exact reflections of reality out there; instead, it is a product of our own categorization of the world around us. (Burr, 1995, p. 3 and Gergen, 1985, p. 266 – 267 as cited by Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002, p. 5).

Fundamentally, people, as so-called "social beings," are historical and cultural beings. Hence, our views, perception, and knowledge of the world are products of situated exchanges among people (Gergen 1985, p. 267, as cited by Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002, p. 5). The way we understand the world has become malleable due to its reliance on continual shaping and reshaping based on the specific historical and cultural context. Knowledge, therefore, is not grounded and solid, rather, it is continually interacting with the social world.

Provided that knowledge is created through interplay with the social world, our understanding of the world is created, maintained, and even modified through social processes (Burr, 1995, p. 4 and Gergen, 1985, p. 268, as cited by Jørgensen and

Phillips, 2002, p. 5). Knowledge is constructed through socializations; and through continual social interaction, what is true and what is false is continually being negotiated by individuals.

Through constant negotiation with the social world, actions gain their meaning. Some actions may be considered as natural, while others may become branded as unthinkable. These varying social understandings shape beings – it shapes how people think, respond, and consequently, how they act. While physical reality exists, these social interpretations of reality are important as they give meaning to physical realities. How individuals interpret the social world – their construction of knowledge and truth – has social consequences (Burr 1995, p. 5, and Gergen, 1985, p. 268 – 269, as cited by Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002, p. 5).

As explained by Willig (2014, p. 341), language and thoughts are inextricably linked. Social, historical, and cultural aspects always serve as the backdrop for the statements we utter. Thus, our underlying social context heavily manifests in the things we say. That said, language in use (or discourse) could be considered as a particular way of talking about and understanding the world or an aspect of the world (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002, p. 1). By examining language, therefore, what is revealed is not merely things that are plainly said. Rather, as claimed by structuralist linguistic philosophy, language is our access to “reality” (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002, p. 8)

“With language, we create representations of reality that are never mere reflections of pre-existing reality but contribute to constructing reality” (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002, p. 8 – 9). Through the study of language in use (discourse), our understanding of the world (or aspects of it) are revealed, including their corresponding social action. Transitively, language in its use also has the capacity to affect and even go as far as define social action.

Thoughts, rationalizations, and ideas do not exist in a vacuum; rather, they are reflections and constructions of a pre-existing social context that defines them. Ultimately, language has the ability to construct and mediate social reality (Willig, 2014, p. 341). As enumerated by Gee (1999, p. 1), language fulfills two basic purposes: (1) to scaffold the performance of social activities and to scaffold human affiliation within cultures and social groups and institutions (Gee, 1999, p. 1). The goal of discourse analysis is to study the details of how language facilitates social activities and different social identities. In simpler terms, discourse analysis is a way to understand how discourse shapes reality.

Discourse Analysis as an Analytical Approach. There are many various approaches to understanding and examining discourse, but for Gee (1999, p. 4), the objective of a discourse analysis is to examine language as it is used to enact activities, perspectives, and identities. To better understand, it is imperative to understand the concept and analytical tools that constitute discourse analysis.

- **Situated Identities.** In the various interactions that an individual participates in, the identity they bring and the position they establish has an implication on the meanings that they project. As discussed by Gee (1999, p. 13), in a person's every communication, they project a different version of themselves, depending on the circumstances that surround their interaction. For example, who you are and what you say may become different when you are in a formal work function and attending to family affairs as one event entails a different "social status" from the other. However, social status does not exclusively determine the situated identity; it is also determined by the "what" or the socially situated activity that the utterance helps to constitute (Gee, 1999, p. 13). The context of a formal dinner and an afterparty may contribute to the creation of two different

identities. The formation of the “situated identity,” therefore, is essentially a recognition of “who-doing-what” (Gee, 1999, p. 14). There are various complexities and overlaps that may occur that a person conducting discourse analysis must be made aware of. For example, the President’s Press Secretary may issue an utterance signed and claimed by the President, but authored by a speech writer (Gee, 1999, p. 13). This means that the “who” factor in communicated language is speech convoluted. While the speech writer initially wrote the utterance, it was also written to imitate the “voice” of the President who was expected to deliver the message (Gee, 1999, p. 14). In conducting a discourse analysis, awareness of these different actors and the different actions they are constructing through their speech is also necessary.

- **Social Languages.** There are other components that come into the formation of discourse. Apart from the “who-doing-what,” language is also caught up in other contextual nuances. In the most basic sense, social language refers to the different styles of language that we use to enact and recognize different identities in different settings (Gee, 1999, p. 13-14). Thus, discourse analysis views interactions in coordination with other factors that may shape meaning including ways of acting, interacting, believing, feeling, etc. (Gee, 1999, p. 25). The effect “social languages” have on shaping interactions and the meanings they render was clearly demonstrated in the case of “Jane,” a student of Professor Gee who believed that she did not use different social languages in different contexts (Gee, 1999, p. 25). Provided her adamant, Professor Gee instructed her to discuss a moral dilemma with two different groups of people – her parents and her boyfriend – and record these conversations. Upon reviewing the recorded conversations, it was seen that in her interaction with

her parents, she used language that was more careful and articulate – using well-constructed sentences to back her arguments. On the other hand, in her recounting of the same moral dilemma to her boyfriend, there was a different outcome in her way of communicating. Her language and manner were more informal. Even without laying out her arguments, she already assumed that her boyfriend would agree with her and not question her position. She did not extensively justify herself, showing that she believed that the understanding of her position would already be a given. Here, it was seen that she utilized different social languages. In her interaction with her parents, she wishes to establish her intelligence and the soundness of her judgement. Whereas, in her conversation with her boyfriend, she stresses social and affective involvement and solidarity (Gee, 1999, p. 26 – 27). While it may be unrecognizable for the speakers themselves, communication is affected by so-called “social languages,” which heavily shape their discourses.

- **Discourses.** Discourses are not made equal. In understanding discourse analysis is it important to recognize the differentiation between Discourse (with an uppercase D) and discourse (with a lowercase D). While discourse merely refers to language in use (basically the collection of words to convey a message or information), Discourse is a step further as it involves the recognition the “other stuff,” including the socially situated factors that may affect the meaning of spoken or written language (Gee, 1999, p. 18). Recognition, therefore, is the key to differentiating mere discourse to Discourse:

If you put language, action, interaction, values, beliefs, symbols, objects, tools, and places together in such a way that others recognize you as a particular type of who (identity) engaged in a particular type of what (activity) here and now, then you have pulled off a Discourse (Gee, 1999, p. 18).

- **Conversations.** Conversation, in its use in this context, does not simply mean a collection of words; instead, Conversations (with an uppercase C), refers to historic conversations, interactions, and exchanges among Discourses (Gee, 1999, p. 34). An example of Conversations among Discourses would be the long-standing debate between creationism and evolutionism (Gee, 1999, p. 34). These are two Discourses that have, for the longest time, been trying to argue with and been modifying each other, where one believes that all life could be traced back to the “Creation” and the other believes life on earth, as we know it today, is a result of centuries long evolution. Another illustration would be the long-standing discourses on Racism – one side protects against the systemic disadvantaging of individuals based on their race, while the other aims to discredit race as a deciding factor in one’s experience of day-to-day life. As per Gee (1999, p. 34, citing Billig, 1987 and Latour, 1987), there three non-verbal factors that are involved in Conversations, including the controversy – that is, the sides we identify as constituting a debate, the values and thinking connected to the debate (the perceptions surrounding the debate) and lastly, the symbolic values of objects and institutions, which are the non-verbal participants of the Conversation.
- **The Properties of Discourse.** With the different tools of inquiry (or “thinking tools”) presented, what do these say regarding the properties of discourse? Discourse is beyond merely the use of language in communication. To understand Discourse in its full extent, it is important to recognize its different properties. At the most basic, language is not stable and general; rather, they have multiple and ever-changing meanings created for and adapted to specific contexts of use (Gee, 1999, p. 40). Provided the infinite possibilities in meaning

and the evolution of meaning, Discourse should also not be understood as static; instead, it is actively and continually contributing to the building and rebuilding of our world. At the same time, the world also actively and continually contributes to the building and rebuilding of Discourse. This shows that there is a certain reflexive property to Discourse, where such that each creates the other (Gee, 1999, p. 20). To generate a clearer picture, language and context are to be seen like two mirrors facing each other, constantly and endlessly reflecting their own images back and forth between each other.

With these complexities involving the understanding, interactions, and evolutions of Discourses, it is essential to simplify by establishing the following properties:

1. Discourses can split into two or more Discourses.
2. Two or more Discourses can meld together.
3. It can be problematic whether a Discourse today is or is not the same as one in the past.
4. New Discourses emerge and old ones die all the time.
5. Discourses are always defined in relationships of complicity and contestation with other Discourses, and so they change when other Discourses in society emerge or die.
6. Discourses need, by no means, be “grand” or large scale.
7. Discourses can be hybrids of other Discourses.
8. There are limitless Discourses and no way to count them, both because new ones, even quite non-grand ones, can always emerge and because boundaries are always contestable.

The boundary of Discourse is only set by the limits of one's understanding (Gee, 1999, 23). Thus, the fundamental objective of Discourse analysis and education is to expand, deepen, and better the Discursive maps in society to create a better understanding on how our Discourses have consequences in our day-to-day realities.

Discourse Analysis as a Methodological Approach. Discourse analysis is centered on the use of language in a network of situations. Language, whether oral or written, all consist of cues that come together to help build the image of certain realities (Gee, 1999, p. 85). The following building activities are completed in conducting a discourse analysis: (1) semiotic building, (2) word building, (3) activity building, (4) socio-culturally-situated identity and relationship building, (5) political building, and (6) connection building (Gee, 1999, pp. 85 - 86). Building these fragments are necessary in finding underlying meanings within texts.

- **Semiotic Building.** Semiotic building refers to the usage of language cues to determine which systems of knowledge or ways of knowing are relevant (Gee, 1999, p. 85). This basically asks: what are the different “social languages” used in the discourse – speech, writing, images, gestures – and how do they affect or construct social reality?
- **Word Building.** This tries to identify what are the important words in texts and conversations and what are their corresponding situated meanings. With the values and meanings attached to different words or phrases in language, how do they transform, affect, or shape the contextual reality? (Gee, 1999, p. 85).
- **Activity Building.** This refers to using language clues in order to identify situated meanings about the activity or activities going on (Gee, 1999, p. 85). This tries to examine what actions are taking place, and what those actions may mean or reveal.

- **Socio-Culturally-Situated Identity and Relationship Building.** This refers to using cues in language to identify meanings about the different identities and relationships relevant to the interaction (Gee, 1999, p. 85). Basically, through text, the roles and positions are identified and examined to see how they affect the discourse or situation (Gee, 1999, p. 93). It also tries to examine the accompanying attitudes, values, feelings, etc. that may play into and affect interactions.
- **Political Building.** This involves the usage of language cues to construct the nature of various social goods mentioned in interactions – including constructing the dynamics of status and power (Gee, 1999, p. 93). This pries into which social goods (status, power, gender, race, class, etc.) are present and relevant, and what contributes or suggests this relevance? (Gee, 1999, p. 94). How do these “social goods” define or shape the discourse?
- **Connection Building.** This refers to the usage of different cues from written or spoken language to make assumptions and figure out patterns about how the past and future are connected with each other (Gee, 1999, p. 94). Interactions are expected to have some degree of “continuous coherence,” and connection building involves being able to identify those patterns (Gee, 1999, p. 94).

All aspects mentioned are expected to work together to constitute a “system” of meaning (Gee, 1999, p. 83) This means to say that the discursive constructions derived from each aspect is not expected to function independently; instead, these elements are to be seen as connected threads, where if you pull one, you get all the others (Gee, 1999, p. 84).

The researcher has to the position of a pattern recognizer and a pattern builder to perform these building tasks. In their position, the researcher must be able to see

the correlations among various features in the discourses and reorganize them in a meaningful and recognizable way which is useful for practice and useful for the development of patterns and theories (Gee, 1999, p. 51).

Uncovering the regional Discourse will be able to provide a deeper understanding on the different unseen factors, issues, and circumstances that may affect the perspective, position, and actions of the region in its natural disaster management. Revealing these contexts and social realities and their corresponding social consequences will make way for more informed, nuanced, and productive suggestions, methods, and criticisms that will further improve the natural disaster response in the ASEAN region.

The next chapter will be discussing how the researcher arrived at the AMS' discourse in their natural disaster approach.

CHAPTER IV

THE PROCESS OF ARRIVING AT THE AMS' NATURAL DISASTER DISCOURSE: THE METHODOLOGY

Situated Researcher

In conducting social constructionist research, a degree of relativism is always to be expected. There is no such thing as absolute “neutrality” in research; because throughout every phase of the research process, there is a degree of it constantly placed under the influence of the researcher. As stated by Jørgensen and Phillips (2002, p. 197), discourses, therefore, always stem from a particular position in social life. With this premise, there have been several debates on whether or not this allows for the creation of “objectively” good descriptions of reality.

While interpretations may always make claims on reality, some claims are, undeniably, more loyal to reality than others (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002, p. 197). Acknowledging relativism in research, therefore, is an essential part of ensuring that the claims the research and the researcher makes are as loyal to reality as it can be. For Derek Edwards, Malcolm Ashmore, and Jonathan Potter (1995, as cited by Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002, p. 196), they believe that relativism is a “fundamental skepticism” relating to any claim to knowledge about reality. The openness to skepticism does not necessarily mean that one can no longer make claims and judgements about their interpretation of reality; rather, this only entails the openness to inquiry, deliberation, and discussion (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002, p. 196). In a sense, the acknowledgement of relativism does not weaken constructivist methods; it merely democratizes it.

These considerations on relativism shed light on the importance of acknowledging “reflexivity” in research.

Reflexivity is an important concept in qualitative research as it attempts to take into account the researcher's involvement – what and up to what extent – in the construction of the research design (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002, p. 198). This is an essential discussion because in qualitative research, it could be assumed that there is no such thing as absolute objectivity. In the research process, the researchers themselves are viewed as the “research instrument” (Dodgson, 2019, p. 1). That being said, reflexivity is the consideration being given to the role of the researcher in the process of constructing knowledge or perceived reality and understanding that this “role” is heavily defined by the researchers on socially constructed positions. Thus, instead of forcing to create “neutral” discourses, the goal is to account for the resulting interactions between the researcher and the researched that may have influenced the study (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002, p. 196). Disclosing the involvement of the agency of the researcher throughout the research process, therefore, is an important aspect in establishing the rigor and the quality of the researcher's work. As said by Teh and Lek (2018, as cited by Dodgson, 2019, p. 1), this transparency of the research process is the gold standard for determining the trust-worthiness of the research conducted. By disclosing the contextual intersections between the researcher and the data and all other aspects of the study, the researcher is better able to establish the credibility of their findings (Berger, 2015, as cited by Dodgson, 2019, p. 1).

Researchers need to increasingly focus on self-knowledge and sensitivity; better understand the role of the self in the creation of knowledge; carefully self-monitor the impact of their biases, beliefs, and personal experiences on their research; and maintain the balance between the personal and the universal (Berger, 2015, p. 220, as cited by Dodgson, 2019, p. 1).

This transparency and acknowledgement of the researcher's role, through reflexivity, will allow for the negotiation of existing relativism. This reflexivity will allow

for thorough scrutiny of research in order to identify whether or not it is closer or farther from what is considered to be an accurate depiction of reality.

