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### ABANTE TONITE

#### [Loren Legarda inalarma krisis sa climate change, polusyon, biodiversity](#)

By: Reymund Tinaza

Nanawagan si Senador Loren Legarda ng agaran at sama-samang aksyon upang tugunan ang lumalalang mga krisis pangkalikasan na kinakaharap ng Pilipinas ngayong pagsisimula ng taon.

### DAILY TRIBUNE

#### [Manila gets EU assist in addressing climate change impact on trade, economy](#)

By: Kathryn Jose

A European Union (EU)-funded project has been launched to assist the Philippines address the economic and trade impact of climate change, and provide action plans for micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) to comply with trade-related climate change measures.

## [Tackling climate risks can unlock growth in \\$14-T green economy](#)

By: Teddy Montelibano

As climate risks threaten corporate profits, addressing such risks can unlock growth in the \$14-trillion market for green technologies by 2030, according to a report released by the World Economic Forum (WEF).

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Sen. Loren Legarda calls for concerted and decisive action to tackle the mounting environmental crises facing the Philippines as the new year begins.

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The Philippines’ appeal as a renewable energy investment hub sparkled in 2024, making a significant jump from 20th to second most attractive market for clean power investments in just three years.

### **POLITIKO**

## [Legarda Calls For Stronger Action Vs ‘Triple Planetary Crisis’](#)

Senator Loren Legarda has called for action to address the immense triple planetary crisis (TPS). “As we welcome 2025, we must resolve to make this year a turning point,” Legarda stated.

### **THE MANILA TIMES**

## [Climate-related insights will shape ESG and sustainability](#)

By: Ludwig Federigan

The future of Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) considerations and sustainability practices is increasingly promising, reflecting a paradigm shift in how businesses, investors and society approach climate change, and its associated challenges. As we navigate this evolving landscape, several critical climate-related insights are emerging that will shape the future of ESG and sustainability initiatives. Here are five key insights to consider in 2025:

## **THE PHILIPPINE STAR**

### **[Unicef calls for Philippines climate education](#)**

By: Pia Lee Brago

The United Nations children's agency is urging the Philippines to make education more climate smart and resilient.

## **CCC IN THE NEWS:**

### **DAILY TRIBUNE**

### **[Inclusive climate action: The intersection of accessibility and climate change](#)**

By: Secretary Robert EA Borje

World Braille Day, observed on 4 January, highlights the importance of accessibility for persons with disabilities (PWDs), particularly those with visual impairments. Yet, accessibility goes beyond communication and must be central to our collective response to the climate crisis. As extreme weather events worsen, PWDs face heightened risks, especially during disasters. Without inclusive adaptation strategies, they remain some of the most vulnerable in our efforts to build resilience.

### **HEAD TOPICS**

### **[Three Philippine Natural Wonders Designated as ASEAN Heritage Parks](#)**

The Climate Change Commission (CCC) announced that Apo Reef Natural Park, Turtle Islands, and Balinsasayao Twin Lakes have been recognized as ASEAN Heritage Parks. These additions bring the total number of Philippine ASEAN Heritage Parks to 14. Apo Reef, the second-largest contiguous coral reef globally, is renowned for its biodiversity. The Turtle Islands are a critical nesting ground for Green Sea Turtles. Balinsasayao Twin Lakes, with its mountainous landscape and diverse ecosystems, provides clean water and supports a wide range of wildlife.

### **PHILIPPINE INFORMATION AGENCY**

### **[100 Paete farming families benefit from CCC Christmas outreach](#)**

In the spirit of the holiday season and in line with the directive of the Office of the President, the Climate Change Commission (CCC) conducted an outreach program that benefited 100 farmers and their families in the municipality of Paete, Laguna. This initiative is part of the CCC's ongoing efforts to engage with communities affected by recent typhoons and promote resilience amid the impacts of climate change.

## **THE MANILA TIMES**

### **[Philippines at the forefront of global climate action](#)**

By: Catherine S. Valente , Kristina Maralit and Agence France-Presse

The Climate Change Commission (CCC) has pledged to continue leading the fight against climate change as its impacts increasingly affect the Philippines.

## **THE PHILIPPINE STAR**

### **[Key trends shaping the Phl economy in 2025](#)**

By: Joefel Ortega Banzon

As we look ahead to 2025, the Philippine economy faces both exciting opportunities and challenges. Here's a simple look at what to expect in the coming year.

**Information and Knowledge Management Division**

## **ABANTE TONITE**

### **Loren Legarda inalarma krisis sa climate change, polusyon, biodiversity**

By: Reymund Tinaza

Nanawagan si Senador Loren Legarda ng agaran at sama-samang aksyon upang tugunan ang lumalalang mga krisis pangkalikasan na kinakaharap ng Pilipinas ngayong pagsisimula ng taon.

Kabilang sa kanyang 2025 agenda, muling pinagtibay ni Legarda ang kanyang matagal nang adbokasiya laban sa Triple Planetary Crisis (TPC), o ang konektadong mga isyu ng climate change, polusyon, at pagkasira ng biodiversity sa bansa.

Aniya, magkakaugnay ang tatlong krisis pangkalikasan. Ang climate change ay nagpapabilis ng pagkasira ng biodiversity habang sinisira naman ng polusyon ang ecosystem.

Dahil naman sa pagkasira ng mga natural habitat ng mga halaman at hayop ay bumababa ang kakayahan ng kalikasan na tumanggap ng carbon emissions na siyang nagpapalala sa climate change.

Binigyang-pansin din ni Legarda ang nakababahalang antas ng polusyon sa plastic sa Pilipinas, kung saan ang bawat Pilipino ay gumagamit ng tinatayang 20 kilo ng plastic taon-taon at 15.4 kilo nito ang nagiging basura.

