



NEWS ROUNDUP

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CCC IN THE NEWS:

- CCC briefs gov't agencies on National Climate Action reports
- CCC gives updates on national climate reports

BUSINESS MIRROR

[Govt completes 16 resiliency road maps for climate-vulnerable provinces, cities](#)

By: Jonathan Dimayuga

The government has completed the resilience road maps for 16 vulnerable areas, which will serve as a guide in managing disaster risks and climate vulnerabilities in the Philippines.

[Six climate breakthroughs that made 2022 a step toward net zero](#)

THE damage caused by climate change over this past year was at times so immense it was hard to comprehend. In Pakistan alone, extreme summer flooding killed thousands, displaced millions and caused over \$40 billion in losses, Fall floods in Nigeria killed hundreds and displaced over 1 million people. Droughts in Europe, China and the US dried out once-unstoppable rivers and slowed the flows of commerce on major arteries like the Mississippi and the Rhine.

BUSINESS WORLD

[\[Opinion\] That was 2022](#)

By: Luis Teodoro

The year 2022 is mostly ending on an economic and political note. The inflation rate is at an unprecedented 8%, the highest level since 2008, while the looming passage of the Maharlika Investment Fund bill in Congress is indicating how the legislative and executive branches of government, while supposedly separate and equal, are practically one and the same. Expect the Supreme Court, in which the majority are appointees of former President Rodrigo Duterte, to be as supportive of those two other branches as well, should there be any challenges to the laws they pass and implement.

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By: Chit U. Juan

The first order of the day is to look at the New Year as a time to change. January is when it is easiest to start a new habit, a new goal or even a new lifestyle.

CNN PHILIPPINES

[Gov't to update PH energy plan, including nuclear power use — Palace](#)

Metro Manila (CNN Philippines, January 1) — The Marcos administration is eyeing to expand the country's energy sources by updating the Philippine Energy Plan with the use of nuclear power as one of its priorities, Malacañang said on Sunday.

MANILA BULLETIN

[A bountiful Media Noche and fruitful 2023](#)

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For moms, it looks like there's no difference between Noche Buena and Media Noche with the kitchen the center of activities, preparing for scrumptious, mouth-watering dishes the family loves.

[\[Opinion\] Facing 2023 with hope](#)

Today, the start of a new year, we are unified by hope and willing to work toward the same goal – a better economy and a better life for all.

[Solving problems and opening doors](#)

By: Carol Malasig

There's still a lot of confusion as to what our diplomats do and I often feel it's a disservice to look at them as people who only issue passports. While consular matters are important, a lot goes on behind the walls of the brutalist edifice along Roxas Boulevard.

MANILA STANDARD

[6 ways digital transformation can help countries achieve sustainable development](#)

The idea that emerging digital technologies are key requirements for sustainable development is not new.

PANAY NEWS

[\[Opinion\] Survival](#)

THE ILOILO City Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office (CDRRMO) encourages residents to have survival kits containing tools and supplies enough to meet their needs for 72 hours during disasters or emergencies.

PHILIPPINE INFORMATION AGENCY

[Ensuring unhampered energy supply, use of renewable energy, top priorities of PBBM admin in 2023](#)

MANILA -- Ensuring an unhampered supply of energy alongside the promotion and utilization of renewable energy sources are top priorities of the administration of President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr., in an aggressive bid to realize a sufficient and clean energy supply in the future.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

[DND resolute in working for peaceful, stable, secure PH](#)

By: Priam Nepomuceno

MANILA – A peaceful, stable and secure Philippines. This will remain the main thrust of the Department of National Defense (DND) as it joins the Filipino people in welcoming the New Year.

[Marcos administration prioritizes cheap, renewable energy](#)

By: Azer Parrocha

MANILA – The administration of Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. will continue to pursue measures and policies to ensure the availability of cheap and reliable energy through the promotion and utilization of renewable energy (RE) sources.

SUNSTAR

[\[Opinion\] Environmental highlights of 2022](#)

By: Rox Peña

Every year end, I make a summary of the significant local and global environmental news and issues. For 2022, here are the highlights which were culled from my columns:

THE MANILA TIMES

[DENR receives resilience roadmaps](#)

By: Bella Cariaso

THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) received resilience roadmaps and corresponding investment portfolios for risk resilience (IPRR) of 16 vulnerable areas amid the threat of climate change in the country.

[France remains committed to PH climate resilience](#)

One year after the devastation of typhoon Odette, the French government remains committed to provide assistance to the Philippines for emergency relief and long-term climate resilience.

[\[Opinion\] Extreme poverty, climate change, worthy resolutions](#)

THE start of every year is traditionally an occasion for making resolutions. Policy-makers and other national leaders should pledge to do something audacious in 2023, like eradicating extreme poverty and fighting climate change.

[PH group to file class suit vs top US polluters](#)

By: Franco Jose C. Baroña

A PHILIPPINE-BASED environmental watchdog has sent a formal notice to the United States government, through its embassy in Manila, of its intention to file a class suit at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) against top industrial polluters in America together with other industrial states worldwide for the deadly effects of their carbon emissions.

[Toledo City celebrates UPSW with tree-planting activity](#)

Presidential Commission for the Urban Poor (PCUP) Chairman Undersecretary Elpidio Jordan Jr. lauded the city of Toledo in Cebu for its innovative celebration of Urban Poor Solidarity Week (UPSW) with a tree planting activity led by Toledo City Mayor Marjorie Perales in Barangay Canlumampao.

[\[Opinion\] Western media incentivized to report dubious claims about climate change?](#)

By: Yen Makabenta

MONEY is playing a big role in climate change propaganda and in sowing public anxiety. Even the biggest and most prestigious Western media organizations are not immune to manipulation into service for climate change advocacy.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

[Food Security](#)

By: Boo Chanco

Food security is increasingly a serious concern for many countries. Thanks to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, climate change and food nationalism, food security should be on top of many government's list of concerns.

[Households urged to tap solar energy](#)

By: Richmond Mercurio

MANILA, Philippines — Chinese solar manufacturer LONGi Solar is urging more Filipino households to utilize solar energy amid the looming power problems.

[New Year challenges](#)

After the holiday celebrations and revelry comes the hard work. The country, buried in debt that has ballooned to P13.52 trillion, must continue its post-pandemic recovery with economic analysts warning of a looming global recession this 2023. This calls for utmost judiciousness in the utilization of precious public funds.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

[CCC briefs gov't agencies on National Climate Action reports](#)

By: Azer Parrocha

MANILA – The Climate Change Commission (CCC) has brought together national government agencies to discuss the progress of the country's national climate reports as part of efforts to pursue scientific, evidence-based and transparent climate governance.

THE MANILA TIMES

[CCC gives updates on national climate reports](#)

By: Bella Cariaso

The Climate Change Commission (CCC) gathered national government agencies to discuss the progress of the country's national climate reports.

Information and Knowledge Management Division

BUSINESS MIRROR

[Govt completes 16 resiliency road maps for climate-vulnerable provinces, cities](#)

By: Jonathan Dimayuga

The government has completed the resilience road maps for 16 vulnerable areas, which will serve as a guide in managing disaster risks and climate vulnerabilities in the Philippines.

The road maps and their corresponding investment portfolios for risk resilience (IPRR) are for 12 climate-vulnerable provinces and four major urban cities.

The road maps were recently turned over to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) Center under the National Economic and Development Authority (Neda) last December 19 in Quezon City.

Developed under the Risk Resiliency Program (RRP) of the Cabinet Cluster on Climate Change Adaptation, Mitigation, and Disaster Risk Reduction, each road map with IPRR contains recommended actions to manage the risks and vulnerabilities in the climate-vulnerable areas in the form of specific resilience measures.

Key findings and relevant experiences were also presented by the study teams that conducted the risk assessments in the climate-vulnerable areas, during the turnover ceremony.

“These planning documents will definitely help inform both local and national investment programming, resulting in more efficient and climate-responsive programs that make better use of our limited resources,” DENR Undersecretary for Finance, Information Systems, and Climate Change Analiza Rebuelta-Teh said in a news statement.

The road maps were developed for the provinces of Siquijor, Eastern Samar, Northern Samar, North Cotabato, Maguindanao, Sulu, Lanao del Sur, Apayao, Kalinga, Ifugao, Mountain Province, Catanduanes, as well as the urban centers of Metro Manila, Metro Cebu, Metro Iloilo, and Metro Davao.

The initiative is implemented by the Neda-PPP Center and the DENR under the project “Strengthening Public-Private Partnerships in the Philippines” with support from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Government of the United Kingdom, through its Urban Climate Change Resilience Trust Fund.

Key officials who witnessed the turnover were DENR Undersecretary for Policy, Planning and International Affairs Jonas Leones; PPP Center Executive Director Cynthia Hernandez and Director Lerma Advincula; ADB's urban climate change resilience specialist Dr. Ramon Abracosa; and Jacques Miel-Soliguin, Climate Change, and Energy Attache of the British Embassy.

Biotech option

Biological technology offers powerful solutions to mitigate the effects of climate change, an official of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) said.

As climate change compels expeditious and wise action toward biotechnology, the DENR is committed to building opportunities in biotechnology to help address this global phenomenon and achieve sustainable and inclusive growth for all Filipinos, DENR Undersecretary for Policy, Planning, and International Affairs Jonas R. Leones said in a statement.

Leones spoke on behalf of DENR Secretary Maria Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga during the 18th Biotechnology Week last November 21 in Pasay City, wherein he declared the agency's full support and commitment to biotechnology.

Leones said climate change "compels us to act expeditiously and wisely, especially since the answer to the climate catastrophe requires a systematic transformation in the fusion of various disciplines."

Six climate breakthroughs that made 2022 a step toward net zero

The damage caused by climate change over this past year was at times so immense it was hard to comprehend. In Pakistan alone, extreme summer flooding killed thousands, displaced millions and caused over \$40 billion in losses, Fall floods in Nigeria killed hundreds and displaced over 1 million people. Droughts in Europe, China and the US dried out once-unstoppable rivers and slowed the flows of commerce on major arteries like the Mississippi and the Rhine.

