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[Preparing the public health system for the next pandemic](#)

By: Patricia B. Mirasol

BATTERED by the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, the Philippine healthcare system has to shift to preventive care from “sick care” and shore up human capital in order to withstand the next infectious disease outbreak, health experts said.

GMA NEWS

[Marcos Jr. in Switzerland to attend World Economic Forum](#)

By: Pia Gutierrez

ZURICH — President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. has arrived in Switzerland for a 4-day working visit to attend the World Economic Forum. Marcos arrived in Zurich at 4:28 p.m. Sunday afternoon (11:28 p.m. in Manila) with First Lady Liza Araneta Marcos, and their son and Ilocos Norte Rep. Sandro Marcos.

[Marcos says Maharlika fund to invest in agri, energy, digitalization, climate change](#)

By: JP Soriano

ZURICH, Switzerland - President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. on Monday said the proposed Maharlika wealth fund will make investments in the basic areas of agriculture, energy, digitalization and climate change.

MANILA STANDARD

[‘Court decision to impact PH-China oil exploration’](#)

By: Macon Ramos-Araneta

Senate Energy committee Sec. Sherwin Gatchalian said the Supreme Court (SC) decision that voided the 2005 joint oil and gas exploration agreement between the Philippines, China, and Vietnam may have also dimmed the prospect of a similar deal between Manila and Beijing.

MANILA BULLETIN

[Focus on emissions, says UAE’s climate talks and oil boss](#)

By: Agence France Presse

ABU DHABI, United Arab Emirates — The president of this year’s COP28 climate talks, who heads one of the world’s biggest oil companies, on Saturday urged a focus on lower emissions, warning global energy needs were set to accelerate.

[UN confirms 2022 among eight hottest years on record](#)

By: Agence France Presse

GENEVA, Switzerland — The past eight years were the hottest since records began, the United Nations confirmed Thursday, despite the cooling influence of a drawn-out La Nina weather pattern.

PANAY NEWS

[\[Opinion\] The climate crisis hits poor countries the hardest \(1st of a series\)](#)

By: Fr. Shay Cullen

THE PHILIPPINES is the hardest-hit country in Asia by the frequency and greater intensity of typhoons indisputably caused by climate change. The World Meteorological Organization says the Philippines climate disasters have increased five times more intense in the past 50 years. What you read here is the truth, it is painful and self-inflicted pain by humankind but knowing the truth might set us free.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

[Half of world's glaciers projected to melt out by 2100: Study](#)

ISTANBUL – By the end of the century, half of the world's glaciers are set to vanish, resulting in not just the loss of their mesmerizing natural beauty, but in heightened water scarcity and risk of natural disasters as well.

[Marcos off to Davos for WEF; vows to underscore PH economic gains](#)

By: Azer Parrocha

MANILA – President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. left for Davos, Switzerland on Sunday morning to attend the 2023 Annual Meeting of the World Economic Forum (WEF) from Jan. 15 to 20, vowing to highlight the Philippines' economic gains and bring home more investment pledges.

THE MANILA TIMES

['Biochar' increases rice yield in Nueva Ecija](#)

By: Celso Cajucom

"Amending" the soil, a suggestion from the Singapore-based Alcom Pte. Ltd. for greater rice yields, worked for Filipino growers like Lauro Medina. A farmer from Nueva Ecija, which is widely acknowledged as the "Rice Granary of the Philippines," Medina took the "green" company up on its recommendation to try biochar, which the latter pushes as a green soil amendment.

[France mobilizes €150M to support PH climate ambitions](#)

The Department of Finance and the French Development Agency (AFD) on January 13 conducted ceremonial exchange of documents signed on December 29 regarding the policy-based loan of €150 million. The loan aims to help the Philippines scale up its efforts to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

[DBM issues call for 2024 budget](#)

By: Louise Maureen Simeon

MANILA, Philippines — Just two weeks after the new year, the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) is now asking government agencies to start preparing their proposals for another record high budget of P5.569 trillion for 2024

[\[Opinion\] Global cooperation as the solution](#)

By: Alain Gaschen

Happy New Year! Like most, I looked forward to the arrival of 2023. For me, the beginning of a new year brings with it an exciting mix of renewed optimism, boundless energy and determination to hit the ground running to achieve even greater things. This motivation helps as we continue strengthening ties between our two countries, as we end our celebration of the 65th anniversary of diplomatic relations.

Philippines borrows P9 billion for climate change efforts

By: Louise Maureen Simeon

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippines has secured 150 million euros (P9 billion) in loan financing from the French government to ramp up climate mitigation and adaptation efforts.

Sara to present Basic Education Report

By: Janvic Mateo

MANILA, Philippines — Vice President and Education Secretary Sara Duterte will present her term's agenda for the education sector and the challenges it faces during her Basic Education Report (BER) set on Jan. 30.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

DWIZ

SSCIS Project ng Climate Change Commission, GIZ-PH aarangkada na

By: Gilbert Perdez

Nagsagawa ng courtesy call ang German Development Cooperation (GIZ) South-South Collaboration on Climate Information Services (SSCIS) Project Team kay Climate Change Commission (CCC) Vice Chair at Executive Robert E.A. Borje, Overall Program Director, para talakayin ang mga susunod na hakbang ukol sa implementasyon ng SSCIS.

MANILA STANDARD

DENR, Globe hail winners of KLIMA-likasan Awards

In celebration of the 2022 National Climate Change Consciousness Week, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and Globe recognized the efforts of individuals, groups, and local government units (LGUs) to address climate change, contribute in disaster risk reduction, and promote cultural and behavioral shifts.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

[SSCIS project to enhance PH capacities on climate action](#)

By: Azer Parrocha

MANILA – It won't be long before climate information services become more accessible to Filipinos.

Information and Knowledge Management Division

BUSINESS MIRROR

[Preparing the public health system for the next pandemic](#)

By: Patricia B. Mirasol

BATTERED by the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, the Philippine healthcare system has to shift to preventive care from “sick care” and shore up human capital in order to withstand the next infectious disease outbreak, health experts said.

The Philippines already has three viruses that are in the same family as pathogens identified by the World Health Organization as having “pandemic potential” — with a possible fourth on the horizon.

“There needs to be a lot of global coordination... for us to focus not just on reactions, not just on surveillance, but also at the complex drivers of zoonosis, such as climate change, pollution, and disasters,” said Noel Lee J. Miranda, a veterinarian and an independent regional consultant who specializes in emerging pandemic threats.

The Philippines is a party to the Pandemic Treaty, which aims to “strengthen pandemic prevention, preparedness and response.” The global accord initiated at the 2021 World Health Assembly will be negotiated in February this year and finalized by May 2024.

Recognizing the need for the “prompt identification and timely response to outbreaks,” the Department of Budget and Management has earmarked P419.3 million in 2023 toward the research and development (R&D) efforts of the proposed Virology Institute of the Philippines; and P25 million to construct a research center in the Visayas and an infectious disease laboratory in Mindanao (both are projects of the University of the Philippines System related to the Philippine Genome Center).

Two related pieces of legislation are in Congress: House Bill No. 9561, filed in September 2021, which seeks to establish a health security national action plan and strengthen institutional capacity for disease prevention, surveillance, control, and response; and Senate Bill No. 1801, filed in September 2020, which seeks to create a national action plan that addresses public health security and emergencies like the COVID-19 pandemic.

‘BUY YOUR TOOLS IN ADVANCE’

Building up local manufacturing is also part of pandemic preparedness, said Ricardo Jose S. Guerrero, a research fellow of the Ateneo Research Institute for Science and

Engineering, whose work includes the production of the proteins that are a component for diagnostic kits.

“As an engineer, I think it’s important to understand the current system before figuring out targeted interventions to solve identified issues,” he said in a Dec. 6 message on LinkedIn. “That’s also why I stress that there’s a lot that needs to be done systemically, and these will primarily be government policy-led to allow solutions to be implemented.”

