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07 JANUARY 2026 | 08:00 am

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By: Almira Louise S. Martinez

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ECO BUSINESS

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UPLB

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Information and Knowledge Management Division

BUSINESS WORLD

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A Filipino scientist received recognition under the patronage of President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi of Egypt for his work in advancing sustainability and innovation in marginalized communities in the Philippines.

Glenn S. Banaguas, a science diplomat with advocacies on climate-disaster resiliency and environmental sustainability, was one of the first Laureates of the Bibliotheca Alexandrina International Award announced on Monday.

“I really don’t know what I’m going to say…this particular award is under the patronage of the president of Egypt,” he told BusinessWorld in a Zoom interview on Tuesday.

“I was speechless, and the only words that I would utter was just ‘Thank you so much’,” he added.

Mr. Banaguas became known for his dedication to helping the disadvantaged through his Environmental & Climate Change Research Institute and its “Climate Smart Philippines: Science for Service” initiative.

“During the earliest times in 2010 up to the present, most of our research projects are focusing on this particular sector,” he said. “It’s a volunteer research organization so 90% of our projects in the Philippines are for free – it’s pro bono.”

Some of his works include providing practical solutions such as biofuels, flood and drought forecasting devices, disaster-prediction systems, and sustainable energy and health systems.

“Most of the research projects are concentrating on our farmers, fisherfolks, indigenous people, because I know that every time there is a disaster, the poor become poorer,” he said. “And every time there’s a disaster, these particular sectors suffer so much.”

“What I really want to do is just do research because I know that this particular research will really create positive impacts in the lives of our people, and that’s really my goal,” he added.

Before becoming a multi-awarded scientist, Mr. Banaguas first dreamt of becoming a priest.

“I really wanted to become a priest, I really don’t want to become a scientist,” he said. “What I really wanted to do is to serve the Lord, serve God with all my heart.”

“This particular vocation is not really meant for me, so I said all right, I will serve through our people,” he added.

The Bibliotheca Alexandrina International Award aims to honor individuals with significant contributions on a specific theme determined by the Higher Committee of the Award. The field of the award's first edition was "Green Technology Applications for Achieving Well-Being and Happiness for Humanity."

Award winners will receive a monetary value of one million Egyptian pounds (1.2 million pesos), along with a gold medal and an official certificate of excellence to be given in February in Cairo, Egypt.

"The money that we get every time I win in a competition or in awards like this, we use it for research purposes," he said. "Sometimes I also allot something for the orphans because part of my advocacy is to give it to the orphanage, a portion of it."

ECO BUSINESS

Five climate adaptation ideas to watch in 2026

From adding finance to making sure loss and damage funds reach vulnerable populations, climate adaptation is an increasingly crucial topic as extreme weather events disrupt daily life.

Around the world, local adaptation models are redesigning how communities respond to a harsher climate, such as coastal cities turning to mangrove restoration and resilient agriculture.

From the Philippines to Ethiopia, here are some examples of local strategies helping frontline communities adapt to climate change:

Nature-based solutions

In the Philippines and Indonesia — among the most disaster-prone countries in the world — mangroves that serve as coastal protection and carbon storage are helping protect communities from deadly waves and storm surges.

Mangroves are natural carbon sinks, acting as buffers from typhoons, rising seas and soil erosion.

In the Philippines, after decades of mangrove loss, local leaders are creating 100-metre-wide "coastal greenbelts," or strips of mangroves, beach forest and wetland vegetation as natural coastal buffer zones.

More than 1,000 hectares of mangroves and related ecosystems have been established or protected since 2022, and the greenbelt initiative is considered a model for coastal areas nationwide.

In Indonesia, islanders, particularly women, are leading mangrove planting efforts in response to rising seas and worsening tidal floods.

They filed a climate lawsuit against Holcim, a large cement company, accusing it of contributing to global carbon emissions responsible for sea-level rise that is harming their island.

Climate-proofing schools
Global warming is taking a toll on children's learning around the world.

According to an analysis by the United Nations Children's Fund, at least 242 million students in 85 countries had their schooling disrupted by extreme climate events in 2024, including heat waves, tropical cyclones, storms, floods and droughts.