Due to the relativist nature of social constructionist research, there have been questions on how its validity is measured or identified. Validity, as per Jørgensen and Phillips (2002, p. 173) is the standard that research must meet in order to be considered as qualified or reliable academic work. Understandably, the validity criteria for constructivist research does not follow the standard set for positivistic epistemologies, where the basis of validity is on how knowledge reflects reality without bias (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002, p. 173). That said, a different criterion determines validity in Discourse analysis. As a “rule of thumb” Potter and Wetherell (1987, as cited by Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002, p. 172) suggests that the analysis conducted should contain the following characteristics:

- **The analysis is solid.** To ensure the soundness of the analysis, it is best to ground interpretation on a range of textual features, instead of just one feature. Multiple evidence pointing to or supporting your assertion will help strengthen or solidify your analysis.
- **The analysis is comprehensive.** This does not necessarily mean that the researcher must forcibly draw analysis from every aspect of text. This is not only impossible but also unnecessary. Analysis should be comprehensive in the sense that the questions that were posed to the text should be examined and answered fully. Any textual features that may conflict with the analysis should also be disclosed and accounted for.
- **The analysis is presented in a transparent manner.** The relativity in social constructivist research acknowledges that there is not a single interpretation of reality. Thus, the key to establishing its reliability or the soundness of the

analysis relies on the extent by which it can withstand scrutiny by readers and other researchers. Through the transparent documentation of the process of coming up with the analysis, the researcher provides the reader with the empirical material they need to deliberate on the analysis' loyalty to reality.

The researcher was mindful of all these aspects of validity throughout the duration of the study. Acknowledging that my own biases, predispositions, perspectives, backgrounds, and agency fully interacts with the entire research process, I explained in detail my research process. The discussions in this methodology also serve as the "audit trail" of this study. This way, the readers and reviewers of this study may, themselves, be able to "get into the mind of the researcher" and understand why the research progressed in the way it did. This is the method by which I build the rigor of my study. Consequently, it better opens my study for the scrutiny and assessment of researchers that encounter the study and the findings I have produced.

Sites of the Study

It was originally planned that the data to be utilized for this study would be official documents and communications from each of the AMS pertaining to their natural disaster experience – such as official reports, briefings, and statements. However, in the process of gathering these forms of data, a problem arose. Although the region has extensive documentation on natural disasters, the data available from member states are not in languages understandable to the researcher. In previous consultations with my thesis adviser, he already informed me regarding the limitations that may come with translations, especially in discourse analysis. Considering the emphasis discourse analysis has on essence rather than content, context and meaning may be lost in translation, which would extensively affect the research

outcomes. Given this issue, I had to locate data sources already available in English or any other language understandable to the researcher.

With its goal of uncovering the region's Discourses on natural disaster and the corresponding consequences this may have on the region's natural disaster experience, this study utilized recorded speeches (with audio, visual, and written speech transcription) from each of the ten (10) ASEAN Member States (Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Viet Nam) through their representative in inter-governmental fora or conferences relating to Natural Disasters.

Scope of the Study

ASEAN Representatives. As previously established, this research focused on the concept of natural disaster on a regional level. This is because Southeast Asia, as a region, could be grouped in terms of their experience of natural disaster not only due to their similar challenges and vulnerability, but also because they receive the same criticisms regarding their natural disaster response. Considering that this research wished to uncover the regional Discourse on natural disaster, it is only appropriate to collect discourses from all the ASEAN members, through their representatives. Collecting data from all the ten (10) ASEAN member states means allowing for a richer and more accurate representation of the overall regional Discourse on natural disaster management. Additionally, it is assumed that when addressing the international arena, representatives are speaking on behalf of their nation-state. Hence, the analysis extracted from their speeches will reflect the discourse of each member nation.

Inter-Governmental Fora or Conferences on Natural Disaster. There are several reasons why inter-governmental fora or conferences provide for the most

adequate site for the intentions of this study. Internationally attended events provide an avenue where the common issue of language differences could be eliminated due to the use of a universally understandable language – English. This made the goal of this study, which was to examine the discourses of ten (10) different ASEAN member nations, doable. Not only that, as per the assumption of Discourse analysis, discourses and their meanings are always situated. Speakers, in what they say, always consider their position in relation to the position of those they are speaking to. That said, when the representatives from the ASEAN member states speak to those belonging to the international community, they speak in a manner that acknowledges the contextual and experiential differences and gaps. Considering that this study identified “underlying contexts” embedded in the discourses of these member nations, it is helpful to examine how member nations themselves communicate to perceived “outsiders.” This way, the understanding of their contextual differences is not assumed, but expounded.

Representativeness of the Result. This study mainly reviewed the discourses of Southeast Asia through official nation-state and regional capacity. It does not necessarily view the experience of natural disaster on the ground, as it is experienced by Southeast Asian citizens and other civil society organizations. That said, the discursive structures generated follow a top-down structure, from the perspective of the decision-makers. It does not discuss the phenomenon of natural disaster and climate change as it is experienced by the citizens themselves. What may be happening on the ground possibly presents a varying discourse with other degrees of reality experienced. Additionally, the speeches taken from this study come from inter-governmental fora and conferences. Thus, it is important to acknowledge that the speeches may be, to some degree, clothed in diplomatic language. There is a

possibility that there are perspectives that could not be completely uncovered due to the degree of diplomacy that, in a way, censors the “raw perceptions” that the region has regarding their experience of natural disaster and climate change.

The above-mentioned points are factors that are explicitly disclosed as they might have affected, influenced, or limited the outcomes of this study to a certain extent.

Speech as Data Source

Using speeches as a data source presented various advantages for the interests of this study. Discourse analysis believes that Discourses comprise of spoken or written language plus “others” (others being contextual factors that may change or modify the meaning of discourse). By constructing analysis from the performance of speeches themselves (through video sources) to supplement the transcription, the researcher better examined the “other” factors such as the tone and emphasis the speaker may place on certain ideas, concepts, or words. This provided for a better and more holistic analysis of the overall Discourse on natural disaster management. In addition, speeches have been in discourse analytic studies as they provide modes through which political or institutional views and policies are articulated and expressed (Schaffner 2010; Sharififar and Rahimi 2015).

Speeches from each of the ten (10) ASEAN members were collected, until data became saturated enough to emerge the region’s overall discursive structures with regard to natural disaster. Provided that Discourses are seen to be malleable and evolving, this research saw no necessity to adhere to certain or determined timelines with regard to the speeches that were collected. Speeches that belonged from different periods only enriched the understanding of these countries’ discourses by demonstrating how contexts changed or stayed the same over the years.

Data was collected through online sources, specifically through the official YouTube channels of different state governments, inter-governmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, and independent media that featured these relevant AMS delegate speeches. The researcher was able to find the speeches needed through utilizing YouTube's search feature. The search queries used to locate the speeches were the country names – Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Viet Nam – with keywords relating to “Natural Disaster Speech, United Nations.”

Through the following search queries, I was able to collect the following speeches performed by each of the ten (10) ASEAN Member States as shown in Table 1.

Table 1:
Speeches Performed by the AMS
in Inter-Governmental Fora and Conferences

ASEAN Member State	Delegate	Inter-Governmental Fora or Conference Attended
1. Brunei	Mr. Yahya Abdul Rahman, Director, National Disaster Management Centre	Third Session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in Geneva (May 2011)
2. Cambodia	Mr. Ross Sovann, Deputy Secretary General, National Committee for Disaster Management	Third Session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in Geneva (May 2011)
3. Indonesia	Mr. Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, Indonesian President	United Nations Summit on Climate Change (September 2009)
4. Lao PDR	Mr. Saleumxay Kommasith, Minister for Foreign Affairs	74th Session of the General Assembly of the UN (September 2019)
5. Malaysia	Mr. Mohamed Thajudeen Abdul Wahab, Secretary, National Security Council	Fourth Session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in Geneva (May 2013)
6. Myanmar	Mr. Soe Aung, Deputy Minister of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement	Sixth Session Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in Geneva (May 2019)

7. Philippines	Mr. Naderev Saño, Chief Negotiator, Head of the Philippine Delegation	United Nations Climate Change Conference in Warsaw, Poland (November 2013)
8. Singapore	Mr. Lee Hsien Loong, Singaporean Prime Minister	Climate Action Summit at the United Nations General Assembly (September 2019)
9. Thailand	Mr Pornpoth Penpas, Deputy Director-General, Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation	Fourth Session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in Geneva (May 2013)
10. Vietnam	Mr. Dang Quang Minh, Deputy Director Disaster Reduction Centre, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development	Third Session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in Geneva (May 2011)

Provided that these speeches were performed in a publicly broadcasted inter-governmental fora and conferences, these are all publicly available and accessible data.

Sense-Making

Beyond listening to the speeches performed by the ASEAN Member States, the researcher converted the available speeches into transcriptions for better reviewing, rereading, and sense-making. To do this, YouTube's automatically generated close captions were extracted and compiled in a separate document. In order to ensure the correctness and accuracy of the transcriptions, each transcription was manually reviewed while listening to the performed speech. Though not yet part of the coding proper, this step allowed the researcher to be better acquainted with the data that to be examined. These primary interactions and the careful reading, rereading, listening, and re-listening of the speeches is essential as it eventually helped the researcher develop a relationship with the data gathered.

In making sense of the data, the primary role of the researcher is to become a "pattern recognizer" and, subsequently, a "pattern builder." This is because Discourse

analysis believes that there are different “situated meanings” that must be recognized in discourses (or language-in-use), and that these “situated meanings” could only be identified through building awareness of existing semiotics, important word associations, activities, socio-culturally constructed identities, relationships, political dynamics, and trends and connections in language and communication. In the process of conducting a Discourse analysis, the researcher will go through the data in various phases in order to recognize and build patterns regarding the patterns being examined.

Reading and Listening. I started the process of building a relationship with my data by repeatedly reading and listening to it whenever I can. Whenever I am accomplishing housework or completing my daily exercise routine, I play the speeches I have gathered in the background. Whenever I’m waiting in lines for government offices (such as when I waited in line to get my passport), I read and re-read the speech transcripts. This way, I build greater familiarity with the data. I did this because in Discourse analysis, it is important that the researcher, before attempting an analysis, reads or listens to the text carefully just to at least “experience” the discursive effects of the writing (Willig, 2009, as cited by Bosangit, 2012 p. 232). The researchers must immerse in the material as a way to gain familiarity with the text and understand, at the very basic, “what the text tries to do” (Willig, 2009, as cited by Bosangit, 2012 p. 232).

Based on my initial exposure to the text, I was able to come up with impressions, which include my inferences and the discursive effects the text had on me as a reader and as a listener. Building these analytical impressions is a part of the preparatory phase to get the researcher familiar with the data prior to formally starting

with the coding process. After establishing this general familiarity of the data set, I began processing the data through coding.

Coding. In the discipline of qualitative research, the general objective is to generate theory from the data collected (Williams and Moser, 2019. p. 47). In this process of theory generation, the researcher must be present and aware of the dynamic nature of the data by constantly inquiring regarding its thematic connectivity and intersectionality. Given that such a process requires heavy interplay between the researcher and the data, coding and the overall process of arriving at knowledge and generating theory must be defined, rigorous, and consistent (Williams and Moser, 2019. p. 47). This is among the ways of ensuring the validity of the sense-making generated at the end of the study. Proper and well-documented processes are part and parcel of validity and reliability in qualitative research. That being said, coding provides for that systematic way to arrive at knowledge.

- **Open Coding.** As described by Williams and Moser (2019, p. 48), the first level of coding involves the researcher identifying distinct concepts and themes for categorization. This means to say that the researcher must be able to recognize existing “thematic domains” in data. As per Flick (2009, p. 307, as cited by Williams and Moser, 2019. p. 48.), different groups of “meanings” found in text must be identified and classified so the phenomenon being studied could be presented through these emergent themes. In the first level of coding, I categorized the data while keeping in mind the different “building tasks” as first described by Gee (1999). I went through the data line-by-line to try and recognize - What does the text try to do? What identities are being built? What positions exist in the text? What politics and dynamics are created by the speaker? What meanings are being alluded to? What activities are being done

through the text? What contexts are being established? These are just a few of the several questions that I had to keep asking the data to build awareness regarding the discourses being examined. In an index card, I wrote notes per country regarding my observations. With these initial categorizations, I am still dealing with discourses (with the small d). Identifying these primary themes are necessary building blocks in forming overall discursive structures later on. From this open coding, I was able to recognize the following recurring codes throughout the data sets. These recurring codes and the discourse or “what was said” by the region are enumerated below in Tables 2 - 7.

Table 2:
Alluding to the AMS’ Perspective on the Status
Of the Events Attended and the People Present

Country	Phrases/Sentences
Brunei Darussalam	• <i>Distinguished delegates, ladies, and gentlemen</i> • <i>Important event</i>
Cambodia	• <i>Distinguished ladies and gentlemen</i> • <i>Such an excellent conference.</i>
Indonesia	• <i>Bismillah Hir Rahman Nir Rahim! Your excellencies, heads of state, and heads of government, your excellency, Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Ban Ki-Moon, excellencies, ladies, and gentlemen</i> • <i>Auspicious occasion</i> • <i>This high-level gathering in New York</i> • <i>Once-in-a-lifetime opportunity</i>
Laos	• <i>Mr. President</i>
Malaysia	• <i>Mr. chairman, excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies, and gentlemen,</i>
Myanmar	• <i>Excellencies and ladies and gentlemen</i> • <i>This important event</i> • <i>Excellencies, ladies, and gentlemen</i>
Philippines	• <i>Mr. President</i> • <i>Mr. President, your excellency, honorable minister</i> • <i>Most respectfully</i>
Singapore	• <i>Mr. President, Secretary-General António Guterres, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates</i>
Thailand	• <i>Honorable chair, excellencies, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.</i> • <i>Decision-makers</i> • <i>Players around the globe</i>

Vietnam	• <i>Excellencies, Ladies, and Gentlemen</i>
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* means no equivalent phrases or statements were found in the data set

Table 3:
Recognizing Climate Change
and Natural Disaster as Connected Events

Country	Phrases/Sentences
Brunei Darussalam	*
Cambodia	• <i>Cambodia consider that disaster reduction and climate change adaptation, it's just a two matters on the same coin – just different phases.</i> • <i>Resource must be poured more for the disaster reduction and climate change.</i>
Indonesia	*
Laos	*
Malaysia	• <i>With the onslaught of climate change, worldwide disasters are anticipated to increase.</i> • <i>new challenges brought about by disasters and climate change</i>
Myanmar	• <i>climate change and global warming endangers the lives of many and hinders the development of many countries... Myanmar also perceives the many significant changes in the patterns of disaster risk and their cascading effects.</i>
Philippines	• <i>climate change will mean increased potential for more intense tropical storms, and this will have profound implications.</i>
Singapore	• <i>the consequences of climate change are catastrophic and affect all countries. This includes new diseases, more extreme weather events, food shortages, forced migration, even wars.</i>
Thailand	• <i>The next step – strengthen disaster and climate resilience</i>
Vietnam	• <i>the government has made efforts to strengthen the plans and institutional framework for disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation.</i>

* means no equivalent phrases or statements were found in the data set

Table 4:
Highlighting the Vulnerability
of the Region to Natural Disasters

Country	Phrases/Sentences
Brunei Darussalam	• <i>This session is very relevant to Brunei Darussalam, as we need to enhance our efforts to reduce the impacts of disasters, namely: floods, landslides, strong winds, wildfires, and haze,</i>

