



NEWS ROUNDUP

18 JANUARY 2024 [07:40 am]

- NEDA bets on P1 trillion 'Blue Economy' to boost growth
- Carbon pricing may spur stable growth
- Norway aids Filipino farmers jack up production with solar-powered water pumps
- London underprepared for deadly climate change risks, report warns
- US in deep freeze while much of world extra toasty? It's climate change
- PBBM vows 'people-centered, community-driven' Pasig River urban dev't
- PBBM leads efforts to bring Pasig River back to its old glory through "Pasig Bigyang Buhay Muli" project
- PBBM seeks for enhanced PH-Brazil relations
- [Opinion] More climate bad news for the new year
- [Opinion] The cost of the climate coterie —\$150 trillion; John Kerry exeunt

ABS CBN

[**NEDA bets on P1 trillion 'Blue Economy' to boost growth**](#)

By: Jekki Pascual

The National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) on Wednesday said it plans to push for the "Blue Economy" bill this year as part of efforts to boost economic growth.

DAILY TRIBUNE

[**Carbon pricing may spur stable growth**](#)

By: Kathryn Jose

This ambitious pledge underscores our firm resolve to become a world leader in confronting climate change head-on.

MANILA BULLETIN

Norway aids Filipino farmers jack up production with solar-powered water pumps

By: Myrna M. Velasco

The government of Norway, in collaboration with sustainable crop nutrition solutions specialist, Yara Fertilizers Philippines, Inc. (Yara), has been aiding Filipino farmers jack up productivity at their farm lands while shifting on their technology use to solar-powered water pumps.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

London underprepared for deadly climate change risks, report warns

London is underprepared for the heatwaves, flooding and rising sea levels it is forecast to experience in coming years, a report commissioned by Mayor Sadiq Khan said on Wednesday.

US in deep freeze while much of world extra toasty? It's climate change

Much of the United States is shivering through brutal cold as most of the rest of the world is feeling unusually warm weather. However strange it sounds, that contradiction fits snugly in explanations of what climate change is doing to Earth, scientists said.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

PBBM vows ‘people-centered, community-driven’ Pasig River urban dev’t

By: Ruth Abbey Gita-Carlos

The Pasig River Urban Development Project will be “people-centered and community-driven,” President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. said Wednesday, as he recognized the river’s cultural and historical significance.

PRESIDENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE

PBBM leads efforts to bring Pasig River back to its old glory through “Pasig Bigyang Buhay Muli” project

President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. led on Wednesday the ceremonial opening of the “Pasig Bigyang Buhay Muli: Pasig River Urban Development Showcase Area,” as part of the administration’s efforts to bring back its old glory.

PTV

PBBM seeks for enhanced PH-Brazil relations

By: Brian Jules Campued

President Ferdinand R Marcos Jr. on Tuesday has expressed his intent to expand the country's bilateral ties with Brazil during the welcome ceremony in Malacañang for new Brazilian Ambassador Gilberto Fonseca Guimarães de Moura.

THE MANILA TIMES

[Opinion] More climate bad news for the new year

By: Ben Kritz

WE are not yet three weeks into 2024, and already there have been two unexpected pieces of incredibly bad news on the climate change front. The first was the global temperature data for 2023 from the EU Copernicus program, which showed that crossing the "red line" limit of a 1.5-degree Celsius increase in global temperatures over the pre-industrial average is not, in fact, something that is five or six years in the future but is already happening. The second was a nasty surprise in the form of a research study published on January 2, which revealed that the world's soils, long assumed to be an important carbon dioxide (CO₂) absorber, are actually releasing CO₂ into the atmosphere at a frightening rate.

[Opinion] The cost of the climate coterie —\$150 trillion; John Kerry exeunt

By: Yen Makabenta

Most people have no idea how much the climate movement is already costing the world, or how much it will cost humanity, all told, if its nostrums and dictums, like net zero and the banishment of all fossil fuels, come to pass.

Information and Knowledge Management Division

ABS CBN

NEDA bets on P1 trillion 'Blue Economy' to boost growth

By: Jekki Pascual

The National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) on Wednesday said it plans to push for the "Blue Economy" bill this year as part of efforts to boost economic growth.

The agency said the value of the country's maritime sector, including its ocean and resources linked to it, is estimated to hit over P1 trillion.