Kabilang din aniya ang Pilipinas sa mga bansang nangungunang contributor ng polusyon sa dagat, kung saan 36% ng kabuuang basura sa mga karagatan ay nagmumula sa bansa.

Dagdag pa ni Legarda, nakababahala rin ang patuloy na problema ng polusyon sa hangin kung saan naitala ang Pilipinas sa ika-79 na puwesto sa air quality noong 2023 mula sa 134 na bansa.

Panawagan ng senador na kailangan ng mas malalim na pagbabago sa mga polisiya na tututok sa climate change, polusyon, at biodiversity bilang magkakaugnay na isyu.

## DAILY TRIBUNE

### [Manila gets EU assist in addressing climate change impact on trade, economy](#)

By: Kathryn Jose

A European Union (EU)-funded project has been launched to assist the Philippines address the economic and trade impact of climate change, and provide action plans for micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) to comply with trade-related climate change measures.

Michaela Summerer, associate expert at Green and Inclusive Value Chains Section of the International Trade Centre, said the ITC climate competitiveness project aims to strengthen the understanding that trade can also play a role in adapting to climate change.

As part of this initiative, Summerer said the ITC is organizing various capacity-building and training opportunities to help Philippine MSMEs build climate competitiveness and resilience.

She urged these MSMEs to signify the kind of training and capacity-building offers that can support them access more international markets amid sustainability trends.

Summerer said these may include sustainability standards and certifications, managing resources efficiently, carbon reporting, business continuity in light of climate change, and environmental sustainability in the business context.

#### Green transition

“I see the green economy where we have an overarching theme that comes — how it links overall and very closely linked to green transition, sustainability initiatives. Renewable energy is also closely linked to resource efficiency but also how to approach this on a national level and be mindful about the sourcing of energy, cost effective practices,” she said during the recent project launch.

“In light of working with MSMEs, market access, I think we have a lot of different sustainability initiatives not only from the EU coming. So definitely a key area for ITC to work with you on climate change adaptation,” she added.

The ITC launched the climate competitiveness project in the Philippines in partnership with the Department of Trade and Industry during the National Export Congress last 5 December.

## [Tackling climate risks can unlock growth in \\$14-T green economy](#)

By: Teddy Montelibano

As climate risks threaten corporate profits, addressing such risks can unlock growth in the \$14-trillion market for green technologies by 2030, according to a report released by the World Economic Forum (WEF).

Developed by the WEF's Alliance of CEO Climate Leaders in collaboration with Boston Consulting Group (BCG), the report said the climate transition presents one of the most significant long-term opportunities for growth in modern history.

"Much like the internet revolution, which created a wave of winners and losers, this transition promises even greater change. Companies that lead the charge are not only opening new growth opportunities, but also creating lasting competitive advantages, disrupting legacy business models in the process," it said.

BCG estimates the market for green technologies and solutions at over \$5 trillion in 2024, and headed for nearly \$14 trillion by 2030.

The market spans sectors and value chains, with the largest segments being alternative energy (49 percent), sustainable transport (16 percent) and sustainable consumer products (13 percent).

### Growing well above GDP

These are all growing well above gross domestic product, at annual rates ranging from 10 percent in consumer products to 20 percent for alternative energy, the WEF report said.

"Companies are seeing successes and setbacks — no surprise given the landscape of regulatory change and uncertainties, technology competition and evolving consumer preferences," added the report.

It also said firms that delay in action risk not only falling behind more proactive competitors but also miss out on economic opportunities tied to climate leadership.

It said sustainability frontrunners are positioned to create clear advantages in a range of areas including deeper talent pools, top-line growth, saving cash and carbon, reduced regulatory risk and lower cost of capital.

However, the WEF report said the pace and scale at which opportunities develop will vary significantly in different scenarios and industries, particularly where legacy grey assets and infrastructure are deeply embedded.

### Careful navigation

“Companies transitioning from grey assets to greener technologies must carefully navigate this balance, ensuring that investments in green technologies and assets are aligned with the scale and timing of future risks and policy shifts across various climate scenarios,” it said.

The report further said climate risks are unfolding now, disrupting industries worldwide. Climate-related disasters have inflicted over \$3.6 trillion in damage since 2000, with risks accelerating.

“Climate risks and opportunities are no longer a peripheral concern; addressing them is a critical component of a company’s overall corporate strategy. Physical and transition risks and opportunities increasingly impact all aspects of corporate strategy,” it added.



## PHILIPPINE DAILY NQUIRER

### [Legarda pushes for action on 'triple planetary crisis' as 2025 begins](#)

By: Antonio Iñares

Sen. Loren Legarda calls for concerted and decisive action to tackle the mounting environmental crises facing the Philippines as the new year begins.

As part of her 2025 agenda, Legarda reaffirmed in a statement on Friday her long-standing commitment to addressing the triple planetary crisis (TPC), a term encompassing the interconnected environmental challenges of climate change, pollution, and biodiversity loss.

According to Legarda, these crises are deeply interwoven, with each issue worsening the others — climate change accelerates biodiversity loss, pollution harms ecosystems, and the destruction of natural habitats diminishes the planet's ability to absorb carbon emissions.

Legarda, a staunch advocate for environmental protection, emphasized that the TPC is not a future threat, but a present reality that demands urgent attention.

The UNDRR Global Champion for Resilience and Climate Vulnerable Forum Ambassador for Parliaments has repeatedly raised the issue of TPC in her speeches, noting that the interlinkage between climate change, pollution, and biodiversity loss creates a vicious cycle that is particularly devastating for developing countries like the Philippines.