In the face of these extremes, the human response was uneven at best. Consumption of coal, the dirtiest fossil fuel, rebounded in 2022. Countries like the UK and China seemed to back away from major climate pledges. But all of this gloom came with more than a silver lining. In fact, it's all too easy to overlook the steps toward a lower-carbon world that came about in between more attention-getting catastrophes.

As 2022 unfolded, a clear pathway of climate hope emerged. New policy breakthroughs have the potential to unlock enormous progress in the effort to slow and reverse warming temperatures. Below is a list of six encouraging developments from a very momentous year, as nation after nation elected more climate-oriented governments and enacted new efforts to curb greenhouse gas.

1. President Biden's big win changes everything

Just when it seemed that Washington was hopelessly gridlocked, in August the Biden administration and a narrow Democratic majority in Congress managed to pass the Inflation Reduction Act. This new US law, backed by some \$374 billion in climate spending, is the country's most aggressive piece of climate legislation ever. Its provisions ensure that for decades to come billions of dollars will roll toward the energy transition, making it easier to deploy renewable energy, build out green technologies and subsidize consumer adoption of everything from electric cars to heat pumps. Experts on energy modeling predict the law will eliminate 4 billion tons of greenhouse gas emissions.

2. The EU taxes carbon dioxide at its border

The European Union started to make good on its pledge to cut emissions by 55 percent in 2030 (from 1990 levels). The bloc's 27 members reached a historic deal to set up the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism, an emissions levy on some imports that's meant to protect Europe's carbon-intensive industries that are forced to comply with the region's increasingly strict rules. Once it take effect, there will be additional costs

imposed on imported goods from countries without the EU's restrictions on planet-warming pollution.

A separate milestone from 2022 saw the biggest overhaul of the EU carbon market that will extend it to road transport, shipping and heating. This expansion of the policy will also accelerate the pace at which companies—from energy producers to steelmakers—are required to reduce pollution. The accord provided certainty to companies and investors, sending European carbon prices to a record high for the year.

3. Birds, bees and biodiversity get a big break

Just two weeks before 2022 ended, negotiators at the COP15 United Nations Biodiversity Conference in Montreal delivered a surprise win in the form of a pledge by 195 nations to protect and restore at least 30 percent of the Earth's land and water by 2030. Rich nations also committed to pay an estimated \$30 billion per year by 2030 to poorer nations in part through a new biodiversity fund.

4. Rich nations agree to fund loss and damage, energy transition

The biodiversity breakthrough came one month after another historic moment at a UN-backed conference. Delegates at COP27 in Egypt's Sharm El-Sheikh reached a last-minute agreement to create a loss-and-damage fund to help developing countries impacted by climate change, a decades-long demand by nations that have contributed the least to warming of the planet.

Another form of climate funding, Just Energy Transition Partnerships, also went into wider use in 2022. The mechanism is meant to help emerging economies heavily dependent on coal move away from the most polluting fossil fuel in a way that doesn't leave workers and communities behind. South Africa's 8.5 billion JETP, announced in 2021, became a blueprint for these deals. Additional deals made in 2022 are set to mobilize \$20 billion for Indonesia and \$15.5 billion for Vietnam.

5. Changes in leaders, change in attitudes

Voters delivered big changes in leadership in several key countries. In Brazil, Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva won the presidency in part by promising to zero-out deforestation of the Amazon. Pro-climate parties also won big in Australia's elections.

In November, meanwhile, President Joe Biden met with Chinese leader Xi Jinping and reset the relationship that had been suspended by a diplomatic standoff over Taiwan.

Cooperation between the top two economies (and emitters of greenhouse gas) has been essential in cementing previous climate breakthroughs like the 2015 Paris Agreement. China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said it was in both nations' interest to tackle climate change in a cooperative manner.

6. Taking methane matters more seriously

The world has been slow to understand the dangers of methane, a particularly powerful heat-trapping gas. But ever since last year's COP26 in Glasgow, nations have been signing up to a global pledge to cut those emissions, which can come from oil and gas wells, coal seams, landfills and livestock. In the lead-up to COP27 in Egypt, for instance, new nations such as Australia joined the pledge and brought the total number of countries signed up to over 150. In the US, meanwhile, the Biden administration pushed forward stronger rules that would require energy companies to do more to stifle methane leaks.

BUSINESS WORLD

[Opinion] That was 2022

By: Luis Teodoro

The year 2022 is mostly ending on an economic and political note. The inflation rate is at an unprecedented 8%, the highest level since 2008, while the looming passage of the Maharlika Investment Fund bill in Congress is indicating how the legislative and executive branches of government, while supposedly separate and equal, are practically one and the same. Expect the Supreme Court, in which the majority are appointees of former President Rodrigo Duterte, to be as supportive of those two other branches as well, should there be any challenges to the laws they pass and implement.

This is not to say that previous years had not ended with political and economic issues and with their consequences unresolved. The Duterte administration's last year in office also passed into history with its control over all three branches of government intact, and with unemployment and the prices of prime commodities, housing, and medical care at record highs.

The first is in violation of the republican principle of checks and balances, while the second is indicative of how little attention Mr. Duterte and company paid to easing the suffering many families have had to endure because of the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on employment and on business. But what makes this year-end unique is that the same problems and worse are still facing this country and its people six months since almost the entire Marcos family returned to power on the promise of change, 36 years after the 1986 EDSA civilian-military mutiny forced them out of the country and into exile.

It is becoming exceedingly clear that rather than "moving on," the results of the May 2022 elections are making only a repetition of the past possible — the exact opposite of the promise of change that beguiled many Filipinos. It was the Marcos restoration that made the year excruciatingly significant, and particularly troubling to those Filipinos aware of history. Political scientists, historians, and most of all the survivors of torture and illegal detention, and the kin of the disappeared and murdered during the martial law period, thought it impossible. But it has indeed come to pass for a number of quite obvious reasons.

The year 2022 practically began with the removal, courtesy of the supposedly independent Commission on Elections (Comelec), of the major challenge to Ferdinand Marcos, Jr.'s and his family's decades-long drive for the Presidency. The Commission

denied the petitions for his disqualification that argued that he cannot run for public office because of his alleged failure to file income tax returns from 1982 to 1985.

Mr. Marcos followed up that victory by wooing the military, assuring it of his support for a bigger budget come 2023 for its National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict (NTF-ELCAC). He was true to his word: his allies and kin in Congress — his cousin and his own son, among others — approved the increase in the NTF-ELCAC's budget in the P5.268 trillion 2023 General Appropriations Act (GAA). He signed it into law, despite the Armed Forces of the Philippines' (AFP) claim that the New People's Army (NPA) is no longer as serious a threat to oligarchic rule as it once was.

But it does make sense for Mr. Marcos, since if there is anything he has learned from his late father's rule, it is how crucial military support can be to the survival of any regime.

But what resonated most in the mass of the electorate was his campaign promise to make rice available at P20 a kilo. Rice — its availability and its cost — has always been an election and governance issue in this country, hence Mr. Marcos' promise, which much of the electorate, especially those in the direst economic straits, believed he could achieve, together with the hope that he would distribute to the poorest at least part of the wealth that his family in some form or another amassed during the Marcos Sr. dictatorship.

But forgetting the past is what the family hopes will serve it best, and they made it clear during the year. As various groups and personalities assailed the martial law period as one of the darkest in Philippine history, the family condemned them for their "preoccupation with the past," and urged everyone to "move on," despite the imperative of remembering what happened in history as the only means of preventing its repetition.

Nevertheless, the family's "forget the past" mantra did not stop the online troll farms, no doubt orchestrated by the usual broadcast and print media hacks and public relations mercenaries, from going back to the martial law era by painting the Marcos Sr. dictatorship as a "golden age" despite the gross human rights violations, the rice and energy crisis, the "world-class" corruption, the economic decline, the war in Mindanao, the savaging of Philippine culture, and the poverty of the millions under its boot heel that characterized it.

Media and election watch groups have correctly identified disinformation as the most crucial factor behind the Marcos restoration. Ours is supposed to be the Information Age, but truth tellers are demonized and under threat from the onslaught of the

mercenaries of disinformation and the demagogues behind them. Thanks to the “golden age” myth and the fairy tale that he would distribute to the poor some of his family’s wealth that the trolls and their cohorts in broadcast and print propagated, Ferdinand Marcos, Jr. is arguably nearly as powerful as his father was, as a consequence of the electorate’s packing both the House of Representatives and the Senate with his kin and allies; the judicial system’s pliability to Executive pressure; and the police and military’s predictable partiality to the rule of another Marcos.

Apparently in deference to his presumed popularity, which the public opinion polls now say is at record highs, much of today’s supposedly free press seems to be content with merely following him around and reporting what he did or said on this or that occasion. Only the handful of independent journalists and media organizations that have survived years of threats, harassments, physical assaults, libel suits, and assassinations have dared point out that other than make such motherhood statements as that “we should raise production” or “improve” our so-called “industries,” Mr. Marcos has yet to specify exactly how he intends to achieve either, and, as critical as the public health situation and the country’s problems with food are, he has yet to name a full-time head of the Department of Health (DoH) and continues to be his own Secretary of Agriculture.

Instead of sustainable means and programs, still in place are the same short-term Duterte regime band-aid responses to public health problems, poverty, unemployment, the rocketing inflation rate, and climate change, such as limited financial aid (“ayuda”), and relief operations for this sector or that region despite the urgent need for long-term, strategic solutions to this country’s and its people’s monumental problems.

Volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, floods, or even the pandemic and other natural calamities are not so much the major causes of Filipino afflictions. Rather are they the doing of the uncaring and ineffectual dynasts the mass of disinformed voters habitually put in office who are obsessed with pelf and power, and whose misplaced, self-servingly lucrative priorities prevent their paying more attention to the plight of the very same long-suffering people to whom they owe the posts they think are theirs by right.