Cambodia	• <i>Cambodia's agrarian country- it's also very vulnerable to the climate change in comparing to other country, based on its limited capacity of coping those issue.</i>
Indonesia	• <i>This also should be transformed into willingness to help those who are vulnerable to the impact of climate change to adapt to it.</i>
Laos	• <i>while developed countries may have been more resilient to and able to adapt to the impact of climate change, developing countries, and in particular, the least developed ones, are the most vulnerable including, in particular, my own country.</i>
Malaysia	• <i>Although high-income countries have incur greater losses in monetary terms, low-income countries have incurred, low and middle-income countries have suffered greater impacts relatively to the GDPs.</i> • <i>Developing countries have disproportionately suffered in terms of human fatalities, due to the weaker infrastructures and response capabilities.</i>
Myanmar	• <i>This year, many areas of our country have experienced the highest recorded temperature in ASEAN region. It affected many people across the country.</i>
Philippines	• <i>And many of our communities, especially those who struggle against the twin challenges of the development crisis and the climate crisis, typhoons such as Haiyan and its impacts represent a sobering reminder to the international community that we cannot afford to delay climate action.</i> • <i>We refuse, as a nation, to accept a future where super typhoons like this will become a way of life.</i> • <i>We refuse to accept that running away from storms, evacuating our families, suffering, the devastation, misery, counting our dead become a way of life.</i>
Singapore	• <i>Like many small island-states, Singapore is vulnerable, especially to the effects of global warming and especially the rise of sea-levels.</i> • <i>For us, climate change is existential.</i>
Thailand	• <i>Just a few months after the Global Platform 2011, in August the same year, our country faced the worst flood in more than 50 years.</i> • <i>Resulted from four consecutive tropical cyclones, the flood killed several hundred people and brought about a huge loss in financial terms.</i> • <i>The World Bank is estimated a total cost of damage from this catastrophic disaster is high as 4 trillion USD, making this disaster number four in the world in term of economic loss.</i>
Vietnam	• <i>Vietnam is constantly at risk from the natural hazard. Annually, weather-related disaster encroach on areas.</i>

	<i>It increased deaths and economic loss equivalent to 1.3% of the national GDP.</i> • <i>Vietnam is one of the countries in the world that will be most affected by climate change and sea water level rise. If the mean sea level rise by one meter by 2100 30% of the Mekong delta will be permanently inundated, and more than 80% of delta will be flooded in the flood season. Housing of some 20 million people will be affected. And in the dry season, shorter rain season will affect up to 70% of the delta area.</i>
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** means no equivalent phrases or statements were found in the data set*

Table 5:
Establishing Climate Change
as a Common Experience/Problem

Country	Phrases/Sentences
Brunei Darussalam	• <i>Brunei Darussalam is excited to be part of this international community with a common goal, which will prevail as an important investment for a safer tomorrow.</i>
Cambodia	• <i>Everybody agree that climate change is a threat.</i> • <i>We can say all country in the world are vulnerable to disaster.</i>
Indonesia	• <i>The Copenhagen conference must conclude with an agreement that ensures a secure climate future for all.</i> • <i>Copenhagen is our time to seize the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to launch the post 2012 climate agreement.</i> • <i>We must reach consensus for the sake of our planet and for the future of humanity.</i>
Laos	• <i>The international community is facing myriad challenges. Many parts of the world have been experiencing more frequent and severe impacts of climate change which has extensively affected the livelihood of the people globally.</i>
Malaysia	• <i>It is a fact that no country, even the most developed, is immune from the impact of natural disasters.</i>
Myanmar	• <i>At this era, climate change and global warming endangers the lives of many and hinders the development of many countries.</i>
Philippines	• <i>Warsaw must deliver on enhancing ambition and should muster the political will to address climate change</i> • <i>Lead us and let Poland, Warsaw be remembered forever as the place where we truly cared to stop this madness.</i>

Singapore	• <i>The consequences of climate change are catastrophic and affect all countries.</i> • <i>Climate change is the ultimate global commons challenge.</i>
Thailand	• <i>This is purely excellent when you encourage decision-makers, as well as players around the globe to continue to develop and make progress in their works.</i>
Vietnam	*

* means no equivalent phrases or statements were found in the data set

Table 6:
Claiming That The Region “Did Their Part”
in Climate Action and Disaster Management

Country	Phrases/Sentences
Brunei Darussalam	• <i>All of these activities and many more in the timeline signify our commitment in putting high investment in managing disaster risk by placing equal priority between disaster risk reduction, preparedness, and disaster response.</i>
Cambodia	• <i>Cambodia try its best. Though we are the developing country with least resources, but however, the government in Cambodia try it's best to prioritize and also to invest to the implementation of disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation.</i>
Indonesia	• <i>Indonesia has made climate change a key priority in Indonesia's national budget for 2010, reaching half a billion dollars, which include preservation and expansion of our tropical rain forest cover.</i> • <i>Indonesia has initiated...</i>
Laos	• <i>the Lao government is focusing on implementation of Paris agreement. It is already mainstream its nationally in determined contributions and integrating climate change and natural disaster risk reduction into the current national social economic development plan.</i>
Malaysia	• <i>Distinguished delegates, ladies, and gentlemen, in 2005, Malaysia adopted the Hugo Framework of Action together with 167 other countries.</i> • <i>Malaysia is happy to announce today that it is in the midst of setting up its own multi-stakeholder, national platform on disaster management which will be ready by the end of this year.</i>
Myanmar	• <i>Myanmar submitted the National Report on Myanmar Sendai Implementation through online platform in 2018.</i> • <i>We are now continuing our efforts to accomplish the next milestone for risk live reporting.</i>

	• <i>We are doing our best to improve Sendai framework implementation, monitoring, and reporting.</i> • <i>We have been implementing Myanmar action plan on disaster risk reduction since 2017.</i>
Philippines	• <i>And despite the massive efforts that my country had exerted in preparing for the onset of the storm</i>
Singapore	• <i>Nevertheless, we have played our part as responsible global citizens to mitigate climate change.</i> • <i>Singapore will do our full part.</i> • <i>We are developing creative solutions within our constraints.</i>
Thailand	• <i>Ladies and gentlemen, since 2011, we have introduced number of counter-measures. The emphasis had been put on building back better.</i> • <i>More importantly, there has been growing number of budget allocation for disaster risk reduction.</i>
Vietnam	• <i>The government has made efforts to strengthen the plans and institutional framework for disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation.</i> • <i>They created nearly 54 million programs will be implemented in the 6,000 communes and villages in the frequently affected by disasters. This will improve capacity in national, provincial, and local level.</i>

** means no equivalent phrases or statements were found in the data set*

Table 7:
Assigning Responsibilities to Countries Regarding
Their Role in Climate Change and Natural Disaster Mitigation

Country	Phrases/Sentences
Brunei Darussalam	*
Cambodia	• <i>Now it's time for us to really act concretely. Resource must be poured more for the disaster reduction and climate change.</i> • <i>That we hope, that from the talking, interpret them into the actual action, so that we together can move ahead in our ambition to build a safer world by our investment today, for a safer world for all in the near future.</i>
Indonesia	• <i>There is a historical responsibility that must be translated into deep cut emissions.</i> • <i>This also should be transformed into willingness to help those who are vulnerable to the impact of climate change to adapt to it.</i> • <i>To this end, developed countries must take the lead in our global effort to combat climate change, while developing countries should also engage in much broader actions to go beyond business as usual.</i>

Laos	• <i>Having all these legal frameworks in place is not enough to combat climate change.</i> • <i>Full and effective implementation of this instrument is the key, yet it would require joint effort at both national and international level to ensure such full and effective implementation.</i> • <i>We would like to call upon the developed countries and own developed partners to honor the commitment in contributing 100 billion US dollar per year to support the developing countries mitigation and adaptation needs.</i>
Malaysia	• <i>We need to inculcate a sense of urgency towards this issue, because if we adopt a business-as-usual attitude the consequences can be quite disastrous.</i>
Myanmar	• <i>We are looking forward to receiving more technical assistance from UNDRR and other partners.</i> • <i>I wish we could come up with action-oriented outcomes for future DRR countermeasures.</i>
Philippines	• <i>I should rally behind climate advocates who peacefully confront those historically responsible for the current state of our climate.</i> • <i>We cannot solve problems at the same level of awareness that created them.</i> • <i>We cannot solve climate change when we seek to spew more emissions.</i>
Singapore	• <i>Singapore contributes only 0.11% of global emissions.</i> • <i>Singapore will not be able to stop climate change on our own.</i> • <i>As leaders, we all have the responsibility to do our part, to rally our people's support for sustainable development.</i> • <i>I therefore call upon my fellow member-states to redouble our efforts both to mitigate and to adapt to climate change.</i>
Thailand	*
Vietnam	*

* means no equivalent phrases or statements were found in the data set

- **Axial Coding.** In the second phase of the coding process, the objective is to identify emerging themes through refining the previously identified open codes. As said by Strauss (1998, p. 109, as cited by Williams and Moser, 2019, p. 50), axial coding is the process wherein the researcher identifies the relationships of the open codes in order to begin developing the core codes of the study. This means to say that in this phase of the coding process, the researcher must

begin the recategorization of the open codes initially developed. The researcher must be able to identify and recognize how said codes relate to one another, how they interact, and how they influence the meanings they form together. Doing so requires the researcher's continuous analysis, cross referencing, and refining of the categorization (Williams and Moser, 2019, p. 50). In this process, I had to identify the patterns that will serve as the building-blocks for the overall Discourse (with a capital D) that I want to emerge through this study. To help identify these relationships between codes, I tried to create and recreate different mental maps by rearranging the codes I have initially written in my index cards. I grouped codes that I identified as interacting with one another. Then, I tried to see how the larger groups of coding related to one another. Throughout this repeated process, the codes emerged to show the existing situated identities and situated context within the text as presented in Table 8 and Table 9. Upon reviewing the discourses or what was said about each of the themes, I was able to identify that there are two sides to that experience – the side of Southeast Asia and the side of Developed Countries (Specifically the West).

Table 8
Situated Identities
The Actors

Previously Identified Themes	Southeast Asia	Developed Countries (Specifically the West)
On Experiencing Vulnerability to Natural Disaster	More vulnerable to natural disaster • <i>Developing countries, and in particular, the least developed ones, are the most vulnerable. (Laos)</i> • <i>Developing countries have disproportionately suffered in terms of human fatalities, due to</i>	Less vulnerable to natural disaster • <i>Developed countries may have been more resilient to and able to adapt to the impact of climate change. (Laos)</i> • <i>Although high-income countries have incur greater losses in</i>

	<i>the weaker infrastructures and response capabilities. (Malaysia)</i>	<i>monetary terms, low-income countries have incurred, low and middle-income countries have suffered greater impacts relatively to the GDPs. (Malaysia)</i>
On Experiencing Climate Change	Climate change is a common experience • <i>Everybody agree that climate change is a threat. (Cambodia)</i> • <i>Climate change is the ultimate global commons challenge. (Singapore)</i> • <i>We must reach consensus for the sake of our planet and for the future of humanity. (Indonesia)</i>	
On Roles in Causing Climate Change	Minimal contribution to climate change • <i>Singapore contributes only 0.11% of global emissions. Nevertheless, we have played our part as responsible global citizens to mitigate climate change. (Singapore)</i> • <i>We invest in our mainstreaming disaster reduction into development and also the climate change. (Cambodia)</i>	Has a “historical role” in causing climate change • <i>There is a historical responsibility that must be translated into deep cut emissions. (Indonesia)</i> • <i>Those historically responsible for the current state of our climate. (Philippines)</i>
On Doing their Part	Doing their best despite constraints • <i>We are doing our best to improve Sendai framework implementation, monitoring, and reporting. (Myanmar)</i> • <i>Cambodia try its best. Though we are the developing country with least resources, but however, the government in Cambodia try it's best to prioritize and also to invest to the implementation of disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation. (Cambodia)</i> • <i>The government has made efforts to strengthen the plans and institutional framework for disaster risk</i>	Lacking commitment to climate change; Owing initiatives. • <i>We cannot solve climate change when we seek to spew more emissions. (Philippines)</i> • <i>As leaders, we all have the responsibility to do our part, to rally our people's support for sustainable development. (Singapore)</i> • <i>We would like to call upon the developed countries and own developed partners to honor the commitment in contributing 100 billion US dollar per year to support the developing countries mitigation and adaptation needs. (Laos)</i>

	<i>reduction and climate change adaptation.</i> (Vietnam)	
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Table 9:
Situated Context
The Inter-Governmental Fora/Conferences
Discussing Natural Disaster and Climate Change

The Inter-Governmental Fora/Conference as an Important Event Attended by Impactful Individuals.
• <i>This high-level gathering in New York</i> (Indonesia) • <i>This important event</i> (Brunei Darussalam) • <i>Decision-makers, as well as players around the globe</i> (Thailand)

- **Selective Coding.** In the third level of the coding process, the researcher continues the axial coding done, but at a higher level of abstraction, through actions that lead to an elaboration or a formulation of the story of the case being examined (Flick, 2009, p. 310, as cited by Williams and Moser, 2019, p. 52). Through this process, the researcher enables the refinement of the data by selecting the main thematic categories and identifying the sub-themes among those other categories that were coded (Williams and Moser, 2019, p. 52). As per Strauss (1998, p. 158, as cited by Williams and Moser, 2019, p. 52), “the conceptualization of the yield from the selective coding as a “case” or “story” is significant as it provides researchers with flexible and multi-type vehicles for codifying and presenting results.” Through this process, the researcher continually works towards identifying thematic specificity and further towards theory creation. It is through this phase that the researcher constructs the meaning of the data examined. Here, I restructured the themes identified in the text, with the considerations of the relationships that have emerged through the data to make-sense of the discursive constructions of Southeast Asia with regard to their natural disaster experience. Guided by the assumptions of

Discourse Analysis (that discourse is not simply a “transfer of information” but shapes and affects social reality), I saw the categorizations made through a structure of discourses that produce outcomes.

The three emergent themes constituting the Discursive structure of the ASEAN Member States’ Natural Disaster Approach and their corresponding outcomes are discussed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER V

THE DISCURSIVE STRUCTURE OF ASEAN MEMBER STATES' NATURAL DISASTER APPROACH

In the review of literature, there was a perspective or voice that was being muted by pre-existing studies. As previously mentioned, in studies pertaining to natural disaster in Southeast Asia, there is a generally critical perspective revolving around the region's natural disaster approach. In the discussions, the voice of Southeast Asia could not be located. In order to add to the ongoing exchange in the overall Discourse of natural disaster, this study set out to create a broader context for the ongoing discussions by answering the questions "How is natural disaster in the ASEAN region discursively constructed?" and "What are the consequences or outcomes arising from the construction of natural disaster in the ASEAN region?"

The Discursive Structure and Consequences

Three main themes constitute the discursive structure with corresponding consequences as summarized in Table 10.

Table 10:
Themes and Consequences

Themes	Consequences
Climate Change and Natural Disaster Events Are Intertwined	Southeast Asia sees the International Platform as the Space Where They Need to Lobby Their Natural Disaster Experience
Southeast Asia as the Victim	Southeast Asia is a Constrained Actor in Dealing with Natural Disaster
West as the Offender	Southeast Asia is Seeking Accountability from the West

Theme 1:
Climate Change and Natural Disaster Events
Are Intertwined

In the first key theme, the region demonstrated that they perceived natural disaster and climate change as intertwined events. This means to say that there is no discussing natural disasters without the mention of climate change.

For Southeast Asia, climate change and disasters are just, as mentioned by Cambodia in their speech, “two matters of the same coin – just different phases.” What these “phases” are is more explicitly articulated by the speeches of other member states. In the experience or in the phenomenon of natural disasters, climate change is seen by Southeast Asia to be the “cause,” while natural disasters are perceived to be the “effects.”

In the speech performed by the Lao PDR delegate, it was mentioned that:

Many parts of the world have been experiencing more frequent and severe impacts of climate change which has extensively affected the livelihood of the people globally. Heat wave has robbed across Europe. Wide drought has prolonged in many parts of the world. But in others, flood has been extensive – inundated residential and productive land.