At the 8th Joint Economic Briefing organized by various foreign chambers in the country, NEDA Usec. Rosemarie Edillon revealed they will support the proposed "Blue Economy Act" sponsored by Senator Loren Legarda.

Edillon added that it could even be worth more than the earlier estimates.

"We first need to have that framework to develop the blue economy that will include resorts, that will include diving spots, the maritime sector, ocean energy, all those offshore wind," said Edillon.

The World Bank defines the blue economy as the "sustainable use of ocean resources for economic growth, improved livelihood and jobs, and ocean ecosystem health." Its scope included fisheries, maritime transport, tourism, climate change, waste management, and renewable energy.

"It's an untapped potential. It consists of so many economic activities that can be done," she added.

The Department of Energy said it can also contribute to this blue economy as the agency pushed for more renewable energy projects, which include hydro, wind, tidal, and offshore wind.

DOE Usec. Rowena Guevara said there are 1,186 renewable energy service contracts awarded under the RE Law as of November 2023 with a total potential capacity of 132.9 gigawatts. So far only 5.7 GW have been installed.

Guevara, however, noted that they are also preparing for El Niño this year, which will affect the power supply in the country.

"Worry lang namin is the El Niño, mga hydro natin, some of them may go down by as much as 70 percent. We are already preparing," she said.

The economic briefing was organized by the British Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines (BCCP), Dutch Chamber of Commerce in the Philippines (DCCP), European Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines (ECCP), French Chamber of Commerce and Industry in the Philippines (CCIFP), German-Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (GPCCI), Nordic Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines (NordCham Philippines), and the Spanish Chamber of Commerce in the Philippines (La Camara).

DAILY TRIBUNE

Carbon pricing may spur stable growth

By: Kathryn Jose

This ambitious pledge underscores our firm resolve to become a world leader in confronting climate change head-on

Finance Secretary Ralph Recto has started exploring policies on carbon taxes and carbon emissions trade to increase government revenues for long-term socioeconomic growth.

The DoF on Wednesday said it had convened a meeting on the matter, as head of the technical working group on preparing carbon pricing instruments for the Philippines.

"This ambitious pledge underscores our firm resolve to become a world leader in confronting climate change head-on," Recto said.

Reducing reliance on dirty fuels

Carbon taxes could reduce reliance of firms on dirty fuels in the long-term by increasing their operating costs and, thus, consumer prices through pass-on costs which then encourages consumers to patronize businesses using renewable energy.

Meanwhile, carbon emissions trade allows highly oil-dependent countries to buy carbon credits from less emitting countries like the Philippines so that the former can further support the latter's green projects as they are catch on climate change goals.

"There is increased momentum in the establishment of carbon pricing systems in the Asia-Pacific region. Carbon pricing instruments serve as a powerful fiscal tool, allowing us to incorporate social and external costs associated with carbon emissions," Recto said.

Members of the technical working group include the Climate Change Commission, Department of Environment and Natural Resource, Department of Trade and Industry, Department of Transportation, and National Economic and Development Authority.

Foreign consultants in the meeting included representatives from World Bank, Asian Development Bank, and the United Nations Development Program.

Most vulnerable

The DoF said the Philippines contributes only 0.48 percent to global carbon emissions, but is the most vulnerable to the impact of climate change due to its geographical attributes, apart from low disaster resilience capacity.

To help ensure that the country avoids the worst climate disaster scenario, the Philippine government is committing to reduce emissions from climate change-inducing greenhouse gases by 75 percent by 2030.

This move supports the goal of the United Nations' Paris Agreement to keep temperature increases below 2 degrees Celsius to prevent extreme flooding, drought and wildfires.

MANILA BULLETIN

Norway aids Filipino farmers jack up production with solar-powered water pumps

By: Myrna M. Velasco

The government of Norway, in collaboration with sustainable crop nutrition solutions specialist, Yara Fertilizers Philippines, Inc. (Yara), has been aiding Filipino farmers jack up productivity at their farm lands while shifting on their technology use to solar-powered water pumps.

Via the “Agos Para sa Masaganang Ani” program, the pilot initiative was instituted by the Norwegian government and private firm-partner Yara for farmers in Barangay Santa Cruz in Calapan, Oriental Mindoro.