Like the many other years that have since passed, that was 2022.

[Opinion] The New Year's guide to living

By: Chit U. Juan

The first order of the day is to look at the New Year as a time to change. January is when it is easiest to start a new habit, a new goal or even a new lifestyle.

But more than just our personal decisions to change a habit, it is also a good time for companies and leaders to start opening up to new ideas and maybe new ways of doing business.

THE GREEN IMPERATIVE

I was at a forum where EU rules were being discussed for exports from our country and the rest of the world. Some exporters see the “greening of the supply chain” as yet another nontariff barrier because certification requirements would increase their expense.

Maybe this time, we should think of going green because it is our duty to do something right, not just to be profitable.

At the forum, there was a manufacturer of shoes made from pineapple fiber, a sustainable product looking for export markets. Why is he into this business? Because it is the right thing to do, he says. What is your green initiative this year?

THE DIVERSITY DIRECTION

More and more companies are looking to include diversity and inclusion in their work plans. The Philippine Business Coalition for Women Empowerment has attracted more member companies. What does it take? If you are a company with forward thinkers in your management, it is about time to get certified as a company that empowers women and includes diversity as one of your goals.

ENABLING HEALTHIER LIVES

If you are in the food business, it is about time to think of serving not just cheap but healthier fare as well to improve consumer health. If we run a company cafeteria, it is time to look for providers who not only sell affordable food to our employees, but healthier food as well. After all, the ones who decide are the management, Human Resources and Finance. You may be surprised that healthier food served in cafeterias may mean fewer sick days.

EFFICIENT TECHNOLOGY

If you have not yet invested in inverter appliances, think again. These energy-efficient appliances, lights and other equipment save the company a lot of money through lower energy consumption while saving the planet. Yes, it may be expensive at the start, but savings as well as a smaller carbon footprint come as a reward for the planet and your bottom line.

BIKE, DON'T DRIVE

Many factories now encourage employees to live near their place of work and avoid long commutes. They give their workers bicycles, motorcycle loans and other provisions so they can avoid long travel times. This also boosts the efficiency of workers who otherwise have to wake up early and get less sleep.

VEGETABLE GARDENS

Companies can designate an area where employees can plant and grow their own vegetables. This helps employees save on market trips and makes them more conscious about growing their own food. Even the lowly malunggay or moringa tree can give employees a lot of healthy meals at home or in the cafeteria. There are urban gardens, like plant towers, that can be started even in high-rise offices with decks or open rooftops.

Instead of just putting tree-planting activities in the Human Resources calendar, you can start allocating space for company gardens where employees can buy fresh vegetables or harvest what they plant.

WORK OUTSIDE

Make a field day or a day outside a regular occasion for your town hall meetings rather than another gathering inside air-conditioned offices or hotels. Get some sun, fresh air and let employees work or meet outside the office for a change. Go to a park or a farm, for a change. You may be surprised with better results when your team gets to commune with nature. Take your employees on a hike, go on a picnic or just let them breathe some fresh air regularly.

GREEN REWARDS

The best ideas come from the people who feel the heat of brownouts, high electricity costs and the high price of onions and rice. Listen to ideas from the smallest member or the one who had the simplest education. Green is the new black. Maybe they have ideas that can help your bottom line while you help mother nature. Reward suggestions on how to make your company greener, healthier or safer.

Ready to start turning a new leaf? Start with yourself, then your family and then your company. If everyone just did something different to make the world a better place, we will all be able to take 2023 by the horns and hope for a better, healthier year. But we have to start with ourselves.

What habit can you change this New Year?

CNN PHILIPPINES

Gov't to update PH energy plan, including nuclear power use — Palace

Metro Manila (CNN Philippines, January 1) — The Marcos administration is eyeing to expand the country's energy sources by updating the Philippine Energy Plan with the use of nuclear power as one of its priorities, Malacañang said on Sunday.

The Office of the Press Secretary (OPS) said the Department of Energy (DOE) will be the agency responsible for updating the Philippine Energy Plan to guide the Nuclear Energy Program Implementing Organization (NEPIO) and the Nuclear Energy Program Inter-Agency Committee (NEP-IAC).

“The use of nuclear power is also an important part of the energy mix that the DOE is eyeing,” the OPS said in a statement.

Marcos has been vocal about his interest in revisiting policies on nuclear energy use and in building nuclear power plants in the country.

During the last quarter of 2022, the chief executive also expressed interest in deals and partnerships with other countries on using nuclear power.

Critics have warned that nuclear power would pose more risks to the country as they called for the government to instead focus on renewable energy sources.

“The DOE, in collaboration with the Energy Regulatory Commission, is also set to develop the policy and framework for new and emerging renewable energy technologies. These include offshore wind, waste-to-energy, expanded rooftop solar program, as well as ocean and tidal stream energy,” the OPS said. Among the DOE's main goals for 2023 are to pursue emergency measures and actions to ensure energy supply during times of need, push for the continuous development of alternative fuels, and increase access to electricity.

MANILA BULLETIN

[A bountiful Media Noche and fruitful 2023](#)

By: Fil C. Sionil

For moms, it looks like there's no difference between Noche Buena and Media Noche with the kitchen the center of activities, preparing for scrumptious, mouth-watering dishes the family loves.

Ever wonder the difference between Noche Buena and Media Noche? Aren't you baffled as to the phrases' usage for a very distinct occasion, the highlight of the Holiday Season?

Having been reared in an Ilonggo home wherein a good number of words are actually in Spanish like jabon (soap), soltero (bachelor), servilleta (table napkin). Thus, hablo un poquito de espanol (I speak a little Spanish). As opposed to today when it is an elective subject, during my school days Spanish was a mandatory subject taken in the first two years of college. Thus, it seems like there's hardly any difference between the two.

Now, here's the thing. Noche Buena is a dinner celebration on Christmas eve that lasts until the early morning hours of Christmas Day while Media Noche is associated with a dinner gathering, ushering in the New Year.

And legend has it that both celebrations, Noche Buena and Media Noche, date back to the introduction of Christianity and the Spanish colonization of the country that lasted for over 300 years. It's not just the sumptuous food but it's the whole vibe of love and togetherness that makes both festive occasions incredibly charming and magical.

Revitalized with family love and positivity, we are ready to face the New Year, surviving and leaving behind 2022 that was peppered with more ups than downs, twists and turns, mounds, humps and bumps.

It also came with surprises: there's the geopolitical tension with the invasion of Ukraine by Russia. Whilst the twisted turn in his political profile, former US President Donald Trump and rapper Kanye West announced their intention to seek the Oval office. Domestically, we were able to withstand the supply chain issue courtesy of the Russia-Ukraine conflict with the country successfully flying through the economic storms and typhoons.

My favorite market analyst, Jonas Ravelas, likened the country to the flag carrier, Philippine Airlines, amidst the headwinds still shining through with full of surprises following the opening of the economy that alternatively fueled more domestic activities, bringing economic performance better than expected.

On a personal note, 2022 was neither tough nor easy, starting off with my strictest, my most stern critic National Artist for Literature F. Sionil-Jose joining the biggest editorial desk up there and was followed several months after by the wind behind his wings, wife Aunt Tita.

Looking back, indeed, there were events that unfolded in the year that was, notably the surge in inflation rate due to cost-push brought about by the Russia-Ukraine conflict, the effects of which we all felt and will continue to linger this 2023.

While the economy is back beyond normal, this ongoing geopolitical tensions, potential supply chain issues, which will keep inflation rate elevated as well as climate change are among the difficult challenges the global economic managers have to address.

As the wheels of business churn to full speed ahead, I fly along with the observation that if we hurdle the high inflation environment in the first half of 2023 then the second half will be better and more fruitful.

Cheers 2023.

[Opinion] Facing 2023 with hope

Today, the start of a new year, we are unified by hope and willing to work toward the same goal – a better economy and a better life for all.

Despite the significant increases in the prices of fuel, food, and services, 92 percent of Filipinos said they will face the new year with hope, according to a recent survey conducted by Pulse Asia.

What do ordinary people hope for in 2023? Jobs, education, shelter, food, the end to Covid, lower prices –are what many people are saying in casual conversations, media interviews, official statements, and even in prayer petitions.

Here are a few of the situations many hope for that were articulated by our columnists, editors, and readers: We look forward that more people will see climate change as a grave threat to our way of life, to life as we know it.” So much about climate change has been discussed in many international forums like the recent Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP27), that took place in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt. Many people have experienced climate change through stronger typhoons, higher floodwaters, thicker snowstorms, hotter summers, colder winters.

A former senator hopes “that Filipino children born in 2023 and beyond will grow up well nourished, especially during their first 1,000 days of life. Healthy children are the foundation of a strong nation.” Malnourishment and stunted growth are a problem among children and that has become more serious because many heads of families lost their jobs during the lockdowns at the height of the pandemic. The private sector, through non-government organizations (NGOs), has responded with more feeding and livelihood programs to help find a solution to hunger.

“For a more efficient agriculture sector that can allow farmers and fishers to earn enough to be considered at least middle class” is a hope that can bring a solution to three problems. One, it will add to the number of farmers whose numbers are decreasing because farmers tell their children to pursue other occupations to earn more and have better lives. Two, more farmers will mean more land tilled to produce food to give the proper nourishment to our children. And three, earning more will push the farmers out of poverty.

Another hope directed at solving poverty is for “greater financial inclusion, for microfinance and microinsurance to be made available to more poor and marginalized Filipinos.” Microfinancing has funded the growth of microentrepreneurs, many of them

now having bigger businesses, better lives, and funding the education of their children. As peace has become significant to more people because the effects of the Russia- Ukraine war has affected everyone's lives through increased prices of fuel and food, a reader simply wrote his hope for 2023 as: "That the Ukraine-Russia war is resolved so the rest of the world can get back to normal life."