In here, it is being made clear that more severe and frequent natural disaster events are, in fact, impacts of climate change. The worsening climate change conditions, therefore, directly affects the magnitude and intensity of the natural disasters that are experienced in the world, and more specifically in the region.

Similar thoughts were expressed by the Malaysian delegate:

It is becoming more and more evident that holistic and innovative approaches are mandatory for addressing disaster risk. This is due to the close inter-relationships and inextricable linkages that exists between disaster risk and other key challenges of poverty reduction, sustainable development, and environmental stability, as well as the emerging reality of global climate change. With the onslaught of climate change, worldwide disasters are anticipated to increase. We need to inculcate a sense of urgency towards this issue, because if we adopt a business-as-usual attitude, the consequences can be quite disastrous.

The relationship that exists between natural disasters and climate change are now being more explicitly discussed. Natural disaster, in the perception of Southeast

Asia, is not a stand-alone phenomenon; it has (as quoted from the excerpt above), “inextricable linkages” to issues that relate to global climate change, such as sustainable development and environmental stability. Relevance has to be given to the choice of describing the connections between natural disaster and climate change as “inextricable.” This means that these two are not just “difficult” to separate, rather, it is essentially impossible to do so. In how they emerge and how they occur, it can never be one without the other. “With the onslaught of climate change, worldwide disasters are anticipated to increase.” Climate change is now the factor that exacerbates natural disaster.

Myanmar also expresses their uneasiness regarding the current trend being created by the interaction between climate change and natural disasters:

At this era, climate change and global warming endangers the lives of many and hinders the development of many countries. Just like many other countries, Myanmar also perceives the many significant changes in the patterns of disaster risk and their cascading effects [...] This unusual pattern of natural disaster warn us to emphasize more on disaster risk reduction approaches.

These sentiments basically bring attention to the trajectory that natural disaster is now heading towards. Climate change is, undeniably, worsening. And along with it comes more worrying trends of natural disaster. Citing from their personal experience, Myanmar has even mentioned already witnessing the significant shifts that climate change has enforced on the current trends of natural disaster. Therefore, the greater emphasis they are now placing on disaster risk reduction approaches, possibly to try and cope with and adapt to the more destructive impacts of the unpredictable weather events.

The region’s perception on the interconnectedness between natural disaster and climate change is not new. In fact, it echoes sentiments that were also laid out in previous researches. Citing from what was discussed in the literature review (pages 10 – 13 of this thesis), it has been established that climate change is most certainly a

cause that intensifies the experience of natural disaster. Anthropogenic climate change is said to be creating ecological changes that stimulate weather variability and weather extremes; and these are manifested in the intensification of natural disasters experienced by Southeast Asia (van Aalst, 2006, p. 5). It is expected that worsening climate conditions will bring about stronger and more unpredictable tropical cyclones, droughts, heat waves, and consequent floodings and landslides (Banholzer et al., 2014, p. 21).

Consequence 1:
Southeast Asia sees the International Platform
as the Space Where They Need to Lobby
Their Natural Disaster Experience

Natural disaster and climate change being intertwined events has created conditions that forced the region to respond by using the international platform as a space where they need to lobby their natural disaster experience. Taking from the theme previously discussed, climate change is causing the worrying magnitudes of the natural disaster events being experienced at the present. That being said, Southeast Asia is desperate to draw global care, concern, and urgency towards climate change by establishing it as a common experience. As seen in their speeches, they have been using the global platform to forward this common goal and common challenge among the international community.

Citing from the speech delivered by Brunei Darussalam, they mentioned:

Ladies and gentlemen, finally, let me once again express our congratulations for the host of this important event. Brunei Darussalam is excited to be part of this international community with a common goal, which will prevail as an important investment for a safer tomorrow.

In the excerpt cited above, which was the closing lines of Brunei Darussalam's speech, it could be seen that the member state decided to end their speech by reaffirming global familiarity on the issue of climate change. The speech wanted to

make sure that there exists a common agreement that climate change is seen by all countries as a collective struggle. All actions that are directed towards climate change do not just concern a specific group of countries. At the end of the day, actions towards addressing climate change are in the common interest of all as it is “investment for a safer tomorrow.”

Similar sentiments were expressed by Cambodia. In the speech they delivered, they really focused on reinforcing climate change and mitigation as a common issue that is faced by everyone globally. Given that it is a common problem, climate action is driven by a common ambition of a safer world:

Everybody agree that climate change is a threat [...] We all listened to all speaker. We learn a lot from the six day long workshop. I believe that we will be able to learn more and more, but now it's time for us to really act concretely. Resource must be poured more for the disaster reduction and climate change. That we hope, that from the talking, interpret them into the actual action, so that we together can move ahead in our ambition to build a safer world by our investment today, for a safer world for all in the near future.

As mentioned in their speech, Cambodia is trying to remind everyone that climate change being a global threat has already been widely acknowledged. That being said, there must be global concern and global action towards addressing worsening climate conditions.

The speech performed by Indonesia tries to do the same thing. It tries to rally the international community together and raise feelings of urgency towards the ongoing climate emergency.

Now, we must complete that journey. Let us have the courage to look beyond our differences, as we face severe global financial and economic storms. This high-level gathering in New York must help to provide a valuable guidance and clear mandate for the negotiators. The Copenhagen conference must conclude with an agreement that ensures a secure climate future for all. We cannot allow any gaps after the expiry of the first commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol in 2012. Remember, we can negotiate about the climate, but we cannot negotiate with the climate. We cannot ask the climate for more time. All effort must be made to ensure the global temperature do not exceed 2 degree Celsius above pre-industrial levels in 2050.

Through their speech, Indonesia is reminding everyone that the goal of fighting against the climate issue is a time-bound task. As mentioned, “Remember, we can negotiate about the climate, but we cannot negotiate with the climate. We cannot ask the climate for more time.” Time is running out, hence everyone has to act quickly and seriously.

It is only by raising this common urgency towards climate change can the region ensure that their concerns regarding their own difficult natural disaster realities could be addressed.

Theme 2: Southeast Asia as the Victim

In the second key theme, the region established their position as being a mere victim of natural disaster events. There are many different factors that led the region to come up with such a perception of their position. In their discourses they have expressed that although they contributed less to anthropogenic climate change through global emissions, they are the ones receiving the strongest impacts of natural disaster. And now, as they deal with the cascading impacts of intensified climate change, they are doing everything that they can; however, the preparation and efforts they can pour are not enough to deal with the overwhelming destruction.

In the speech delivered by the Singaporean delegate, they make it clear that they believe they have little to no contribution to the anthropogenic drivers of climate change, and yet they are taking strides in forwarding proactive measures towards climate action:

Singapore is vulnerable, especially to the effects of global warming and especially the rise of sea-levels. For us, climate change is existential. Singapore contributes only 0.11% of global emissions. Nevertheless, we have played our part as responsible global citizens to mitigate climate change. We pledged in Paris to peak our carbon emissions in around 2030. We are switching to a cleaner fuel mix and deploying cleaner energy solutions. Being small and highly urbanized, we are disadvantaged in terms of alternative energy options. But we are developing creative solutions within our constraints. For example, we are using solar energy to the maximum extent

possible and installing large scale solar panels that float in our reservoirs and off our shorelines in the sea. We also implemented a carbon tax this year, with the intention of increasing it over the next 10 years. And we are greening our physical and transport infrastructure. We are aiming for 80% of our buildings in Singapore to be green by 2030, and for 90% of peak hour commuting trips to be via public transport, active mobility, or shared transport by 2040. We are also developing our long-term low emissions development strategy, as called for under the Paris Agreement. Singapore will do our full part. But however hard we try, Singapore will not be able to stop climate change on our own.

In the excerpt cited above, Singapore claims its vulnerability to the effects of climate change, more specifically to the threats of sea level rise. For Singapore, having to deal with climate change is an “existential” problem. This means to say that, for them, the experience is so pervasive that it could not be separated from their daily life.

The reality of climate change and the consequences of natural disaster has become so mundane that it is simply an inescapable reality. But beyond their own vulnerability, they make it clear that they have miniscule contribution to causing the climate emergency that they are suffering from. They even make it a point to provide quantifiable data, “less than 1%,” to emphasize that the emissions they cause are close to nothing or a negligible value. Singapore, in their speech, even goes beyond not adding to the problem as they have even placed much effort into solving it as well. As could be seen, they have religiously done their part and poured resources into helping the world deal with the climate emergency.

The Philippines also makes a similar point by emphasizing how much natural disasters have severely victimized their own country:

It was barely 11 months ago in Doha when my delegation made an appeal, an appeal to the world to open our eyes to the stark realities that we face, as then we confronted a catastrophic storm that resulted in the costliest disaster in Philippine history. Less than a year hence, we cannot imagine that a disaster much bigger would come. With an apparent cruel twist of fate, my country is being tested by this hell storm called super typhoon Haiyan. It was so strong that if there was a category 6, it would have fallen squarely in that box. And up to this hour, Mr. President, we remain uncertain as to the full extent of the damage and devastation, as information trickles in agonizingly slow manner, because power lines and communication lines have been cut off and may take a while before they are restored. The initial assessment showed that Haiyan left a wake of massive destruction that is unprecedented, unthinkable, and horrific. According to the Joint Typhoon Warning Center, it was estimated to have attained sustained winds of 315 kilometers per hour. That's equivalent to 195 miles per hour

and gusts up to 370 km/h, making it the strongest typhoon in modern recorded history. And despite the massive efforts that my country had exerted in preparing for the onset of the storm, it was just a force too powerful. And even as a nation familiar with storms, Haiyan was nothing we have ever experienced before.

In the use of the word “stark,” the Philippines reveals that they believe there is great variation in the way natural disaster and climate change is experienced. Stark, here, denotes a sharp contrast. The difference in the experience of the vulnerable nations is not small or unnoticeable. Instead, the experience of the Philippines as compared to the rest could be as close to “opposites.” The speaker, through this excerpt, wanted to establish that the extent of the experience they go through is entirely different. And even when the experience of massive storms is not a new occurrence for the Philippines, there is nothing that could have prepared them for Haiyan. Their wealth of experience in dealing with natural disasters and the “massive efforts” they placed into preparations did not help them in dealing with this new wave of “intensified” climate impacts.

Cambodia also shares the same sentiments as the previous Southeast Asian countries cited. In their account, they acknowledge their vulnerabilities, difficulties, and limitations in dealing with climate change, regardless, they are doing what they can within their capacities:

Cambodia try its best. Though we are the developing country with least resources, but however, the government in Cambodia try it's best to prioritize and also to invest to the implementation of disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation [...] Everybody agree that climate change is a threat. Cambodia's agrarian country- it's also very vulnerable to the climate change in comparing to other country, based on its limited capacity of coping those issue.

These perceptions of Southeast Asia regarding their conditions are not unfounded. In fact, even the literature review has acknowledged the high vulnerability experienced by the Southeast Asian region. Taking from studies previously cited (pages 6 – 19 of this thesis), it was mentioned that considering the intersection of vulnerabilities that exists in Southeast Asia, the worrying trends are expected to affect

the region disproportionately. The region is expected to suffer more from climate change in the years to come, and the impacts they have to endure will likely be worse than the global average (Pachauri and Reisinger, 2007, as cited by Islam and Khan, 2018, p. 3). This means to say that although climate change and natural disasters affect everyone globally, it does not affect everyone to the same extent. Southeast Asia gets the short end of the stick when it comes to their natural disaster experience.

The contrast between established literature and the discourses of Southeast Asia come with the discussion on whether or not the region has been doing enough in dealing with natural disasters. According to different researches (Loh, 2005; Ding and Beh, 2022; Francisco, 2008; Nguyen and Salamanca, 2016), the region lacked proactiveness and dedication in genuinely forwarding a development-oriented approach to natural disasters. On the other hand, the region insists that it has been doing what it can, while acknowledging that there are various challenges that make it difficult for them to be fully adaptive to natural disaster consequences.

Consequence 2:
Southeast Asia is a Constrained Actor
in Dealing with Natural Disaster

Building upon what was previously discussed, Southeast Asia has been victimized by their natural disaster experience. They believe that despite having minimal contributions to climate change, the region is the recipient of harsh weather conditions, one after the other. Citing from the studies previously mentioned in the literature review, Caballero-Anthony (2017, p. 22) discussed that half of the world's natural disaster deaths actually come from the region, with the yearly loss of life being at about 354,000. Other than that, UNESCAP (2020, p. 1) accounts for a total of 86.5 billion USD economic loss due to natural disaster. The severe natural disaster outcomes in the region have placed Southeast Asia and their initiatives under constant

scrutiny of the international community. However, despite the calls for a more proactive approach to natural disasters in the region, this is difficult for the region to fulfill due to their preoccupation on recovering from the natural disasters they frequently encounter.

Citing from the speech delivered by Vietnam, it could be seen that they believe they are trying what they can. However, they could not do so in the same capacity that the international community expects them to:

Vietnam is constantly at risk from the natural hazard. Annually, weather-related disaster encroach on areas. It increased deaths and economic loss equivalent to 1.3% of the national GDP. Vietnam is one of the countries in the world that will be most affected by climate change and sea water level rise. If the mean sea level rise by one meter by 2100, 30% of the Mekong delta will be permanently inundated, and more than 80% of delta will be flooded in the flood season. Housing of some 20 million people will be affected. And in the dry season, shorter rain season will affect up to 70% of the delta area. Vietnam disaster risk management objective are highlighted at the national strategy for the national disaster prevention, response, and mitigation to 2020. The frameworks focus mainly on weather-related disaster hazard, but it needs 13 billion US dollars of which 11 billion is for structural measures such as reservoirs, dams, dike, and ship harbors and more than 2 billion for non-structural measures. This, at least, the government has made efforts to strengthen the plans and institutional framework for disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation.

It could be seen here that contrary to what is being asserted by previous studies (Loh, 2005; Paragas, Rodil, and Pelingon, 2016, Telford and Cosgrave, 2006, Ding and Beh, 2022), the lack of proactiveness in the region's natural disaster response is not brought about a lack of commitment coming from the region. Instead, it stems from the fact that the region is too preoccupied with dealing with short-term challenges to forward with the long-term initiatives.

Another example would be the experience that was recounted by Lao PDR in their speech:

During the past two months, we experienced unexpected heavy rainfall as a result of tropical storm Fudo across the country. It has made nearly all provinces inundated, causing enormous damage to infrastructure, agriculture, and livelihood of the people. This has already costed millions of dollars to rehabilitate and restore the normalcy in the affected areas.

Simply working towards returning the normalcy in disaster stricken areas already caused massive depletion in the resources of Southeast Asia.

The conditions of Southeast Asia are exactly as articulated in the “rights-based approach” to climate justice which was cited in the literature review. “Development rights” is a concept that argues that those who have not yet developed out of poverty conditions could not be expected to take responsibility for mitigating climate change (Schlosberg and Collins, 2014, p. 365). Simply put, their current poverty conditions make them unable to afford the proactive approaches that are expected to have genuine impacts in mitigating natural disasters. Provided their inability to handle the current natural disaster conditions on their own, Southeast Asia is now welcoming cooperation with other countries and is dependent on the “global approach” to climate change mitigation, as this is the only way they could cope with the ongoing climate issue.

In the speech of Myanmar, for example, they described the difficulties they have due to limited resources. Regardless, they are doing what they can to improve.

