**APPENDIX IIf**

**Opening Remarks**

**By Ms. Courtney DRAGGON,**

**Director of the National Weather Service International Activities Office, NOAA**

It is a great honor to be able to host this prestigious and effective Committee here in beautiful Honolulu.

I welcome the Honorable Mr. Peter HIRAI, Deputy Director of Department of Emergency Management of the City and County of Honolulu; Mr. YU Jixin, Secretary of the Typhoon Committee; Mr. Taoyong PENG, Representative of WMO; Mrs. Shamika SIRIMANNE, Representative of ESCAP to this event and commend Mr. Yu JIXIN and his team with particular thanks to Mr. Denise LAU and Ms. Lisa KOU for their coordination with our Local Organizing Committee under the deft leadership of Ms. Jackie Kubo.

My experience in working as the policy lead for all matters WMO for our US Permanent Representative to WMO have enabled me to have the opportunity to work closely with our National Hurricane Center in Florida and the nations of the Caribbean and Central America. For several years I helped our team of Hurricane Hunters to do public outreach in the region and connect with the public and partners to increase preparedness. But it was only recently that I learned that this TC was the inspiration for the other regional TCs to be established. And I am personally very happy to learn more about the work that you are doing in the Pacific to improve the coordination and efforts needed to protect life and property from typhoons.

At NWS our key initiative is to build a weather ready nation. NOAA's Weather-Ready Nation is about building community resilience in the face of increasing vulnerability to extreme weather and water events. Through operational initiatives, NOAA's National Weather Service (NWS) is transforming its operations to help America respond.

NWS knows we can't do it alone. Building a Weather-Ready Nation requires we build partnerships within the emergency coordination community, with decision makers, school teachers, businesses, and the media – just to name a few. This initiative has helped us to mobilize and prepare our citizens and communities. The best time to plan for any hazard like a typhoon is well before it is beating a path to your door.

We are now extending this to our global community through an initiative we are calling Weather Ready Nations that will be coordinated by the WMO bringing together other nations to discuss this principle of partnerships for preparedness.

I know that being together this week to hear about and learn from one another’s new approaches to and refinements in typhoon forecasting, and improvements in working within your own communities to build preparedness and enhance resilience will contribute to building weather ready nations.

Again, welcome to this beautiful place and a big thank you to Ray and his team and the Secretariat.