“As we enter 2025, and as I have said before on numerous environmental discussions before, we must recognize that the triple planetary crisis — climate change, pollution, and the loss of biodiversity — is no longer an abstract concern. It is happening now, and it is deeply interconnected with our daily lives and future prospects,” she said.

In particular, Legarda pointed to the alarming levels of plastic pollution in the Philippines, where each Filipino consumes an average of 20 kilograms of plastic annually. Of that, 15.4 kilograms end up as waste, making the country the leading contributor to ocean plastic waste globally, accounting for a staggering 36 percent of the total pollution.

The country's poor waste management infrastructure exacerbates the issue, as seen in the increasing amount of hazardous waste produced — over 253,000 tons in 2022 alone.

Further, in Metro Manila, over 80 percent of wastewater is discharged untreated, contributing to widespread health and environmental risks.

These are just a few of the stark realities that Legarda believes must be addressed with greater urgency.

In addition, the senator also highlighted the Philippines' persistent struggle with air pollution. The country ranked 79th out of 134 nations in air quality in 2023.

"The effects of pollution and climate change are visible across the country. From intensified typhoons and flooding in Metro Manila to prolonged droughts in the provinces, these are not isolated incidents, but consequences of our environmental degradation," she warned.

She further stressed the need for comprehensive policy changes that not only address these crises individually but also recognize their interconnected nature.

According to the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Philippines is recognized as one of the world's 18 mega-biodiverse countries, harboring a significant portion of the planet's biodiversity. It is home to approximately two-thirds of Earth's species and about 70 to 80 percent of global plant and animal varieties.

Notably, the Philippines ranks fifth in terms of plant species diversity and accounts for 5 percent of the world's flora, highlighting its critical role in global biodiversity conservation.

"Addressing the triple planetary crisis is not an easy task — it is complicated and requires a whole-of-society approach. But it is a challenge that we must take on if we want a sustainable future for the generations to come," Legarda stressed.

She called for stronger collaboration between the government, businesses, and communities, urging Filipinos to be proactive in protecting their environment.

Legarda emphasized that, while environmental protection laws exist, more must be done at the national level to strengthen climate resilience and promote sustainability.

"As we welcome 2025, we must resolve to make this year a turning point. The challenges of the triple planetary crisis are immense, but so too is our capacity to make a difference," Legarda concluded.

She urged her fellow Filipinos to work together and take concrete steps toward environmental stewardship, stressing that the future of the planet — and the survival of future generations — rests on their shoulders.

## [PH aspires to be next green power paradise](#)

By: Lisbet K. Esmael

The Philippines' appeal as a renewable energy investment hub sparkled in 2024, making a significant jump from 20th to second most attractive market for clean power investments in just three years.

Can it still dream to become the No. 1, or is this too tall an order?

The government's renewable push is on full steam, and it is seen to further thrive as more funds from abroad are expected to flood the market for clean energy developments.

State officials welcomed the 2024 Climatescope Report by BloombergNEF released earlier this month, where the Philippines overtook mainland China, one of the world's economic powerhouses.

India claimed the prime spot, while Chile and Brazil completed the top five.

On top of improving the local business climate, the current administration has been strengthening its ties with investors to trigger more development in renewable energy. This, as the government hopes to increase its share in the power generation mix to 35 percent by 2030 from the current 22 percent.

The Department of Energy (DOE) said that currently, local players have been driving the growth of the sector. But it is confident that more foreign investors would cash in on the country's abundant resources, seeing the Philippines as a bankable destination for expansion.

This optimism is particularly buoyed by recent reforms that allow 100 percent foreign equity in renewable energy projects.

Can the Philippines dethrone India?

An official of the Philippine unit of Singapore-based Blueleaf Energy expressed doubts about the country's capacity to secure the top place, especially when compared to a large country like India.

"I think we cannot be No. 1 compared to India [because] it has a sheer volume," says Christopher Chua, country head at Blueleaf Energy Philippines.

Chua says gaining the second spot was “not bad,” since the Philippines is already the leading nation in Southeast Asia.

He adds that the Philippines has an advantage versus other markets whose government leaders have control over utilities, including power purchase agreements, which could be subject to “a lot of control and corruption.”

“So, here, it’s very open. So that’s why a lot of foreign investors, like Blueleaf, invest in the Philippines because it’s a very open market. Everyone has a fair chance,” Chua says.

But for Jose Layug Jr., president of Developers of Renewable Energy for AdvanceMent Inc., the Philippines has a fighting chance given the current administration’s efforts to entice more investors through “friendly policies” and Filipinos’ increasing demand for electricity.

Layug tells the Inquirer that, aside from tapping onshore wind, solar, hydro, geothermal and biomass, the country can embrace bigger capacities through offshore wind and floating solar projects.

Meanwhile, Alberto Dalusung III, Energy Transition advisor at the Institute for Climate and Sustainable Cities (ICSC), says that the ranking second proved the country’s competence to potentially dominate renewable energy in emerging markets.

“It also underscores the abundance in the country of renewable energy and its capacity to become a hub for investment and collaboration, not just within Asean, but across other regions,” Dalusung tells Inquirer in a separate interview.

“Through its advancement in the deployment and development of RE, the Philippines is demonstrating a model response that climate-vulnerable countries can adopt in facing climate change, promoting economic opportunities, like energy security, energy independence, and employment,” Dalusung adds.

Mylene Capongcol, director of the Renewable Energy Management Bureau of the DOE, also says that all areas in the country were “suitable for renewable energy development.”

“There are provinces committed to renewable energy development like Iloilo Province, Negros, Ilocos Norte, etc.,” Capongcol said in a message.

