



NEWS ROUNDUP

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[PH to import 450,000 metric tons of sugar for 2023](#)

By: Jervis Manahan

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[Tulfo seeks construction of 'well-equipped' evacuation centers all over PH](#)

By: Jauhn Etienne Villaruel

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By: Jonathan Mayuga

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MANILA BULLETIN

[IMF head says PH an 'exceptionally well-performing' country amid turbulence](#)

By: Argyll Cyrus Geducos

ZURICH, Switzerland — The International Monetary Fund (IMF) lauded President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. for his leadership amid the various " more complex challenges" that the Philippines faced.

[More renewable energy sources expected in Mindanao](#)

By: Antonio Colina IV

DAVAO CITY – The Mindanao Development Authority (MinDA) said more sources of renewable energy will be added to the Mindanao grid between 2023 and 2028 that will balance out the current power mix of the island at 70-30 in favor of fossil fuels.

[\[Opinion\] The other side of Davos: Reframing, rather than solving issues](#)

By: Diwa C. Guinigundo

This may not exactly be the best time to be attending the World Economic Forum (WEF) being held in Davos, Switzerland this week of Jan. 16-20. The Philippines is embroiled in serious domestic problems too many to cite.

[Tulfo files bill establishing evacuation centers in every city, municipality in PH](#)

By: Mario Casayuran

Senator Raffy Tulfo has filed a bill seeking to establish well-equipped evacuation centers in all 1,488 municipalities and 146 cities in the country.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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By: Anna Cristina Tuazon

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[World Economic Forum projection: Debt, inflation biggest threats to PH](#)

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MANILA, Philippines—In the next two years, natural disasters and extreme weather events will be the top risks for the Philippines, which is considered as the “most disaster-prone” country in the world

SUNSTAR

[CSF residents urged to support green programs](#)

By: Jovi De Leon

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO The city government of San Fernando is urging residents and businessmen here to support its environment programs to avert the negative effects of climate change.

THE MANILA TIMES

[IMF to help PH achieve growth](#)

By: Catherine S. Valente

DAVOS, Switzerland: The International Monetary Fund (IMF) said it is willing to help its member countries, including the Philippines, achieve sustainable growth and push economic policies that will benefit more Filipinos.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

DWIZ

[Pagkakasama ng climate change agenda sa pdp 2023-2028 ikinalugod ng CCC](#)

By: Gilbert Perdez

Ikinalugod ng Climate Change Commission (CCC) ang pagkakasama ng accelerated climate change agenda sa Philippine Development Plan (PDP) 2023-2028.

PHILIPPINE COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE

[Pagkakasali ng Climate Change Agencda sa Philippine Development Plan 2023-2028, pinuri](#)

Pinuri ni Climate Change Commission (CCC) Vice Chair and Executive Director Robert Borje ang desisyong isali sa Philippine Development Plan (PDP) 2023-2028 ang layuning palakasin ang aksyon ng pamahalaan hinggil sa climate change

SMNI NEWS

[Desisyong isali sa PH Development Plan ang layong palakasin ang aksyon ukol sa climate change, pinuri](#)

By: Cresilyn Catarong

PINURI ni Climate Change Commission (CCC) Vice Chair and Executive Director Robert Borje ang desisyong isali sa Philippine Development Plan (PDP) 2023-2028 ang layuning palakasin ang aksyon ng gobyerno patungkol sa climate change.

Information and Knowledge Management Division

ABS CBN

[PH to import 450,000 metric tons of sugar for 2023](#)

By: Jervis Manahan

MANILA - The Sugar Regulatory Administration is preparing to import 450,000 metric tons of sugar for this year, officials said Wednesday.

SRA Board Member Pablo Luis Azcona said that despite higher levels of local sugar production, the output is still not enough to meet local demand.

"Yung sinasabi naming record high, it's a month to month comparison. If we base it (on) month-to-month comparison, talaga ahead tayo ngayon compared to last year. However, yung final production surveys and final production projections, we feel we will be at around 1.8 million more or less. So we might be ahead now. But come end of milling, kapos pa rin tayo," he said.

The volume that will be imported is higher than the total imports for 2022, during which the country imported a total of 350,000 metric tons under two sugar orders.

The SRA said that the government wants to have buffer stock good for two months.

Azcona said a portion of the supply to be imported this year will be shipped immediately for retail.

"There is a suggestion to make part industrial, part retail. There are also suggestions to make it open for everybody na lang, wala ng actual percentages. They want to temper retail price," he said.

