**Manila Observatory, Ateneo partner to aid int’l climate scientists**

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Manila Observatory

MANILA, Philippines - Dr. Emma Porio, Dr. Gemma Narisma and director Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga of the Manila Observatory, and the Ateneo de Manila University have been named key members of an international effort by top climate scientists to help cities around the world adapt to the impacts of climate change, according to Dr. Cynthia Rosenzweig of the NASA Goddard Institute for Space Studies and Columbia University’s Earth Institute in New York City.

Rosenzweig, among the first scientists to focus on climate change in cities, is a founder of the Urban Climate Change Research Network (UCCRN).

Porio, Narisma and Yulo-Loyzaga are members of the network. The UCCRN includes a group of approximately 500 researchers in cities located throughout the world.

More than half of the world’s population now live in urban centers, many of them located in coastal or delta areas. Because of topography and population density, cities are disproportionately vulnerable to weather extremes like flooding from storm surges and heat waves.

Cities are important economic engines, promoting economic development and providing jobs that support their own residents as well as large numbers of families outside city boundaries.

In addition, Rosenzweig said, “Cities, not central national governments, already lead the action on responding to climate change. Our job is to help by providing the strongest possible physical and social science information and state-of-the-art knowledge so cities can prepare for rising temperatures and changing patterns of extreme weather events, and soften their impacts when they hit.”

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Porio and Loyzaga are members of the expert team that will produce an assessment on housing and informal settlements. Narisma is a member of the expert team that will produce an assessment on climate change science.

The work is part of a larger effort by UCCRN to produce a resource for guiding cities in their response to climate change. The Second UCCRN Assessment Report on Climate Change and Cities (ARC3-2) will be published in 2015 and will cover a range of issues, from urban health to food to water and energy systems, transportation, economics and private finance, and governance. This will be the second major Assessment Report.

City mayors praised the first, published in 2011, as a practical, action-oriented resource.

The authors are scholars from a variety of universities and institutions in cities around the world.

Co-editors of the report include, besides Rosenzweig, William Solecki of Hunter College of the City University of New York, Shagun Mehrotra of Milano at the New School, Shobhakar Dhakal of the Asian Institute of Technology, and Paty Romero-Lankao of Urban Futures at the National Center for Atmospheric Research.

Porio has just returned from representing the team at the three-day ARC3-2 Initiating Workshop convened in New York City. In attendance were 110 urban climate change experts, stakeholders, and practitioners from Asia, Australia, Europe, Africa and the Americas.

Porio said, “I was inspired by New York’s initiatives toward building climate resilience and by the innovations of other cities.  The message is clear: Cities must adapt and mitigate the effects of climate change according to their levels vulnerability and capacity!”

UCCRN ARC3-2 will provide scientific knowledge that could be useful to signers of the Durban Adaptation Charter, founded at the time of the climate change treaty conference in 2011.

The Durban Adaptation Charter is now the basis for a comprehensive response plan underway in Dumangas town in Iloilo, which was presented at the ARC3-2 Initiating Workshop.

“Sometimes,” said Patrick Driscoll of University of Aalborg, Copenhagen, “we assume that we can only learn from cities like us. For instance, in Copenhagen we know we can learn from Amsterdam. But Delhi might also have lessons for us.”

Even at this early stage, the ARC3-2 group is committed to including the advice and the voices of people generally not consulted on issues of urban planning until late in the process.

As one community leader put it, “We have a saying. If you are not at the table, you are probably on the menu.” Climate change affects everyone, and, say the experts, everyone needs to be at the table.

Support for the project has come from international and national agencies, universities, and the private sector.