What more can be done

For the government's part, Capongcol said the DOE would continue enhancing policies and strategies.

Last October, the DOE bared that at least 105 renewable energy projects were facing termination of their contracts as the government has begun training guns on "nonserious" developers.

While some may see this as a big step back from the government's target, the DOE as well as other business executives said this could actually accelerate the expansion of clean energy capacity.

Defending the rationale behind the move, the DOE says if any contracts were not progressing, they would open these up for new builders who could pursue the projects.

Capongcol likewise notes that the DOE would focus on grid integration, a crucial part of the sector, to ensure the power generated using renewable sources would be transmitted to the grid network.

This was mirrored by ICSC's Dalusung, as he calls for modernizing the country's power grid.

"We also need to ensure grid stability, upgrade the current infrastructure, and integrate smart grid technologies to accommodate the variability of renewable energy," he says, adding that doing so would ensure electricity needs are met.

For the Philippines to bolster its commitment to a clean energy shift, Dalusung also highlighted the need to deploy "targeted efforts," particularly on curbing small developers' financial woes in funding expensive renewable projects.

"The playing field between large corporations and smaller companies has to be leveled. Making financing more accessible and equitable will make it possible for smaller enterprises to play a bigger role in advancing the energy transition," the ICSC executive says.

"We also need the government and multilateral development banks to help derisk renewable energy projects and help come up with innovative financing solutions," he says.

Dalusung hopes that more local banks could follow suit the example of the Development Bank of the Philippines and Land Bank of the Philippines in improving their portfolio with financing programs intended for renewable energy projects.

“However, innovative financing mechanisms such as green bonds and programs supported by the Climate Investment Funds, and the Green Climate Fund remain underutilized,” he adds.

Dalusung also says the government must pick up the pace of training the local pool of talents and professionals to keep up with the booming sector and adoption of new technologies.

“While renewable projects offer opportunities for more jobs, they require upskilling and reskilling of those currently working in fossil fuel power plants,” he says.

## **POLITIKO**

### **Legarda Calls For Stronger Action Vs 'Triple Planetary Crisis'**

Senator Loren Legarda has called for action to address the immense triple planetary crisis (TPS). “As we welcome 2025, we must resolve to make this year a turning point,” Legarda stated.

“The challenges of the triple planetary crisis are immense, but so too is our capacity to make a difference,” she added.

TPS refers to the interconnected environmental challenges of climate change, pollution, and biodiversity loss.

Meanwhile, Legarda urged the government and public sector in working together to address TPS.

“Addressing the triple planetary crisis is not an easy task—it is complicated and requires a whole-of-society approach,” said the lawmaker.

“But it is a challenge that we must take on if we want a sustainable future for the generations to come,” she added.



## THE MANILA TIMES

### [Climate-related insights will shape ESG and sustainability](#)

By: Ludwig Federigan

The future of Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) considerations and sustainability practices is increasingly promising, reflecting a paradigm shift in how businesses, investors and society approach climate change, and its associated challenges. As we navigate this evolving landscape, several critical climate-related insights are emerging that will shape the future of ESG and sustainability initiatives. Here are five key insights to consider in 2025:

– Consequences for inaction among business leaders: The top 20 global polluters — all in the fossil fuel industry — contributed 35 percent of all energy-related carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) and methane worldwide, according to the Climate Accountability Institute. As climate change intensifies and its impact becomes more evident, business leaders who fail to act on sustainability will increasingly face significant consequences. Stakeholders, including investors, consumers and employees, are holding companies accountable for their ESG performance.

Companies that neglect to integrate sustainability into their core strategies risk damaging their reputations, losing competitive advantage and facing financial repercussions. The demand for responsible business practices is growing, and organizations must recognize that inaction is no longer a viable option. Those who proactively embrace sustainability will position themselves favorably in the marketplace, while complacent businesses may find themselves struggling to survive.

– The shift toward carbon offsetting: Carbon offsetting refers to "making up for" the emissions of greenhouse gases like CO<sub>2</sub>. It has emerged as an essential component of corporate sustainability strategies. As organizations strive to reduce their carbon footprints, many are investing in projects that capture or prevent the release of CO<sub>2</sub>, such as reforestation or renewable energy initiatives.

However, the effectiveness of carbon offsetting relies on rigorous standards and transparency. Companies must ensure that their offsetting initiatives are credible and impactful. As the market for carbon offsets matures, businesses will need to navigate regulatory frameworks and verify claims to avoid accusations of "greenwashing," and to genuinely contribute to climate mitigation.

– The rise of "climate positive" over "net zero": The concept of "climate positive" is gaining traction as companies seek to go beyond simply achieving net-zero emissions. While "net zero" implies balancing emissions produced with emissions removed,

climate-positive organizations aim to achieve a net reduction in greenhouse gases (GHG). This ambitious goal requires them to actively contribute to the restoration and revitalization of ecosystems, neutralizing GHG's impact while providing environmental benefits. As this concept becomes more mainstream, businesses will be encouraged to adopt more aggressive climate strategies that demonstrate genuine leadership and commitment to long-term sustainability.

#### Call for authenticity

– Disclosure of climate risks as an organizational responsibility: An increasing number of regulatory bodies and stakeholders demand that organizations disclose their climate-related risks and their impact on operations. The Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures has propelled this conversation forward, urging companies to provide transparent assessments of how climate change could affect their financial performance and long-term strategies.

Companies that prioritize meaningful disclosures comply with regulatory requirements and enhance their credibility and foster trust among stakeholders. By actively sharing their climate risks and mitigation strategies, they can better prepare for the uncertainties posed by climate change while aligning with broader sustainability goals.