R&D has limited visibility in government policy because it is “abstract,” he added. “If I have to procure a single chemical in Germany, there’s not much I can do,” he said in a Dec. 1 Zoom call. “R&D is such a small market. It takes weeks for shipping, weeks to months for things to get through customs... procurement is very bespoke.”

“Technology is a tool. If you don’t buy your tools in advance... if you only invest in a hammer, when problems arise, you’re just stuck with your hammer — or you import en masse,” Mr. Guerrero said.

At the BusinessWorld Economic Forum last November, Jon Canto, co-managing partner for the Philippines at McKinsey & Company, said that the Philippines, as a net importer of pharmaceuticals, is vulnerable to supply chain disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Price variation and production inefficiencies could result in “poor quality of care” in 2023, he said in his presentation.

GIVE FRONTLINERS A LIVING WAGE

Healthcare workers in the Philippines, despite being hailed as heroes after serving at the frontlines of the pandemic, still don’t get a living wage, said Monina A. Hernandez, an infection prevention and control clinical nurse specialist who continues to keep an eye on colleagues she left behind after leaving the country for greener pastures in 2010.

“Raise the salary of nurses,” said Ms. Hernandez, founder of the Filipino Nurses Association of New Zealand, Inc.

The health sector has been allotted a P296.3-billion budget for 2023, up from P268.4 billion the previous year; of this, P29 billion has been allocated for the procurement of medicines and vaccines, while P19 billion has been earmarked for the salary and benefits of healthcare workers.

A bill that proposes increasing the minimum base monthly salary of nurses in public medical institutions to P63,997 from P36,619 to encourage more licensed practitioners to stay in the country was filed in the House of Representatives last October.

For comparison, a newly qualified nurse can earn £27,055 in the United Kingdom, where Filipinos make up 24% of internationally trained professionals registered with the Nursing and Midwifery Council.

“Our educational system encourages all our graduates to leave the country,” said Ms. Hernandez. “It’s ingrained as early as high school... What are the fastest ways to leave? One is nursing; another is teaching.”

The Philippines needs an additional 117,000 physicians and 126,000 nurses, the Department of Health (DoH) told BusinessWorld in a Viber message. Among the department’s proposed legislative agenda are the standardization of the salaries of human resources for health and an amendment of the incentives for barangay health workers.

“All of our decisions are centered on our families,” said Ms. Hernandez, who left the country for a better future. While creating nursing positions, offering competitive wages, and providing career development are steps in the right direction, she said that Filipino nurses who want to leave should be allowed to do so.

President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr., said last September that he plans to ease the restrictions imposed on nurses during the pandemic and, at the same time, “improve opportunities domestically.”

WORK WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR

The current health system, which is hospital-centered and specialist-oriented, is “sick care” and not healthcare, said former Health Secretary Dr. Manuel M. Dayrit, an adjunct professor at the Ateneo School of Medicine and Public Health.

“It does not do a good job of addressing the preventive and promotive aspects of health — which is about preventing disease, encouraging healthy lifestyles, and assuring healthy environments for people to live and work,” he told BusinessWorld in a Dec. 21 e-mail.

His recommendations for the next Health secretary include strengthening healthcare delivery and ties with the private sector.

The COVID-19 immunization rollout — which involved a tripartite agreement between the Philippine government, the private sector, and vaccine manufacturers — is an example of how public-private partnerships can address large-scale health concerns, he pointed out.

The 1991 devolution of public health services rendered the quality of healthcare across the Philippines uneven, said Mr. Dayrit. Meant to improve healthcare delivery, it had the “unintended consequence of fragmenting the government health sector.”

“Fundamental reform includes the strengthening of health services at the primary level, which is the weakest part of the country’s health system,” he said.

GMA NEWS

Marcos Jr. in Switzerland to attend World Economic Forum

By: Pia Gutierrez

ZURICH — President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. has arrived in Switzerland for a 4-day working visit to attend the World Economic Forum. Marcos arrived in Zurich at 4:28 p.m. Sunday afternoon (11:28 p.m. in Manila) with First Lady Liza Araneta Marcos, and their son and Ilocos Norte Rep. Sandro Marcos.

In his departure speech, the President said the World Economic Forum is an opportunity to promote the Philippines as a “leader and driver of growth in the Asia-Pacific region” as the country emerges from the COVID pandemic.

He is also expected to outline his administration’s economic plans for the Philippines, including efforts to build more infrastructure to support growth, and ensure food and energy security for the country.

The President said he was looking forward to a more candid exchange during the WEF, where he could “expand and explore” more of the country’s economic outlook, as well as his administration’s plans, which includes include a proposed sovereign wealth fund.

“Pare-pareho naman ang ginagawa natin dito sa mga trips, we talk about the Philippines, what the situation is as an investment destination and now as added to that, meron na tayong pwedeng pag-usapan na sovereign wealth fund,” Marcos Jr. earlier said.

“Sasabihin ko, exactly what happening, that we are forming a sovereign wealth fund for big investments in the basic areas such as agri, energy, digitalization, climate change. But the point being, is that now there is a wealth fund,” he added.

(We do the same thing in these trips, we talk about the Philippines... and now as added to that, we have a sovereign wealth fund we can talk about.)

Marcos said he expected a lot of work would also be done at the sidelines of the forum, where he is also scheduled to meet with business leaders.

“Sometimes, the best deals are done outside. In fact many, if not most, are done informally. Magkita ang dalawa, ‘mag-usap nga tayo...’ tawag sa diplomatic phraseology, they call it pull-away,” the President said.

“We’ll have a lot of those, because there are certain businessmen, who our own business group want to engage. So siguro papatulong sila sa atin maybe the secretary, or me myself, papatulong sila sa atin, samahan mo ako, kausapin natin,” he continued.

(The 2 sides will meet, agree to talk; in diplomatic phraseology, they call that pull-away... Maybe certain businessmen would ask us to go with them, talk to them.)

[Marcos says Maharlika fund to invest in agri, energy, digitalization, climate change](#)

By: JP Soriano

ZURICH, Switzerland - President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. on Monday said the proposed Maharlika wealth fund will make investments in the basic areas of agriculture, energy, digitalization and climate change.

"Meron na tayong puwede pang pag-usapan na sovereign wealth fund. So sasabihin ko exactly what's happened that we are forming a sovereign wealth fund for investments, for big investments in the basic areas such as agri, energy, digitalization, climate change — the point being is that now there is a wealth fund," Marcos told reporters while on board a plane from Manila to Switzerland.

(We have something to talk about, the sovereign wealth fund. So I will tell you exactly what's happened, that we are forming a sovereign wealth fund for investments, for big investments in the basic areas such as agri, energy, digitalization, climate change — the point being is that now there is a wealth fund)

The announcement was seen as a renewed effort by the government to attract more investments in the country and to create more economic opportunities. Marcos hopes that the wealth fund will be a mechanism to increase the country's economic stability and alleviate poverty.

Foreign Affairs Undersecretary Carlos Sorreta said last week that Marcos will bring up the sovereign wealth fund during the World Economic Forum (WEF) scheduled from January 16 to 20 in Davos, Switzerland.

"It's really more of a soft launch, to introduce it," Sorreta said during a press briefing.

Sorreta said it was the President's idea to tackle the wealth fund, which seeks to maximize the investible funds of state-run financial institutions and ultimately increase public funds for nation-building.

The House of Representatives already approved on final reading House Bill 6608, which creates the Maharlika Investment Fund (MIF) and was certified as urgent by the President.

The measure creating the MIF states that it would be funded by the investible resources of the Landbank of the Philippines (P50 billion), the Development Bank of the Philippines (P25 billion), and the dividends/profits of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.

WEF

The President while en route to Switzerland to attend the WEF in Davos also expressed his excitement for one of the programs set to be featured at the forum, a one-on-one conversation between himself and WEF President Børge Brende.

