I. ECOP Position and Comments

1. The government has made its commitment to addressing the impact of climate change on Philippine society through the adoption of the Philippines’ National Framework Strategy on Climate Change (2010-2022), which has now been translated into the National Climate Change Action Plan (2011). The Guiding Principles of the Framework are:

“The State adopts the following Guiding Principles in formulating the National Framework Strategy on Climate Change…


“2.2. The goal is to build the adaptive capacity of communities and increase the resilience of natural ecosystems to climate change, and optimize mitigation opportunities towards sustainable development.

“2.3 The Philippines, as a State Party to the United National Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), is committed to its core principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities.

“2.4. The precautionary principle guides the State’s climate change framework and shall take precautionary measures to anticipate, prevent or minimize the causes of climate change and its adverse effects. Where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing such measures.

“2.5. The Framework is risk-based, and strategies/activities shall be formulated, with decisions made based on the causes, magnitude and impacts of risks.

“2.6. Climate change knowledge is science-based, and shall draw from scientific contributions and best practices from communities taking into consideration local circumstances.

“2.7. The national priorities, and therefore, the pillars of the National Framework Strategy on Climate Change shall be adaptation and mitigation, with an emphasis on adaptation as the anchor strategy. Whenever applicable, mitigation actions shall also be pursued as a function of adaptation.

“2.8. Adaptation measures shall be based on equity, in accordance with common but differentiated responsibility; special attention must be given to ensure equal and equitable protection of the poor, women, children and other vulnerable and disadvantaged sectors.

“2.9. Even with inadequate scientific information, anticipatory adaptation measures should be undertaken to prevent or minimize the causes and potential impacts of climate change, whenever necessary.
“2.10. The Framework adopts the Philippine Agenda 21 for Sustainable Development, to fulfill human needs while maintaining the quality of the natural environment for current and future generations.

“2.11. The principle of complementation shall be observed to ensure that climate change initiatives by one sector do not restrict the adaptation of other sectors.

“2.12. The Framework recognizes the roles of agencies and their respective mandates as provided by law. The Framework also recognizes the principle of subsidiarity and the role of local governments as front-liners in addressing climate change.

“2.13. The Framework recognizes the value of forming multi-stakeholder participation and partnerships in climate change initiatives, including with civil society, private sector and local governments, and especially with indigenous peoples and other marginalized groups most vulnerable to climate change impacts.

“2.14. Policy and incentive mechanisms to facilitate private sector participation in addressing adaptation and mitigation objectives shall be promoted and supported.”

2. These Guiding Principles espouse everything that the Employers Confederation of the Philippines wishes to accomplish. As stated, the goal is to create climate risk-resilient, healthy, prosperous, safe and self-reliant communities and thriving and productive ecosystems in the Philippines. This requires action from every single individual as well as different sectors in society. The private sector, which utilizes a significant amount of natural resources, plays a pivotal role in realizing this and ECOP is in a strategic position to implement this objective.

3. ECOP recognizes that companies have legitimate concerns in implementing green projects: (a) where and how to obtain the technology and the expertise to implement green projects; (b) cost considerations of implementing them; and (c) the value added for the company, especially how adopting green technology can make them more competitive, attract more consumers and generate revenue.

4. ECOP also recognizes that micro and small and medium enterprises (SMEs) require the most assistance and support in making the private sector “greener.”

5. As such, ECOP adheres to the concept of just transition: a shift towards green practices in all means and levels of production that transform the country into a low carbon economy. Adopting environment-friendly practices does not entail only cost for companies. This is not the objective of a just transition; rather, a balance between (a) responsible and sustainable practices that lead to environmental preservation and the wellbeing of consumers and communities and (b) the creation of new economic opportunities for people and companies alike, is the desired end. The key word is justice, implying a reasonable distribution of responsibilities and benefits for all stakeholders.

6. Consequently, ECOP perceives that the creation of green jobs is tied to the creation of “decent work.” The goal is not just to develop technology, but also to promote “green lives,” improve the quality of living of society in general, promote healthy living and sustainable practices to preserve the environment.

7. Such a transition, as mentioned, requires the active engagement of and tripartite cooperation among different sectors in the Philippines, namely, the government, civil society and the private
sector. It becomes imperative to bridge the gaps in the implementation of green practices among these pillars of society and improve opportunities for dialogue, collaboration and innovation.

8. ECOP can fill the space that exists due to lack of dialogue with the government and civil society. We can serve as the representative of the private sector in policy dialogues with the government. We can also serve as a portal through which companies can gain expertise on green initiatives and acquire best practices and standards for their own internal compliance. ECOP can be a vehicle for increasing awareness on green jobs and green initiatives.

9. The thrust of awareness campaigns and other initiatives should always be, aside from our moral responsibility to take care of the environment, what are the possible economic and business opportunities that companies can gain from environmentally friendly and green ventures? How do you implement the triple bottom line approach of “people, planet and profit”? How do you adopt and implement “no regrets” measures?

10. Companies, therefore, require the following: (a) financial and technical assistance and expertise, (b) adequate training of personnel, (c) information and data on best practices; and (d) information on the impact of climate change and environmental issues on company operations and society in general.

11. ECOP believes that non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society organizations (CSOs), international organizations, workers groups, the academe, research institutions, and the scientific community are in a position to provide expertise and training to companies who need them. These institutions can also help companies set standards, in accordance to international standards, and institute greener practices as a norm within the private sector. ECOP is prepared to collaborate with these groups to address environmental issues as well as the needs and concerns of companies.

12. ECOP is also prepared to work with the government in implementing existing laws and creating new ones that are friendly for businesses and, more importantly, fulfilling just transition. ECOP supports green initiatives spearheaded by the government through its agencies.

13. ECOP also pushes the government to provide more incentives to companies, especially micro and SMEs, to motivate them to adopt green projects and create green jobs. As stated in the National Framework Strategy on Climate Change, the government should make an effort to provide incentives for companies who are interested in adopting green practices as well as those who have successfully implemented related programs. Incentives can be in the form of subsidies, tax cuts in exchange for carbon credits, improving infrastructure, awards and recognition, and special assistance.

14. ECOP, for its part, will continue to be committed to fulfilling a greener society through assisting all sectors towards this development. Aside from working with different sectors in society, we seek the cooperation of the media and the religious sector in enhancing awareness on green projects and green jobs.

15. On their part, companies should, in turn, make a commitment to implementing green projects and dedicating resources to the creation of green jobs, given the proper support and training. Large companies are in the best position to assist micro and SMEs and also have the responsibility as major consumers of resources. Current initiatives of companies must be made aware and promoted to all to set an example to smaller companies that wish to make the
transition towards green initiatives. ECOP can, again, be a vehicle to making this information known and promoting these initiatives to the private sector.

16. Again, referring to the Framework, adaptation and mitigation in all aspects of life and levels of governance and policy implementation should be adopted to full effect.

II. Conclusions

1. The operative phrase perhaps is multisectoral, transnational engagement, linking the efforts of the private sector, the government and civil society in conjunction with international efforts to promote green jobs creation and green initiatives.

2. In the long run, implementing a just transition is beneficial to all, companies and consumers, the government and civil society alike.