– Consequences of greenwashing: As ESG and sustainability practices become integral to corporate strategies, the risk of greenwashing — the practice of making misleading claims about environmental benefits — grows. Stakeholders are becoming increasingly discerning and savvy, able to identify and challenge companies that falsely promote their sustainability efforts or exaggerate their environmental credentials. Regulatory scrutiny around greenwashing is intensifying, with authorities taking steps to penalize such practices.

Companies must, therefore, ensure that their marketing and communications align with their actual practices and commitments. Demonstrating genuine sustainability efforts and verifying claims through third-party assessments will be essential to maintaining credibility in a landscape that prioritizes transparency.

The future of ESG and sustainability is characterized by heightened expectations for accountability, innovation and collaboration. The abovementioned emerging climate-related insights will significantly influence how organizations navigate this complex landscape.

As the demand for responsible and sustainable practices increases, businesses that proactively embrace these insights thrive and contribute to a more sustainable and equitable future for generations to come. The path forward is full of challenges, but it also holds unprecedented opportunities for those willing to lead in sustainability and climate action.

## THE PHILIPPINE STAR

### [Unicef calls for Philippines climate education](#)

By: Pia Lee Brago

The United Nations children's agency is urging the Philippines to make education more climate smart and resilient.

A United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) report showed the Philippines ranking number two in the region on the Children's Climate Risk Index.

UNICEF regional director for East Asia and the Pacific June Kunugi said typhoons and heat waves contribute to fewer hours for children in the classroom.

"Looking at other ways to maintain continuity and learning is trying to make education more climate smart and resilient," Kunugi told The STAR.

According to data from the Department of Education released in November, up to 26 learning days were lost due to class suspensions in several schools nationwide caused by recent typhoons and other natural calamities.

The top Asian countries at risk from climate change, according to a UNICEF report, are Myanmar, Philippines, Papua New Guinea and North Korea.

The UNICEF Children's Climate Risk Index measures the risk of climate change on children in 163 countries. It considers two main factors – exposure of children to climate and environmental hazards, shocks and stresses and their vulnerability.

UNICEF also called on the Philippine government to provide better strategic solutions and more investments for more sustained development of data about children.

Although the Philippines has a wealth of data about children, relatively more expansive than many countries, UNICEF said there are still key gaps and issues in terms of granularity, periodicity and timeliness, accessibility, reliability and consistency.

Other key data gaps exist in the areas of disaster risk preparedness, planning and response monitoring; climate change impacts on children; social protection and public financing for children; children with disabilities; early childhood education; children's civil rights and participation and richer local-level data on children in the provincial, municipal/city and barangay levels.

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By: Secretary Robert EA Borje

World Braille Day, observed on 4 January, highlights the importance of accessibility for persons with disabilities (PWDs), particularly those with visual impairments. Yet, accessibility goes beyond communication and must be central to our collective response to the climate crisis. As extreme weather events worsen, PWDs face heightened risks, especially during disasters. Without inclusive adaptation strategies, they remain some of the most vulnerable in our efforts to build resilience.

As one of the most climate-vulnerable nations, the Philippines experiences extreme events, including typhoons and flooding. For PWDs, these disasters pose greater challenges — from accessing early warnings to ensuring safe evacuation and obtaining relief. Most disaster response systems in the country are not equipped to address their specific needs.

Early warning systems, which are essential for saving lives during extreme weather, often fail to consider the needs of PWDs. For those with visual or auditory impairments, traditional warnings — such as text messages or sirens — may be ineffective. This highlights the urgent need for warning systems that are inclusive and sensitive to the specific requirements of PWDs to ensure that no one is left behind during crises.

Moreover, many evacuation centers and facilities remain physically inaccessible to individuals who use wheelchairs or other mobility devices. The lack of accessible pathways, ramps and communication tools limits PWDs from seeking refuge in times of crisis.

In 2013, typhoon “Yolanda” (Haiyan) damaged many rehabilitation facilities that severely affected essential services for PWDs. An assessment conducted by the World Health Organization between November 2013 and April 2014 identified 2,998 individuals in need of rehabilitation services, including both those with pre-existing disabilities and individuals injured by the typhoon.

Rehabilitation efforts increased in the months following typhoon “Yolanda,” peaking four months after the disaster. The Eastern Visayas Regional Medical Center established a Department of Rehabilitation Medicine, expanding services to include physical therapy, physical rehabilitation consultations, occupational therapy, and the provision of prostheses and orthoses.

Beyond medical care, initiatives were introduced to increase awareness of and inclusion for PWDs at the community level, involving local governments and stakeholders. A directory of health, rehabilitation, and disability services for Region 8 was published, improving access to critical information and services for PWDs.

As a strong advocate for accessibility and inclusion, I have also pushed for and long supported the promotion of Filipino Sign Language (FSL), our national sign language under Republic Act 11106. By integrating FSL into early warning systems and public service announcements, we can help deaf individuals prepare for disasters and respond to emergencies. FSL is crucial for empowering the deaf community, breaking down communication barriers and ensuring their access to information, especially during disasters.

Indeed, supporting FSL education and interpreter training helps create a more inclusive society. Promoting FSL and Braille emphasizes the need for communication systems that include everyone, especially PWDs. In disaster response and recovery, strategies must address the needs of PWDs, including the deaf, and ensure that essential services like rehabilitation are quickly restored. It is of prime importance to protect the rights of the marginalized groups and foster their full participation.

The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) further emphasize the need for inclusive climate action. SDG 13 urges countries to take urgent action against climate change, while SDG 10 calls for reducing inequality. The intersection of these goals lies in ensuring that climate policies uplift marginalized communities, including PWDs. A truly resilient society is one where each person has equal access to opportunities for growth and safety.