Primarily, the Royal Norwegian Embassy extended P4.0 million grant to the project through Yara – and that amount had been used to procure and install 16 units of solar-powered water pumps which are now benefitting 55 farmers that have been raising crops across 80 hectares of rice fields.

If reckoned on the typical configuration, one water pump can irrigate up to 5.0 hectares of land being tilled for rice plantation.

All of the 16 units were already successfully installed; and the way forward will be for Yara to “continuously engage with the farmers until April this year to monitor and evaluate the irrigation system’s performance as well as its impact on the productivity and profitability of the farmer beneficiaries,” according to the Norwegian Embassy.

It further conveyed that the program now thrives as a proof-of-concept showcasing that the clean energy-food nexus could emerge as viable solution for the agriculture sector in the Philippines.

“Its goal is to bring down the cost of irrigation in the barangay, which currently uses traditional water pumps running on diesel fuel,” the Norwegian embassy said, adding that “the project would result in better profitability and secured yields for the farmers plus reduced CO₂ (carbon dioxide) emissions as the pumps will no longer rely heavily on diesel fuel to draw in water and irrigate the land.”

As emphasized by Norwegian Ambassador to the Philippines Christian Halaas Lyster, “the government of Norway has always been supportive of projects that align with its advocacies such as climate change, environmental protection, and food security.”

He stressed “Norway gives priority to increasing food security and transitioning to renewable energy. This project does both at the same time.”

On the pilot project with farmers in Mindoro, the ambassador qualified that it is “something that can be scaled across different regions of the Philippines, to ensure increased food production while decreasing the overall carbon footprint.”

Yara Country Manager Michael Ardieta explained that the idea of installing solar-powered water pumps was calculatedly thought out within the precept of advancing a nature-positive food future for the Philippines.

“Under that ambition is climate neutrality, regenerative agriculture, and prosperity. So, for this project, instead of using 100% diesel – it’s solar power that will be used so we can reduce emissions,” he noted.

He expounded that for a regenerative future, their company will be providing “crop nutrition solutions as part of proper farming management like planting at the right time, putting the right amount and type of fertilizers, plus of course, the availability of water source.”

As Ardieta opined, “when we say prosperity, what we want is for the farmers to benefit...we want their income to go up. And if their cost of production will be reduced by using less diesel and relying on solar power instead, then it’d mean additional income for them...that’s basically the main rationale for this project.”

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

London underprepared for deadly climate change risks, report warns

London is underprepared for the heatwaves, flooding and rising sea levels it is forecast to experience in coming years, a report commissioned by Mayor Sadiq Khan said on Wednesday.

The report, which was ordered after soaring temperatures, wildfires and floods all hit the capital in recent years, said a “step change” in planning and investment was needed.

“London has many good plans and programs to prepare for climate hazards but we need to recognize that Londoners now face lethal risks,” the chair of the report, and former chair of the Environment Agency, Emma Howard Boyd said in statement.

Boyd said that while there had been a strong focus on reducing emissions, Britain also needed to prepare and adapt its critical national infrastructure.

“Things that we need to deal with in the future have suddenly become very, very real,” Boyd told Reuters.

In summer 2022, Britain recorded its hottest day ever during a heatwave that fueled fires across London’s outer areas, shut down key transport services, and led to the country declaring a national emergency.

The report said climate change presented a threat to life among the most vulnerable communities in London, such as the elderly, children, low income families, marginalized communities and vulnerable health groups.

The report’s recommendations included strengthening flood defenses along the River Thames and improving housing standards.

Khan said he would later this year follow the report’s advice to undertake a multi-agency exercise to test the capital’s preparedness for severe heat.

“A city is only as good as its weakest link,” Boyd said.

US in deep freeze while much of world extra toasty? It's climate change

Much of the United States is shivering through brutal cold as most of the rest of the world is feeling unusually warm weather. However strange it sounds, that contradiction fits snugly in explanations of what climate change is doing to Earth, scientists said.

In a map of global temperatures the last several days, big chunks of the world — the Arctic, Asia, parts of Africa, the Middle East and South America — show as dark red, signifying more than a dozen degrees Fahrenheit (7 degrees Celsius) warmer than the late 20th-century average. But the United States stands out like a cold thumb — a deep bluish-purple that is just as out of whack but on the frigid side.