Many readers said hope for the return of "normal" starting with the end to Covid: "That 2023 will be the year we could bounce back from the pandemic." We ended the year with the easing of restrictions, the opening of businesses, the optional use of masks in open spaces, the start of face-to-face classes and church services as Covid infections continues to go down around the Philippines.

With a strong leadership from government and support from the people, we are optimistic that we can make many of what we hope for a reality.

Solving problems and opening doors

By: Carol Malasig

There's still a lot of confusion as to what our diplomats do and I often feel it's a disservice to look at them as people who only issue passports. While consular matters are important, a lot goes on behind the walls of the brutalist edifice along Roxas Boulevard.

In the field of science and technology, the Philippines and Korea rekindled cooperation work by agreeing to jointly provide funding of ₱5 million (\$96,000) and implement two projects related to climate change and smart agriculture for three years.

The inaugural Joint Science and Technology Consultation (JSTC) Meeting was led by our Department of Science and Technology (DOST) and Korea's Ministry of Science and ICT. The two countries have been partners in the field, together making strides in technology through partnerships between DOST and various government agencies in Korea. This time, the two countries identified great potential for enhanced cooperation, particularly on smart agriculture, climate change, and oceanography.

Ambassador Theresa De Vega said that the first JSTC marks another milestone in bilateral ties as both sides seek to deepen relations through science, technology, and innovation. De Vega also expressed high hopes for the invaluable partnership that will arise from the Philippines' quality talent and the ROK's technical and digital competitiveness in the sciences.

MANILA STANDARD

6 ways digital transformation can help countries achieve sustainable development

The idea that emerging digital technologies are key requirements for sustainable development is not new.

For years, the World Economic Forum has continually reiterated the need for governments and larger private institutions to adopt digital transformation as a way of meeting sustainable development goals and tackling bigger long-term issues such as climate change and economic inequality.

This view has also been largely shared by the United Nations and many of the world's leading academics.

The past few Philippine government administrations also share this view. In recent years, the national government and various LGUs have already engaged private sector partners such as Aboitiz InfraCapital (AIC) to improve the Philippines' digital infrastructure with the ultimate goal of facilitating equitable and sustainable development in the country.

Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, in particular, AIC has grown to be a major player in the country's efforts towards achieving digital transformation. The company's investments in small cell sites and common tower projects have proven instrumental in boosting digital communications across the Philippines.

All this being said, the question as to how digital transformation will result in sustainable development still remains. To answer this, this short guide will summarize some of the ways digital evolution will help countries achieve their sustainable development goals.

1.) It Removes Barriers That Limit Job Opportunities

High domestic employment has to be achieved before sustainable development can begin in earnest. Unemployment and underemployment reduce economic activity and value creation which, in turn, makes it difficult to achieve sustainable development.

Through the expansion of digital infrastructure, Philippines' development partners could create the conditions needed to improve domestic employment.

With better digital connections, access to knowledge, training, and jobs will no longer be as limited by geography or economic status.

Additionally, digital transformation will create more equitable access to both global and domestic markets, enabling greater entrepreneurship and trade, thus, increasing employment opportunities.

2.) Digital Transformation Expands Freedom of Expression

Digital transformation will not just increase a country's economic power but also its population's sociopolitical power—a key component of sustainable development.

Digital access lays the foundations for true freedom of expression, allowing normally disenfranchised and economically disadvantaged individuals to finally have a meaningful voice.

Even modest digital transformation has proven itself to be a great equalizer, giving ordinary citizens more of a say in the policy directions of their home countries than was ever possible before the internet.

This louder voice can be critical for ensuring that development does not unnecessarily infringe on the rights of communities or create long-term environmental problems.

3.) It Brings People into the Financial System

In developing and middle-income countries, there remains a widespread mistrust of financial institutions, hampering the ability of these organizations to fund development and entrepreneurship endeavors.

The expansion of digital infrastructure and the convenience it brings to personal finance will be key to encouraging more individuals to become a part of mainstream financial systems.

Regardless of whether an individual ultimately chooses to use a traditional bank or a newer fintech business, the entry of more people into mainstream finance will be important for reducing the risks of business and entrepreneurship.

Widespread adoption of digital finance will also enable the more efficient processing of various important services, reducing the burden on both individuals and institutions, and ultimately making it easier to shift to more sustainable ways of facilitating development.

4.) It Improves Access to Healthcare

Adding digital infrastructure can effectively increase access to medical services through telemedicine. Telemedicine services and improved access to medications will be a boon to communities without immediate access to a doctor or medical facilities.

Soon, digital transformation may become key to effective preventative medicine, improving the overall health of a population while simultaneously reducing the cost of healthcare.

This more efficient delivery of preventative healthcare can also reduce the financial, time, and labor burden associated with palliative care, setting the stage for more sustainable health care models.

5.) Digital Transformation Prevents Labor Flight and Maintains Family Connections

Labor flight is a serious issue affecting many developing and middle-income countries. The people emigrating from their home countries in search of a better way of life are typically the most productive individuals in their country.

While they may deliver value to their home country through remittances, the bulk of their productive value will go to their host economies. Their migration also reduces the integrity of family units, putting young children at a developmental disadvantage and creating long-term social repercussions along the way.

Digital transformation can empower more individuals to earn a decent income in their home countries, reducing the motive to migrate elsewhere.

This allows them to create more value domestically and prevents capital flight over the long-term. This also has the effect of preserving families, enabling the next generation to have a better chance at becoming more productive and self-actualized adults.

6.) Digital Transformation is a Requisite for the Internet of Things

The Internet of Things (IoT) is a technology trend that is already changing everything about how societies function.

Even now, it is enabling substantial efficiency gains in agriculture, energy production, water management, and the distribution of services. In other words, the Internet of Things is creating the very conditions needed for efficient and sustainable development.

However, for the IoT to bring its full benefits to a population, affordable and high-quality digital connectivity must become universal.

To enjoy the benefits of the IoT, it is not enough for every individual to own a smartphone—they must also be able to use it to connect to the internet wherever they may be in the country, without any difficulties related to cost or connection quality.

A well-directed digital transformation involving both the public and private spheres may very well be the single biggest factor that will empower countries to shift toward sustainable development.

In middle-income countries such as the Philippines, this transformation may even enable a quality of life comparable to highly industrialized economies for just a fraction of the resources it used to take.

With this in mind, funding wider digitalization in support of sustainable development should be something policymakers and business leaders take seriously.

PANAY NEWS

[\[Opinion\] Survival](#)

THE ILOILO City Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office (CDRRMO) encourages residents to have survival kits containing tools and supplies enough to meet their needs for 72 hours during disasters or emergencies.

This makes sense. The Philippines is among the countries most affected by climate change in the last two decades. Emergencies such as earthquakes, storms, flooding, storm surge, water scarcity, fire, and soil liquefaction can happen, some without warning.

A survival kit usually contains the family's food supply, first-aid and hygiene kits, medicines, water, clothes, beddings, and other items they will need to survive for the next 72 hours as three days are said to be the crucial time for disaster response. The kit has to be checked and replenished every three months and stored in an area that can be easily accessed.

It is incumbent upon the government to be more active and assertive in increasing the resiliency of citizens and transforming them to become its reliable partners and enablers for sustainable development. One effective tool to realize sustainable development is through education. It is vital to cultivate in the minds of people, especially our young ones, a sustainable lifestyle and resilient character that will allow them to reach their full potential while moderately using resources and mitigating climate change. There used to be a proposed measure in the House giving the Department of Education the mandate to incorporate Sustainability and Resiliency Studies, or SRS, in the school curriculum. What happened to it?

The SRS is eyed as a fusion of sustainability, disaster resilience, and climate change education. This course, contained in modules to be incorporated in the Science, Social Studies, Values Education, and Health subjects, can help foster a culture of sustainability among the Filipino youth to empower them to be our agents in building sustainable and resilient communities all over the country. Let us produce a new generation of Filipinos who value sustainable lifestyle, resilient and able to help combat climate change.

PHILIPPINE INFORMATION AGENCY

Ensuring unhampered energy supply, use of renewable energy, top priorities of PBBM admin in 2023

MANILA -- Ensuring an unhampered supply of energy alongside the promotion and utilization of renewable energy sources are top priorities of the administration of President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr., in an aggressive bid to realize a sufficient and clean energy supply in the future.

Based on the administration's year-end report, the Department of Energy's (DOE) major plans for 2023 include updating the Philippine Energy Plan, pursuing contingency measures and activities to ensure energy supply during critical periods, and pushing for the continued development of alternative fuel and improving access to electricity.

The DOE, in collaboration with the Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC), is also set to develop the policy and framework for new and emerging renewable energy (RE) technologies. These include offshore wind, waste-to-energy, expanded rooftop solar program, as well as ocean and tidal stream energy.

To meet the target of 35 percent renewable energy (RE) share in the country's power generation mix by 2030 and 50 percent by 2040, the Marcos administration has increased Investments in RE projects.

The executive department reported that from July 1 to December 14, 2022, the DOE awarded 41 RE service contracts with a potential capacity of 9.2 gigawatts (GW).

Of which, around 6.2 GW of equivalent capacity will come from offshore wind (OSW) service contracts.

The DOE also issued 18 Certificates of Award to the winning bidders of the 1st Green Energy Auction Program (GEAP), with an aggregate capacity of 1,866.93 megawatts (MW).

To encourage more investors to develop and utilize RE, the DOE increased the annual percentage of Renewable Portfolio Standards for on-grid areas from 1 percent to 2.52 percent beginning 2023 and started preferential dispatch of all RE-generating units in the Wholesale Electricity Spot Market (WESM).

The DOE also allowed 100 percent foreign capital in RE projects by amending the implementing rules and regulations (IRR) of the RE Act that had previously limited foreign ownership of RE projects to 40 percent.

Further, the DOE has endorsed to the Office of the President a draft Executive Order that would strengthen and rationalize the regulatory framework for the immediate development of the OSW.

Also this year, the DOE made continued energy resource development, initiated the development of alternative fuels and implemented the government's Energy Resiliency Compliance Plan.