At the national level, the Climate Change Commission has been working to integrate disability inclusion into the country's climate strategies. The National Adaptation Plan (NAP) stresses the importance of an inclusive and participatory approach in addressing the impacts of climate change. A key strategy of the NAP involves mainstreaming integrated adaptation governance, which fosters collaboration across sectors and disciplines. This approach ensures that discussions include vulnerable populations — women, children, PWDs, Indigenous peoples and senior citizens — whose needs are often overlooked.

A rights-based approach to adaptation recognizes that PWDs have the right to safety, health and well-being, and these must be respected in every adaptation effort. This means ensuring that infrastructure, healthcare and essential services remain accessible to all, even in the face of disasters.

As the Philippines advances its climate adaptation plans, inclusivity must be at the forefront of every policy to make sure that PWDs receive the protection, services and opportunities they deserve.

We must work closely with all sectors to build resilience that leaves no one behind. Climate change affects everyone, but it affects the vulnerable the most. Only by embracing inclusivity can we build a resilient future where everyone has the opportunity to thrive.

## HEAD TOPICS

### [Three Philippine Natural Wonders Designated as ASEAN Heritage Parks](#)

The Climate Change Commission (CCC) announced that Apo Reef Natural Park, Turtle Islands, and Balinsasayao Twin Lakes have been recognized as ASEAN Heritage Parks. These additions bring the total number of Philippine ASEAN Heritage Parks to 14. Apo Reef, the second-largest contiguous coral reef globally, is renowned for its biodiversity. The Turtle Islands are a critical nesting ground for Green Sea Turtles. Balinsasayao Twin Lakes, with its mountainous landscape and diverse ecosystems, provides clean water and supports a wide range of wildlife.

The Apo Reef Natural Park, the largest contiguous coral reef system in the Philippines and second largest in the world, stands out for its exceptional marine biodiversity. Photo courtesy of the ASEAN Center for Biodiversity

The Turtle Islands Wildlife Sanctuary, recognized as the only major nesting habitat of the Green Sea Turtle in member countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, and the 11th largest nesting site globally, plays a pivotal role in conserving this endangered species. Its critical importance for biodiversity conservation was recognized through various national and international legal frameworks, ensuring its long-term protection.

“We must integrate climate change considerations into the management of these protected areas. By prioritizing sustainable practices, such as reducing pollution and overfishing, we can enhance the resilience of our marine ecosystems and safeguard their contributions to climate change mitigation,” CCC vice chairperson and executive director Robert E.A. Borje said.



## **PHILIPPINE INFORMATION AGENCY**

### **100 Paete farming families benefit from CCC Christmas outreach**

In the spirit of the holiday season and in line with the directive of the Office of the President, the Climate Change Commission (CCC) conducted an outreach program that benefited 100 farmers and their families in the municipality of Paete, Laguna. This initiative is part of the CCC's ongoing efforts to engage with communities affected by recent typhoons and promote resilience amid the impacts of climate change.

Paete, a fourth-class municipality, relies heavily on agriculture for livelihoods, making it particularly vulnerable to climate-related challenges.

One of the key sectors of the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) focuses on agriculture, fisheries, and food security. The NAP aims to achieve three key outcomes for agriculture: productive and resilient agriculture and fisheries, conservation of natural resources critical for agriculture and aquaculture, and protection of farmers' and fisherfolk's livelihoods amid climate change.

The CCC continues to work closely with local governments through the development of Local Climate Change Action Plans (LCCAP) to ensure that farmers and their communities have the resources and knowledge needed to build climate resilience.

"This holiday season, we are undertaking this outreach program as part of our community-building activities, underscoring the reason for this season. We recognize that our farmers are at the frontline of climate impacts and we hope this outreach program helps ease the burden of those most affected and empower them to not just survive, but thrive," said CCC Vice Chairperson and Executive Director Robert E.A. Borje.

The Municipality of Paete submitted its LCCAP for 2021-2026 and Annual Investment Program (AIP) for 2023 to the CCC in May last year. The LCCAP outlines the LGU's strategies and actions to address climate change impacts on their community, infrastructure, and economy, while the AIP contains the programs, activities, and projects (PAPs) of the LGU, including on climate action.

As the CCC strengthens its efforts to combat climate change and strengthen adaptation measures, it continues to focus on helping vulnerable communities, ensuring no one is left behind in the journey toward a climate-resilient future.

For more information on the CCC's climate mainstreaming activities, visit [www.climate.gov.ph](http://www.climate.gov.ph) and [www.facebook.com/CCCPhl](https://www.facebook.com/CCCPhl). (CCC)

## THE MANILA TIMES

### [Philippines at the forefront of global climate action](#)

By: Catherine S. Valente, Kristina Maralit and Agence France-Presse

The Climate Change Commission (CCC) has pledged to continue leading the fight against climate change as its impacts increasingly affect the Philippines.

CCC Vice Chairman and Executive Director Robert Borje said the commission would explore further collaborations on climate change programs to "strengthen efforts to safeguard our communities, protect livelihoods and enhance our adaptive capacities."

He emphasized that this was "crucial" as the country continues to "experience the devastating impacts of climate change, including stronger typhoons, rising sea levels and prolonged droughts."

Last month, the CCC held a consultation dialogue with civil society organizations to strengthen the Philippines' position at the 29th Conference of the Parties (COP29) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Baku, Azerbaijan.

Borje said this collaboration was vital to enhancing the country's strategy in global climate negotiations and aligning efforts to build climate resilience at the national level.

"Our goal is to ensure that every voice, especially from the most vulnerable communities, is represented and heard," Borje said.