Wind chills in parts of North Dakota reached minus 70 degrees (minus 56 degrees Celsius), while the heat index in Miami was more than 160 degrees warmer at 92 (33 degrees Celsius). The fourth-coldest NFL football game took place in Kansas City, while across the globe the thermometer hit a blistering 92 degrees, 12 degrees (6.8 degrees Celsius) warmer than average on Friday during tennis' Australian Open in Melbourne. Warm temperature records fell overnight in Aruba, Curacao, parts of Argentina, Oman and Iran.

Where weather was warmer than usual, it was happening both in the southern hemisphere, which is in summer, and in the northern hemisphere, which is in winter. For example, Oman, in the north, had its warmest January night ever at 79.5 degrees (26.4 degrees Celsius). Argentina, in the south, had a record for warmest January night at 81.1 Fahrenheit (27.3 Celsius).

If it seems as if the world has gone topsy-turvy, in a way it has. Because this all comes from what's happening in the Arctic, where it used to be warming twice as fast as the rest of the planet. Now, it's warming three to four times faster.

"When the Arctic is off-the-charts warm (like now), we're more likely to see frigid cold invade places like Texas that are ill-equipped to deal with it," said Jennifer Francis, a Woodwell Research Center climate scientist and a pioneer in the theory of Arctic Amplification, which links the cold outbreaks to climate change. "Rapid Arctic warming is one of the clearest symptoms of human-caused climate change, making winter extremes more likely even as the globe warms overall."

The way the cold is invading is through a weather phrase that is becoming increasingly familiar to Americans: The polar vortex. It's a weather term that goes back to 1853 but has only been frequently used in the past decade or so.

That could be because the icy stabs are happening more often, said winter weather expert Judah Cohen of Atmospheric Environmental Research, a commercial firm outside of Boston.

The polar vortex is strong, icy weather that usually stays over the top of the planet, penned in by strong winds that whip around it, Cohen said.

It's like an ice skater spinning rapidly with her arms tucked in, he said. But when the polar vortex weakens, the arms start flailing out, the skater slips and "all the cold air then gets released away from the center of the polar vortex," Cohen said.

The current cold outbreak is consistent with Arctic change and the polar vortex, Cohen said. "What we found is when the polar vortex stretches like a rubber band, severe extreme winter weather is much more likely in the United States. That's where it tends to be focused and in January we have an extreme case of that stretching of the polar vortex."

This one is stronger and may last longer than most, Cohen said.

Cohen and others have done studies that show the polar vortex outbreaks have become more frequent in recent decades.

The idea is the jet stream — the upper air circulation that drives weather — is wavier in amplified global warming, said University of Wisconsin-Madison climate scientist Steve Vavrus. And those wave changes in the upper air knock the polar vortex out of its place and toward the United States, Cohen said.

It's a theory still debated by climate scientists but growing in acceptance. Initially, Vavrus and Francis theorized it was due to melting Arctic sea ice leading to barometric pressure changes. Now several scientists say it's more complicated, yet still connected to climate change and the supercharged warming in the Arctic, with other factors like Siberian snow cover and other atmospheric waves also playing a role.

"The key takeaway for me right now is that Arctic Amplification is happening and has complex interactions within our climate system. Winter will always bring us cold weather, but like the warm season it may be changing ways that we understand and ways that we are still learning about," said University of Georgia meteorology professor Marshall Shepherd. "Unlike the Vegas slogan, what happens in the Arctic doesn't stay in the Arctic."

Think of what's happening as an orchestra making one symphony, and "what's driving all those orchestra instruments is a warming planet," Northern Illinois University meteorology professor Victor Gensini said.

Gensini and Cohen said this cold snap in the United States will fade in several days to be replaced by unusually warm weather, due to climate change. But another polar vortex looks like it's coming at the end of the month, though not as strong as this one, they said.

Despite the U.S. cold, Earth's global average temperature keeps flirting with daily, weekly and monthly records, as it has for more than seven months. That's because the United States is only 2% of Earth's surface, scientists said.

"A place like Chicago or Denver or Lincoln, Omaha, Oklahoma City, Dallas, Houston, I mean we're all experiencing it," said Gensini, who said the temperature outside his window Tuesday was 6 below. "We're one isolated pocket if you look globally."