On December 14, 2022, the DOE launched the National Energy Contingency Plan (NECP) for "The Big One," aimed at crafting harmonized multi-sectoral contingency plans and disaster response measures from energy stakeholders.

At the same time, the DOE and National Power Corp. (NPC) will undertake its renewable energy development program, including the hybridization of diesel generating facilities, considering that 89 percent of the energy generation and capacity mix in off-grid areas came from oil-based sources.

The use of nuclear power is also an important part of the energy mix that the DOE is eyeing.

The DOE will update the existing Nuclear Road Map to guide both the Nuclear Energy Program Implementing Organization (NEPIO) and the Nuclear Energy Program Inter-Agency Committee (NEP-IAC) in addressing the challenges of the country's nuclear energy program.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

DND resolute in working for peaceful, stable, secure PH

By: Priam Nepomuceno

MANILA – A peaceful, stable and secure Philippines. This will remain the main thrust of the Department of National Defense (DND) as it joins the Filipino people in welcoming the New Year.

DND officer-in-charge Undersecretary Jose Faustino Jr. emphasized this and said they will build on the progress they made in 2022, guided by their 10-point Defense Agenda.

"As we enter the New Year, the Department remains resolute in working towards our vision of providing a peaceful, stable, and secure environment conducive to national development, aptly guided by our 10-point Defense Agenda. To this end, I am confident that the trust and support of the Filipino people will continue to inspire us to sustain this noble pursuit of the Department," Faustino said on Saturday.

"To this end, I am confident that the trust and support of the Filipino people will continue to inspire us to sustain this noble pursuit of the Department," he added.

The DND's 10-point defense agenda includes sovereignty and territorial integrity; internal security and stability; disaster resilience and climate change adaptation; cyber defense; modernization, capability and capacity development; security cooperation and engagements; Reserve Force development; welfare of soldiers, veterans and civilian human resource; legal and legislative agenda; and protection of cognitive domain.

Faustino reiterated the DND is always committed to defend and protect the country and its people from any dangers and security threats. "Nawa'y sama-sama nating salubungin ang taong 2023 nang may pag-asa at pagmamahal para sa bayan (May we all greet 2023 with hope and love for the country)," he said.

He noted the selfless contribution of the men and women of the DND made possible the "significant strides in our strategic thrusts and operational goals" for this year.

In 2022, the DND weathered the challenge of helping maintain national stability amid the change in administration following the May 2022 elections as well as uncertainties in the domestic and global security landscapes.

Also, some of the DND's modernization programs bore fruit in 2022, including the arrival and commissioning of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP)'s first ground-based air defense system, acquisition of the first two out of nine missile boats from Israel, and deliveries of another set of two Turkish-made T-129 attack helicopters.

Progress was also made in the campaign against the New People's Army (NPA), as only 23 of the 89 guerilla fronts reported in 2016 are still existing. Of the 23, only five are capable of conducting any action.

"In 2022, we continued to ensure internal security, upheld our sovereignty and territorial integrity, pursued the organization's modernization and capability development, advanced disaster resilience systems, and enriched our defense and security partnerships in the international arena," Faustino said.

Earlier, AFP chief-of-staff Lt. Gen. Bartolome Vicente Bacarro said "external security operations" are always a cornerstone of sovereignty and are done to protect the country from "pressure and aggression from the outside".

Marcos administration prioritizes cheap, renewable energy

By: Azer Parrocha

MANILA – The administration of Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. will continue to pursue measures and policies to ensure the availability of cheap and reliable energy through the promotion and utilization of renewable energy (RE) sources.

This was the promise made by the Department of Energy (DOE) in its yearend report which identified major plans for 2023 including updating the Philippine Energy Plan, pursuing contingency measures and activities to ensure energy supply during critical periods, and pushing for the continued development of alternative fuel and improving access to electricity.

Marcos, in his first State of the Nation Address (SONA), said energy will be a “key sector” in the administration’s push for economic growth and increased employment.

He said the country is searching for new power sources while improving the mix of the energy supply between traditional and renewable sources.

As part of these efforts, the DOE, in collaboration with the Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC), is set to develop policy and framework for new and emerging renewable energy (RE) technologies.

“These include offshore wind, waste-to-energy, expanded rooftop solar program as well as ocean and tidal stream energy,” the DOE said in a news release on Sunday.

The DOE said the Marcos administration has increased investments in RE projects to meet the target of a 35 percent RE share in the country’s power generation mix by 2030 and 50 percent by 2040.

From July 1 to Dec. 14, 2022, the DOE said it has awarded 41 RE service contracts with a potential capacity of 9.2 gigawatts (GW).

Of this number, around 6.2 GW of equivalent capacity will come from offshore wind (OSW) service contracts.

The DOE also issued 18 Certificates of Award to the winning bidders of the 1st Green Energy Auction Program (GEAP), with an aggregate capacity of 1,866.93 megawatts (MW).

To encourage more investors to develop and utilize RE, the DOE increased the annual percentage of Renewable Portfolio Standards for on-grid areas from 1 percent to 2.52 percent beginning 2023 and started preferential dispatch of all RE-generating units in the Wholesale Electricity Spot Market (WESM).

In November last year, the DOE also allowed 100 percent foreign capital in RE projects by amending the implementing rules and regulations (IRR) of the RE Act that had previously limited foreign ownership of RE projects to 40 percent.

The DOE has also endorsed to the Office of the President the draft Executive Order that would strengthen and rationalize the regulatory framework for the immediate development of the OSW.

Other accomplishments under the DOE include initiating the development of alternative fuels and implementing the government's Energy Resiliency Compliance Plan.

The DOE launched on Dec. 14 last year the National Energy Contingency Plan (NECP) for "The Big One," aimed at crafting harmonized multi-sectoral contingency plans and disaster response measures from energy stakeholders.

Together with the National Power Corp. (NPC), the DOE will also undertake its renewable energy development program, including the hybridization of diesel generating facilities, considering that 89 percent of the energy generation and capacity mix in off-grid areas came from oil-based sources.

Marcos, in his SONA, also expressed belief that it is time also to re-examine the country's strategy towards building nuclear power plants in the Philippines while complying with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) regulations for nuclear power plants.

The DOE said nuclear power is also an important part of the energy mix that the DOE is eyeing.

It will also update the existing Nuclear Road Map to guide both the Nuclear Energy Program Implementing Organization (NEPIO) and the Nuclear Energy Program Inter-Agency Committee (NEP-IAC) in addressing the challenges of the country's nuclear energy program.

SUNSTAR

[\[Opinion\] Environmental highlights of 2022](#)

By: Rox Peña

Every year end, I make a summary of the significant local and global environmental news and issues. For 2022, here are the highlights which were culled from my columns:

In early January 2022, the National Centers for Environmental Information (NCEI) of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration of the United States said that 2021 was the sixth warmest year on record since 1880. According to NCEI, the Earth's average land and ocean surface temperature in 2021 was 0.84 of a degree Centigrade above the 20th-century average. Ocean heat content, which describes the amount of heat stored in the upper levels of the ocean, was record high in 2021, surpassing the previous record high set in 2020.

On February 28 to March 2, the fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly hosted by the UN Environment Programme was held. The world's ministers for the environment agreed to establish an Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee to set the terms of a treaty on plastic pollution by the end of 2024. The UN will then convene a conference to adopt the treaty.

The World Meteorological Organization released on May 18, 2022, its State of the Global Climate report for 2021. According to the report, four key climate change indicators – greenhouse gas concentrations, sea level rise, ocean heat and ocean acidification – set new records in 2021. It confirmed that the past seven years have been the warmest seven years on record. The average global temperature in 2021 was about 1.11 (± 0.13) ° C above the 1850-1900 pre-industrial average. The most recent seven years, 2015 to 2021, are the seven warmest years on record.

In April, President Rodrigo Duterte signed into law Republic Act 11684 which designates Mount Arayat in Pampanga as a protected landscape or area.

The mangrove planting project of Bonuan Boquig National High School in Dagupan City was shortlisted in the World's Best School Prizes, Environmental Action category, by the international educational group T4 Education. They competed against nine other schools from different countries. In October, it was announced that the school won and got a \$50,000 prize.

In July 2022, Ocean Conservancy, a nonprofit environmental advocacy group based in Washington, D.C., United States, issued an apology for a report released in September 2015 claiming that the Philippines, China, Indonesia, Thailand, and Vietnam are the top five plastic polluters in the world. The controversial report was removed from their website.

The much-awaited Extended Producer Responsibility Act of 2022 or Republic Act No. 11898, lapsed into law on July 23, 2022. It amended RA 9003, or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000, inserting a provision that institutionalizes extended producer responsibility as a practical approach to efficient waste management and adapts the concept of circular economy. The law requires large companies to adopt and implement policies for the proper management of plastic packaging wastes.

The U.S. made a historic move when President Joe Biden signed into law in August 2022 the 'Inflation Reduction Act of 2022' which targets to reduce the U.S. carbon emissions by roughly 40 percent by 2030.

On November 06 to 18, 2022, the United Nations Climate Change Conference or COP 27 was held in Egypt. Towards the end of the conference, it was announced that countries reached a historic decision to establish and operationalize a loss and damage fund, particularly for nations most vulnerable to the climate crisis. This was the issue being pushed by the Philippines and other climate-vulnerable countries.

Note that most of the news are related to climate change. It will probably remain as the major issue this year. In the Philippines, we expect the IRR of the Plastic EPR Law or RA 11898 to be released. It is a major development as far as plastic pollution is concerned.

Happy New Year everyone!

THE MANILA TIMES

[DENR receives resilience roadmaps](#)

By: Bella Cariaso

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) received resilience roadmaps and corresponding investment portfolios for risk resilience (IPRR) of 16 vulnerable areas amid the threat of climate change in the country.

Environment Undersecretary for Finance, Information Systems and Climate Change Analiza Rebuelta-Teh said that this will boost the country's overall effort to address climate change.