He also highlighted the urgent need to ramp up disaster risk readiness and preparedness, particularly in the wake of several tropical cyclones that recently battered parts of the country.

He underscored President Marcos Jr.'s vision of climate solidarity: "This gathering is more than just a recognition of partnerships; it is a rallying call for action. Climate action and adaptation are a whole-of-nation, whole-of-society, and whole-of-world endeavor. There is much at stake."

President Marcos also emphasized the critical role of the CCC in empowering communities to adapt, build resilience and pave the way for sustainability for all Filipinos.

Under the leadership of Marcos, the CCC remains committed to advancing national policies on climate resilience, focusing on building adaptive capacity across various sectors and communities.

As the lead policymaking body on climate change, the CCC is tasked with coordinating, monitoring and evaluating government programs. It also ensures that climate change is

integrated into national, local and sectoral development plans to help create a climate-resilient and climate-smart Philippines.

At COP29, the Philippines signed a host country agreement with the Loss and Damage Fund (LDF) Board, formalizing the country's responsibilities.

The LDF is an international financial mechanism designed to provide grants and concessional financing to climate-vulnerable countries to support their recovery efforts from climate-related economic and non-economic losses and damages.

In August, President Marcos, who also heads the CCC, signed into law Republic Act 12019, also known as the Loss and Damage Fund Board Act.

The law grants the Philippines the legal capacity to host the Board of the Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage, enabling it to address the loss and damage caused by climate change while mobilizing innovative sources of climate financing.

The LDF board, made up of 26 members from the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Paris Agreement, will establish the fund's direction and manage its operations.

The Philippines secured a seat on the board as a permanent representative for the Asia-Pacific Group for 2024 and 2026 and as an alternate representative for 2025.

The Philippines is pushing for the Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage (FRLD) to be based in Manila, citing the country's extreme vulnerability to climate change and natural disasters.

The FRLD, which manages funds to assist climate-vulnerable developing countries, held its fourth board meeting in Manila.

During a courtesy call with the FRLD board members in Malacañang on Dec. 2, President Marcos reiterated that hosting the board would be "of supreme importance" to the Philippines due to its vulnerability to climate risks.

"The record number of disasters that have hit the Philippines in recent weeks underscores the urgency of addressing climate change," Marcos said. "The momentum created since the Industrial Revolution is difficult to halt or redirect, but I hope that all of you can help find solutions so that, in the Philippines, most of our people do not suffer."

Marcos emphasized that hosting the board meeting in Manila would give the Philippines a stronger voice in accessing financial assistance for climate-related initiatives.

"As we can see worldwide, weather events are becoming more extreme, with torrential rains followed by scorching heat waves," Marcos noted. "Our country's geographical location makes us highly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change. Because

of this vulnerability, we are proactive advocates for heightened climate responsibility and justice on the global stage."

The president also encouraged government agencies, educational institutions, civil society organizations, the business sector and local government units to intensify efforts to localize the National Adaptation Plan, which aims to reduce climate-related loss and damage by 2050.

"Together with actions both big and small, let us continue our mission for a safer, greener, and brighter future for all," Marcos said.

Borje welcomed the president's actions to strengthen the country's climate adaptation and mitigation strategies.

"The Climate Change Commission will ensure that the Philippines remains at the forefront of global climate action. The president's support for climate-related initiatives is crucial in securing a sustainable future for the Philippines and the world," Borje said.

During the Global Warming and Climate Change Consciousness Week, President Marcos called on Filipinos to unite and take collective action to address the pressing challenges of climate change.

He expressed confidence that through unity and shared commitment, Filipinos can rise to the challenge and ensure a brighter future for future generations.

"We are continuously called to act so that the next generations can still enjoy the lush and bountiful Philippines we have inherited," the president said.

Marcos also highlighted the importance of a collective vision for a sustainable future: "As we commit to building a Bagong Pilipinas, let our vision be clear. We want a Philippines that is well taken care of. We want a nation that remains unshaken, no matter the situation. Most importantly, we want a people who truly appreciate the abundance of our lands and seas."

Recently, the CCC conducted an outreach program that benefited 100 farmers and their families in the municipality of Paete, Laguna.

Paete, a fourth-class municipality, relies heavily on agriculture for livelihoods, making it particularly vulnerable to climate-related challenges.

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From a global perspective, nowhere was spared the devastating impact of supercharged climate disasters in 2024.

This year is the hottest in history, with record-breaking temperatures in the atmosphere and oceans acting like fuel for extreme weather around the world.

World Weather Attribution, experts on how global warming influences extreme events, said nearly every disaster they analysed over the past 12 months was intensified by climate change.

"The impacts of fossil fuel warming have never been clearer or more devastating than in 2024. We are living in a dangerous new era," said climate scientist Friederike Otto, who leads the WWA network.

## Heat

That was tragically evident in June when more than 1,300 people died during the Muslim hajj pilgrimage in Saudi Arabia where temperatures hit 51.8 degrees Celsius (125 degrees Fahrenheit).

Extreme heat — sometimes dubbed the "silent killer" — also proved deadly in Thailand, India, and United States.

Conditions were so intense in Mexico that howler monkeys dropped dead from the trees, while Pakistan kept millions of children at home as the mercury inched above 50C.

Greece recorded its earliest ever heatwave, forcing the closure of its famed Acropolis and fanning terrible wildfires, at the outset of Europe's hottest summer yet.

## Floods

Climate change isn't just sizzling temperatures — warmer oceans mean higher evaporation, and warmer air absorbs more moisture, a volatile recipe for heavy rainfall.

In April, the United Arab Emirates received two years worth of rain in a single day, turning parts of the desert-state into a sea, and hobbling Dubai's international airport.