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

PBBM vows ‘people-centered, community-driven’ Pasig River urban dev’t

By: Ruth Abbey Gita-Carlos

The Pasig River Urban Development Project will be “people-centered and community-driven,” President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. said Wednesday, as he recognized the river’s cultural and historical significance.

During the inauguration of the showcase area of the Pasig River Urban Development Project in the city of Manila, Marcos said his administration aims to “blaze a path forward for this national asset,” rejecting the defeatist view that the Pasig River is “beyond redemption.”

“We are here to consecrate ourselves to the mission of transforming Pasig River to what it is supposed – to be a living river of multiple benefits for the multitude, featuring safe walkways and bikeways along its bank, a green corridor that will serve as lungs for our city’s needs, a string of parks for communities nearby,” he said.

“Make no mistake about it. It will be a people-centered and community-driven development with ideas crowdsourced from experts and carried out with political will.”

While he admitted that there is a slim chance to restore the Pasig River to its pre-colonial pristine condition, Marcos said the government would stop the river from being “a petri dish of toxins” and make it instead “an incubator of progress and of best environmental practices.”

The President said the government would come up with “new and fresh” ideas to ensure the success of the comprehensive urban development project.

“Along the 2-km. stretch will judiciously sprout commercial enterprises run by the best stewards and the strongest stakeholders of the river’s development – the people themselves. We envision civic spaces where our children will play, our seniors will relax, families will exercise, artists can showcase their talents and the creative can display their wares,” he said.

“We want it to be a permanent exhibit area of green technology that works from solar lights to rain-harvesting facilities, sustainable practices like urban gardens. We will also maximize this ready-to-use but underutilized maritime highway by deploying more ferry boats’ stations because if you build them, the riders will come.”

Marcos said he has asked for quarterly and yearly progress reports on the project to ensure the "sustainable speed" and the "final and logical conclusion" of the redevelopment of Pasig River.

He emphasized the need to continue the cleanup drive and relocate the poor and vulnerable people living along its banks, considering the threat of climate change and frequent typhoons.

"The transformation we would like to see in Pasig River (is) not cosmetic in nature. We will not paper over the river's fundamental problems nor whitewash its grime while leaving the old and rotten still there. We do not want the river that is instantly made picturesque by coats of paint," Marcos said.

Dubbed as the "Pasig Bigyan Buhay Muli" (PBBM), the urban development project aims to transform the Pasig River into a center of economic activity, tourism and promote transportation connectivity in Metro Manila and adjacent provinces.

On July 25, 2023, Marcos issued Executive Order (EO) 35, mandating the "rehabilitation of the Pasig River to its historically pristine condition conducive to transport, recreation and tourism."

After the issuance of EO 35, the Inter-Agency Council for the Pasig River Urban Development (IAC-PRUD) chaired by Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development (DHSUD) Secretary Jose Rizalino Acuzar developed a master plan for the rehabilitation project, which was subsequently approved.

First Lady Liza Araneta-Marcos was the first to throw her full commitment to the project, which will give rise to mixed-use establishments along the river banks from Manila to Pasig City, thus, maximizing the waterway's full potential.

Recreational and wellness amenities, such as public parks and jogging and bike paths, will also be constructed in key areas along the 26-km. stretch of the river, which traverses 11 cities in the metropolis, the DHSUD said.

PRESIDENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE

PBBM leads efforts to bring Pasig River back to its old glory through “Pasig Bigyang Buhay Muli” project

President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. led on Wednesday the ceremonial opening of the “Pasig Bigyang Buhay Muli: Pasig River Urban Development Showcase Area,” as part of the administration’s efforts to bring back its old glory.

In his speech, President Marcos reminded the public that the project does not only aim to look back at the historical significance of the Pasig River, but also to focus on the transformation of the waterway.

President Marcos said the Pasig Bigyan Buhay Muli, a project under the guidance of First Lady Louise Araneta-Marcos, envisions the Pasig River to become “a living river” of multiple benefits for the multitude with safe walkways and bikeways along its banks, greener corridor and a string of parks for communities nearby.

“Along the 25-kilometer stretch will judiciously sprout commercial enterprises, run by the best stewards and strongest stakeholders of the river’s development—the people themselves,” President Marcos said.

“We envision civic spaces where our children will play, our seniors relax, families will exercise, artists can showcase their talents, and the creative can display their wares,” he added.