This conversation will give chief executive officers and global business leaders the opportunity to ask the President questions directly.

"I am looking forward to the one-on-one conversation at the World Economic Forum," said Marcos. "This conversation will be a great opportunity for CEOs and business leaders to exchange ideas and gain knowledge."

The President also spoke of his eagerness to speak directly to CEOs and global business leaders at the forum one on one, saying "The best deals are often done informally on the sidelines of forums like this."

He believes that engaging with these leaders will be the most effective way to attract investors to the Philippine economy.

"That I think will give us... Kasi kung titingnan mo 'yung mga prepared speeches, maliliit lang, five minutes lang eh. But I think that kind of forum, that kind of format will be — give us a better opportunity to expand and expound on the things that we are doing in the Philippines," Marcos said.

(If you will see, the prepared speeches are short, just five minutes.)

Marcos added that the WEF is a great opportunity for the Philippines to attract investments but, aside from the formal programs and speeches at the forum, informal talks on the sidelines are a more effective way to do it.

"Sometimes, the best deals are done outside of the forum. In fact, many — I'll even say, baka most of the best deals — are done informally," said Marcos.

"They just pull somebody away, 'usap tayo (let's talk),'" he said. This way of networking will be beneficial for the Philippines, and Marcos said it will give investors a great

opportunity to understand the unique economic and business conditions of the Philippines.

Marcos will speak at the WEF on Wednesday, January 18. He departed Manila on Sunday morning and arrived in Switzerland early Monday morning, Philippine time.

He was invited to greet the participants and to express his perspective on one of the main topics of discussion — the need for increased global cooperation.

The WEF has been held annually since 1971 with the sole purpose of connecting leaders from businesses, politics, academia, and society to shape and collaborate in search of better solutions on global issues.

This year, topics of discussion range from new technologies to global trade and digital platforms.

MANILA STANDARD

'Court decision to impact PH-China oil exploration'

By: Macon Ramos-Araneta

Senate Energy committee Sec. Sherwin Gatchalian said the Supreme Court (SC) decision that voided the 2005 joint oil and gas exploration agreement between the Philippines, China, and Vietnam may have also dimmed the prospect of a similar deal between Manila and Beijing.

He noted that the Court ruling on the Joint Marine Seismic Undertaking (JMSU) indicated that any activity whether it is on the pre-exploration or in the main exploration is already considered an "exploration."

"And if you are going to explore, develop and utilize resources under our exclusive economic zone, also within our territorial jurisdiction, it should be under full control and supervision of the state which is the Philippines. So meaning any activity there, our government should be the one revising and it should be under our local laws and constitution," Gatchalian explained.

He said the SC sets up parameters for any joint exploration that will be undertaken by other countries, and not just China. "But it's just a parameter and it will now guide the potential joint exploration that is being discussed between the Philippines and China," he also said.

The senator likewise divulged that personally, he is not so optimistic that the country can move forward with this joint exploration with China.

Gatchalian also said the Philippines can pursue other partnerships with another country that would be able to abide by the SC decision.

"If you look at Malampaya, it is run by Europeans and Americans. And the Malampaya project is being governed by PD 87, which is the oil and gas, local oil and gas law of the country and it's also compliant to our constitution. So yes, we can, but the West Philippines issue is much more complex because China is claiming it, and that becomes an uncertain factor in terms of how to move forward with oil and gas exploration."

Gatchalian however said the Philippine will not be able to afford a solo exploration and that the government does not have the technical capability, nor the capital.

Sen. Risa Hontiveros meanwhile said the plan of the government under the current administration for the JMSU Joint Marine Seismic Undertaking (JMSU) with China and Vietnam serious constitutional issues.

“Of course, the decision is not yet final, but whatever the final outcome of the case is, the Court’s opinion on the matter should be respected,” Hontiveros said

At the very least, she noted that this forces the government to proceed prudently by, among others, choosing its partners carefully.

To cope with depleting energy and the rising costs that come with it, she believes It’s time to re-think the EPIRA and the way the energy industry is organized.

Hontiveros said as stated by the Department of Energy (DOE), she agrees with this-the development and optimal use of the country’s renewable energy resources is central to the Philippine’s sustainable energy agenda.

She said renewable energy is an essential part of the country’s low emissions development strategy and is vital to addressing the challenges of climate change, energy security, and access to energy.

According to Hontiveros, negotiations on oil and gas exploration in the South China Sea (SCS) or West Philippine Sea (WPS) have long been at a stalemate due to the failure to find a compromise.

“Are there any plans on your side to pitch for amendments under the constitution to pursue this venture? “ she asked.

Llf yes, which provisions do you plan to amend? What are the specific details? If not, why? What do you think of bills filed for this purpose?” She further questioned.

Hontiveros said we have no such proposal at this time. However, she assured to seriously consider the merit of any bills filed for this purpose.

MANILA BULLETIN

[Half of world's glaciers projected to melt out by 2100: Study](#)

ISTANBUL – By the end of the century, half of the world's glaciers are set to vanish, resulting in not just the loss of their mesmerizing natural beauty, but in heightened water scarcity and risk of natural disasters as well.

A recent scientific report, Global glacier change in the 21st century: Every increase in temperature matters, uncovered the vastly changed world we might face by 2100 when even the best-case scenario would result in huge amounts of glacier loss.

David Rounce and Matthias Huss, the report's co-authors, spoke separately to Anadolu about the results of the report, in which they evaluated about 200,000 glaciers in the world under various temperature scenarios, and underlined the importance of reducing carbon dioxide emissions for saving glaciers.

"Taking action helps, but some loss is inevitable"

Rounce, an assistant professor of civil and environmental engineering at the US' Carnegie Mellon University, said that even the best-case scenario would fall short of reaching the Paris climate deal's goal of no more than a 1.5C rise.

Even under that goal, he said Central Europe is destined to lose "85% of glaciers by mass and 83% of glaciers by number" by 2100, and added: "So even in the best-case scenario, Central Europe is experiencing a lot of loss."

For the global best-case scenario, the expert said all glaciers, excluding the ice sheets, are "losing about 26% of their mass, contributing about 90 millimeters (3.54 inches) to sea level rise from just the glaciers, and losing about 50% of the glaciers by number."

For the 2.7C scenario, about a third of the glacier mass is being lost by the end of the century, two-thirds of the glaciers by number, and about 150 millimeters (5.9 inches) of sea level rise coming from glaciers, he added.

Asked whether it is possible to reverse the situation, Rounce said a lot of the climate change impacts are already shrinking glaciers.

He said: "Taking action will certainly help preserve some of the ice in the region but because those glaciers are responding at least some of that loss is inevitable."

Huss, a glaciologist who heads Glacier Monitoring (GLAMOS) in Switzerland, urged the need for "strong climate change mitigation efforts" to save about three-quarters, 75%, of all glaciers."

"This is mainly because the big glaciers are in the polar regions, they can still be saved. Whereas the smaller glaciers like the ones that are in the Alps but also the ones in Türkiye, for those it is already too late," Huss said.

"It's not too late to take action but the situation is not reversible, at least in the short- or mid-term," he said, adding that the world is in the midst of "a quite important rise" in global temperatures and therefore also "a loss in glaciers."

Yet it is still "important to act now" because, according to the scientist, we can still mitigate "the most adverse consequences, the most adverse impacts of global sea level change and climate change globally."

Except for a few ice patches, Europe's glaciers will be thing of the past if nothing is done to fight climate change, all glaciers in Europe will be gone, except for a few ice patches at the very highest elevations, said Huss.

For his part, Rounce said that in a 4C temperature change scenario, Europe will lose 99% of the mass of its glaciers, but as of now the estimate is closer to 2.7C, and in that case, estimates show Europe will lose some 94% of its glacier's mass by 2100.

"So Europe is one of those regions that is very sensitive to changes between a degree and a half, two degrees and three degrees," he said.