Kenya was barely out of a once-in-a-generation drought when the worst floods in decades delivered back-to-back disasters for the East African nation.

Four million people needed aid after historic flooding killed more than 1,500 people across West and Central Africa. Europe — most notably Spain — also suffered tremendous downpours that caused deadly flash flooding.

Afghanistan, Russia, Brazil, China, Nepal, Uganda, India, Somalia, Pakistan, Burundi and the United States were among other countries that witnessed flooding in 2024.

## Cyclones

Warmer ocean surfaces feed energy into tropical cyclones as they barrel toward land, whipping up fierce winds and their destructive potential.

Major hurricanes pummeled the United States and Caribbean, most notably Milton, Beryl and Helene, in a 2024 season of above-average storm activity.

The Philippines endured six major storms in November alone, just two months after suffering Typhoon Yagi as it tore through Southeast Asia.

In December, scientists said global warming had helped intensify Cyclone Chino to a Category 4 storm as it collided head-on with Mayotte, devastating France's poorest overseas territory.

## Droughts and wildfires

Some regions may be wetter as climate change shifts rainfall patterns, but others are becoming drier and more vulnerable to drought.

The Americas suffered severe drought in 2024 and wildfires torched millions of hectares in the western United States, Canada, and the Amazon basin — usually one of Earth's wettest places.

Between January and September, more than 400,000 fires were recorded across South America, shrouding the continent in choking smoke.

The World Food Programme in December said 26 million people across southern Africa were at risk of hunger as a months-long drought parched the impoverished region.

### Economic toll

Extreme weather cost thousands of lives in 2024 and left countless more in desperate poverty. The lasting toll of such disasters is impossible to quantify.

In terms of economic losses, Zurich-based reinsurance giant Swiss Re estimated the global damage bill at \$310 billion, a statement issued early December.

Flooding in Europe — particularly in the Spanish province of Valencia, where over 200 people died in October — and hurricanes Helene and Milton drove up the cost, the company said.

As of Nov. 1, the United States had suffered 24 weather disasters in 2024 with losses exceeding \$1 billion each, government figures showed.

Drought in Brazil cost its farming sector \$2.7 billion between June and August, while "climatic challenges" drove global wine production to its lowest level since 1961, an industry body said.

## THE PHILIPPINE STAR

### [Key trends shaping the Phl economy in 2025](#)

By: Joefel Ortega Banzon

As we look ahead to 2025, the Philippine economy faces both exciting opportunities and challenges. Here's a simple look at what to expect in the coming year.

The Philippine economy is expected to continue growing in 2025, but at a slower pace compared to recent years. Experts predict the country's GDP to grow by around 6.0% to 6.5%, a positive sign, although not as fast as the recovery seen after the pandemic.

Key areas like services, manufacturing, and infrastructure will help drive growth. However, global issues like inflation and slowdowns in major countries like the US and China might affect exports and business activity.

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) and World Bank have both projected a moderate growth rate for the Philippines in 2025, reflecting the challenges posed by global economic slowdowns but also highlighting the strong foundations laid by infrastructure spending and domestic recovery.

Inflation, which has been a concern in recent years, is expected to ease in 2025. Prices are likely to stabilize, with inflation forecasted to be around 3-4%. The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) is expected to adjust interest rates to help keep prices stable and encourage spending and investment.

The Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) and BSP have both indicated that inflation is projected to moderate, aligning with the central bank's target range of 2-4% for 2025.

The government's infrastructure projects on the other hand, which have been a major focus in recent years, will continue in 2025. Big projects like new roads, bridges, airports, and ports are expected to create jobs and improve transportation across the country. There will also be a stronger focus on "green" infrastructure, which includes energy-efficient buildings, renewable energy projects, and climate-resistant structures. These projects are important for both the economy and the environment.

The National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) and the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) have outlined an ambitious infrastructure program, with investments continuing to flow into major projects under the "Build, Build, Build" initiative.

In 2025, there will be more emphasis on sustainable or "green" investments. The Philippine government is aiming for carbon neutrality by 2050, meaning the country wants to reduce its carbon emissions to protect the environment.



The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and Climate Change Commission (CCC) are pushing for policies that attract green investments, in line with the Philippines' commitment to global climate agreements such as the Paris Agreement.

Moreover, the digital economy in the Philippines is expected to continue growing in 2025. More people are shopping online, using digital services, and engaging with technology in their daily lives. Areas like e-commerce, online banking, and education will remain strong, and technology-based jobs will continue to rise.

The government is improving digital infrastructure, which will support the growth of these industries. The rise of artificial intelligence (AI) and automation will also bring new opportunities for businesses and workers.

Reports from Google Philippines and The National ICT Confederation of the Philippines (NICP) have highlighted the rapid growth of e-commerce and digital platforms, which are expected to continue in 2025 as more Filipinos go online for work and shopping.

However, while the Philippine economy is expected to grow, it will still face challenges from global trends. Issues like rising trade tensions, the risk of recessions in other countries, and natural disasters like typhoons could affect growth. The government will need to remain flexible and continue working on policies that protect the economy from these risks.

The World Trade Organization (WTO) and other global economic bodies have noted the potential impact of global trade tensions and supply chain disruptions, particularly in relation to the Philippines' reliance on imports and exports.

The Philippine economy in 2025 is expected to experience steady growth, thanks to investments in infrastructure, digital technology, and sustainability. While there will be challenges—such as global economic risks and climate change—the government's focus on creating jobs, improving social services, and investing in green projects will help ensure the country remains on a positive path. With a focus on long-term progress, 2025 should be a year of continued recovery and development for the Philippines.

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