Solutions like air conditioning are a costly response that also worsens climate change.

In Burkina Faso, Kenya and India, architects are using passive-cooling designs such as clay or earthenware walls, cross-ventilation and elevated roofs to keep classrooms cooler, tapping into local materials and renewable energy like solar power.

Climate-smart schools could be a model for low-cost and low-carbon infrastructure to address the threat of extreme heat to education.

Ecotourism and community-based efforts

In regions where deforestation, illegal logging and habitat destruction are rampant, residents have found community-based solutions to conserve forest and coastal resources.

In a national park in Indonesia's West Java, a women-led initiative of ecoprinting, which is transferring natural pigments of local rainforest plants onto fabric, provides income to communities without relying on destructive practices such as logging and deforestation.

Ecoprinting jobs help families survive in a region where logging or mining are the usual sources of income.

Ecotourism, which promotes responsible travel in nature-rich areas, also aims to conserve the environment and support the livelihoods of local communities.

Since 2014, the local government of Del Carmen in Siargao, Philippines, has retrained illegal fishers and mangrove cutters to become ecotourism operators and plant mangroves.

Instead of engaging in destructive sources of income like mangrove cutting, residents now offer guided tours around the mangrove reserve to support its conservation.

Climate insurance and labour adaptation
Insurance is considered an underused tool in building climate resilience among low-income or informal workers, and labour adaptation can help workers facing climate risks.

Nicaragua introduced so-called climate-risk microinsurance in 2021 to support farmers and small-business owners exposed to extreme weather.

Guatemala's government initiated a similar programme, called Catastrophic Parametric Insurance, to protect the livelihoods of family farmers against severe climate risks.

The programme fully funds the costs of the insurance for farmers, who are paid in the event of a triggering event or after heavy rainfall.

In Bangladesh, workers in the global garment industry are increasingly exposed to climate hazards such as heat stress and flooding.

Improving conditions in garment-making factories, such as adding ventilation and insulated roofing, is encouraged to reduce workers' heat stress and vulnerability to extreme weather.

Boosting food security

Extreme weather events like typhoons, floods and droughts destroy farmlands and fisheries, significantly disrupting food systems.

A global temperature increase of 2°C would push an additional 189 million people into hunger, and 1.8 billion more people would be added if there were an increase of 4°C, according to the UN World Food Programme.

Climate-smart technology is a tool for African farmers who are vulnerable to such extreme events.

Tech solutions such as solar-powered irrigation and using AI to detect pests are helping strengthen food security amid climate change and rapid population growth.

Countries like Ethiopia are expanding use of heat-tolerant wheat crops to boost domestic production and reduce dependence on imports, while others use regenerative farming, a sustainable method that rehabilitates degraded land, to improve soil health and capture carbon.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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By: Keith Clores

The shear line is forecast to bring heavy rainfall in the Bicol Region and other parts of Southern Luzon on Wednesday, the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical, and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) said.

Due to the shear line, Bicol Region, Quezon, Oriental Mindoro, Marinduque, Romblon, and Northern Samar will experience scattered rains and isolated thunderstorms, Pagasa said in its 5 a.m. bulletin.

With this, the state weather bureau issued a yellow rainfall warning for 50 to 100 millimeters of rain in the next 24 hours expected in Catanduanes, Albay, and Sorsogon.

Three other weather systems will also be affecting the rest of the country.

Palawan will experience scattered rains and thunderstorms caused by the trough of the low-pressure area (LPA) southwest of the Philippine area of responsibility (PAR), Pagasa reported.

Meanwhile, the northeast monsoon, or “amihan,” will bring light rains to Cordillera Administrative Region, Cagayan Valley, and Aurora; as well as isolated light rains in Metro Manila and the rest of Luzon.

Pagasa also warned of scattered rains and thunderstorms brought by the easterlies in the rest of Eastern Visayas, and isolated rain showers in the rest of the country.

As of writing, no LPA or tropical cyclone is being monitored inside the PAR, Pagasa further said.