Rebuelta-Teh said the roadmaps and IPRR for 12 climate-vulnerable provinces and four major urban cities were turned over to the DENR and Public-Private Partnership (PPP) Center of the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA).

She said the roadmaps were developed under the Risk Resiliency Program of the Cabinet Cluster on Climate Change Adaptation, Mitigation and Disaster Risk Reduction.

The roadmaps were developed for the provinces of Siquijor, Eastern Samar, Northern Samar, North Cotabato, Maguindanao, Sulu, Lanao del Sur, Apayao, Kalinga, Ifugao, Mountain Province, Catanduanes, as well as the urban centers of Metro Manila, Metro Cebu, Metro Iloilo and Metro Davao, Rebuelta-Teh said.

She added that each roadmap with IPRR contains recommended actions to manage the risks and vulnerabilities in the climate-vulnerable areas in the form of specific resilience measures.

"Key findings and relevant experiences were also presented by the study teams that conducted the risk assessments in the climate-vulnerable areas during the turnover ceremony. These planning documents will definitely help inform both local and national investment programming, resulting in more efficient and climate-responsive programs that make better use of our limited resources," Rebuelta-Teh said.

The initiative is implemented by the NEDA-PPP Center and the DENR under the Strengthening Public-Private Partnerships in the Philippines with support from the Asian Development Bank and the Government of the United Kingdom through its Urban Climate Change Resilience Trust Fund.

France remains committed to PH climate resilience

One year after the devastation of typhoon Odette, the French government remains committed to provide assistance to the Philippines for emergency relief and long-term climate resilience.

The Embassy of France to the Philippines was among the first to provide emergency assistance to those who were affected when super typhoon Odette struck the Philippines in December 16, 2021. The typhoon claimed nearly 400 victims and displaced tens of thousands of people in the Philippines.

In response to the aftermath of Odette, the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, through its Crisis and Support Center (CDCS), mobilized 1 million euros of emergency aid to support ACTED and the French Red Cross, together with the Philippine Red Cross, and another 1 million euros to the World Food Program and Unicef. These projects will be carried throughout 2022 and beyond.

In typhoon-struck Siargao Island, ACTED Philippines provided hygiene kits and shelter repair kits in the municipalities of Siso, San Francisco, San Isidro and Santa Monica in the first weeks of the response.

ACTED's flagship project in Surigao del Norte is focused on rehabilitation of water sources reconstruction of damaged infrastructures, and construction of WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene) facilities, which benefitted 1,269 households or 6,345 individuals.

The Airbus Foundation provided a helicopter to deliver medicines and supplies to French and Filipino communities in Siargao. The Philippine Air Force also extended its help to the French Embassy in bringing food, medicine, and other supplies to Bohol and Siargao.

The French Chamber of Commerce and the France-Philippines United Action Foundation organized a donation drive for the benefit of communities in difficulty in Cebu, Bohol, and Siargao, in coordination with the Philippine Coast Guard.

The Alliance française de Cebu and French NGO Enfants d'Asie sent 3,000 liters of water to Cebu for the French and Filipino communities.

Cooperation between the French Embassy and its partners in the Philippine government, French community, NGOs and the private sector underscore the commitment of France in supporting the Philippines in its efforts to adapt to the consequences of climate change, illustrated by increasing frequency of typhoons.

[Opinion] Extreme poverty, climate change, worthy resolutions

The start of every year is traditionally an occasion for making resolutions. Policy-makers and other national leaders should pledge to do something audacious in 2023, like eradicating extreme poverty and fighting climate change.

Those issues are somewhat related. That is, climate change has a poverty dimension to it. Climate change affects everyone, but the poor tend to be the most vulnerable to the consequences of rising global temperatures. Unlike the impoverished, for instance, people with means can find shelter during intense storms or have access to food during droughts.

To be realistic, society is unlikely to eradicate all types of poverty. Relative poverty, for instance, will persist, because resources are not equally distributed. That is not necessarily bad.

In some developed countries, a select few have more than others while everyone else has enough to live comfortably well. In the Philippines, even some taipans are poorer relative to the wealthiest individual.

The kind of poverty that should be eradicated is defined as living on the equivalent of \$1 or \$2 a day. That is worse than the official poverty rate in many countries, including the Philippines. To be extremely poor means being deprived of basic needs, like food and shelter. They lack proper health care services, resulting in shorter lifespans. They have no access to quality education, which limits their potential to earn income. And with that, their children grow up poor, repeating the cycle for the next generation.

The Duterte administration did well to reduce the poverty incidence. Unfortunately, many families who earned enough to be officially above the poverty line probably slid back below it because of Covid-19's economic impact.

The Marcos government can do something about extreme poverty, and not merely with dole-out or populist measures either. Generating jobs would be far better as that gives the poor some dignity, which enables them to overcome other challenges in life.

Green opportunities

Programs that mitigate climate change can create employment, particularly by planting trees and mangroves and caring for them. This makes sense given that poverty incidence is higher in rural areas and coastal communities in the provinces compared to urban centers, where there are more placement opportunities.

Planting trees helps capture harmful emissions that are blamed for global warming. But as mentioned previously in this space, people should plant the right kind of trees, the ones that are indigenous or native to the Philippines. Planting foreign tree species can

do more harm by crowding out other plants, making the soil acidic and failing to support native wildlife.

Also, people should avoid planting monocultures. They should instead try to recreate forests that support ecosystems.

Mangroves are interesting because they can capture 10 times more carbon per hectare than terrestrial trees, according to several sources including Conservation International.

They are also superior to concrete seawalls in protecting coastal communities from deadly storm surges.

The government, as well as private firms and various civic organizations, already plants trees and mangroves. But the suggestion here is to ramp up those programs and create more jobs.

The beneficiaries will be those living in remote and coastal areas. This program might also be good for indigenous Filipinos, many of whom lack access to economic opportunities. And while this idea might be not enough to entice the urban poor to relocate to the provinces, the program could slow down urban migration. At the least, more opportunities will become available in the countryside.

To be clear, planting trees and mangroves is not a one-off activity. Seedlings will need to be cultivated. Saplings will require some care, particularly during the dry season, and even grown forests will have to be protected from illegal logging and land grabbers. In other words, a program to rebuild forests in mountains and coastal areas could generate plenty of jobs. Plus, even unskilled workers can do the work, perhaps with only minimal training.

Experts will need to fill in other details needed for effective execution. But the general idea can be a worthwhile and meaningful New Year's resolution for the country.

[PH group to file class suit vs top US polluters](#)

By: Franco Jose C. Baroña

A PHILIPPINE-BASED environmental watchdog has sent a formal notice to the United States government, through its embassy in Manila, of its intention to file a class suit at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) against top industrial polluters in America together with other industrial states worldwide for the deadly effects of their carbon emissions.

"We would like to put your country, the United States of America (and other co-defendant countries) an official notice that in six months from this date of notification, our multi-sectoral organization will jointly file a one-trillion dollar 'loss and damage' class suit against all of you at the ICJ if you fail to address our legitimate grievances on climate change and human rights that have gravely injured and severely affected our climate-change vulnerable country and its suffering people," said the Clean Air Philippines Movement Inc. (Capmi), headed by its president Dr. Leo Olarte. Its letter of intent was sent to US Ambassador to the Philippines MaryKay Carlson and received by the US Embassy in Manila on December 29.

Olarte said the purpose of the letter was to provide the US government a formal notice that Capmi, together with other private sector organizations in the Philippines, will file the class suit "due to all the deadly greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to global warming and climate change that is now a worldwide crisis."

The various private sector organizations that have joined Capmi in its intention to file the case include the World Youth for Climate Justice, the United Filipino Consumers and Commuters, Luntiang Pangarap (Green Dream) Movement, Kapisanan and Social Media Broadcasters ng Pilipinas Inc., and Mata sa Balota Movement. Olarte said they have joined other climate change vulnerable Pacific countries headed by the Republic of Vanuatu in seeking an advisory opinion from the ICJ through a United Nations General Assembly resolution "to clarify the obligations of states to protect the rights of the current and future generations from the adverse effects of climate change."

"By giving an advisory opinion, the Court can provide the impetus for more ambitious action under the Paris Agreement, provide authoritative baselines for state action on mitigation and international cooperation and assistance, integrate areas of international law that are currently separate, human rights and environmental law, provide impetus and guidance for domestic, regional and international adjudications, and cement consensus on the scientific evidence of climate change," the former Philippine Medical Association president said in the letter.

Olarte, who is also a lawyer, said this initiative has already received support at the UN, particularly from the UN High Commission for Human Rights Commissioner Michelle Bachelet and UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and the Environment David Boyd.

"Our Philippine groups are working towards securing global state and non-state support for the ICJ advisory opinion," he said. Olarte pointed out that demand for an authoritative guidance from the ICJ on the issue of climate justice was initiated by the youth sector from the different Pacific Islands, the most affected region by climate change.

He said this move has also received the backing of 139 civil society organizations and over 100 countries.

Olarte said the UN General Assembly will vote on the ICJ Climate Resolution for the Advisory Opinion this month.

"The link between the climate crisis and human rights is now well established," he said in the letter of intent. "Climate impacts have been shown to exacerbate pre-existing inequalities and human rights challenges such as poverty, well-being, wealth inequality, gender relations and many others."

The Philippines, he added, is generally not a carbon polluting country mainly because its share of fossil carbon dioxide emissions, or carbon footprint, is only 35 percent as compared to highly industrialized nations.

A carbon footprint is the total amount of greenhouse gases, including carbon dioxide and methane, that are generated by an individual, event, organization, service, place or product. The average carbon footprint for a person in the United States is 16 tons, one of the highest rates in the world.

Capmi also sent the same letter of intent to the governments of Japan, Germany, India, South Korea, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Russia, China and Indonesia through their respective embassies in Manila.