"That's really one of the areas where in our study when we say every increase in temperature matters, it's because our actions as a society can have a huge impact on preserving at least some of the ice in Europe."

Effects of glacier loss

Rounce mentioned glaciers' contribution to the sea level rising, as the melting of those glaciers would raise the global mean sea level, the baseline, causing extreme events to be even more intense.

"It's the nuisance flooding that happens on the coasts, the extreme storm systems that come through and cause this devastation and this massive flooding. When we increase

the sea level rise by for example, 100 millimeters (3.9 inches), that's going to increase that baseline meaning (so) that those extreme events are going to become even worse if large scale-adaptation strategies aren't taken," he said.

On the sea level rise, Huss warned that rising ocean levels might go even higher, rising to three meters (9.8 feet) by 2300, which would pose a "huge problem" for many coastal cities.

Touching on the importance of glaciers as a water source, he said glaciers provide a great deal of water to streams in hot, dry periods of the year.

"Summer drought is strongly mitigated as long as glaciers are present. If glaciers have disappeared in the future, we will be having a lack of water in hot and dry summers," he explained. "And this might be a problem for the stability of stream flow for irrigation, but also for hydropower production."

Huss also mentioned possible effects on glacier tourism in the Alps, saying people from around the world flock to the Alps to see its beautiful glaciers, as well as to ski.

If Switzerland loses its glaciers, this is a problem for tourism, but also the country's water resources, he added.

Global action needed

It is "vital" that all countries take action to meet the commitments to reduce carbon emissions under the Paris Agreement in order to try to mitigate and avoid some of the damages that we are going to see, Rounce said.

"And it's important because it's very easy to get caught up in the fact that a lot of the glacier mass loss is inevitable and a lot of the glaciers being lost ... but we really do have the ability to preserve a lot of ice," he said.

Huss underlined the need for changes in many areas, both economically and socially, to reduce emissions everywhere on Earth.

"The most important is really that we do it as a global community and not at (just) a national level," he said.

Focus on emissions, says UAE's climate talks and oil boss

By: Agence France Presse

ABU DHABI, United Arab Emirates — The president of this year's COP28 climate talks, who heads one of the world's biggest oil companies, on Saturday urged a focus on lower emissions, warning global energy needs were set to accelerate.

Sultan Al Jaber, the United Arab Emirates' special envoy for climate change and CEO of the ADNOC oil giant, said less-polluting fossil fuels would remain part of the energy mix, along with renewables and other solutions.

"As long as the world still uses hydrocarbons, we must ensure they are the least carbon intensive possible," Al Jaber told the Global Energy Forum in Abu Dhabi, two days after his unveiling as COP president.

"We're working with the energy industry on accelerating decarbonisation, reducing methane and expanding hydrogen. Let's keep our focus on holding back emissions, not progress."

Al Jaber's nomination on Thursday prompted protests from climate activists concerned that a senior figure from the oil industry has little incentive to steer the world away from hydrocarbons.

The Gulf monarchy argues that oil remains indispensable to the global economy and is pushing the merits of carbon capture — removing carbon dioxide, the main greenhouse gas, as fuel is burned or from the air.

Al Jaber said the UAE, which will host COP28 in Dubai in November and December, approached the task with "humility, a clear sense of responsibility and a great sense of urgency".

He said the world's population, currently eight billion, was on course to reach 9.7 billion by 2050 and would need "50 percent more energy than what is available today".

"We are way off track. The world is playing catch up when it comes to the key Paris goal of holding global temperatures down to 1.5 degrees (Celsius)," he said.

"And the harsh reality is that in order to achieve this goal, global emissions must fall 43 percent by 2030."

Al Jaber said renewable energy needed to triple to 23 terawatt hours by 2030, while low-carbon hydrogen production had to double. He said agriculture produces one-third of global emissions and needed deep reform.

“We are at a turning point in history. Low carbon growth is the future, but we must get there much faster,” he said.

[UN confirms 2022 among eight hottest years on record](#)

By: Agence France Presse

GENEVA, Switzerland — The past eight years were the hottest since records began, the United Nations confirmed Thursday, despite the cooling influence of a drawn-out La Nina weather pattern.

Last year, as the world faced a cascade of unprecedented natural disasters made more likely and deadly by climate change, the average global temperature was about 1.15 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, the World Meteorological Organization said.

The US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and NASA released similar 2022 global temperature figures on Thursday and Bill Nelson, head of the US space agency, described them as “alarming.”

“Forest fires are intensifying, hurricanes are getting stronger, droughts are wreaking havoc, sea levels are rising,” Nelson said.

“Extreme weather patterns threaten our well-being across this planet,” he said. “And we need some bold action.”

The WMO, a UN agency, said the past eight years “were the warmest on record globally, fuelled by ever-rising greenhouse gas concentrations and accumulated heat.”

The hottest year on record was 2016, followed by 2019 and 2020, it found.

Last year marked the eighth consecutive year that annual global temperatures were at least one degree over the pre-industrial levels seen between 1850 and 1900.

The Paris Agreement, agreed by nearly all the world’s nations in 2015, called for capping global warming at 1.5C, which scientists say would limit climate impacts to manageable levels.

But the WMO warned Thursday that “the likelihood of — temporarily — breaching the 1.5C limit... is increasing with time.”

Russell Vose, NOAA’s chief of climate monitoring, said there is a 50-50 chance that there will be a year in the 2020s above 1.5C, although a sustained average of 1.5C warming is not projected to occur until the late 2030s or 2040s.

The WMO reached its conclusions by consolidating six leading international datasets, including those of NOAA and the European Union's Copernicus climate monitor (C3S).

La Nina effect 'short-lived'

The UN agency highlighted that the warmest eight years on record had all been since 2015, despite consecutive La Nina events since 2020.

The weather phenomenon has a cooling effect on global temperatures. Last year was therefore "just" the fifth or sixth hottest year ever recorded, the WMO said. The situation last year was more extreme in some places.

Copernicus said in its annual report Tuesday that the planet's polar regions experienced record temperatures last year, as did large swathes of the Middle East, China, central Asia and northern Africa.

Europe endured its second-hottest year ever as France, Britain, Spain and Italy set new average temperature records and heatwaves across the continent were compounded by severe drought conditions, it said.

For the planet as a whole, the WMO said the impact of La Nina, which is expected to end within months, would be "short-lived."

The weather pattern, it said, "will not reverse the long-term warming trend caused by record levels of heat-trapping greenhouse gases in our atmosphere."

Extreme weather events

The WMO said the trend was clear. "Since the 1980s, each decade has been warmer than the previous one," it said.

The average temperature for the period 2013-2022 was 1.14C above the pre-industrial baseline.

It stood at 1.09C between 2011 and 2020, according to estimates by the UN's climate science advisory panel, the IPCC.

This, WMO said, "indicates that long-term warming continues," with the world "already approaching the lower limit of temperature increase the Paris Agreement seeks to avert."

Like NASA's Nelson, the WMO chief Petteri Taalas highlighted extreme weather events in 2020, pointing to floods that submerged a third of Pakistan, record-breaking heatwaves in China, Europe and the Americas, and a drawn-out drought in the Horn of Africa.

At the COP27 climate summit in November, UN chief Antonio Guterres unveiled a five-year, \$3-billion plan to build a global early warning system for deadly and costly extreme weather events amplified by climate change.

So far, only half of the 193 UN member states have such systems, Taalas said.

Gavin Schmidt, director of NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies, said collective action is needed now but "it's never going to be too late to make better decisions.

"Future warming is a function of future emissions of carbon dioxide," Schmidt said. "At any point in the future, we can decide to do something that will reduce the emissions and reduce the temperatures in the future."

THE PHILIPPINES is the hardest-hit country in Asia by the frequency and greater intensity of typhoons indisputably caused by climate change. The World Meteorological Organization says the Philippines climate disasters have increased five times more intense in the past 50 years. What you read here is the truth, it is painful and self-inflicted pain by humankind but knowing the truth might set us free.