The chief executive also emphasized that the administration wants the Pasig River to become a permanent exhibit area of green technology “that works—from solar lights to rain harvesting facilities—sustainable practices like urban gardens.”

Marcos said the government will also maximize the ready-to-use maritime highways by deploying more ferry boats and stations in a bid to invite more riders to patronize the transport system.

While the government pushes for the transformation of the Pasig River, the President clarified it will not be “cosmetic in nature,” as it will be done through cleaning up to the bottom of the river.

The President said some solutions to the problems of the Pasig River “are found upstream.”

“As the threat of climate change looms, we must save the poor and vulnerable living along its banks from the ravages of frequent and fiercer typhoons by transferring them to better homes they deserve,” President Marcos said.

“Make no mistake about it. It will be a people-centered and community-driven development, with ideas crowdsourced from experts, and carried out with political will,” he added.

Marcos acknowledged the Pasig River will no longer go back to its pre-colonial pristine condition, but it can still be revived to serve the present while preserving it for the future.

“We can stop it from being a petri dish of toxins and make it instead an incubator of progress and best environmental practices. In some ways, the fate of the Pasig River mirrors that of our country and of our people,” he said.

“Both contain much untapped potential and both move forward persistently, despite years of neglect. That is why we have set into operation the “Pasig Bigyang Buhay Muli.”

The President clarified the “Pasig Bigyang Buhay Muli” is not a re-branding, but reviving of new and fresh ideas.

President Marcos earlier issued Executive Order No. 35, constituting the Inter-Agency Council for the Pasig River Urban Development (IAC-PRUD), tasked to facilitate and ensure the rehabilitation of the Pasig River and nearby water systems.

The council is also tasked to relocate informal settler families living along the banks of the Pasig River with the help of the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) and the Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development (DHSUD).

PTV

PBBM seeks for enhanced PH-Brazil relations

By: Brian Jules Campued

President Ferdinand R Marcos Jr. on Tuesday has expressed his intent to expand the country's bilateral ties with Brazil during the welcome ceremony in Malacañang for new Brazilian Ambassador Gilberto Fonseca Guimarães de Moura.

President Marcos noted the two nations' partnership in areas of technical cooperation, agriculture, trade and investment, defense, and environmental protection, hoping for further collaborations in the future.

The Chief Executive also expressed his support for Brazil's hosting of the 30th Session of the Conference of the Parties (COP30) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 2025.

"Brazil is a powerful voice in marshaling collective action towards the protection of the environment and addressing the effects of climate change, which is the foremost existential threat to our species today," the President said.

Furthermore, Marcos assured the Brazilian envoy of the country's commitment to "continued reciprocal support for each other" within the principles of the United Nations and other multifocal fora.

"I wish you an enjoyable and fulfilling stay here in our country and I hope you will experience the warm hospitality of the Filipino people," he added.

For his part, the Brazilian Ambassador stressed his country's commitment to overcoming challenges and expanding collaboration with the Philippines.

Established in 1946, the Philippines and Brazil will be celebrating their 78th year of diplomatic relations in July this year.

Earlier in January, Marcos also accepted the credentials of Vietnam's Ambassador to the Philippines Lai Thai Binh and Timor-Leste's Resident Ambassador-Designate Marciano Octavio Garcia Da Silva.

THE MANILA TIMES

[Opinion] More climate bad news for the new year

By: Ben Kritz

WE are not yet three weeks into 2024, and already there have been two unexpected pieces of incredibly bad news on the climate change front. The first was the global temperature data for 2023 from the EU Copernicus program, which showed that crossing the "red line" limit of a 1.5-degree Celsius increase in global temperatures over the pre-industrial average is not, in fact, something that is five or six years in the future but is already happening. The second was a nasty surprise in the form of a research study published on January 2, which revealed that the world's soils, long assumed to be an important carbon dioxide (CO₂) absorber, are actually releasing CO₂ into the atmosphere at a frightening rate.

The study entitled "Projected soil carbon loss with warming in constrained Earth system models" was led by researchers from the Chinese Academy of Sciences and published in the journal Nature Communications. It is accessible online without a subscription — a bit of a rarity, in that respect — at <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41467-023-44433-2>. It is not a long paper, but it is rather heavy reading, so I'll provide a simplified explanation.