THE MANILA TIMES

Anti-air pollution measures sought

By: Allen Limos

Breathe Metro Manila (BMM), a coalition of air quality experts, has urged local government units (LGUs) to adopt real-time monitoring systems as air pollution levels in Philippine cities exceed health standards.

The group said LGUs should follow the examples of Quezon City, Makati City, and Mandaluyong City in adopting real-time air quality monitoring systems.

“Pollution doesn’t stop at city borders. Sharing data across LGUs is essential so communities can work together — not in isolation,” said Ethel Garcia, Clarity Movement regional account manager for Southeast Asia and Oceania, and a BMM member.

Garcia stressed the need to unite academic air quality experts, LGUs working to confront air pollution, and corporations willing to fund the initiative.

Data from the Center for Research on Energy and Clean Air showed that air pollution caused over 66,000 deaths in the Philippines in a single year, with economic losses in 2019 alone reaching nearly 12 percent of the country’s gross domestic product, or about P2.32 trillion.

BMM said prompt action is crucial to prevent bigger losses in the future.

“With strong LGU leadership and cross-sector collaboration, we can protect public health and create cleaner, more livable cities for all Filipinos,” Garcia said.

Mandaluyong City Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office chief Roald Arcangel said real-time monitoring has improved the city's response to environmental threats.

Mandaluyong’s air quality remains within acceptable levels, but pollution tends to spike during rush hours, particularly in densely populated areas like Addition Hills.

He said Sangguniang Panlungsod Ordinance 1030, series of 2025, mandates that air quality data serve as a guide for school cancellations due to high levels of air pollution.

“We needed our own data — not assumptions — to respond to rising respiratory illnesses and environmental events like volcanic eruptions and smog,” Arcangel added.

UNDP-backed partnership positions Philippines for regional leadership on plastic pollution

Senior leaders from the Philippine government, international development agencies, multinational companies, and civil society have signaled a renewed push to curb plastic pollution and accelerate the country's shift toward a circular economy, as the Steering Board of the National Plastic Action Partnership (NPAP) Philippines met to chart its next phase of action.

The meeting brought together representatives from government, industry, academe, and development partners at a pivotal moment for NPAP Philippines, a multi-stakeholder platform designed to align national policy, private-sector investment, and community-level implementation. Members reviewed progress on initiatives aimed at reducing plastic leakage while supporting inclusive economic transition, an issue with growing regional and global implications.

Central to the discussion was the National Plastic Action Roadmap, now undergoing refinement following a public consultation process that gathered inputs from stakeholders across the plastics value chain. Updates were also presented on the partnership's Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) Assessment and the work of technical groups focused on flexible plastic recycling and upstream interventions such as reduction, reuse, and substitution.

Steering Board members emphasized the importance of stronger coordination between national policy frameworks and local government implementation, particularly in waste collection systems, the integration of waste workers, and community-led innovation. Participants noted that the NPAP platform plays a critical role in fostering policy coherence, generating evidence-based solutions, and ensuring that environmental goals are aligned with social and economic realities.

The discussions took place against the backdrop of persistent plastic leakage in the Philippines, one of the world's largest contributors to marine plastic pollution. NPAP Philippines is working to align national action with existing laws such as the Extended Producer Responsibility Act and the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000, while also supporting the country's engagement in global negotiations toward a legally binding agreement on plastic pollution.

Participants also highlighted the relevance of these efforts to the Philippines' upcoming ASEAN Chairmanship in 2026, pointing to opportunities for the country to elevate regional cooperation on circular economy initiatives.

"Our work here has implications beyond our sector as well as beyond our borders. The Philippines is actively participating in ASEAN regional dialogues and in the global negotiations towards an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution. Through the NPAP, we can demonstrate our coordinated, multi-sectoral approach, and translate global commitments into national action and meaningful local impact," said Environment Secretary Raphael Lotilla, chair of the NPAP Philippines Steering Board.

United Nations Development Program (UNDP) Philippines Deputy Resident Representative Edwine Carrie underscored the importance of ensuring a just transition, particularly for communities whose livelihoods depend on plastics.