The heating of the oceans and rising sea levels all impact the Philippines. Roxas Boulevard will be underwater in 20 years. The mango and banana harvests have been badly affected with a decline in mango production by 4 percent, according to the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) in 2022.

The 27th Conference of the Parties (COP) of the UNFCCC (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change) is ongoing in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt until the 18th November 2022 and over 100 heads of state have attended. For the past ten years, the rich countries have promised to reduce greenhouse gases, move away from fossil fuel and compensate the poor countries but most never did. In fact, CO2 emissions have increased, a record of shameful lies. Corporations have lied, too, by "green-washing" their CO2 polluting projects. Al Gore reveals at COP27 ". . . that the top 14 individual polluters are all gas and oil fields and their associated facilities, despite their emissions being "significantly under-reported" by 50 percent. Methane leaks and flaring was found

to be three times more than what they reported to the UN. Methane is eighty times worse for the atmosphere than CO2.

In fact, all the oil companies lied again and again and still lie to the world and make billions of extra profits from selling the oil and gas at exaggerated prices upon which the world economy depends. The EU passed a law forcing them to pay an extra “windfall” tax.

The General Secretary of the UN, Antonio Guterres, said that the world is on the road to a fatal crash with its foot on the accelerator for not stopping the burning of fossil fuel. In fact, the world has increased its output of deadly CO2 by 14 percent. Governments of rich nations continue to give financial subsidies to oil exploration companies. “The fossil fuel industry is killing us”, Guterres said, “and leaders are out of step with their people, who are crying out for urgent climate action.” This increase in emissions means that holding the global temperature below 1.5 degrees increase will not be possible. The planet has warmed continually for the past eight years and will continue to get hotter. We can expect more disastrous climatic events.

The climate crisis is getting worse, not better, and the planet is in convulsions. If you have doubts about it, consider the following. Thousands of experts and scientists report that 2022 is the worst year for climate disasters. The Philippines has had the worst series of super typhoons in living memory bringing floods and devastation.

Pakistan had a massive drought with 62 percent less rain and endured temperatures of 40 degrees centigrade. Then the non-stop rains came and 33 million people had to flee as one third of the country was under water. One thousand five hundred people died. China, the worst producer of CO2 in the world, had temperatures over 40 degrees as well that lasted for 70 days, followed by floods. Massive floods also devastated parts of South Korea with twice the average rainfall and the worst floods in 80 years.

PANAY NEWS

[Opinion] The climate crisis hits poor countries the hardest (1st of a series)

By: Fr. Shay Cullen

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PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

Marcos off to Davos for WEF; vows to underscore PH economic gains

By: Azer Parrocha

MANILA – President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. left for Davos, Switzerland on Sunday morning to attend the 2023 Annual Meeting of the World Economic Forum (WEF) from Jan. 15 to 20, vowing to highlight the Philippines' economic gains and bring home more investment pledges.

In his pre-departure speech, Marcos said the theme for this year's WEF, "Cooperation in a Fragmented World", is appropriate because the world came to a standstill because of the Covid-19 pandemic.

He vowed to highlight steps being undertaken by the Philippines to "mend the fissures of such fragmentation" within the country and in partnership with other nations.

"Related to this is the need to collectively bolster and reinforce our post-pandemic economic recovery efforts by addressing the challenges we face posed by rising food prices, the impact of conflict in other parts of the world, and the continuing existential threat posed by climate change," he said.

Marcos said his participation in the WEF Annual Meeting would give him a chance to exchange views on such pressing issues with other government leaders, policymakers, business executives and entrepreneurs, civic society advocates and academic experts.

"The Philippines is also being given a unique opportunity to highlight the significant economic gains we have achieved in the last part of the year as attested to by upward growth projections of the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank," he said.

He said joining the WEF Country Strategy Dialogue would give him an opportunity to promote the Philippines as a "leader", "driver of growth" and "gateway to the Asia-Pacific region—one that is open for business."

"I will draw attention to our efforts at building resilient infrastructure that bolsters our efforts to reinforce robust and resilient supply chains, ensure food security including its critical interlinkages with health and nutrition, while furthering climate-friendly, clean and green energy to power the Philippine economy," Marcos said.

He said he will also share the country's experience as a model for managing the impact of Covid-19.

"I intend to share our efforts in saving both lives and livelihoods, as well as the people-centered next steps that we are taking to ensure that we are ready to meet the lingering effects of the pandemic and address the occurrence of the next one," he said.

Marcos also said he looks forward to meeting with various government and business leaders at the WEF and strengthening partnerships.

Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) Undersecretary Carlos Sorreta earlier said Marcos will also make a "soft launch" of the Philippines' proposed sovereign wealth fund (SWF), otherwise known as the Maharlika Investment Fund (MIF) which is crucial in boosting the Philippine investments and economic growth.

The House of Representatives on Dec. 15 approved on the third and final reading House Bill 6608 or the MIF bill after being certified as urgent by the President.

Under the proposed measure, the MIF will be financed through pooled funds from state-owned financial institutions and state pension funds.

Marcos will be the only leader of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) who will attend the 2023 Annual Meeting of the WEF.

He will be joined by a Philippine delegation composed of government officials and business leaders on his trip to Davos.

Marcos will be attending the WEF Annual meeting upon the invitation of WEF founder and chair emeritus Klaus Schwab who he met at the sidelines of both the ASEAN and APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation) meetings in Phnom Penh and Bangkok, respectively in November last year.

This year's annual meeting of the WEF is the forum's first in-person gathering since 2020.

The WEF, established in 1971, serves as an international organization for public-private cooperation.

The annual WEF convenes leaders from government, business and civil society to address the state of the world and discuss priorities for the year ahead.

THE MANILA TIMES

'Biochar' increases rice yield in Nueva Ecija

By: Celso Cajucom

"Amending" the soil, a suggestion from the Singapore-based Alcom Pte. Ltd. for greater rice yields, worked for Filipino growers like Lauro Medina. A farmer from Nueva Ecija, which is widely acknowledged as the "Rice Granary of the Philippines," Medina took the "green" company up on its recommendation to try biochar, which the latter pushes as a green soil amendment.

Biochar has proved to be a revelation to the local farmer.

He observed that rice seedlings planted on the "amended" soil are "shock-resistant and germinate quickly," with their leaves turning green "immediately" unlike in the past when he just relied on additives that were available.

Medina said biochar also makes rice "more robust" when employed on the growing grains.

He added that he noticed that the plants were "significantly larger" than those that were untreated with what the producer of biochar has described as a breakthrough in sustainable agriculture.

Also, according to Medina, "grain stalks were larger and the grains were fuller" when enhanced with biochar.

This year and thanks to biochar, he eventually produced 24 cavan of rice from 2,644 square meters to which the crop had been planted with an average of 59.00 kilos per cavan.

"In the past and based on my long years of farming, I only made 21 cavan of rice with an average of 50.75 kilos from a 2,900 square-meter plot," Medina said.

"So, I truly believe that using biochar in my farm helped increase the yield by almost one metric ton per hectare," he added.

The biochar maker, Alcom Carbon Markets Philippines is a subsidiary of Alcom Pte. Ltd., a renewable energy firm with headquarters in the Lion City that specializes in carbon-removal projects.

It has partnered with the provincial government of Nueva Ecija to produce biochar in the province and possibly promote the product later in other rice-producing parts of the country as well.

Biochar, according to Alcom Carbon Markets Philippines, is an environment-friendly soil amendment made from rice husks or "ipa" that locally are being disposed of mainly through indiscriminate burning outside rice mills or left to rot elsewhere.

In 2021, the Philippines was reported to have produced 19.96 million metric tons of rice, indicating an increase over the previous year.