In time of getting the disaggregated data, limited technical capacity to use online platforms for monitoring and reporting and limited resource for scale up of the Sendai Framework at the local levels. However, based on the previous reporting experiences, we are doing our best to improve Sendai framework implementation, monitoring, and reporting [...] Myanmar strategy and action plan are also in place since 2017. In fact, all these action plans and strategies are intended to compliment the achievement of SDGs and we are investing extensively to transform them into reality. We are not focusing not only on resource mobilization but also capacity building in these areas. Mr. Chairman, on this note, I would like to conclude my remarks by reaffirming that Myanmar is committed to the implementation of SFDRR, and we are looking forward to receiving more technical assistance from UNDRR and other partners. I wish we could come up with action-oriented outcomes for future DRR countermeasures.

Here, it could be seen that Myanmar ended their speech by being transparent to the international community that they are in need of assistance. They welcome it and they are even looking forward to it.

Even Singapore, although being a developed country themselves, acknowledge their difficulties in climate action. They insisted that they have been doing their part. Regardless, the only way for them to solve the problem is to really rely on the assistance of the international community:

We pledged in Paris to peak our carbon emissions in around 2030. We are switching to a cleaner fuel mix and deploying cleaner energy solutions. Being small and highly urbanized, we are disadvantaged in terms of alternative energy options. But we are developing creative solutions within our constraints. For example, we are using solar energy to the maximum extent possible and installing large scale solar panels that float in our reservoirs and off our shorelines in the sea. We also implemented a carbon tax this year, with the intention of increasing it over the next 10 years. And we are greening our physical and transport infrastructure. We are aiming for 80% of our buildings in Singapore to be green by 2030, and for 90% of peak hour commuting trips to be via public transport, active mobility, or shared transport by 2040. We are also developing our long-term low emissions development strategy, as called for under the Paris Agreement. Singapore will do our full part. But however hard we try, Singapore will not be able to stop climate change on our own. Therefore, we are cooperating with other countries in this common endeavor.

Here, the realities of Southeast Asia in their natural disaster experience becomes clear. They are constrained actors who try to do what they can to help themselves; however, due to the magnitude of the challenges they need to overcome, coupled with their limited capacity, they are forced to rely on global approaches and the cooperation and assistance coming from other countries.

Theme 3: West as the Offender

In the speeches delivered, Southeast Asia has identified a clear perpetrator to the difficulties they face in dealing with natural disasters. Developed countries, and more specifically the West, were identified as the primary offenders. They believe that the West performs the most industrially-driven carbon emission-intensive activities that exacerbate climate change and natural disasters. Adding insult to injury for Southeast Asia, the West do not face the same difficulties and vulnerabilities as they do in dealing with natural disasters events. As they have expressed through their

speeches, they see developed countries as among the least vulnerable in the natural disaster phenomenon.

In the speech delivered by Indonesia, we can see that the “offenders” and the “victims” are clearly delineated:

All effort must be made to ensure the global temperature do not exceed 2 degree Celsius above pre-industrial levels in 2050. There is a historical responsibility that must be translated into deep cut emissions. This also should be transformed into willingness to help those who are vulnerable to the impact of climate change to adapt to it. To this end, developed countries must take the lead in our global effort to combat climate change, while developing countries should also engage in much broader actions to go beyond business as usual.

A lot could be drawn from the excerpt cited above. Mentions of “historical responsibility” allude to a long-ongoing activity of spewing harmful emissions which has caused the rise in global temperature. Developed countries are known to have heavily industrialized economies and societies. Thus, they are recognized as heavy contributors to harmful emissions that exacerbate climate change.

The assertions made by Indonesia were also supplemented by the experience of Laos. In their speech they mentioned:

In this context, while developed countries may have been more resilient to and able to adapt to the impact of climate change, developing countries, and in particular, the least developed ones, are the most vulnerable including, in particular, my own country. During the past two months, we experienced unexpected heavy rainfall as a result of tropical storm Fudo across the country. It has made nearly all provinces inundated, causing enormous damage to infrastructure, agriculture, and livelihood of the people. This has already costed millions of dollars to rehabilitate and restore the normalcy in the affected areas.

Here, Laos also makes reference to the fact that there is an “imbalance” in the way the developed world and the developing world experience natural disasters. Those causing intensified global warming and climate change are resilient and able to adapt. Climate change impacts are not the same problems for the developed countries of the West, as compared to Southeast Asia.

Malaysia also forwards similar sentiments by highlighting the differences in the adaptive capacities that exist between the developed and the developing world:

Although high-income countries have incur greater losses in monetary terms [...] low and middle-income countries have suffered greater impacts relatively to the GDPs. Developing countries have disproportionately suffered in terms of human fatalities, due to the weaker infrastructures and response capabilities.

Another speech that supplements the arguments made by the other Southeast Asian countries is the point made by the Philippines. It is made clear that the region not only wants to point out the differences in adaptive capacities, but they also want to bring attention to the fact that developed countries are still benefiting from these carbon-intensive activities that continue to victimize the Southeast Asian region:

I should rally behind climate advocates who peacefully confront those historically responsible for the current state of our climate [...] The next two weeks, these people and many around the world who serve as our conscience will again remind us of this enormous responsibility. To the youth here who constantly remind us that their future is in peril, to the climate heroes who risk their life, reputation, personal liberties, to stop drilling in polar regions, and to those communities standing up to unsustainable and climate disrupting sources of energy, we stand with them. We cannot solve problems at the same level of awareness that created them. As Dr. Pachauri alluded to Einstein earlier, we cannot solve climate change when we seek to spew more emissions.

Returning to the studies that were previously mentioned in the literature review, the region's outlook is not unfounded. In fact, it mirrors previously established perspectives on climate justice. The concept of "historical responsibility" is an established acknowledgement of the faults that the developed countries have in bringing the world into its current climate realities. Looking at it historically, developed countries since the industrial revolution have long been enriching themselves through destructive practices (Schlosberg and Collins, 2014, p. 365). A great percentage of the greenhouse gases being released into the atmosphere comes from the consumption of developed countries of fossil fuels for their activities and their economies (Schlosberg and Collins, 2014, p. 365). Apart from being the primary driver of climate change, the concept of climate justice also confirms that while developing countries are made to face the resulting hazard risks, developed countries can find comfort in their capacities to deal with climate hazards (Ikeme, 2003, p. 200).

Consequence 3: Southeast Asia is Seeking Accountability from the West

Provided that the West was identified as the ones truly causing climate change, the initiatives that the region themselves can do to address climate change is minimal. Unfortunately, given that the West is not directly affected by the intensified natural disasters brought by the worsening climate conditions, they are not as invested in combating climate change. Up to present, developed countries are even heavily benefitting from carbon-emission intensive activities. That being said, Southeast Asia needs to take the position of an “accountability-seeker” in the global arena. This is the only way they could ensure that concrete initiatives are placed towards their concerns of the natural disasters.

Taking from what was said by the Lao PDR delegate in their speech, they emphasize that the current frameworks and agreements that have been established will have no effect if there is no genuine dedication to implement what was agreed upon. Lao PDR then called upon developed countries to give contributions to help developing countries to meet their mitigation and adaptation needs.

Having all these legal frameworks in place is not enough to combat climate change. Full and effective implementation of this instrument is the key, yet it would require joint effort at both national and international level to ensure such full and effective implementation. In this regard, as we commit ourselves at the national level. We would like to call upon the developed countries and own developed partners to honor the commitment in contributing 100 billion US dollar per year to support the developing countries mitigation and adaptation needs.

In the same way, Malaysia is also seeking genuine concern for the climate emergency. In their speech, they emphasized that “writing another document” is not going to solve the problem. Instead, commitment in the implementation of these documents is what needs to take place. As mentioned:

In our view, the preparation of a successor document to HFA need not involve a rewriting and adoption of an entirely new document. The successor document to HFA should focus upon making concrete progress in the implementation of existing measures, including provisions, which can be used to measure and quantify progress.

It should also concentrate upon formerly abandoned and neglected elements of the HFA. We should certainly refrain from building any new systems to implement DRR. We should need to maximize the utilization of existing systems and networks. Looking beyond 2015, the post-HFA framework and its implementation monitoring system should be institutionalized at the national levels. We should strive for a framework that is flexible and usable by the range of situations the countries and local communities find themselves in. The framework should provide different starting points and facilitate choices, while prioritizing implementation. This should facilitate the identification of supporting action and progress monitoring. Malaysia looks forward to a successful conference here in Geneva. In particular, we hope to see fruitful deliberations on the post HFA framework. We also look forward to achieving consensus on how local, national, regional, and international stakeholders can effectively address the new challenges brought about by disasters and climate change

As demonstrated above, stronger calls are being made to ensure that mechanisms are produced to ensure the implementation is monitored. Malaysia even calls for said progress to be measured and quantified as this is one of the ways to ensure that “concrete” measures, instead of rhetoric, drive climate action.

In the speech by the Philippines, it could be seen that the country is taking the position of calling out the international community for its complacency in dealing with climate change and natural disaster events.

I should rally behind climate advocates who peacefully confront those historically responsible for the current state of our climate. These selfless people who fight coal, exposed themselves to freezing temperatures, or block oil pipelines. In fact, we are seeing increasing frustration. And, thus, more increased civil disobedience. The next two weeks, these people and many around the world who serve as our conscience will again remind us of this enormous responsibility. To the youth here who constantly remind us that their future is in peril, to the climate heroes who risk their life, reputation, personal liberties, to stop drilling in polar regions, and to those communities standing up to unsustainable and climate disrupting sources of energy, we stand with them. We cannot solve problems at the same level of awareness that created them. As Dr. Pachauri alluded to Einstein earlier, we cannot solve climate change when we seek to spew more emissions. Mr President, and I express this with all sincerity and solidarity with my countrymen who are struggling to find food back home, and with my brother who has not had food for the last three days, With all due respect, Mr. President, and I mean no disrespect for your kind of hospitality. I will now commence a voluntary fasting for the climate. This means I will voluntarily refrain from eating food during this call, until a meaningful outcome is in sight, until concrete pledges have been made to ensure mobilization of resources for the Green Climate Fund. We cannot afford a poured cup with an empty GCF. Until the promise of the operationalization of a loss and damage mechanism is being fulfilled until there is assurance on finance for adaptation, until we see real ambition and climate action, in accordance with the principles we have so upheld. Mr. President, this process under the UNFCCC has been called many, many names. It has been called the farce. It has been called an annual carbon intensive gathering of useless frequent flyers. It has been called many names, and this hurts. But we can still prove them wrong. The UNFCCC can also be called the project to save the planet. It has also been called saving tomorrow today, a

couple of years ago. And today, we say I care. We can fix this. We can stop this madness right now, right here, in the middle of this football field, and stop moving the goalposts. Mr. President, your excellency, honorable minister, My delegation calls on you most, respectfully, to lead us and let Poland, Warsaw be remembered forever as the place where we truly cared to stop this madness. If this is our imperative here, in Warsaw, you can rely on my delegation.

This declaration and the action of a hunger strike is the way the Philippines forces other states to take concrete actions. Apart from laying out their demands, the Philippine delegation also mentions that the actions they are asking for are actually part and parcel of the principles promised by all those participating in the United Nations. What the country is asking for here is not too much nor is it, in any way, beyond the mandates of the UN. Instead, they are simply seeking accountability from the members present to fulfill their promises and dedication. The Philippines is merely positioning itself as an accountability-seeker that works to ensure that the principles promised will translate into concrete actions. From the Philippines, this is a promise that they will be actively working in making sure that the world takes responsibility.

The speeches cited above mirror the “historical responsibility” being discussed in climate justice. As stated by Ikeme (2003, p. 200), developed countries are being made to take responsibility for the destruction they have caused to the environment as a form of compensatory justice. They were the ones who benefited from climate change, yet they suffer the least from it (Ikeme, 2003, p. 200.). This dynamic of an identified clear offender and clear victim, therefore, has led to an arrangement where one is now seeking accountability from the other. The overall discursive structure could be seen in Table 11.

Table 11:
The Discursive Structure of the AMS'
Natural Disaster Management

Themes	Subthemes	Position of Actors (As Represented by the Philippines' Speech)	Outcomes Arising from Subthemes	Outcomes Arising from Theme
Climate Change and Natural Disaster Events Are Intertwined	Climate Change as the Cause	<i>But it tells us simply that climate change will mean increased potential for more intense tropical storms and this will have profound implications. And many of our communities, especially those who struggle against the twin challenges of the development crisis and the climate crisis, typhoons such as Haiyan and its impacts represent a sobering reminder to the international community that we cannot afford to delay climate action. Warsaw must deliver on enhancing ambition and should muster the political will to address climate change and build that important bridge towards Peru and Paris. It might be said that it must be poetic justice that the Typhoon Haiyan was so big that its diameter span the distance between Warsaw in Paris. Mr. President, in Doha we asked: If not us, then who? If not now, then when? If not here, then where? But here in Warsaw, we may very well ask these same forthright questions. What my country is going through as a result of this extreme climate event is madness. The climate crisis is madness.</i>	Southeast Asia Establishes Climate Change as a Common Experience	Southeast Asia sees the International Platform as the Space Where They Need to Lobby Their Natural Disaster Experience
	Natural Disaster as the Effect	<i>But it tells us simply that climate change will mean increased potential for more intense tropical storms and this will have profound implications. And many of our communities, especially those who struggle against the twin challenges of the development crisis and the climate crisis, typhoons such as Haiyan and its impacts represent a sobering reminder to the international community that we cannot afford to delay climate action. Warsaw must deliver on enhancing ambition and should muster the political will to address climate change and build that important bridge towards Peru and Paris. It might be said that it must be poetic justice that the Typhoon Haiyan was so big that its diameter span the distance between Warsaw in Paris. Mr. President, in Doha we asked: If not us, then who? If not now, then when? If not here, then where? But here in Warsaw, we may very well ask these same forthright questions. What my country is going through as a result of this extreme climate event is madness. The climate crisis is madness.</i>	Southeast Asia Needs Everyone to Care About Climate Change	

Southeast Asia as the Victim	Southeast Asia Receives the Strongest of Impacts of Natural Disaster	<i>With an apparent cruel twist of fate, my country is being tested by this hell storm called super typhoon Haiyan. It was so strong that if there was a category 6, it would have fallen squarely in that box.</i>	Southeast Asia is Preoccupied with Recovering from Natural Disasters	Southeast Asia is a Constrained Actor in Dealing with Natural Disaster
	Southeast Asia is Limited in Confronting Natural Disaster Events	<i>And up to this hour, Mr. President, we remain uncertain as to the full extent of the damage and devastation, as information trickles in agonizingly slow manner, because power lines and communication lines have been cut off, and may take a while before they are restored. The initial assessment showed that Haiyan left a wake of massive destruction that is unprecedented, unthinkable, and horrific. According to the Joint Typhoon Warning Center, It was estimated to have attained sustained winds of 315 kilometers per hour. That's equivalent to 195 miles per hour and gusts up to 370 km/h, making it the strongest typhoon in modern recorded history. And despite the massive efforts that my country had exerted in preparing for the onset of the storm, it was just a force too powerful. And even as a nation familiar with storms, Haiyan</i>	Southeast Asia Welcomes Cooperation with Other Countries	
	Southeast Asia Has Minimal Contribution to Climate Change	<i>was nothing we have ever experienced before...We can take drastic action now to ensure that we prevent a future where super typhoons become a way of life, because we refuse, as a nation, to accept a future where super typhoons like this will become a way of life. We refuse to accept that running away from storms, evacuating our families,</i>	Southeast Asia is Dependent on the Global Approach for their Natural Disaster Management	

		<i>suffering, the devastation, misery, counting our dead become a way of life. We simply refuse to.</i>		
West as the Offender	Developed Countries as Greatest Contributor of Climate Change	<i>I should rally behind climate advocates who peacefully confront those historically responsible for the current state of our climate. These selfless people who fight coal, exposed themselves to freezing temperatures, or block oil pipelines. In fact, we are seeing increasing frustration. And, thus, more increased civil disobedience. The next two weeks, these people and many around the world who serve as our conscience will again remind us of this enormous responsibility. to the youth here who constantly remind us that their future is in peril, to the climate heroes who risk their life, reputation, personal liberties, to stop drilling in polar regions, and to those communities standing up to unsustainable and climate disrupting sources of energy, we stand with them...And today, we say I care. We can fix this. We can stop this madness right now, right here, in the middle of this football field, and stop moving the goalposts. Mr. President, your excellency, honorable minister, My delegation calls on you most, respectfully, to lead us and let Poland, Warsaw be remembered forever as the place where we truly cared to stop this madness.</i>	The Initiatives That Southeast Asia Can Do to Address Climate Change Are Minimal	Southeast Asia is Seeking Accountability from the West
	The West is Least Vulnerable in Natural Disaster		The West Is Not as Invested in Combating Climate Change	
	Developed Countries Benefit from Carbon Emission-Intensive Activities		Developed Countries Are Reluctant in Genuinely Addressing Climate Change	

This study was initially carried out due to the abundance of criticisms that have been thrown at Southeast Asia's natural disaster responses. Different authors (Loh, 2005; Ding and Beh, 2022; Francisco, 2008; Nguyen and Salamanca, 2016) cited the region's lack of proactiveness, dedication, and development-oriented approach to natural disaster. Although such criticisms have merit as they bring attention to the areas where the region can further improve their natural disaster response, these perspectives are also speaking from a seemingly outsider and an on-looker's lens. The existing discourses have muted Southeast Asia's own accounts of their experience and context in dealing with natural disasters. This study was therefore forwarded with the assumption that there are realities experienced by the region that are being pushed out of the discussion.