Soil absorbs CO₂ in considerable quantities from dead plant matter; all of the CO₂ taken in by trees, grasses and other plants is carried into the ground when leaves and branches fall, harvested crop plants are tilled under, and so on. The CO₂ is eventually released through microbial action as bacteria and other microorganisms break down the plant matter, but it is a slow, gradual process; the soil takes in much more CO₂ than it releases over any given period of time.

Or that's what climate scientists have assumed, based on experimental data done years ago; this assumption, in the form of average rates of soil CO₂ absorption, has found its way into most climate models. From those models, we get our estimates of the rate of CO₂ buildup in the atmosphere, the rise in global average temperature as a result, and the "carbon budget" — the amount of CO₂ mankind can still emit before temperature thresholds such as +1.5 C or +2.0 C would be exceeded.

Unfortunately, the latest research has demonstrated the assumption is dead wrong and did so by gathering real-world data from soil samples taken at 366 sites around the world, covering all the various types of landscapes: different types of forests, grasslands, wetlands, croplands, tundra, and so on. The new data thus provided a "constraint" to

the climate models, observed data that could be substituted for the older, mostly assumed soil CO₂ absorption and release factors.

The results were not good. In the current climate models based on what could be considered a reasonably likely "average" scenario — mild to moderate global warming of something like 1.5-2.0 C, or in other words, the current aspirational goal of most climate policy — it is assumed that soil absorption would remove about 30 billion metric tons of CO₂ from the atmosphere by the end of the century. Plugging the new data into the models, however, completely reverses that, showing that CO₂ "turnover" will actually release about 19 billion metric tons of CO₂ over the same time span.

The most important immediate consequence of this is that it means that the "carbon budget" is an overestimate by about 66 percent. Until now, the carbon budget was six years, meaning that we could continue to emit CO₂ into the atmosphere at the current rate for only another six years before the 1.5 C limit is exceeded (for the mostly political purposes of the 2015 Paris Agreement, the limit is considered as a 10- to 20-year average, rather than a point). With the latest findings, that deadline has been cut to two years.

It gets worse, however; that new estimate does not take into account the latest Copernicus temperature data, which showed that Earth's temperature actually stepped over the line — or at least stepped right on it — last year. Global average temperatures for all of 2023 were 1.48 C above the 1850-1900 average, and the temperature on every day of the year was at least 1.0 C above that average, with more than 180 days exceeding 1.5 C over the average. Two days in November exceeded +2.0 C over the pre-industrial average, and November's average temperature was 1.69 C over the pre-industrial average for the month. December was even warmer, at +1.78 C.

Ironically, or perhaps not, the current temperature trajectory is very close to that predicted by climate research conducted — and kept secret from the public for decades — by the petroleum industry's CO₂ and Climate Task Force in 1980. That research, which has so far been demonstrated to be extremely accurate in other contexts, predicted a 2.5 C temperature rise by 2038.

The scientists who conducted the recent soil research also pointed out that warmer temperatures will tend to accelerate soil CO₂ release. The soil microbes that release the CO₂ trapped in plant matter as they go about their little microbe business thrive in warmer conditions, and so the "most plausible" estimate of 19 billion metric tons of CO₂ added from soil emissions by the end of the century could be as high as 45 billion metric tons.

I suppose the natural question at this point is, "What now?" Don't ask me, man, I just work here. But I do think these latest findings are a further call, nay, imperative demand for climate advocates, policymakers and institutions to pull their heads out of the clouds, resign themselves to living in the present day, and dispense with the laughably, desperately outdated messaging that "we need to take action to keep global warming under 1.5 C before it's too late." It's already too late, and has probably been too late for a long time.

[**\[Opinion\] The cost of the climate coterie —\\$150 trillion; John Kerry exeunt**](#)

By: Yen Makabenta

Most people have no idea how much the climate movement is already costing the world, or how much it will cost humanity, all told, if its nostrums and dictums, like net zero and the banishment of all fossil fuels, come to pass.

The "Issues and Insights" website, together with some economists and scientists, has calculated what the cost of the climate change pressure groups and their programs would be in an editorial on Jan. 11, 2024, "The cost of the climate cabal." This was its conclusion:

"A year ago while in Davos, Switzerland, for the World Economic Forum, the Biden administration's climate functionary John Kerry said that "money, money, money, money, money, money, money" was needed for climate programs. That string of words actually corresponds with a sum, and it's \$150 trillion.