With this great amount of the grain comes an equally huge quantity of rice husks that are a by-product of the harvest and a big issue for the industry.

Jefrey Disameto, another Nueva Ecija farmer, has noted that his fellow growers just leave the rice husks outside rice mills and the husks are usually burned shortly by millers in order to decongest their plants.

Dr. Claro Torres, chief agriculturist of biochar maker Alcom Carbon Markets Philippines, said burning involves oxygenation that produces a by-product that is basically ash.

"During the process, we can expect that elemental components of the rice husks are converted into gases that enter the atmosphere. With complete burning, you release carbon dioxide, one of the greenhouse gases that contributes to heating of the atmosphere leading to climate change," he added.

Rice husks are made up of carbon, water, silica, cellulose and lignin.

According to Torres, "global environmental and health issues" are brought by the burning of the rice husks, an approach that is deemed cost-effective by many farmers and millers but, he pointed out, not only produces smoke but also breathes out "health-hazardous chemicals."

Alcom said it has been recommending biochar not only for rice but also onion and calamansi (Philippine lime) farms, also observing that limes cultivated in soil infused with biochar grow 30 percent larger than those without it.

With the mission of protecting the environment from global warming and climate change, according to Alcom Pte Ltd. founder Prateek Tiwari, the company said it at the same

time helps local communities in the Philippines by providing jobs to farmers and teaching them sustainable agricultural practices.

Indeed, such practices have been adopted by Lauro Medina, getting positive results from them.

He said biochar has proved to be effective in reducing adverse effects of heavy metals in plants, increasing water retention three to five times and improving soil permeability and aeration.

Concluding that biochar is an eco-friendly soil enhancer and a sustainable nature-friendly soil amendment, Medina pointed to his increased rice harvest that he said would not have been made possible by commercial fertilizers in the market today.

This output, according to Rodeo Nunez Jr., lawyer and managing director of Alcom Carbon Markets Philippines, "demonstrated that using biochar widely and extensively is highly advantageous for both agricultural and climatic systems, making it a viable tool for regenerative agriculture."

France mobilizes €150M to support PH climate ambitions

The Department of Finance and the French Development Agency (AFD) on January 13 conducted ceremonial exchange of documents signed on December 29 regarding the policy-based loan of €150 million. The loan aims to help the Philippines scale up its efforts to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

The Philippines is one of the most vulnerable countries to climate change and ranked as the fourth most affected country by extreme weather events between 2000 and 2019. In addition to their direct impacts on people, the economic consequences of these disasters will cost the country more than \$3.5 billion a year by 2040. As the Philippine economy struggles to recover from the Covid-19 pandemic, the Philippine government has adopted an important climate actions program to move towards adaptation and mitigation, submitting its first nationally determined contribution (NDC) in 2021 at COP 26.

The French Development Agency and the Asian Development Bank support the Philippines' ambitions to scale up its climate action with a combined policy-based loan of equivalent €390 million, including €150 million mobilized by AFD in addition to the \$250 million ADB loan signed on June 1, 2022. It will aim to support the country in achieving its NDC and in its efforts to transform vulnerable sectors into a resilient, low-carbon economy.

"France remains more than ever engaged in a race against time for the preservation of our planet, and the fight against the climate crisis that becomes a concrete and devastating reality in the Philippines. In this fight for justice and solidarity, France is taking its full part. It will devote €6 billion each year, until 2025, to help developing countries, including the Philippines, finance their transition and cope with climate disasters," said Michèle Boccoz, Ambassador of France to the Philippines.

This new program is an example of the parties' joint commitment. More specifically, it will support public reforms aimed at setting up planning and financing systems to strengthen climate action, but also to strengthen the resilience of populations to the growing impacts of climate change and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through the deployment of renewable energies, improving energy efficiency and deploying sustainable transport.

For Secretary of Finance Benjamin Diokno, "As a country vulnerable to climate change impacts (with over 1 percent of the country GDP in direct losses to public and private assets due to earthquakes and typhoons), the Philippines is committed to concrete

climate actions with the aim of helping the most vulnerable to adverse effects of climate change. Considerable efforts will be made to allocate around 8.72 percent of the 2023 budget for programs related to climate change mitigation and adaptation to meet its own NDC targets without sacrificing the need for developing."

Since the Paris Agreement, the AFD Group has provided €30 billion in climate finance, including €7 billion euros for adaptation. In the Philippines, climate action is at the heart of AFD's activities: this new loan program follows a previous €250 million adaptation program loan mobilized at the end of 2021 to reduce the risk of natural disasters at the local level," said Bénédicte Gazon, AFD Country Director.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

[DBM issues call for 2024 budget](#)

By: Louise Maureen Simeon

MANILA, Philippines — Just two weeks after the new year, the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) is now asking government agencies to start preparing their proposals for another record high budget of P5.569 trillion for 2024

Budget Secretary Amenah Pangandaman has issued national budget memorandum 145 containing the national budget call for fiscal year 2024.

Based on the government's fiscal program, the 2024 national expenditure program is pegged at a record high P5.569 trillion.

Next year's planned budget is 5.7 percent higher than the 2023 appropriation of P5.268 trillion approved in December last year.

Pangandaman said that next year's budget is poised to respond to the expected continuing headwinds brought about by geopolitical tensions that resulted in rising inflation and interest rates.

The budget also targets to address the economic scarring that was left by the pandemic.

"With clear macroeconomic objectives set in place by the medium-term fiscal framework, the 2024 budget has a blueprint by which it can achieve the eight-point socioeconomic agenda of the administration," Pangandaman said.

She said the government would continue to implement risk-managed interventions in areas of food security, transport and logistics, energy, bureaucratic efficiency and fiscal management, health, education and social protection.

These aim to ensure the unimpeded and adequate delivery of social services, mitigate inflation pressures, accelerate economic recovery and address economic scarring.

Further, the budget chief emphasized that the government would ensure that only implementation-ready agency proposals are included for next year.

This, as the fiscal space of the government continues to be limited.

This also means that agencies' budget proposals are expected to contain concrete program plans and designs that outline key procurement and implementation milestones, including specific project locations and beneficiaries.

"The government will also look into the agencies' previous year budget utilization and performance as part of its evaluation process," Pangandaman said.

As of end-November last year, the utilization rate of the government stood at 94 percent.

Moreover, Pangandaman said priority programs for next year should support the Philippine Development Plan, the roadmap that aims to transform economic sectors and institutions for a "prosperous, inclusive, and resilient society."

The government will also put emphasis on infrastructure development, including the Build Better More program, as well as digital and social infrastructure.

For 2024, infrastructure spending is proposed to increase by almost 10 percent to P1.297 trillion from this year's P1.18 trillion.

Increased infrastructure spending will not in any way detract from the full support provided to the poorest, lagging, climate change and disaster risk vulnerable areas nor the social sector and basic public services," Pangandaman said.

[Opinion] Global cooperation as the solution

By: Alain Gaschen

Happy New Year! Like most, I looked forward to the arrival of 2023. For me, the beginning of a new year brings with it an exciting mix of renewed optimism, boundless energy and determination to hit the ground running to achieve even greater things. This motivation helps as we continue strengthening ties between our two countries, as we end our celebration of the 65th anniversary of diplomatic relations.

Perhaps it is in this spirit that the World Economic Forum (WEF) is set in January of each year. Every January, leaders from all around the world gather in Davos to discuss the issues that affect our present and could impact our future. This meeting of public and private sector leaders, civil society organizations, academe and investors is a great opportunity to help shape the solutions to the problems we face. So much so that President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. decided to make his way to Switzerland to join the event.

Despite being a privately organized event, I believe that the WEF has engrained in it some Swiss DNA. This is not surprising, given that its headquarters is in Switzerland as well but, more importantly, the WEF holds in high esteem the values of global cooperation, entrepreneurship and innovation.