The results of the study confirmed that there definitely is "more than meets the eye" when it comes to the region's natural disaster experience. The discussion is not merely on whether or not the region is "dedicated" to addressing the problems of natural disaster. Instead, there are many more concepts that arose in the examination of the region's discursive construction of natural disaster. Issues pertaining to agency, responsibility, and capacity complicate the dilemma. The problem is more convoluted compared to what the initial studies on natural disaster in Southeast Asia suggests.

The current context of the situation is defined by the fact that climate change and natural disaster could no longer be separated. Climate change causes the intensification of natural disasters. That being said, in order to truly manage natural disasters, climate change must also be addressed. While the region is the recipient of harsh weather conditions, they have very little contribution to climate change. On the other hand, developed countries and more specifically the West have been the primary perpetrators of climate change, and yet they don't have to deal with the same extent

of natural disasters as the Southeast Asian region. It's the West's responsibility, but Southeast Asia is being made to suffer. This is the general overall narrative that is being forwarded through the region's speeches.

Although the Discourse of the region is not covered in previous studies on Southeast Asia and natural disasters, these sentiments of the region are not unheard of. In fact, this has already been covered in the global climate justice discourses. As elaborated by Ikeme (2003) and Schlosberg and Collins (2014), the global climate justice Discourse generally recognizes the concept of "historical responsibility." The dynamic that the region claims to exist, wherein Southeast are the victims and the developed countries as the offenders, have long been acknowledged and articulated. The limited capacity of the victims to "address" the ongoing problem has also been raised. It was stated that developing countries could not afford to write the wrong; hence, the greater responsibility placed in the shoulders of the developed countries to address the ongoing climate issue (Schlosberg and Collins, 2014, p. 365). Provided that the region mirrors or articulates this Climate Justice discourse, what implications does this now have on the region's approach to natural disaster?

Overall, this just means that the AMS wants to redirect attention to those who actually started the issue and have the capacity to address it. Southeast Asia acknowledges that there are measures that they themselves could implement. And as per their own accounts, they have been doing what they can. Regardless of how hard they try, the magnitude of the problem is just too much for them to handle. That said, for the region, the only thing left to do is really to seek accountability from those who are responsible.

Aseanological Approach to the Management Of Natural Disaster

In the ASEAN member states' discourse on their natural disaster approach, they establish a clear dynamic where the region sees themselves as a mere victim and the developed nations, specifically the West, as offenders. Due to the climate emergency started and perpetuated by the West, the region is now suffering from harsher natural disaster realities. Given this dynamic, the actions and initiatives of the AMS, therefore, are more guided by their intention to make developed nations accountable for their actions. The Discourse being forwarded by the region greatly echoes established perspectives on "climate justice."

In the application of discourse analysis, it is said that discourses are windows to the region's realities. Looking at the "consequences" as enumerated in the region's discursive approach as seen in Table 11, the claims that discourses affect social reality is again reaffirmed. What the previous studies pointed out as the ineffectiveness, unwillingness, and reactivity in the approaches of AMS is not because the region is not concerned about addressing natural disasters in their countries effectively. Rather, it is because they believe that only the states responsible could truly effectively address and solve the issues they created.

The ASEAN Member States greatly adhere to the so-called "ASEAN Way" which forwards the norms of cooperation, consensus decision-making, non-interference, and sovereign equality. Despite acknowledging their position as the aggravated party in their natural disaster experience, the region still adheres by the diplomatic standards set by the ASEAN region. By utilizing the ASEAN brand of diplomacy in the international platform, they raise and encourage awareness, urgency, and actions towards the phenomena of natural disaster and climate change. This way,

they may seek accountability and assistance from the West in dealing with their circumstances.

This study and its articulation of the Climate Justice Discourse within the AMS' experience of natural disaster creates new opportunities to argue for a different approach to managing natural disasters and climate change. Instead of what is currently being forwarded by the critical discourses which suggests to the region to simply, "do more," this study adds to the literature that calls for shifting responsibility towards those who are genuinely responsible. However, this shift must still be situated within the framework and discourse of the ASEAN Way. Responsibility, concern, and action should be negotiated by the region through building consensus with the developed countries they deem responsible for their predicament. Spaces must be created where the Discourse and experience of Southeast Asia on natural disaster could be heard. ASEAN should build exposure, create conversations, and open venues where the natural disaster circumstances of the AMS can be more accessible to the West and to the rest of the world who wish to help lobby for the vulnerable nations' natural disaster plight.

Maybe this persistence on seeking accountability and placing responsibility where it lies is the way that we, as an international community, can truly begin to address climate change and natural disasters, especially now when the future of the world is more uncertain than ever.

CHAPTER VI

RESEARCH SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

Discourse analysis, as an analytical framework, believes in the inextricable connections behind language and thought. Thoughts and the underlying contexts that form thoughts are manifested through language in use. Therefore, the examination of language in use allows for better understanding of underlying contexts, realities, perspectives, and identities that inform discourses. Discourse analysis also believes in the transformative effects of discourses. Being of social constructivist orientation, discourse analysis believes that beyond merely being a way to pass information, discourse and language have the potential to shape and influence social reality. The assumptions of discourse analysis made it the appropriate framework and methodology that guided this research in answering the following research questions: (1) How is natural disaster in the ASEAN region discursively constructed? and (2) What are the consequences or outcomes arising from the construction of natural disasters in the ASEAN region? Revealing the answers to these questions allowed for a better understanding of the overall context of the region. Consequently, this contextual understanding opened up richer and more productive discussions regarding the region's natural disaster response.

In uncovering the discourses of the region, this study utilized speeches performed by each of the ten (10) ASEAN member state delegates in international fora/conferences on natural disaster. Throughout the research process, it is the role of the researcher was to become a pattern recognizer and a pattern builder. The

researcher examined the text and identified different situated identities and situated meanings in the text. The analytical process took place in three major phases:

The first phase was an attempt to immerse the researcher in data in order to experience the discursive effects of the writing. Familiarity with the text helped the researcher understand what the text is trying to accomplish. From these initial inferences, the researcher tried to familiarize the different actions, intentions, relationships, and dynamics in the text.

In the second phase, the researcher examined the text in-depth through line-by-line analysis to recognize different situated meanings in the text. The researcher was guided by Gee's (1999) "building tasks" in his approach to discourse analysis. Emerging themes were recognized, noted, and modified several times throughout the multiple rounds of coding, including open, axial, and finally, selective coding.

Lastly, the researcher finalized the findings of the study by building the resulting discursive structure of the region. The emerging themes worked together to form the system of meaning which reveals the overall natural disaster Discourse of the region.

The results of this analytical process yielded rich arguments that have great implications on the global discussions of natural disaster. The findings provided a better understanding on the orientations of the Southeast Asian region regarding natural disaster and helped me find the answers to my research questions, through Table 12:

Table 12:
Summary of the
Discursive Structure

Themes	Subthemes	Outcomes Arising from Subthemes	Outcomes Arising from Theme
Climate Change and Natural Disaster Events Are Intertwined	Climate Change as the Cause	Southeast Asia Establishes Climate Change as a Common Experience	Southeast Asia sees the International Platform as the Space Where They Need to Lobby Their Natural Disaster Experience
	Natural Disaster as the Effect	Southeast Asia Needs Everyone to Care About Climate Change	
Southeast Asia as the Victim	Southeast Asia Receives the Strongest of Impacts of Natural Disaster	Southeast Asia is Preoccupied with Recovering from Natural Disasters	Southeast Asia is a Constrained Actor in Dealing with Natural Disaster
	Southeast Asia is Limited in Confronting Natural Disaster Events	Southeast Asia Welcomes Cooperation with Other Countries	
	Southeast Asia Has Minimal Contribution to Climate Change	Southeast Asia is Dependent on the Global Approach for their Natural Disaster Management	
West as the Offender	Developed Countries as Greatest Contributor of Climate Change	The Initiatives That Southeast Asia Can Do to Address Climate Change Are Minimal	Southeast Asia is Seeking Accountability from the West
	The West is Least Vulnerable in Natural Disaster	The West Is Not as Invested in Combating Climate Change	
	Developed Countries Benefit from Carbon Emission-Intensive Activities	Developed Countries Are Reluctant in Genuinely Addressing Climate Change	

I discovered three emerging themes, each with three resulting consequences.

The gist of which are as follows:

- **Theme: Climate Change and Natural Disaster Events Are Intertwined.**

Southeast Asia perceives the challenges of natural disaster that they face as something that could not be separated from the ongoing issue of climate change. Climate change is acknowledged to be the cause of the worsening natural disaster experience of the Southeast Asian region.

- **Consequence: Southeast Asia sees the International Platform as the Space Where They Need to Lobby Their Natural Disaster Experience.**

Given that climate change is what worsens their natural disaster experience, Southeast Asia needs to lobby to the international community and bring attention and urgency to the issues of climate change. They accomplish this by making sure that the international community builds a common understanding that climate change should be perceived as a shared struggle.

- **Theme: Southeast Asia as the Victim.** Southeast Asia views themselves as the victims in the natural disaster phenomenon. In terms of climate change, Southeast Asia believes they have limited contribution to the worsening climate conditions. Yet, when it comes to its impacts (in the form of natural disasters), Southeast Asia is the one most affected. On top of that, the region carries an intersection of multiple vulnerabilities. This greatly impedes on their capabilities to confront natural disasters on their own.

- **Consequence: Southeast Asia is a Constrained Actor in Dealing with Natural Disaster.** Provided that the region experiences frequent natural disaster, they are often preoccupied with recovering from recent natural disaster encounters. Their resources are being utilized and depleted to address

the short-term natural disaster response initiatives. This makes it difficult for them to focus on long-term developmental goals. Given that the region is having difficulties coping with natural disasters on their own, they are persistent in taking on a global approach to natural disaster mitigation, where they could seek the assistance, support, and cooperation from other states and regions.

- **Theme: West as the Offender.** Southeast Asia perceives developing countries, specifically the West, as the primary perpetrator of climate change. Western economies and their societies greatly run on the utilization of resources that often produce harmful emissions (such as fossil fuels). Due to their carbon emission intensive activities that intensify climate change and natural disasters, the vulnerable developing countries are being made to pay for the debt developed countries have to the environment. Developed countries do not face the same levels of vulnerability compared to Southeast Asia. Hence, while Southeast Asia struggles in dealing with natural disasters, the West is able to stay comfortable as they continue to enrich themselves through their destructive practices.
- **Consequence: Southeast Asia is Seeking Accountability from the West.** Provided that the West is what caused climate change, it is therefore their responsibility to fix the issues they have caused. Considering that Southeast Asia has not contributed to climate change as much, they can only rely on the West to cut down their own emissions. But unfortunately, the West is not as dedicated to genuinely addressing climate change as this would pose distractions and challenges for their profiteering activities. Given these conditions, Southeast Asia needs to take the role of an accountability seeker and place pressure on the west to adhere to agreed-upon climate change and

natural disaster mitigation and adaptations strategies. This is the only way Southeast Asia can protect the region from the worsening effects of climate change and natural disasters.

Conclusion

Natural disasters have always been an inescapable reality for Southeast Asia. Due to the region's geographical location, socio-economic conditions, and the intensifying effects of climate change, the Southeast Asian region lies at the intersection of multiple vulnerabilities. Given the precarious natural disaster experience in Southeast Asia, there have been multiple studies that examine natural disasters in the region, specifically, on the region's natural disaster approach.

Studies have generally forwarded a critical outlook regarding the ASEAN Member States' approach to natural disasters. There were criticisms that the region lacked dedication in forwarding a truly holistic and proactive developmental approach to natural disaster. While these assessments are important, in a sense that they inform the region on the potentials of improving their natural disaster responses, they are also limited as it criticizes the region's natural disaster management approach from a seemingly outsider point of view. Amidst all the discussions, the voice of Southeast Asia themselves could not be located. There are no considerations given to the region's contextual realities and how these may have affected the region's overall approach natural disaster.

This study revolved around finding the muted voice by uncovering the ASEAN discourse in their natural disaster approach that informs or shapes the region's natural disaster responses. This examination was done through the framework and methodology of discourse analysis.

The findings of this study reveal that although natural disaster in ASEAN seem to be a widely explored topic, there are still many things unknown and left to be uncovered. By possibly emerging another side of reality, this research aimed to provide a more holistic discussion of natural disasters in Southeast Asia.

Interestingly enough, this study was able to reveal, through the discourses of the region, that Southeast Asia views natural disasters differently. Unlike common assertions in previous studies regarding natural disasters in Southeast Asia, the region sees that the “responsibility” for addressing natural disasters to lie elsewhere. The discourses of the AMS compared to the non-AMS and their perception of where responsibility should lie are at a disconnect. Through this study, contexts, perceptions, and discourses that could forward the discussions regarding the AMS and their experience of natural disasters were surfaced. And yet, the narratives that were reviewed still provide only a glimpse of the entire experience of natural disaster in the ASEAN region. Provided that this research studies the speeches performed by the AMS in the international arena, it could be seen that the region fixated on how they were wronged by the different international actors present. There was not much discussion on their own shortcomings. This is another narrative that remains muted and is left to be discovered. The discussions that were covered in this study revolved heavily at the top, with not much discussions on how natural disaster is happening and being experienced on the ground by the ASEAN citizens themselves. Maybe, this is another opportunity for inquiry that also needs to be uncovered in the future.

Recommendations

For scholars who wish to further expand the field of knowledge regarding ASEAN and Natural Disasters in ASEANOLOGY research, I offer the following recommendations:

1. Theoretical

- Provided the setting created by inter-governmental fora and conferences, the discourses of the region may be greatly clothed in diplomacy. That said, future researchers can locate other research sites that are less formal and less diplomatic as this could emerge in other dimensions in the region's natural disaster Discourse.
- Another important arena to study the discourses of Southeast Asia would be within the ASEAN organization itself. The discursive construction of the region within their own organization could supplement the perspective provided by the current study. This way, the outlooks of the region when they are just communicating with each other can be compared to when they are communicating with the rest of the world.
- Given that the region can only seek accountability from the West by working within their own framework of ASEAN diplomatic norms, future research could further explore the Aseanological approach to consensus-building between the region and West. Future studies can examine topics relating to the effectiveness of these different "spaces" where negotiations are taking place.