Go ahead, try to comprehend that number. It's about 5 1/2 times the size of the US economy, more than four times larger than the (always-growing) federal debt, and 150 percent of the world's GDP. Or, according to Eric Worrall at the Watts Up With That? climate site, 'if you spent \$130 million every day since the death of Jesus Christ, just about now you would be approaching \$100 trillion.'

That it will be spent over the next 26 years doesn't mean that it's not a significant, and economy-breaking, amount.

The immense size of the 'need' matters little to the Davos crony crowd, which will meet for the 54th time next week. The gathering of the rich and powerful will spend its week schmoozing, trading favors and backslapping to become richer and more powerful. And, of course, talking about how much the world needs them, their special skills to solve the climate crisis they have fabricated, and how much of other people's money they need to get the job done.

But let's say the climate cabal gets the \$150 trillion (after all, it's only about \$5 trillion a year) from taxpayers. What can we expect in return?

Economic struggles. Energy shortages. And zero impact on the climate.

'You can turn out the lights and shut down the cars and oil fields, and you won't affect the weather because, if you believe humans are causing dangerous climate change, which I don't, developing countries, led by China and India, are presently driving the

bus,' says H. Sterling Burnett, director of the Arthur B. Robinson Center on Climate and Environmental Policy.

'In the end, the only true effect (President Joe) Biden's climate efforts will have on Americans is to make their supply of electric power more expensive and less reliable, to make travel more difficult and expensive, and cost jobs and lives.'

Research by University of Sussex economist Richard S.J. Tol, whose other academic and institutional affiliations are too numerous to list here, found that reaching previously agreed upon climate targets can't withstand a cost-benefit analysis.

'In 2050, the year of net-zero, the best estimate of the benefits of the 1.5 C target is about 0.5 percent of GDP while the costs are almost 5 percent,' he wrote last year.

He further noted that 'the biggest policy challenge lies in dealing with the inevitable fallout when the 1.5°C target is missed, perhaps later this decade, and the 2.0 C becomes undeniably infeasible. The environmental movement will have to come to terms with a catastrophe that was foretold but did not materialize.'

While we'd be pleased to see the climate alarmists come to terms with their many missed predictions, exaggerations, irresponsible fearmongering, obstructive 'protests,' constant streams of nonsense and demands for money, we fear that it will take another generation for rationality to prevail. True believers don't easily surrender their convictions. Grifters greedily cling to their racket. Politicians don't amass power just to give it up when it's shown the facts aren't on their side. The reasonable among us still have a lot of work to do."

Another alarmist bites the dust

Word is out that John Kerry is on the way out as Joe Biden's climate czar because he will move presently to another racket. This will be cause for satisfaction for climate skeptics because of Kerry's bizarre pronouncements and gimmicks.

Kerry is exceeded in climate hyperbole only by Al Gore, the erstwhile pope of global warming or climate change, who has dropped out of the climate debate because of an almost total loss of listeners/believers in his laughable forecasts and crazy claims.

"Issues and Insights" took notice of Kerry's impending exit with an appropriate send-off on January 16: "John Kerry, goodbye, good riddance." It wrote:

"In a city overflowing with useless people, agencies and institutions, one of its most worthless figures is (finally) leaving his government post. While John Kerry is not quite going away, he is closer to the exit than the entrance. This is good for the country.

At some point this spring, Kerry will leave his billet as the administration's climate envoy... He will reportedly join the re-election campaign of President Joe Biden, who was for decades useless but eventually became destructive, as the last three years have shown. If voters act rationally, Kerry, an insufferable hypocrite, will disappear from public life for good by the middle of November.

Ever an imperious scold, a male Karen before that term became widely used, Kerry has spent much of his adult life, more than four decades, implementing the Democratic Party dream, which is to convert our civil society to a political society...

Most recently Kerry served as the administration's climate czar. It was the perfect post for a gasbag, providing its occupant endless opportunities to lecture climate crisis skeptics, whom Kerry surely regards as 'stupid.'

When Davos and the World Economic Forum convenes this month for their annual confab, they will feel like a lonely and deserted bunch. Virtually no one is bothering to attend the meeting this time. The media, tired of all the humbug, are loath to cover the event.

Nobody cares much anymore about Davos.

=END=