An order is yet to be issued, but talks are ongoing on the percentage of allocations. Azcona assured there will be allocations for both domestic and industrial use.

The official said climate change and high production costs, and even the closure of a milling company in Batangas, affected the country's sugar output. Azcona said the Philippines imports sugar every year.

Tulfo seeks construction of 'well-equipped' evacuation centers all over PH

By: Jauhn Etienne Villaruel

MANILA — Sen. Raffy Tulfo on Wednesday day said he has filed a bill that seeks to establish "well-equipped" evacuation centers in all municipalities and cities in the country.

The Philippines is ranked among the most vulnerable nations to the impacts of climate change.

Tulfo lamented the usual practice of turning covered courts and other public spaces into evacuation sites even if they are unsuitable to accommodate a large number of people.

“When disaster and calamities strike, covered courts, gymnasiums, schools, and even churches serve as evacuation areas... These areas are jam-packed when the situation worsens. Diseases; existing and unforeseen may also spread because these areas do not meet standard measures for a proper and well-ventilated evacuation center,” Tulfo noted in his bill.

Under Senate Bill No. 1652, filed last Jan. 11, each location for every evacuation center will be determined by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), in close coordination with the LGUs concerned.

Tulfo underscored the need for evacuation centers that have basic facilities, accessible location and adequate emergency supplies, such as water, medicine and relief goods considering that the Philippines is one of the most typhoon-prone countries in the world.

Approximately 19 to 20 typhoons enter the Philippine Area of Responsibility annually, Tulfo noted, citing data from the Climate Change Knowledge Portal for Development Practitioners and Policy Makers.

BUSINESS MIRROR

DENR chief cites framework for special climate fund

By: Jonathan Mayuga

DEPARTMENT of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Maria Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga vowed to implement projects under the 8th cycle of the Global Environment Facility (GEF 8) anchored on a sound, scientific foundation.

Yulo-Loyzaga's assurance was contained in a speech delivered by DENR Undersecretary Analiza Rebuelta-The during the kick-off ceremony of the GEF National Multi-Stakeholders Dialogue in Taguig City last January 18.

Projects in the GEF—a “multilateral environmental fund that provides grants and blended finance for projects related to biodiversity”—is expected to deliver economic, social and environmental benefits and would support the accounting valuation of the country's natural resources and accelerate the appropriate management of the country's environmental assets, the DENR chief said.

It was learned that under the GEF 8, the Philippines has one of the largest allocations in the Asean with over 120 projects and programming totaling over \$727 million. Learning from its experience in implementing past GEF projects, the DENR said it hopes to address identified gaps.

The latter include: lack of policy coherence and integration between effective climate change adaptation and biodiversity actions; weak science-policy linkage and data generation in the environment and natural resource management; limited knowledge development and management; and, inadequate innovative financing mechanism to support sustainable resource management.

“The fund marked an important point of progress in ensuring that vulnerable countries are provided the needed support,” Loyzaga said. “Further, the Philippines hopes to receive soon from the GEF Secretariat the guidance to the operating entities on the finance mechanism to support technology development, transfer and diffusion.”

Planet, people

THE DENR, the DENR chief said, also hopes to advance the country's efforts to address environmental issues by tackling the drivers of ecological degradation and strengthening the country's commitments to multilateral environmental agreements and

contributing to global environmental benefits, supporting integrated approaches and ensuring that programs are inclusive and prioritizes the most vulnerable.

The projects are being eyed “to help realign private sector capital to achieve wider scale and impact, empower local communities to harness their contributions, strengthen their capacities, protect their livelihoods, uplift their socio-economic conditions and enhance resilience.”

According to Loyzaga, the sound, scientific foundation of the projects would also strengthen the national geospatial database for natural resources as a platform for programmatic planning.

“We live in a multi-hazard environment and due consideration must be given to addressing highly differentiated and local scale impacts on food, water, energy and human security from ridge to reef,” Loyzaga said in her speech.

The Philippines continues to face more complex challenges in advancing goals toward achieving ecosystem integrity while building a more resilient and inclusive post-pandemic community, she added.

This, she said, calls on the Philippines to optimize the opportunity to review and finalize the country’s portfolio of projects under GEF 8 by developing projects that respond to the needs and priorities of the country.

As such, she said the “healthy planet, healthy people” framework as the heart of the overall global GEF 8 emphasizes the critical connection between humanity and the environment, highlighting the importance of urgent environmental threats reduction and protection of natural resources in order to improve human well-being.