2. Methodological

- Other methodologies could be used to emerge the perspectives of the region regarding natural disasters. Studies grounded on Critical Discourse Analysis, Ethnomethodology, Ethnography, Autoethnography, with focus on narratives

from climate activists, environmental advocates, ASEAN citizens, and Civil Society Organizations, for example, has the potential to add to the discussion from a different lens or framing.

1. Practical

- Provided that consensus needs to be built between ASEAN (the victim) and the rest of the global community, especially the West (the offender), this study suggests creating more spaces where the Discourse and experience of Southeast Asia on natural disaster could be heard. More events, conferences, exposures, conversations, and exchanges could be facilitate to make the AMS' circumstances more accessible to the West and the rest of the world.
- In the future as the region forwards its agenda in natural disaster and climate change, it is important to move the discourse beyond the current claims of "victimhood," towards becoming "claimants." This research adopts the suggestions made by Telesca and Kumar (2022), regarding the need to change the narratives surrounding climate justice. The current "victim" discourses of the region have its limitations as it still does not solve the issue of creating equitable conditions across societies. At the moment, the orientation is towards "helping" the vulnerable countries cope with or adapt to the effects of climate change and natural disaster. However, the approach should go beyond mere assistance. The concept of "degrowth" emphasizes that the current levels of economic consumption should no longer be tolerated. For as long as the consumption remains to be at the same level, no amount of "aiding" developing countries will matter. To genuinely forward a long-term solution to the issue of climate change, it is time for the vulnerable countries to "claim" climate reparations, as this is the debt owed to them by the West. Shifting this narrative

is extremely important as it properly articulates the extent at which the current direction the world is heading towards is inequitable, unsustainable, and blatantly unfair to the developing countries who face the impact of the rich countries' carbon footprint. This concept of becoming a claimant should not just describe the relations between the developed and the developing countries. Allocating climate and natural disaster as purely a global phenomenon will give leeway to national and local governments and corporations to shy away from their own accountability. Even at a national and local level, climate change victims should seek reparations and hold their local and national governments and corporations accountable for their consumption, inaction, and complacency. Overall, claimants at all levels should recognize and insist on their right to live in a safe and healthy environment – a right that is being denied of them by every offender. It is only when the offenders are held accountable will a just and equitable approach to natural disaster and climate change be established.

- The current study and its implications on the dynamics of natural disaster opens issues regarding how natural disaster is approached globally. Provided that Southeast Asia is greatly disadvantaged by the current natural disaster-climate change dynamic, ASEAN could possibly utilize this common goal and issue to institutionalize the regional organization as an accountability-seeking body in forwarding climate justice. The regional organization, through its capacity should use its international influences to assert its citizens' right to a live and exist in safe and healthy environment. This process includes establishing blueprints, fixed roles within the regional organization, implementations and processes, standards, and mechanisms to produce data, narratives, and

accounts that would help the region hold the West accountable for natural disaster damages in Southeast Asia. Establishing such mechanisms can create moves towards more concrete reparations from the West such as climate financing, sponsorship of developmental projects, and knowledge and technology sharing to assist the ASEAN region with their natural disaster adaptation measures.

- In order to successfully shift the discourse, narratives at all levels need to be centered around the region and its people as “claimants.” Civil society and civil society organizations can contribute as one of the main vehicles in shaping the framework and perspectives locally, nationally, and internationally. The pressure coming from civil society, although sometimes takes a long time to materialize, have often had the potential in agenda-setting. That being said, their voice and contribution in the discussion could help magnify the calls towards degrowth and accountability. Seeking accountability from the local, national, and international offenders can be the common goal that could bring the region’s CSOs together. At the local and national level, CSOs should gather and make this discursive strategy their rallying point. Through national and local conferences, dialogues, and forums, the civil society can build a common identity in their natural disaster and climate change experience. In this space or avenue, it is also important to invite local and national government officials and owners of massive corporations to allow this “claimant” position be promulgated at the local and national level. In the regional level, it is important for CSOs to organize conferences and meetings where they can discuss with other ASEAN CSOs in order to share this “claimant” perspective and reinforce this position across the region. Having this shared regional identity will help the

CSOs of ASEAN to espouse their discourse and experience to other international gatherings where other influential individuals, governments, established civil society groups, and international organizations are present. While this agenda-setting might be a long process, eventually, this claimant narrative can become the mainstream discussion. Becoming a widespread narrative, this perspective can become a pressure point that helps force the shift in the global approach to natural disaster and climate change.

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ANNEX I: BRUNEI DARUSSALAM SPEECH

Distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, good morning.

First and foremost, sincere congratulations and appreciation to UNISDR for organizing this very important event, and towards warm hospitality accorded to us.

The theme of this session is very relevant to Brunei Darussalam, as we need to enhance our efforts to reduce the impacts of disasters, namely: floods, landslides, strong winds, wild fires, and haze, with special attentions of the communities and other stakeholders at the local level.

Under the mandate of Disaster Management Order 2006, the National Disaster Management Center is preparing a strategic national action plan for disaster risk reduction, in realizing our commitment to the Hyogo Framework of Action and also the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response. The main task of our investment will be on the community preparedness, disaster response mechanism, and disaster risk mitigation projects.

On community preparedness, we have embarked Community-Based Disaster Risk Management program(CBDRM). The program is introduced in 2010, with the support of ASEAN Disaster Reduction Center ADRC, with the objective of developing community awareness in disaster risk and building-up the capacity in managing emergencies and disaster situations. It has been carried out in most disaster prone areas, comprising of three modules from coaching and hazard mapping, first aid, and fire safety. The CBDRM program will be followed up this year with a module on contingency planning and a disaster exercise with the participation of the communities working alongside government emergency responders.

On the other hand, a multi-sector approach has been our most effective means in managing disasters. And we recognize that our disaster response mechanism could be strengthened through the adaption of Incident Command System (ICS). Under the ASEAN and United State program on Disaster Management, the ICS has been introduced in 2010 and has proven its effectiveness in disaster operations – enabling efficient and timely response, while minimizing the impact of disasters.

In terms of infrastructure and development, we have carried out a number of flood mitigation projects in the most frequently flooded areas. In the last national development plan, a total of approximately 236 million US dollars' worth of projects were implemented, resulting in notable reductions in flood prone areas from 918 sq. km in 1998, to 315 sq. km in 2008. Another 136 million US dollars will be spent in the current national development plan for more outlets to help manage the flood situations and hopefully reduce the flood prone areas further to 70 sq. km. These mitigation projects have factored in changes in climate pattern so that they can reduce flood risk impact during extreme rainfall.

All of these activities and many more in the timeline signify our commitment in putting high investment in managing disaster risk by placing equal priority between disaster risk reduction, preparedness, and disaster response.

Ladies and gentlemen, finally, let me once again express our congratulations for the host of this important event. Brunei Darussalam is excited to be part of this international community with a common goal, which will prevail as an important investment for a safer tomorrow

ANNEX II: CAMBODIA SPEECH

Good afternoon, distinguished ladies and gentlemen.

As madam chair mentioned already, it's very saving time and effort to download our speech and read. It's more meaningful and more comprehensive, but just let me take a few time to highlight the point that Cambodia delegation is appreciate to the UNISDR to support and organizing such an excellent conference.

Cambodia, we cannot claim that we are the only most vulnerable country in the world - we can say no country is less vulnerable, we can say all country in the world are vulnerable to disaster. Cambodia try its best. Though we are the developing country with least resources, but however, the government in Cambodia try it's best to prioritize and also to invest to the implementation of disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation.

Among that, Cambodia consider that disaster reduction and climate change adaptation, it's just a two matters on the same coin – just different phases. So, within our effort, we review our legislation policy guiding principle. We promote the disaster national platform. We also implement the principal guideline. We invest in our mainstreaming disaster reduction into development and also the climate change. We really like that the Hyogo framework for action is a key tool for improve disaster reduction and also the climate change.

Everybody agree that climate change is a threat. Cambodia's agrarian country- it's also very vulnerable to the climate change in comparing to other country, based on its limited capacity of coping those issue.

We all listened to all speaker. We learn a lot from the six day long workshop. I believe that we will be able to learn more and more, but now it's time for us to really act concretely. Resource must be poured more for the disaster reduction and climate change. That we hope, that from the talking, interpret them into the actual action, so that we together can move ahead in our ambition to build a safer world by our investment today, for a safer world for all in the near future.

Thank you very much, madam.

ANNEX III: INDONESIA SPEECH

Bismillah Hir Rahman Nir Rahim! Your excellencies, heads of state, and heads of government, your excellency, Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Ban Ki-Moon, excellencies, ladies, and gentlemen. Let me begin by expressing on the auspicious occasion my greetings of peace and blessing to my fellow Muslims and all people around the world.

Some two years ago, Indonesia was honored to host the Bali Climate Conference that produced, after dramatic twists and turns, the historic Bali Action Plan. Now, we must complete that journey.

Let us have the courage to look beyond our differences, as we face severe global financial and economic storms. This high-level gathering in New York must help to provide a valuable guidance and clear mandate for the negotiators. The Copenhagen conference must conclude with an agreement that ensures a secure climate future for all.

We cannot allow any gaps after the expiry of the first commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol in 2012. Remember, we can negotiate about the climate, but we cannot negotiate with the climate. We cannot ask the climate for more time. All effort must be made to ensure the global temperature do not exceed 2 degree Celsius above pre-industrial levels in 2050. There is a historical responsibility that must be translated into deep cut emissions. This also should be transformed into willingness to help those who are vulnerable to the impact of climate change to adapt to it. To this end, developed countries must take the lead in our global effort to combat climate change, while developing countries should also engage in much broader actions to go beyond business as usual.

As agreed in the Bali action plan, the nationally appropriate mitigation action should be truly supported by the technology, financing, and capacity-building in a measurable, reportable, and verifiable manner. While our effort to frame a global framework for climate change post-2012 is underway, we should intensify national effort and establish partnership to advance climate security.

Indonesia has made climate change a key priority in Indonesia's national budget for 2010, reaching half a billion dollars, which include preservation and expansion of our tropical rain forest cover. Indonesia has also initiated with 10 tropical rainforest countries the forest 11 joint cooperation to ensure that our forests will be a key part of global climate solution. Indonesia also initiated the Coral Triangle Initiative (CTI) with five other countries to sustainably manage the marine and coastal resources of our region; and in May this year, the world ocean conference in Manado, Indonesia called for ocean issues to be placed at the center of climate change solution in the future, just as with forest issues.

Excellencies, ladies, and gentlemen, Copenhagen is our time to seize the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to launch the post 2012 climate agreement. We must reach consensus for the sake of our planet and for the future of humanity. Let us demonstrate that we are up to that momentous challenge, and we shall prevail. I thank you

ANNEX IV: LAOS SPEECH

Mr. President, the international community is facing myriad challenges. Many parts of the world have been experiencing more frequent and severe impacts of climate change which has extensively affected the livelihood of the people globally. Heat wave has robbed across Europe. Wide drought has prolonged in many parts of the world. But in others, flood has been extensive – inundated residential and productive land.

In this context, while developed countries may have been more resilient to and able to adapt to the impact of climate change, developing countries, and in particular, the least developed ones, are the most vulnerable including, in particular, my own country.

During the past two months, we experienced unexpected heavy rainfall as a result of tropical storm Fudo across the country. It has made nearly all provinces inundated, causing enormous damage to infrastructure, agriculture, and livelihood of the people. This has already costed millions of dollars to rehabilitate and restore the normalcy in the affected areas.

Realizing the importance of combating climate change, the Lao government is focusing on implementation of Paris agreement. It is already mainstream its nationally in determined contributions and integrating climate change and natural disaster risk reduction into the current national social economic development plan. In addition, our National Assembly has endorsed the law on disaster management and it is expected to promulgate it soon. Currently, we are formulating national strategy on action plan on disaster preparedness and risk reduction. At the regional level, ASEAN also exerted common effort to address the impact of climate change and disaster risk management, among others in this connection.

We highly appreciate the United Nation support to ASEAN through the implementations of ASEAN to enjoin strategic plan of action on disaster management 2016-2020 and the environmental and climate change action 2016-2020. Having all these legal frameworks in place is not enough to combat climate change. Full and effective implementation of this instrument is the key, yet it would require joint effort at both national and international level to ensure such full and effective implementation.

In this regard, as we commit ourselves at the national level. We would like to call upon the developed countries and own developed partners to honor the commitment in contributing 100 billion US dollar per year to support the developing countries mitigation and adaptation needs.

ANNEX V: MALAYSIA SPEECH

Mr. chairman, excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies, and gentlemen, at the outset allow me to congratulate the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction for the convening of the fourth session of the global platform for disaster reduction, as well as the government of Switzerland for hosting this event. This year's session is a pivotal one as it will set the tone for international cooperation in the DRR post-2015, leading to the world conference on disaster risk reduction in Japan.

It is a fact that no country, even the most developed, is immune from the impact of natural disasters. As such, DRR and resilience should be viewed as matters of common concern to both developing and the developed world. It serves the common interests that national cooperation in this matter be intensified.

It is therefore heartening to see increasing willingness among countries everywhere to jointly address this shared problem, especially since the first session of the global platform held in 2007. Over the past 20 years, losses caused by natural disasters have been steadily rising.

Beyond the human toll, which is in fact, incalculable, economic losses have exceeded USD 200 billion. Although high-income countries have incur greater losses in monetary terms, low-income countries have incurred, low and middle-income countries have suffered greater impacts relatively to the GDPs. Developing countries have disproportionately suffered in terms of human fatalities, due to the weaker infrastructures and response capabilities. It is becoming more and more evident that holistic and innovative approaches are mandatory for addressing disaster risk. This is due to the close inter-relationships and inextricable linkages that exists between disaster risk and other key challenges of poverty reduction, sustainable development, and environmental stability, as well as the emerging reality of global climate change.

With the onslaught of climate change, worldwide disasters are anticipated to increase. We need to inculcate a sense of urgency towards this issue, because if we adopt a business-as-usual attitude the consequences can be quite disastrous. The high level of scientific uncertainty about the nature and consequences attributable to climate change and intrinsic relationship between climate change and DRR both call for intensive research by scientific and academic institutions; so that state-of-the-art knowledge and know-how can be translated into national policies and local actions. Various types of partnerships need to be forged to tap scientific and technical knowledge, to facilitate inform policy and decision-making for DRR and climate change adaptation. The elements that bring about successful partnerships must be identified and understood, documented and disseminated so that such partnerships can be replicable/replicated worldwide. In this way, scientific and technical knowledge can then be effectively used at all levels - both national and local levels.\

Distinguished delegates, ladies, and gentlemen, in 2005, Malaysia adopted the Hugo Framework of Action together with 167 other countries. One of the positive results of the HFA implementation is the widespread recognition and acceptance of DRR as a valuable instrument for the national planning and implementation. DRR has also served to heighten awareness among disaster/about disasters at various levels.

Many countries have also strengthened their respective national platforms for building multi-stakeholder consensus. This, in turn, has improved DRR governance.

Malaysia is happy to announce today that it is in the midst of setting up its own multi-stakeholder, national platform on disaster management which will be ready by the end of this year. We will then have an integrated approach to reducing the risk of disasters. Malaysia fully supports the ongoing work of the UNISDR to promote and accelerate the implementation of HFA, including the development of the post-2015 framework for DRR.