These values are not new to my country. As I have written here previously, we have always espoused the importance of cooperation and innovation with all our efforts in the Philippines and around the world. For example, Switzerland has contributed to the relief efforts at the time of natural calamities like typhoons and earthquakes. At the height of the pandemic and alongside many other countries, Switzerland had also invested resources into Gavi, the Global Vaccine Initiative, to help speed up the development of vaccines and to ensure their equitable distribution around the world. Coincidentally, Gavi was also established at the WEF – an example of the solutions that can be discovered at Davos!

Indeed, we see now, or rather we fully realize what many experts have been telling us for years, that the world's challenges do not recognize borders. Transnational issues are concerns that affect all states, no matter their geographical or economical size. In the current global context with its various overlapping crises, the UN Security Council has a significant role to play for peace in the world. The role of the UN Security Council is even more relevant to Switzerland this year as we joined it as a member for the first time in our history. 20 years after joining the United Nations, Switzerland is ready to

take on more responsibility to serve the cause of world peace and intends to represent its foreign policy values and interests in the Security Council.

While we strive for a credible engagement across the full range of the Security Council agenda, we have identified four thematic priorities representing our core values. First, considering the strong track records of Switzerland in promoting peace and providing good offices, we will promote sustainable peace by building up confidence among the member-states of the Security Council but also by promoting a more effective UN peacebuilding.

Second, Switzerland's long-standing humanitarian tradition and commitment to international humanitarian law places the protection of civilians as another priority. The resolution introduced by Switzerland and Brazil at the beginning of the week on the renewed cross-border humanitarian aid into Syria is a good illustration. It was passed unanimously by the Security Council for the first time. The humanitarian mission includes emergency aid, enabling access to vital services, assisting in the protection of civilians and their livelihoods and promoting compliance with international humanitarian law and human rights.

Third, addressing climate security as we see today that climate change is a risk multiplier with the potential to exacerbate existing political, social, economic and ecological stress factors. The most vulnerable population groups are usually the most exposed to climate risks.

Finally, Switzerland will continue its advocacy work for greater transparency and accountability with the final goal of enhancing the effectiveness of the multilateral system.

It is important to note that it is not just governments working together to deliver solutions. What makes Davos stand out is its multi-stakeholder approach. It is one of the few places where high-level meetings where representatives of the civil society, the academe, the media as well as the public and private sector engage in constructive discussions to forge alliances and to seek solutions to global challenges. Public-Private Partnership (PPP) thus takes on a stronger role as the inputs of the business, academic and scientific community must be heard, with even the sentiment of the general public being a factor in building solutions. It is also in the interest of non-government actors to contribute and collaborate, because the challenges of today – such as the emergence of new health concerns, climate change and food security – are existential threats that must be addressed with haste.

I'm proud to say that this collaboration is gaining ground in the Philippines. PPP is the preferred means of support in modernizing infrastructure and services by the Filipino government, and the endeavor is widely supported by the private sector, as we heard repeatedly from both sides during our recent Innovation exhibit. We are keen to see more of those initiatives and to support them.

Just a few days ago, I was honored to attend the launch of a multi-stakeholder collaboration between a patient organization (ICanServe Foundation), a pilot and pioneer LGU (Taguig), a successful start-up and “baby” of the pandemic (Dashlabs.ai) and the private sector (Novartis, through its Alliance and Partnership for Patient Innovation and Solutions). Together and with the support of the Department of Health (DOH) to leverage and disseminate the best practices, they will scale up existing and remarkable breast cancer control programs, bring them to the next level and encourage data-driven decision making – a great showing of innovation and collaboration!

As I've continued to note in my pieces, I am an optimist by nature. It is with this outlook that I welcome 2023 and more opportunities to push for collaboration as we aim to address the challenges we all face. The various crises of the moment are no reason to sit back or to put the blame on the activity of some or the inactivity of others. On the contrary, they should encourage us to focus on what works and has always worked: cooperation!

Philippines borrows P9 billion for climate change efforts

By: Louise Maureen Simeon

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippines has secured 150 million euros (P9 billion) in loan financing from the French government to ramp up climate mitigation and adaptation efforts.

This is part of the bigger 390 million euros (P23.29 billion) financed by the French Development Agency (AFD) and Asian Development Bank. The \$250 million (P13.78 billion) ADB loan was signed in June last year.

The loan financing aims to support the country in achieving its nationally determined contribution (NDC) and in its efforts to transform vulnerable sectors into a resilient, low-carbon economy.

In particular, the fund will aid public reforms aimed at setting up planning and financing systems to strengthen climate action, as well as strengthen the resilience of the population to the growing impacts of climate change.

It also targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through the deployment of renewable energies, improving energy efficiency and deploying sustainable transport.

The Philippines has been one of the most climate-vulnerable countries over the past two decades. At present, over one percent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP) is directly lost due to earthquakes and typhoons.

An earlier report of the Department of Finance showed that the Philippines is bound to incur as much as P1.5 trillion in losses from natural disasters in the next five decades as impacts of climate change continue to worsen.

This is about 7.7 percent of the country's nominal GDP of P19.187 trillion as of 2021.

For this year's budget, almost nine percent has been allocated for programs related to climate change mitigation and adaptation to meet the country's own NDC targets.

French Ambassador Michèle Bocoz said that France remains engaged in the fight against the climate crisis, which has become a big problem for the Philippines.

France has earmarked six billion euros each year until 2025 to help developing countries, including the Philippines, finance their transition and cope with climate disasters.

AFD implements France's policy on international development and solidarity.

It was in 2009 when AFD started its operations in the country with a focus on addressing climate change. Since then, AFD has mobilized more than 1.14 billion euros in financing for the Philippines.

Sara to present Basic Education Report

By: Janvic Mateo

MANILA, Philippines — Vice President and Education Secretary Sara Duterte will present her term's agenda for the education sector and the challenges it faces during her Basic Education Report (BER) set on Jan. 30.

"In this report, we want to present to the general public what really is the current state of basic education," Department of Education (DepEd) spokesman Michael Poa told reporters in Filipino yesterday.

"After presenting the challenges, the department will also outline its plans and initiatives to resolve these challenges," he added.

"In this report, we want to present to the general public what really is the current state of basic education," Department of Education (DepEd) spokesman Michael Poa told reporters in Filipino yesterday.

"After presenting the challenges, the department will also outline its plans and initiatives to resolve these challenges," he added.

Poa said the review of the Kindergarten to Grade 10 curriculum is already on the finalization stage, with consultations currently being conducted.

"When it comes to Grades 11 to 12, we also already started our review last November. So right now, the review is ongoing," he added.

Child protection

Meanwhile, Poa said the agency's child protection hotline has received a total of 78 complaints from November to December.

Many of the complaints they received, he said, were alleged incidents of bullying and these are under verification and investigation.

Poa said he is also requesting for additional data to determine how fast the complaints are resolved.

Last November, it was Duterte who led the launch of the Learner Rights and Protection Office and TeleSafe Contact Center Helpline at the culminating program of the 2022

National Child Protection Month. She said the helpline will allow them to receive child protection complaints from students through landline, e-mail and messages through the agency's Facebook page.

Agri, aquaculture and conservation

In a related development, Kabayan party-list Rep. Ron Salo has filed a bill to entice the youth to engage in agriculture, aquaculture and environmental activities by introducing such programs in elementary and high school.

Through House Bill 6769, the proposed Agri-Scouting Act, Salo aims to empower the youth by giving them the chance to learn about agriculture, fisheries, forest and marine conservation and management and ecology.

He said these programs will allow them to “take a proactive stance in environment conservation and climate change resiliency, discover the fundamental concepts of proper food nutrition and be acquainted with modern farming, fisheries and food production methods.”

“It is our aspiration that the learning process would instill in their young minds a sense of wonder that leads to awareness and initiative and a desire to engage in agriculture, fisheries, forest and marine conservation and management and ecology,” he added.

