

Promoting Plastics Circularity in the Philippines: Launch of Manila City Action Plan for Plastics Circularity and Future Opportunities
Multifunction Hall 2, ADB Headquarters, Mandaluyong City
Monday, 10 February 2025, 9:00 a.m.–1:30 p.m.

Opening Remarks for Norio Saito
Senior Director, Water and Urban Development Sector Office, Sectors Department 2
Asian Development Bank

I. Introduction

- I want to first acknowledge our partners from the Philippine Government, represented by Honorable Krystle Marie C. Bacani of the City Council of Manila, the City of Manila Department of Public Services, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Department of Finance, Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development, the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority, Department of the Interior and Local Government, Department of Trade and Industry, and Department of Science and Technology. ADB colleagues, good morning!
- Welcome to this launch of the Manila City Action Plan for Plastic Circularity!

II. Background on the Manila City Action Plan for Plastic Circularity

- The Manila City Action Plan for Plastic Circularity gives us an actionable blueprint for seizing opportunities to strengthen government capacity, work with the private sector, and deploy technologies to tackle plastic pollution at source and achieve our collective circularity goals.

- This plan aligns with the country's National Plan of Action for the Prevention, Reduction and Management of Marine Litter, which envisions "A Philippines free of marine litter through shared responsibility, accountability and participatory governance". The plan is also aligned with ADB's Environment Action Plan, which promotes pollution control and circular economy approaches for nature-positive development.

III. Acknowledgement and appreciation on the collaboration

- We greatly value this collaboration with the local and national government, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your support in making this launch happen. We at ADB are particularly excited to see how the City of Manila will put this plan into action.

IV. Regional perspective on plastic pollution

- Plastic pollution is a critical emerging transboundary issue in Asia and the Pacific, with most plastics finding their way into drainage systems, waterways, and eventually, into oceans. Marine plastic pollution poses a threat to our oceans, biodiversity, and our coastal communities. About 12% of all waste generated in the region is plastic. According to a study, the People's Republic of China, Indonesia, Philippines, Viet Nam and Thailand alone are responsible for nearly half of the world's marine plastic pollution.
- To address this, a paradigm shift from a linear to a circular economy is essential, where waste is minimized, resources are regenerated, and

plastic is managed sustainably. Innovative financing and multi-stakeholder partnerships will be critical in unlocking scalable and sustainable solutions for addressing marine plastic pollution.

V. ADB's role in advancing the circular economy in the region

- The Asian Development Bank is highly committed to working with our partners to catalyze path-finding and sustainable circular economy knowledge and financing solutions. By promoting circular economy practices, we can make cities more livable, competitive, and resilient.
- We see collaboration as a key catalyst for broader development impact. ADB recently launched an exciting cross-sector initiative to support the rejuvenation of the Pasig River, in close collaboration with the members of the Pasig River Interagency Council. Last year, we signed a regional Memorandum of Understanding with UAE's Clean Rivers at COP29, to explore collaboration and unlock investments and innovation in river restoration via circular economy-based waste management systems, across Asia, including for the Pasig River.
- ADB works with governments in the region in adopting a holistic and systems-wide approach to the circular economy. A prime example of this is our \$500 million policy-based loan for marine debris reduction in Indonesia. We are working with the Indonesian government to reduce plastic waste flow into the oceans by 70% by 2025, primarily through downstream waste management, upstream interventions to reduce waste production, and supporting critical elements for overall reform. This effort is complemented by certified blue loans by ADB's Private

Sector Operations Department to Indorama Ventures Ltd and PT Alba Tridi to expand plastic recycling capacity, technical assistance to develop roadmaps for digitalizing the plastics value chain and city-level plastic circularity. ADB provided a small grant to Alner, an Indonesian social venture, to pilot its reusable packaging and refilling solution for consumer goods. Similar to this, to complement this action plan and the Pasig River clean-up program, we are preparing a policy-based loan to address marine pollution and strengthen the blue economy in the Philippines.

VI. Congratulations and Looking ahead

- Before I close, I want to congratulate the Manila City Government for this tremendous accomplishment, made possible through our work with DENR (Environmental Management Bureau). In addition, we would greatly appreciate the support of our national government partners, who are present today.
- I also want to thank our ADB organizing team for their hard work in preparing this impactful program, with strong collaboration amongst the Climate Change, Resilience, and Environment Cluster, Sectors Department 2, Water and Urban Development Sector Office, Solid Waste Management CoP, and the Circular Economy Working Group.
- As we move to the implementation phase, we look forward to continuing to work with our partners from the Government, leveraging our collective expertise and knowledge to bring our joint ambitions into reality. We are optimistic that by continuously working together, we

can make transformational change and pave the way for a sustainable, inclusive, prosperous, and resilient Asia and the Pacific.

- Thank you very much.