On this matter, many views and options have been expressed today. In our view, the preparation of a successor document to HFA need not involve a rewriting and adoption of an entirely new document. The successor document to HFA should focus upon making concrete progress in the implementation of existing measures, including provisions, which can be used to measure and quantify progress. It should also concentrate upon formerly abandoned and neglected elements of the HFA.

We should certainly refrain from building any new systems to implement DRR. We should need to maximize the utilization of existing systems and networks. Looking beyond 2015, the post-HFA framework and its implementation monitoring system should be institutionalized at the national levels. We should strive for a framework that is flexible and usable by the range of situations the countries and local communities find themselves in. The framework should provide different starting points and facilitate choices, while prioritizing implementation. This should facilitate the identification of supporting action and progress monitoring.

Malaysia looks forward to a successful conference here in Geneva. In particular, we hope to see fruitful deliberations on the post HFA framework. We also look forward to achieving consensus on how local, national, regional, and international stakeholders can effectively address the new challenges brought about by disasters and climate change. I thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

ANNEX VI: MYANMAR SPEECH

Excellencies and ladies and gentlemen, good morning. I would like to express my profound thanks to the government of Switzerland for hosting this important event and warm hospitality. I also thank the UNDRR for their continuous support to Myanmar.

At this era, climate change and global warming endangers the lives of many and hinders the development of many countries. Just like many other countries, Myanmar also perceives the many significant changes in the patterns of disaster risk and their cascading effects.

This year, many areas of our country have experienced the highest recorded temperature in ASEAN region. It affected many people across the country. This unusual pattern of natural disaster warn us to emphasize more on disaster risk reduction approaches.

Excellencies, ladies, and gentlemen, I would like to update some key activities of Myanmar we launched. Myanmar submitted the National Report on Myanmar Sendai Implementation through online platform in 2018. We are now continuing our efforts to accomplish the next milestone for risk live reporting.

Actually, we face common challenges like many other countries too – in time of getting the disaggregated data, limited technical capacity to use online platforms for monitoring and reporting and limited resource for scale up of the Sendai Framework at the local levels. However, based on the previous reporting experiences, we are doing our best to improve Sendai framework implementation, monitoring, and reporting. Here, I also like to point out national level achievement of Sendai; that is – the increases of actions on the local and national DRR strategy. We have been implementing Myanmar action plan on disaster risk reduction since 2017. It is a national level strategy for DRR and a roadmap for DRR implementations.

At the subnational level, DRR plans of action are being drawn and implemented by the respective local governments. We have also DRR plans for specific sectors and specific hazards: protecting cultural heritage, schools safety for disaster, and contingency plans are what we prioritize now a days. Moreover, to enhance DRR and CCA integration. Myanmar strategy and action plan are also in place since 2017. In fact, all these action plans and strategies are intended to compliment the achievement of SDGs and we are investing extensively to transform them into reality. We are not focusing not only on resource mobilization but also capacity building in these areas.

Mr. Chairman, on this note, I would like to conclude my remarks by reaffirming that Myanmar is committed to the implementation of SFDRR, and we are looking forward to receiving more technical assistance from UNDRR and other partners. I wish we could come up with action-oriented outcomes for future DRR countermeasures.

Thank you very much for your kind attention.

ANNEX VII: PHILIPPINES SPEECH

Mr. President, it was barely 11 months ago in Doha when my delegation made an appeal, an appeal to the world to open our eyes to the stark realities that we face, as then we confronted a catastrophic storm that resulted in the costliest disaster in Philippine history.

Less than a year hence, we cannot imagine that a disaster much bigger would come. With an apparent cruel twist of fate, my country is being tested by this hell storm called super typhoon Haiyan. It was so strong that if there was a category 6, it would have fallen squarely in that box. And up to this hour, Mr. President, we remain uncertain as to the full extent of the damage and devastation, as information trickles in agonizingly slow manner, because power lines and communication lines have been cut off and may take a while before they are restored.

The initial assessment showed that Haiyan left a wake of massive destruction that is unprecedented, unthinkable, and horrific. According to the Joint Typhoon Warning Center, it was estimated to have attained sustained winds of 315 kilometers per hour. That's equivalent to 195 miles per hour and gusts up to 370 km/h, making it the strongest typhoon in modern recorded history. And despite the massive efforts that my country had exerted in preparing for the onset of the storm, it was just a force too powerful. And even as a nation familiar with storms, Haiyan was nothing we have ever experienced before.

Mr. President, the picture in the aftermath is ever slowly coming into clearer focus. The devastation is colossal. And if this is not enough, another storm is brewing again in the warm waters of the Western Pacific. I shudder at the thought of another typhoon hitting the same places where people have not yet even managed to begin standing up.

To anyone outside who continues to deny and ignore the reality that is climate change, I dare them, I dare them, to get off their ivory towers and away from the comfort of their armchairs. I dare them to go to the islands of the Pacific, the Caribbean, the Indian Ocean and see the impacts of rising sea levels; the mountainous regions of the Himalayas and the Andes, the sea communities confronting glacial floods, to the Arctic where communities grapple the fast-dwindling sea ice sheets, the large deltas of the Mekong, the Ganges, the Amazon, the Nile, where lives and livelihood are drowned. To the hills of central America that confront similar monstrous hurricanes. To the vast savannahs of Africa where climate change has likewise become A matter of life and death as food and water becomes scarce. Not to forget the monster storms in the Gulf of Mexico; and the eastern seaboard of North America as well as the fires that have razed down under. And if that is not enough, they may want to see what has happened to the Philippines now.

Mr. President I need not elaborate in the science as Dr. Pachauri has done that already for us, But it tells us simply that climate change will mean increased potential for more intense tropical storms and this will have profound implications. And many of our communities, especially those who struggle against the twin challenges of the development crisis and the climate crisis, typhoons such as Haiyan and its impacts

represent a sobering reminder to the international community that we cannot afford to delay climate action.

Warsaw must deliver on enhancing ambition and should muster the political will to address climate change and build that important bridge towards Peru and Paris. It might be said that it must be poetic justice that the Typhoon Haiyan was so big that its diameter span the distance between Warsaw in Paris.

Mr. President, in Doha we asked: If not us, then who? If not now, then when? If not here, then where? But here in Warsaw, we may very well ask these same forthright questions. What my country is going through as a result of this extreme climate event is madness. The climate crisis is madness.

Mr. President, we can stop this madness right here in Warsaw. We cannot sit and stay helpless staring at this international climate stalemate. It is now time to raise ambition and take action. We need an emergency climate pathway.

Mr. President, I speak for my delegation, but I speak for the countless people who will no longer be able to speak for themselves after perishing from the storm. I speak also for those who have been orphaned by the storm. I speak for those of the people now raising time to save survivors and alleviate the suffering of the people affected. We can take drastic action now to ensure that we prevent a future where super typhoons become a way of life, because we refuse, as a nation, to accept a future where super typhoons like this will become a way of life. We refuse to accept that running away from storms, evacuating our families, suffering, the devastation, misery, counting our dead become a way of life. We simply refuse to.

Now, Mr. President if you will allow me, I wish to speak on a more personal note. Super Typhoon Haiyan, perhaps unknown to many here, made landfall in my own family's hometown, and the devastation is staggering. I struggle to find words, even for the images that we see on the news coverage. And I struggle to find words to describe how I feel about the losses. Up to this hour, I agonize waiting for words for the fate of my very own relatives. What gives me renewed strength and great relief is that my own brother has communicated to us, and he had survived the onslaught. In the last two days, he has been gathering bodies of the dead with his own two hands. He is very hungry and weary as food supplies find it difficult to arrive in that hardest hit area. Mr. President, these last two days, there are moments when I feel that I should rally behind climate advocates who peacefully confront those historically responsible for the current state of our climate. These selfless people who fight coal, exposed themselves to freezing temperatures, or block oil pipelines. In fact, we are seeing increasing frustration. And, thus, more increased civil disobedience.

The next two weeks, these people and many around the world who serve as our conscience will again remind us of this enormous responsibility. To the youth here who constantly remind us that their future is in peril, to the climate heroes who risk their life, reputation, personal liberties, to stop drilling in polar regions, and to those communities standing up to unsustainable and climate disrupting sources of energy, we stand with them. We cannot solve problems at the same level of awareness that created them. As Dr. Pachauri alluded to Einstein earlier, we cannot solve climate change when we seek to spew more emissions.

Mr President, and I express this with all sincerity and solidarity with my countrymen who are struggling to find food back home, and with my brother who has not had food for the last three days. With all due respect, Mr. President, and I mean no disrespect for your kind of hospitality. I will now commence a voluntary fasting for the climate. This means I will voluntarily refrain from eating food during this call, until a meaningful outcome is in sight, until concrete pledges have been made to ensure mobilization of resources for the Green Climate Fund. We cannot afford a poured cup with an empty GCF. Until the promise of the operationalization of a loss and damage mechanism is being fulfilled until there is assurance on finance for adaptation, until we see real ambition and climate action, in accordance with the principles we have so upheld.

Mr. President, this process under the UNFCCC has been called many, many names. It has been called the farce. It has been called an annual carbon intensive gathering of useless frequent flyers. It has been called many names, and this hurts. But we can still prove them wrong. The UNFCCC can also be called the project to save the planet. It has also been called saving tomorrow today, a couple of years ago. And today, we say I care. We can fix this. We can stop this madness right now, right here, in the middle of this football field, and stop moving the goalposts.

Mr. President, your excellency, honorable minister, my delegation calls on you most, respectfully, to lead us and let Poland, Warsaw be remembered forever as the place where we truly cared to stop this madness. If this is our imperative here, in Warsaw, you can rely on my delegation. Now, can humanity rise to this occasion?

Mr. President, I still believe we can.

Thank you, Mr. President.

ANNEX IIX: SINGAPORE SPEECH

Mr. President, Secretary-General António Guterres, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates.

The consequences of climate change are catastrophic and affect all countries. This includes new diseases, more extreme weather events, food shortages, forced migration, even wars.

Like many small island-states, Singapore is vulnerable, especially to the effects of global warming and especially the rise of sea-levels. For us, climate change is existential.

Singapore contributes only 0.11% of global emissions. Nevertheless, we have played our part as responsible global citizens to mitigate climate change.

We pledged in Paris to peak our carbon emissions in around 2030. We are switching to a cleaner fuel mix and deploying cleaner energy solutions. Being small and highly urbanized, we are disadvantaged in terms of alternative energy options. But we are developing creative solutions within our constraints. For example, we are using solar energy to the maximum extent possible and installing large scale solar panels that float in our reservoirs and off our shorelines in the sea. We also implemented a carbon tax this year, with the intention of increasing it over the next 10 years. And we are greening our physical and transport infrastructure. We are aiming for 80% of our buildings in Singapore to be green by 2030, and for 90% of peak hour commuting trips to be via public transport, active mobility, or shared transport by 2040. We are also developing our long-term low emissions development strategy, as called for under the Paris Agreement.

Singapore will do our full part. But however hard we try, Singapore will not be able to stop climate change on our own. Therefore, we are cooperating with other countries in this common endeavor.

We launched the Climate Action Package to offer capacity building programs. We have contributed \$5 million to the ASEAN Specialized Meteorological Centre based in Singapore, for a 5-year regional capacity development program for Southeast Asia. We have established the Southeast Asia Disaster Risk Insurance Facility, with the support of Japan and the World Bank, to provide flood risk pooling for the region.

Climate change is the ultimate global commons challenge. As leaders, we all have the responsibility to do our part, to rally our people's support for sustainable development, to convince and educate our people that these efforts are important, and to safeguard our future, and the futures of our children and grandchildren. I therefore call upon my fellow member-states to redouble our efforts both to mitigate and to adapt to climate change.

Thank you!

ANNEX IX: THAILAND SPEECH

Thank you, honorable chair, excellencies, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

On behalf of the deputy director general of department of disaster prevention and mitigation and Thailand delegation to the global platform on disaster risk reduction 2013, I would like to convey my sincere thanks and appreciation to the organizer of this event, for the invitation and for the hospitality extended to us all.

To Thailand, the global platform is an important and special venue for sharing and learning the disaster risk reduction experiences and best practices. Ladies and gentlemen, let me begin by telling you briefly about disaster and disaster risk reduction efforts in Thailand.

Just a few months after the Global Platform 2011, in August the same year, our country faced the worst flood in more than 50 years. Resulted from four consecutive tropical cyclones, the flood killed several hundred people and brought about a huge loss in financial terms. The World Bank is estimated a total cost of damage from this catastrophic disaster is high as 4 trillion USD, making this disaster number four in the world in term of economic loss.

I am now delighted to share with you what we have learned from this catastrophe.

First, we have learned that there is a need to have strong coordination among all stakeholders. Secondly, we have learned about the public awareness is the most important issue that we need to materialize. Thirdly, we should pay more attention to disaster risk reduction and disaster risk management. Last but not the least, we should engage public sector to DRR endeavors.

Ladies and gentlemen, since 2011, We have introduced number of counter-measures.

The emphasis had been put on building back better. Many community living the flood-prone areas were trained with the principle of community-based disaster risk management. In this case, they also learned about the climate change adaptation. Some cities in Thailand helped our local self-assessment tool to prepare to make their city resilient. Business sector and the government have undertaken a surge of projects related to post disaster reconstruction and national preparedness and response plan.

Some of these projects have been supported by governments, given development fund. More importantly, there has been growing number of budget allocation for disaster risk reduction. The next step – strengthen disaster and climate resilience and see to look at social development and the social protection issues.

In this opportunity, I would like to inform you once again that Thailand will host the 6th AMCDRR in January 2, 2013. The 6th AMCDRR will then lead to the world conference on disaster risk reduction. Therefore, as the chair of the regional forum, we will be coordinate and call for countries and all parties concerned in the region to develop and move forward to HFA2.

Ladies and gentlemen, I would like to end my speech by thanking the organizer of this event for giving the opportunity to Thailand to express our thoughts in relation to disaster risk reduction. This is pure excellent when you encourage decision-makers, as well as players around the globe to continue to develop and make progress in their works. I'm looking forward to seeing you in Thailand in the 6th AMCDRR.

Welcome to Thailand! Kapunkap! Thank You!

ANNEX X: VIETNAM SPEECH

Excellencies, Ladies, and Gentlemen.

Due to its geographical location, Vietnam is constantly at risk from the natural hazard. Annually, weather-related disaster encroach on areas. It increased deaths and economic loss equivalent to 1.3% of the national GDP. Vietnam is one of the countries in the world that will be most affected by climate change and sea water level rise. If the mean sea level rise by one meter by 2100, 30% of the Mekong delta will be permanently inundated, and more than 80% of delta will be flooded in the flood season. Housing of some 20 million people will be affected. And in the dry season, shorter rain season will affect up to 70% of the delta area.

Vietnam disaster risk management objective are highlighted at the national strategy for the national disaster prevention, response, and mitigation to 2020. The frameworks focus mainly on weather-related disaster hazard, but it needs 13 billion US dollars of which 11 billion is for structural measures such as reservoirs, dams, dike, and ship harbors and more than 2 billion for non-structural measures. This, at least, the government has made efforts to strengthen the plans and institutional framework for disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation.

Currently, the government is in the process of preparing the disaster risk management laws. In 2009, the government perused community-based natural risk reduction programs. They created nearly 54 million programs will be implemented in the 6,000 communes and villages in the frequently affected by disasters. This will improve capacity in national, provincial, and local level. Along with cooperation, quality-control, and require strong partnership between the government and civil society. The program is expected to receive 55% of the natural disaster fund from state budget with a further 40% from non-government organizations, and 5% from local communities themselves and private sectors.

Ladies and gentlemen, strong community involvement and engagement is crucial for disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation to increase the resilience of the country.

Thank you very much for your kind attention.