When this happens, he claimed it could contribute to “our collective aspiration of achieving food self-sufficiency.”

Being an agricultural country, he underscored the Philippines should put a “premium in the development of the agricultural sector as it directly affects the economy and the quality of life of its people.”

However, the lawmaker lamented the Philippines has low food productivity despite its abundant natural resources.

“It is quite concerning that low food productivity has now become a national issue,” he said.

Citing the 2020 report on the State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World prepared by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the bill showed the Philippines recorded the highest number of food insecure people in Southeast Asia in 2017 to 2019.

Salo added the findings were recorded even before the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Our youth have so much potential to address long-standing challenges, especially in food security. This is one of our ways to maximize that potential so they can truly contribute to society in the immediate future and for the generations to come,” he said.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

DWIZ

[SSCIS Project ng Climate Change Commission, GIZ-PH aarangkada na](#)

By: Gilbert Perdez

Nagsagawa ng courtesy call ang German Development Cooperation (GIZ) South-South Collaboration on Climate Information Services (SSCIS) Project Team kay Climate Change Commission (CCC) Vice Chair at Executive Robert E.A. Borje, Overall Program Director, para talakayin ang mga susunod na hakbang ukol sa implementasyon ng SSCIS.

Sa nangyaring pagpupulong, mainit na tinanggap at pinuri ni Borje ang SSCIS Project Team sa pagpupursige nito, katuwang sila, upang maisakatuparan ang proyekto.

“The implementation of the SSCIS Project presents an opportunity for CCC and the Philippine government to further enhance knowledge and capacities in data management, including collecting, generating, and analyzing climate data as a basis of climate action,” wika ni Borje.

Layon ng EUR 5-million project na matulungan at mabigyan ng climate information services ang national at local government, gayundin ang academe, at lumikha ng isang South-South Center of Excellence kung saan maaaring magpalitan ng kaalaman at kahusayan ang mga bansang lantad sa pabago-bagong klima.

“The South-South Center of Excellence will allow us to further deepen our engagement with the Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF), promoting a whole-of-world approach in enhancing climate resilience of communities,” sabi ng opisyal.

Maliban naman kay Dr. Bjoern Surborg, Principal Advisor ng SSCIS Project and Cluster Coordinator for Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management ng GIZ Philippines Office, dumalo rin sa meeting si Chief Adviser Jimmy Loro, at maging ang team members na sina Theresa Lim, Denise Ann Suarez, Richard Antonio, at Rune Ylade.

“The GIZ Philippines, through the South-South Project, remains committed to work with the Philippine government in promoting data-driven climate action to enhance local knowledge on climate change,” pahayag naman ni Dr. Surborg.

MANILA STANDARD

[DENR, Globe hail winners of KLIMA-likasan Awards](#)

In celebration of the 2022 National Climate Change Consciousness Week, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and Globe recognized the efforts of individuals, groups, and local government units (LGUs) to address climate change, contribute in disaster risk reduction, and promote cultural and behavioral shifts.

In line with its commitment to climate resiliency, Globe partnered with the DENR Climate Change Service (CCS) and is the lone private sector co-presenter of the 2022 Mga Kuwentong KLIMA-likasan: A Climate and Disaster Resiliency Recognition Awards.

Entries were evaluated based on their Climate and Disaster Resiliency content (60%), visual appeal of photos and videos (30%), and the geographical reach of the initiative (10%).

The board of judges composed of representatives from the Climate Change Commission (CCC), Office of Civil Defense (OCD), and Globe chose individuals, groups, and local government units that have come a long way in their efforts to address climate change impacts within their communities or beyond.

As the county's leading digital solutions provider, Globe recognizes that climate change is a huge challenge that requires collective action, hence the need to support and highlight the efforts of Filipinos from around the country.

"We see technology, which is a key enabler of industries, to help accelerate the just transition to a green economy," said Yoly Crisanto, Chief Sustainability and Corporate Communications Officer of the Globe Group.

"Let us all work together to build a sustainable and climate-resilient Philippines. It is our fervent wish that by giving recognition, ang Mga Kuwentong Klima-likasan ay magbibigay ng mas malawak na inspirasyon para sa ating lahat upang tumugon sa pangangailangan ng ating kalikasan," she added.

First prize winners for the individual, group and LGU categories who won P30,000-P50,000 in cash were:

Moises Butic – The Ifugao Muyong: Perpetuating a Forest Legacy
iRISE UP – Intelligent, Resilient, and Integrated Systems for the Urban Population
CDRRMO Baguio City – Smart and gender-Inclusive Flood Early Warning and Mitigation System

KLIMA-likasan also gave out Climate Technology for Resilience Awards. Winners for this category were chosen for their contributions and initiatives that highlight the role of digital technologies in building resilience, including the use of artificial intelligence,

robotics, sensor-driven tools, smartphone applications, the Internet, SMS, and social media, among others.

The awardees are:

- Raheemah Hafsah Pangarungan's BIOPHIL, which intends to provide cleaner, cheaper, a more accessible energy source and products from water hyacinth, an invasive plant species within Lake Lanao
- iRISE UP's Intelligent, Resilient, and Integrated Systems for the Urban Population, which aims to streamline the Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (DRRM) Information System of Quezon City

"The stories that we received from 16 regions in the country only say one thing: there are already significant actions happening on the ground. We need to take note of them, document them, map them and see how we can scale up the initiatives to expand to other areas in their community," shared Undersecretary Analiza Rebuelta-Teh of the DENR.

To view the complete list of winners and be inspired to become a climate change warrior like them, visit: <https://www.denr.gov.ph/index.php/news-events/press-releases/4704-denr-names-winners-of-klima-likasan-awards-for-climate-and-disaster-resiliency>.

To learn more about Globe's sustainability initiatives, visit <https://www.globe.com.ph/about-us/sustainability.html>.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

[SSCIS project to enhance PH capacities on climate action](#)

By: Azer Parrocha

MANILA – It won't be long before climate information services become more accessible to Filipinos.

In a press release, the Climate Change Commission (CCC) announced that the German Development Cooperation (GIZ) South-South Collaboration on Climate Information Services (SSCIS) Project Team paid a courtesy call on CCC Vice Chair and Executive Robert Borje, the Overall Program Director, on Friday to discuss the next steps in the implementation of the SSCIS.

The 5-million euro (PHP298.8 billion) SSCIS project aims to provide climate information services to national and local government and the academe, and establishes a South-South Center of Excellence as a venue for knowledge exchanges among climate-vulnerable countries.

“During the meeting, Borje welcomed the SSCIS Project Team tasked to handle project operations under the guidance of the CCC as the lead government partner, in coordination with relevant agencies and institutions,” the CCC said.

Borje described the SSCIS Project as an opportunity for CCC and the Philippine government “to further enhance knowledge and capacities in data management, including collecting, generating, and analyzing climate data as a basis of climate action.”

“The South-South Center of Excellence will allow us to further deepen our engagement with the Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF), promoting a whole-of-world approach in enhancing climate resilience of communities,” Borje said.

The CVF is an international partnership of countries highly vulnerable to a warming planet, according to its website. It serves as a South-South cooperation platform for participating governments to act together to deal with global climate change.

The SSCIS Project Team was led by Dr. Bjoern Surborg, Principal Advisor of the SSCIS Project and Cluster Coordinator for Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management for GIZ Philippines Office.

“The GIZ Philippines, through the South-South Project, remains committed to work with the Philippine government in promoting data-driven climate action to enhance local knowledge on climate change,” Surborg said.

Surborg was joined by Chief Adviser Jimmy Loro and team members Theresa Lim, Denise Ann Suarez, Richard Antonio and Rune Ylade.

The Philippines’ geographical location and archipelagic formation make it one of the most vulnerable countries in the world to climate change.

Based on Germanwatch Institute’s 2021 Global Climate Risk Index, the Philippines is the fourth most affected country in the 20-year period from 2000 to 2019.

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