Toledo City celebrates UPSW with tree-planting activity

Presidential Commission for the Urban Poor (PCUP) Chairman Undersecretary Elpidio Jordan Jr. lauded the city of Toledo in Cebu for its innovative celebration of Urban Poor Solidarity Week (UPSW) with a tree planting activity led by Toledo City Mayor Marjorie Perales in Barangay Canlumampao.

Undersecretary Jordan expressed admiration over the activity which, he said, not only supports the PCUP's trust to provide service to the country's urban poor population but will also serve as a measure to help the Marcos administration's efforts to address climate change.

The tree-planting activity was co-sponsored by the Carmen Copper Corporation (CCC), which donated the seedlings, as well as the Federation of Urban Poor Organizations (FUPOs), Toledo City Environment and Natural Resources Office (Cenro), PCUP Visayas, Integrated Bar of the Philippines (IBP) Cebu Chapter and Philippine Movement for Climate Change (PMCC).

The initiative was attended by the Urban Poor Federation Officers and representatives and officers of the city's 33 accredited urban poor organizations (UPOs). Also joining the worthwhile endeavor were members of the IBP Cebu Chapter.

As part of the activity, a lecture on Climate Emergency and Environmental Conservation/Protection was also conducted before the tree planting by environmental lawyer Atty. Aaron Pedrosa of the PMCC.

In thanking Mayor Perales, Undersecretary Jordan underscored the importance of all stakeholders and the PCUP's partners to act in unity in supporting the poverty alleviation program of President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Romualdez Marcos Jr. to ensure the government's nation-building commitment.

[\[Opinion\] Western media incentivized to report dubious claims about climate change?](#)

By: Yen Makabenta

MONEY is playing a big role in climate change propaganda and in sowing public anxiety. Even the biggest and most prestigious Western media organizations are not immune to manipulation into service for climate change advocacy.

A new year-end climate fact-check report claims to have found that The Associated Press (AP) took \$8 million in donations to fund climate coverage in 2022. The news cooperative and several other major media publications have engaged in reporting dubious claims about climate change. Nikolas Lanum of Fox News reported exclusively on the findings of the "Climate Fact Check 2022" report on Dec. 22, 2022.

The "Climate Fact Check 2022" report was presented by the Competitive Enterprise Institute, the Heartland Institute, the Energy & Environmental Legal Institute, the Committee for a Constructive Tomorrow and the International Climate Science Coalition.

It said "climate alarmists" and members of the media engaged in claims about the relationship between man-made emissions and natural disasters, claims that clashed with "reality and science."

In February 2022, the AP announced that they would assign more than 24 journalists across the globe to cover "climate issues" after receiving more than \$8 million over three years from various organizations. The organizations contributing to the "philanthropy-funded news" via a "climate grant" are the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, the Howard Hughes Medical Institute, Quadrivium, the Rockefeller Foundation and the Walton Family Foundation.

The AP news vice president Brian Carovillano declared that AP only accepts money "without strings attached" and he claimed that funders have no influence on the stories conducted.

Similarly, in March 2021, high-ranking US State Department officials discussed a proposal to sponsor foreign journalists to "have experiences that educate them on reporting on climate change," according to emails obtained by Protect the Public's Trust and shared with Fox News Digital.

Steve Milloy, a senior legal fellow at the Energy & Environment Legal Institute, told Fox News Digital that the Associated Press has essentially become a "propaganda outfit" for liberal organizations with climate agendas.

"It's hard to claim it's news when you're being paid to report only one side of the climate discourse," Milloy said.

Proof of bias?

The fact-check report pointed to a recent article from the AP by reporter Seth Borenstein, headlined "New abnormal: Climate disaster damage 'down' to \$268 billion," as proof of bias.

The article attributed flooding in Pakistan, Hurricane "Ian," droughts in Europe, China and Africa, as well as deadly heat waves across the world to climate change.

"Weather disasters, many but not all of them turbocharged by human-caused climate change, are happening so frequently that this year's onslaught, which 20 years ago would have smashed records by far, now in some financial measures seems a bit of a break from recent years," Borenstein wrote.

The Climate Fact Check report questioned whether climate activists and "media mouthpieces" could legitimately attribute disaster damages to climate change or if they were merely trying to "surf human tragedy" to advance a political agenda.

The report also highlighted several other climate claims from major media corporations, providing fact-checks for articles written by The Washington Post, The New York Times and more.

In August, Times reporter Derrick Bryson Taylor claimed that Britain's brief heat waves this summer were worsened by climate change. A fact-check from the report noted that heat waves have dramatically declined in duration and frequency in the US over the past 90 years, according to the National Climate Assessment.

1,000 top climate scientists

While AP has admitted to receiving donations, other media agencies have been secretive about their financial dealings for their climate coverage. Reuters is claimed to engage in heavy propaganda for the climate movement.

In a year-end report, Reuters posted on its website a purported hot list of the world's 1,000 top climate scientists, portraying them as paragons of responsibility and influence among climate scientists.

Unsurprisingly, the several hundreds of scientists who have rejected the claim of a climate emergency and the vilification of CO₂ (carbon dioxide) have been expressly excluded from the list.

The top scientists so honored, of course, are those who constitute the claimed "90 percent consensus. They are the scientists who have been fattened with handsome research grants by governments and the climate change lobby. Scientists who have questioned the science and exposed the crooked patronage system are impugned and left to fend for themselves."

How much in donations or other sweeteners did Reuters get for this initiative?

What is left out by the politics of climate change are the rigors of the scientific method and scientific inquiry.

As with media and climate scientists, so with governments.

The main idea behind the proposed climate reparations fund is to bribe developing countries into supporting the entire climate change agenda and its alarmism.

Hidden also in the bushes are the hundreds of First World journalists who have fanned out into developing countries to propagandize the claims of climate change and the so-called energy transition. They have burrowed themselves into legitimate media organizations and nongovernment organizations to push the objective of making developing countries adopt climate policies, no matter how misguided.

In the Philippines, these undercover journalists will face the music when the Congress passes the proposed foreign agents registration law.

Since the Constitution expressly bars foreigners from owning stakes in the media among many industries, does it similarly prohibit foreigners from engaging in journalism and public deliberation on sensitive issues?

It could be argued that these foreign agents are no different from the religious missionaries who spread Christianity in the archipelago. The saga of Maria Ressa will make the opposite argument.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

Food Security

By: Boo Chanco

Food security is increasingly a serious concern for many countries. Thanks to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, climate change and food nationalism, food security should be on top of many government's list of concerns.

In Singapore, its government is very conscious of food security. CNBC reports that as a small island nation, Singapore lacks natural resources. It imports more than 90 percent of its food from more than 170 countries and regions.

Singapore is already feeling the effects of rising food inflation. Food prices rose by 4.1 percent in April from a year earlier, up from 3.3 percent in March, the Monetary Authority of Singapore and Ministry of Trade and Industry said. With the country vulnerable to many external headwinds, the government launched a "30 by 30" initiative to produce 30 percent of its nutritional needs by 2030.

In the Philippines, food security and food inflation are related and are growing problems. It was reported that the national average for food inflation rose from 6.5 percent in August to 7.7 percent in September. Of the food items, the foremost drivers of higher food inflation are sugar, confectionery, and desserts (30.2 percent); corn (26.2 percent); and oils and fats (20.1 percent). The big problem is the lack of productivity of our agricultural sector. Farming methods are antiquated, the economics of agriculture impoverish the farmers and government is focused on rice.

According to the Philippine Institute of Development study or PIDS, "with traditional agricultural methods falling short, investing in new technologies is key to transforming the country's livestock, poultry, and dairy (LPD) industries."

"Many investments must be poured into production and process improvements, including technology, equipment, animal inventory, and manpower capacity upgrades, for the agriculture industry to be more competitive," the PIDS paper said.

Though LPD industries produce a third of the agriculture sector's output based on Philippine Statistics Authority data, local consumption still relies on imports. The study noted that pork import dependency showed "an increasing trend in value from 2012 to 2018".

Dressed chicken imports are “significantly higher than exports” and local milk production constitutes only “ five percent of the total milk demand”.

“Processing consolidation of backyard operators under farmer organizations (FOs) can be an opportunity to transform the LPD industries...”

This recommendation was echoed by another PIDS study. PIDS senior research fellow Roehlano Briones and research analyst Isabel Espineli raised the need to undertake a comprehensive review of trade policies affecting the value chain of the LPD industries.

Both studies noted the Philippines’ failure to take advantage of export-driven industrialization. According to the authors, the country missed a phase in the structural transformation process by quickly shifting from an economy based on agriculture to one that is driven by services. The sector’s inability to move up the value chain was caused by policy inconsistencies that encouraged import substitution as well as foreign exchange.

For example, corn accounts for 50 percent of swine and poultry feed but local corn is more expensive than imported corn, prompting commercial producers to prefer importation. While high tariffs on corn seek to protect local producers, they raise feed cost which is the highest among all operating expenses, thereby increasing the overhead cost.

Given the inefficiency of the agriculture department, perhaps the entry of big corporations will help increase our level of food security. There is good news. Metro Pacific and San Miguel have launched such projects.

Last year, MPIC ramped up investments to help reduce the country’s dependence on food imports.

Metro Pacific Agro Ventures, Inc. (MPAV) has tapped the LR Group of Israel to expand MPAV’s existing dairy business.

MPIC invested in the dairy industry by partnering with the Carmen’s Best Group. They plan to further develop and expand the operations of its dairy farm and dairy products manufacturing facilities.

“Our investment in agriculture is synonymous to food security and substantial independence but will ultimately become a means of alleviating hunger in our country –

a pressing issue that we have taken as a challenge to address,” said MPIC chairman, president, and CEO Manuel V. Pangilinan.

“Our goal is and always will be to feed our people first.”

This partnership plans to annually produce at least six million liters of milk in a facility in Bay, Laguna.

On the other hand, San Miguel Corp.’s (SMC) food unit San Miguel Foods has broken ground on its P20-billion Davao Broiler Complex project, the first of a planned 15 mega poultry farms the company is building in the next 10 years, to help ensure sufficient supply of chicken and improve food security in the country.