“Eliminating or reducing plastic pollution is an environmental imperative. It’s also a strong economic incentive, which comes with very strong collateral health benefits. From the standpoint of UNDP, we see the role of NPAP as important in the issue of just transition — the recognition that plastics still plays a prominent role in the livelihoods of many vulnerable sectors in the Philippines,” Carrie said.

He added that while phasing out plastics may cause short-term disruption, it is essential that solutions focus on helping affected communities at the local level as the country moves toward a more sustainable future.

Steering Board members also examined the Roadmap’s system change scenario, which projects that a combined approach of upstream reduction and improved collection, recycling, and disposal could cut aquatic plastic pollution by as much as 93 percent by 2040. The findings reinforced the need for coordinated investments that deliver environmental, economic, and social gains.

Closing the meeting, Coca-Cola Philippines President Antonio del Rosario called for stronger collective ownership of national priorities across sectors.

“We must rally around the National Plastic Action Roadmap. Its success depends on collective ownership, alignment, and commitment from all sectors to move as one, not in silos,” del Rosario said. He noted that the private sector has a key role to play through upstream innovation, investments in collection and recycling, and the creation of markets for secondary materials. “The future we want is one where sustainability and equity go hand in hand,” he added.

Development partners, including the United Kingdom, Canada, the European Union, and the World Bank, reaffirmed their support for the Philippines’ circular economy transition, citing opportunities for technical assistance, financing, and data-driven planning. Discussions highlighted how coordinated investments — from local collection systems to recycling infrastructure — could help drive long-term systems change.

The Steering Board also formally welcomed new members, including the United Kingdom, Canada, and Nestlé Philippines, expanding the partnership’s international reach and technical expertise as the Philippines positions itself as a key player in regional and global efforts to address plastic pollution.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

UPLB

INREM hosts PH's 1st carbon-neutral int'l summit, champions nature-based climate-resilience strategies

To advance global sustainability and resilience against the deepening climate crisis through nature-based solutions (NbS), the UPLB-Interdisciplinary Studies Center on Integrated Natural Resources and Environment Management (UPLB-INREM) convened over 200 stakeholders for the 5th International Conference on INREM (INREM 2025) or "INREM: Nature-based Solutions for Climate Resilience and Sustainability."

Climate experts, researchers, policymakers, practitioners, advocates, and students, and representatives of national government agencies, the private sector, and civil society converged at the Acacia Hotel in Muntinlupa City on November 18-20, 2025 to discuss NbS to the climate crisis.

The gathering, which centered on the theme "Innovating through INREM 2025," served as a transdisciplinary platform for participants from the Philippines, Japan, South Korea, Canada, Germany, the Netherlands, France, the United Kingdom, and the United States to share nature-based strategies on future-proofing development through integrated resource management.

A historic environmental milestone

With INREM 2025, UPLB-INREM marked a historic precedent for academic gatherings in the country, as it was the first-ever carbon-neutral international conference in the Philippines.

UPLB-INREM and its partners will plant approximately 800 native trees at the former's Research, Education and Public Service (IREPS) sites, including in Laguna and La Union, to offset the carbon emissions generated during the conference.

Dr. Juan M. Pulhin, UPLB-INREM founding director, described the initiative as a movement of responsibility, ensuring that it leaves a positive environmental footprint.

A ceremonial signing of a memorandum of agreement with the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and a partnership night with the Climate Change Commission (CCC) to institutionalize these carbon-offsetting practices solidified this commitment.

Dr. Pulhin also traced the decade-long evolution of the INREM conference from a knowledge-sharing forum to a premier regional platform.

He highlighted high-impact collaborations with partners such as French Agricultural Research Centre for International Development (CIRAD), German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ), the Forest Foundation Philippines (FFP), the Asia-Pacific Network for Global Change Research (APN), and DOST-Philippine Council for Agriculture Aquatic and Natural Resources Research and Development (DOST-PCAARRD), noting how these partnerships bridge scientific research with policy and community action.

