

Minister Trần Hồng Hà, Director General Lê Công Thành, heads of delegations, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, I am delighted and honored to be here as we celebrate 50 years of successful collaboration in typhoon forecasting and mitigation. I specifically want to thank the Government of Vietnam, the National Hydro-Meteorological Service, the U.N. Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, and the World Meteorological Organization for hosting this year's meeting. This is both a large and important undertaking and on behalf of the United States Government, I thank you.

The United States has been a member of the Typhoon Committee since 1998 through our Central Pacific Hurricane Center in Hawaii. That center operates under the direction of our National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, which I represent along with my colleagues Mr. Tom Evans and Ms. Genevieve Miller. The center serves as America's critical line of defense against Pacific storms. It is through our work that the United States contributes to the Typhoon Committee in ways both large and small. If the United States can use its

experience and expertise to help others than our contribution, regardless of its size, will have been well worth it.

We share a common enemy: powerful storms born in the open ocean.

Because of your location in the Pacific, you know them as typhoons.

We too, are the occasional target of typhoons, but the United States suffers far more from the annual onslaught of hurricanes in the Atlantic.

For a victim left amid a storm's destructive wake, however, the label matters far less than the devastation it brings. That is just one reason why the United States so strongly supports the work of the Typhoon Committee.

Our shared vision of mitigating the impact and risks of typhoon-related disasters improves the quality of life throughout the region. Achieving such a vision requires dedicated collaboration between all our governments so that lessons learned can become the foundation of future success. Our work is timely. It is vital. And it saves lives.

The United States suffered a particularly brutal hurricane season last year with 17 named storms, ten of which became hurricanes. Of the seven that made landfall, three were particularly devastating to people and property, from Texas to Puerto Rico. As measured by storm intensity and duration, 2017 ranked as the most active in over a decade.

Thankfully, 2017 also produced the most accurate forecasts. Yet, despite repeatedly knowing well in advance what was coming, when, where, and how, the 2017 hurricane season still recorded upwards of \$200 billion worth of damage and well over 100 deaths in the U.S.

Increasingly, the problem with trying to protect the public from a major storm such as a typhoon or hurricane is not so much the prediction itself, but how the public and local officials use that prediction -- which is one reason why the Typhoon Committee exists.

As storms get bigger and more destructive, how do we convey information in a meaningful way that does not prompt either panic or disbelief? How do we plan for storms? How do we recover from them?

These questions still vex us in the United States but they are just as applicable, if not more so, to the Asia Pacific region with its vulnerable coastlines, dense populations and active tropical cyclone basin.

Problems such as storm preparation and recovery do not recognize geopolitical boundaries. Neither should the solutions. This is why the United States so strongly supports the work of the Typhoon Committee. Regardless of where the next storm hits, the work that all of you do will benefit many. For that, the United States of America thanks you.