The new complex, to be built on 921 hectares of land in Hagonoy, Davao City, will feature 28 world class climate-controlled broiler houses that can produce up to 80 million grown broilers a year, and meet demand from the entire Mindanao region.

The broiler complex will feature multi-tier decks designed to allow for more efficient production and better health and welfare practices, and will include an integrated sanitation management program to neutralize odor and eliminate flies.

“This major investment is an important milestone not just for San Miguel and the whole of Mindanao, but more significantly, for our country’s food industry. Poultry is a staple food of Filipinos as it is versatile, affordable, and nutritious. This mega-facility is our first step at ensuring sufficient, year-long supply of high-quality, local poultry nationwide, and is among the ways we’re helping to achieve food security for every Filipino,” said SMC president Ramon S. Ang.

Ang said San Miguel Foods is set to begin work on four other mega-facilities within the next five years. These are set to be built in Sison, Pangasinan; Lucanin, Bataan, and Sariaya and Pagbilao in Quezon province.

In 10 years, these four mega farms, combined with the Davao complex, will be able to produce 400 million birds a year. We need more investments like these to reduce our dependence on food imports and develop the economic situation in our farm areas.

Corporate agribusiness ventures have been successful in the past. Dole and Del Monte are good examples. We have to think economies of scale which the conglomerates can provide.

Households urged to tap solar energy

By: Richmond Mercurio

MANILA, Philippines — Chinese solar manufacturer LONGi Solar is urging more Filipino households to utilize solar energy amid the looming power problems.

“As the Philippines continues to grapple with a struggling energy system, experts are now expecting more potential power shortages in 2023,” LONGi said.

“Given this unfavorable scenario, it’s high time to LONGi Solar, the largest supplier of solar panels in the world, said the most significant and practical benefit of installing solar panels on rooftops is the cost savings.

“This benefit is valid as long as your business or home consumes all the solar energy generated, compared to using power from utilities,” it said. consider shifting to a better, more sustainable solution like solar energy,” it said.

While the initial investment for a basic solar home installation is around P100,000, the company said the savings accumulated through the years makes the initial investment worth it.

It said a homeowner is likely to break even in three to five years, and the system will work for at least 25 years.

The financial institutions providing loans to cover the initial investments are also increasing linearly with the additional demand for banking services that cover renewables, LONGi Solar said.

In addition, LONGi Solar said when more households switch to solar energy, the overall demand for electricity on the system decreases, thereby reducing the heavy burden on the power grid.

“This situation is critical during the summer months when electricity demand is higher – homes and businesses kick their air conditioners into overdrive, and appliances like freezers and refrigerators work twice as hard to maintain the same baseline level of cooling. Electricity also becomes more expensive to produce and purchase in the mid-afternoons of hot days,” it said.

The company said solar reduces the overall demand for electricity on the power grid, lessening the grid’s stress while lowering consumer electricity spending.

Homes with solar panels can also substantially and positively impact the environment as there is no need to burn fossil fuels which have damaging emissions that pollute the environment.

From an energy generation view, solar is one of the cleanest energy sources, according to LONGi Solar.

In terms of reliability, meanwhile, the company said solar energy is relatively free and readily available in the Philippines, unlike fossil fuels, which are running out fast.

“It makes sense to reduce dependence on limited resources and instead take advantage of a plentiful, abundant resource,” it said.

LONGi currently supplies more than 42 gigawatts of its latest Hi-MO 5 series modules worldwide. Some of the company’s projects include Ocean Park Hong Kong and Chulalongkorn University in Thailand.

“Our innovative technology and exceptional quality have allowed us to maintain a leading position in the industry for reliability and stability. As LONGi is recognized by all financial institutions worldwide, our quality speaks for itself,” said Jonathan Xu, Asia Pacific marketing manager of LONGi.

New Year challenges

After the holiday celebrations and revelry comes the hard work. The country, buried in debt that has ballooned to P13.52 trillion, must continue its post-pandemic recovery with economic analysts warning of a looming global recession this 2023. This calls for utmost judiciousness in the utilization of precious public funds.

Vladimir Putin doesn't look ready to withdraw Russian troops from Ukraine anytime soon, thereby guaranteeing the sustained disruption of global supply chains and consequent high prices of many basic commodities.

COVID-19 isn't done with its work, as the World Health Organization keeps warning. SARS-CoV-2 is still mutating, continuing to cause debilitation and death especially among the elderly and other vulnerable sectors. The new year is starting with the coronavirus bringing illness and death in its country of origin, China.

Philippine officials said the 14-year-high inflation at the end of 2022 was mostly imported. But soaring food prices, the key driver of the high inflation rate, were not just due to forces abroad beyond the government's control. The high prices of items as basic as onions and sugar illustrated the weaknesses of the agricultural sector that need urgent attention to reduce the risks to the country's food security.

As the year drew to a close, incessant downpours and cataclysmic floods surprised people in several parts of the Visayas and Mindanao, highlighting the extreme weather conditions that experts are attributing to global warming. The Philippines, classified as one of the countries most vulnerable to climate change, must ramp up measures to confront this long-term existential threat.

Education was further set back by two years of mostly remote learning. Even before the pandemic, comparative tests already showed that the quality of Philippine education is in dire need of an upgrade, with 10-year-old pupils lagging behind their foreign peers in terms of reading comprehension and mathematics.

There are so many things that need fixing: inadequate infrastructure; the criminal justice system, and the impunity that springs from the weakness of the rule of law; endemic corruption and the persistent roadblocks to ease of doing business; a compromised political system sustained by patronage. This is a society where the cream often cannot rise to the top, where the right surname and connections rather than merit determine advancement in life.

Over 10 million Filipinos have found it necessary to find decent employment overseas. While their remittances keep the economy afloat even during downturns and make them modern-day heroes, most of them are abroad because of the lack of opportunities in their own land.

So much work to do, and so little time. The start of the year gives hope that the energy, commitment and capability are there to confront the toughest challenges.

A prosperous, joyful New Year to all!

CCC IN THE NEWS:

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

[CCC briefs gov't agencies on National Climate Action reports](#)

By: Azer Parrocha

MANILA – The Climate Change Commission (CCC) has brought together national government agencies to discuss the progress of the country's national climate reports as part of efforts to purs

In a news release on Thursday, the CCC said it held a “Coordination and Update Meeting on National Climate Action Monitoring and Reporting” with over 50 participants from 24 government agencies on Dec. 21.

The meeting was a hybrid setup which took place at the Hive Hotel and Convention Place in Quezon City and also via Zoom video conference.

It covered the three ongoing reports facilitated by CCC – the National Climate Change Action Plan (NCCAP) 2017-2020 Monitoring Report, the 2015 and 2020 National [GHG] Inventory Report (NIR) and the Philippine Biennial Update Report (BUR) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

The NCCAP Monitoring 2017-2020 tracks the progress of the government in concretizing its outputs and outcomes under its seven thematic priorities—food security, water sufficiency, ecological and environmental stability, human security, climate-smart industries and services, sustainable energy and knowledge and capacity development, in line with the Climate Change Act of 2009, as amended.

The 2015 and 2020 NIR measure GHG emission levels to inform evidence-based mitigation policy and planning and is in line with the Philippine Greenhouse Gas Inventory Management and Reporting System (PGHGIMRS), issued under Executive Order No. 174 in 2014.

The Philippine BUR is one of three national reports to be submitted to the UNFCCC to assess global progress on climate commitments and mobilize support needs of the parties.

The CCC also said the implementation of National Climate Public Expenditures was also presented to further encourage agencies to tag their climate programs.

Representatives from the Philippine Statistics Authority, Department of Energy and Department of Environment and Natural Resources also shared their methods and best practices for their respective submissions to the 2015 and 2020 National GHG Inventory Report.

CCC Deputy Executive Director Romell Antonio Cuenca, during the meeting, hoped that presenting the initiatives and efforts of the national government encapsulated in Climate Reports provides a reflection of what the CCC have done so far and how the Philippine government can scale up climate actions.

He also assured that the CCC will continue to work with various government agencies to foster the finalization of the said reports.

The CCC is the lead agency in the monitoring and evaluation of national climate change programs and it is the focal point for the Philippines' communications to the UNFCCC.

THE MANILA TIMES

[CCC gives updates on national climate reports](#)

By: Bella Cariaso

The Climate Change Commission (CCC) gathered national government agencies to discuss the progress of the country's national climate reports.

Over 50 participants from 24 national government agencies attended the Coordination and Update Meeting on National Climate Action Monitoring and Reporting that covered the National Climate Change Action Plan (NCCAP) 2017-2020 Monitoring Report; 2015 and 2020 National (GHG) Inventory Report (NIR); and the Philippine Biennial Update Report (BUR) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The NCCAP Monitoring 2017-2020 tracks the progress of the government in concretizing its outputs and outcomes under its seven thematic priorities: food security, water sufficiency, ecological and environmental stability, human security, climate-smart industries and services, sustainable energy, and knowledge and capacity development, in line with the Climate Change Act of 2009.

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The Philippine BUR is one of three national reports to be submitted to the UNFCCC to assess global progress on climate commitments and mobilize support needs of parties.

"By presenting to all of you today the initiatives and efforts of the national government encapsulated in Climate Reports, we hope to provide a reflection of what we have done so far and how we can scale up our climate actions," said Romell Antonio Cuenca, CCC deputy executive director.

The implementation of National Climate Public Expenditures was also presented to further encourage agencies to tag their climate programs.

Representatives from the Philippine Statistics Authority, Department of Energy and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources also shared their methods and best practices for their respective submissions to the 2015 and 2020 National GHG Inventory Report. GHG stands for greenhouse gas.

As the lead agency in the monitoring and evaluation of national climate change programs, and as the focal point for the Philippines' communications to the UNFCCC, the CCC vows to continue to work with various national government agencies to foster the finalization of the said reports.

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