Leadership for resilience

UPLB Chancellor Jose V. Camacho, Jr. and Dean Marlo D. Mendoza of the UPLB College of Forestry and Natural Resources, emphasized in their talks that the complexity of modern climate risks demands cross-sector collaboration.

Both UPLB officials urged delegates to move beyond academic discourse and translate research into transformative, on-the-ground actions that protect vulnerable ecosystems.

UP President Angelo A. Jimenez echoed this sentiment, underscoring the need for innovation and holistic management. He emphasized that resilience as experienced across different scales must be documented and replicated to future-proof the nation.

Heads of partner agencies also delivered inspirational messages of support. Jose Andres A. Canivel, JD, executive director of the Forest Foundation of the Philippines, noted that while NbS can be perceived as costly, they offer long-term science-based interventions.

For his part, Dr. Reynaldo V. Ebora, executive director of DOST-PCAARRD, enjoined participants to use the platform to address complex resource management challenges.

Policy and governance perspectives

The keynote speaker, Senator Loren Legarda, called for a paradigm shift in viewing landscapes as single, interconnected “ridge-reef” systems. She criticized development projects that compromise natural functions, such as the ability of land to act as “sponges” during floods.

“When nature-based solutions, INREM integration, and strong policy move in one direction, a clear vision emerges, one that restores the systems that we have damaged and turns them into our strongest desires,” Legarda said.

She challenged the audience to look beyond data, stating,”we can’t keep on just grappling with statistics and not living disaster risk resilience (DRR) and mainstreaming DRR into our daily lives. These losses are part of a larger pattern.”

Climate Change Commission (CCC) Vice Chairperson and Executive Director Robert E.A. Borje highlighted the role of science as the country’s moral and strategic compass. He described science as the “most critical infrastructure,” which is cognitive rather than physical.

“We cannot choose the climate we are born into. But we can choose the country we build in response to it,” Borge stated, affirming that carbon neutrality is achievable when science provides the method.

Meanwhile, Energy Secretary Raphael P.M. Lotilla emphasized the link between ecological and human health. “Integrated natural resources and environment management is more than a strategy; it is a way of thinking and acting that recognizes the interdependence of our environment,” Lotilla said.

The Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Her Excellency Marielle Geraedts, who was also present at the summit, discussed the power of mainstreaming NbS in building a climate-resilient future.

Research Innovations: Plenary and Parallel Sessions

The conference featured nine plenary sessions and 11 parallel sessions showcasing 38 research papers and nine poster presentations. Topics ranged from indigenous governance, blue carbon, natural capital accounting, scenario development through the Nature Futures Framework, climate mitigation and resilience, forest-based resilience, and policy integration.

Eleven early-career researchers participated in the event, continuing the conference’s tradition of empowering the next generation of scientists.

Awards were given for best papers on landscapes and seascapes, lakes and river basins, rural-urban linkages, small islands, as well as for undergraduate, graduate, and poster research categories.

INREM 2025 publications will be featured in a 2026 Special Issue of the Science and Engineering Journal of the Philippine-American Academy of Science and Engineering.

Closing and future outlook

In his closing remarks, Dr. Nathaniel C. Bantayan, UPLB vice chancellor for research and extension, celebrated the conference’s success in establishing communities of practice across the Asia-Pacific region.

He reiterated the university’s commitment to the UPLB AGORA framework, which aims to translate research into tangible community solutions.

INREM 2025 was co-organized with the UPLB-CFNR in collaboration with the DOST-PCAARRD, FFP, with the support of the Government of Canada, and the UP Resilience Institute, together with the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Manila, Climate

Change Commission as a strategic government partner, UP Office of International Linkages, Nickel Asia Corporation, and Alsons Power Group.

It was brought to the public by the International Climate Initiative, implemented by the GIZ, Forestry and Forest Products Research Institute of Japan, Energy Development Corporation, UP Veterinary Medicine Foundation, and Fostering Education & Environment for Development. Other partners are the Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture, San Roque Power Corporation, and Klima 1.5 Corporation.

The UPLB-INREM, led by Dr. Pulhin, is an ecosystem-based resilience hub of the UP Resilience Institute that aims to serve as a center of excellence in integrated natural resources management.

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