Systematic, transformational

ACCORDING to Loyzaga, the GEF 8 calls for a “systematic and transformational” strategy that responds to the urgency of raising ambitions.

“The Philippines is geared up to work with GEF as its staunch partnership in strengthening national commitments to multilateral environment agreements while enhancing and institutionalizing capabilities to translate these commitments into meaningful actions to support sustainable development,” she said.

Loyzaga said the Philippines “deeply values such exercises to design the integrated approaches needed” for several tasks. The latter includes the following: addressing “the intersectional ties between development, climate change, biodiversity and disaster resilience”; adopting a “comprehensive risk-management approach”; and, optimizing the resources available to improve quality of life.

In her speech, the DENR chief reminded the participants of the dialogue to recall the decisions of the recently concluded sessions of the Conference of Parties (COP).

She noted that the GEF, as a financing mechanism for the COP conventions, translates COP directives into operational guidelines for GEF projects.

Loyzaga, who led the Philippine delegation to the recent COP, took part in the sealing of the groundbreaking agreements during the 2022 UN Biodiversity Conference (COP15), which resulted in the adoption of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) that features concrete measures to halt and reverse nature loss, including putting 30 percent off the planet and 30 percent fo degraded ecosystems under protection by 2030.

COP 27, meanwhile, ended with a breakthrough agreement to provide finance to “Loss and Damage,” particularly for developing countries most vulnerable to the climate crisis.

Groups flag appointment of Abu Dhabi oil boss Al Jaber to lead climate talks

By: Lenie Lectura

The ultimate goal of COP28, or the 28th session of the Conference of Parties, could be stalled after the chief of state-owned Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC) has been selected to lead this year's UN brokered-climate talks scheduled in the latter part of the year.

According to the Manila-based think tank Institute for Climate and Sustainable Cities (ICSC), the representation of the COP presidency by a leader of the global petroleum industry is "clearly problematic," ICSC Deputy Executive Director Angelo Kairos dela Cruz said via email.

Sultan Al Jaber, head of the world's twelfth-largest oil company by production, will be responsible as the COP28 President for holding governments and the fossil fuel industry accountable to global climate goals to limit warming to 1.5°C, which entails, according to the International Energy Agency (IEA), an immediate end to all new oil and gas extraction projects.

"There can be no doubt the intention is to stymie progress in the talks to make fossil industry companies accountable to the global public," dela Cruz added.

While the group recognized that it is the right and privilege of the UAE—as the host country to appoint the COP28 leadership—"the ultimate barometer is how closely the Dubai round of talks will be measured to its adherence to implementing and advancing the Paris Agreement."

With this, ICSC intends to closely engage the UAE leadership of COP28 to make sure it tackles "the increasingly serious diplomatic challenge of addressing climate change now and for the long term."

"And as with previous COPs, it is just as vital to remind everyone concerned that decisive, strategic climate action—or the lack thereof—is the responsibility of all stakeholders who see the climate crisis as the most critical challenge humanity has ever faced.

"It's not just the UAE leadership that bears this weight. We need to make sure our respective governments and institutions deliver what the youth of today expect," added dela Cruz.

Separately, Global Policy manager at Oil Change International (OCI) Romain Ioualalen commented that the appointment risks further undermining the credibility of global climate talks and threatens the action and leadership needed for a rapid and equitable phase out of all fossil fuels.

“This is a truly breathtaking conflict of interest and is tantamount to putting the head of a tobacco company in charge of negotiating an anti-smoking treaty... The reality is that the climate talks will be run by the CEO of a company betting on climate failure. These are the worst possible credentials for an upcoming COP President,” said Ioualalen.

Based on OCI’s recent research, the UAE is poised to become the third largest expander of oil and gas production between 2023 and 2025. ADNOC’s new oil and gas production over the next three years would lock in over 2.7 Gt of CO₂ emissions, which is equivalent to one year of the European Union’s CO₂ emissions from fossil fuels.

MANILA BULLETIN

[IMF head says PH an 'exceptionally well-performing' country amid turbulence](#)

By: Argyll Cyrus Geducos

ZURICH, Switzerland — The International Monetary Fund (IMF) lauded President Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr. for his leadership amid the various “ more complex challenges” that the Philippines faced.

IMF managing director Kristalina Georgieva said this during a bilateral meeting with Marcos on the sidelines of the 2023 World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos.

According to Georgieva, the IMF thought what Marcos did over the past year was “quite commendable.”

“We found the Philippines to be an exceptionally well-performing country,” she said.

“What you have done in the last year of turbulence to sustain growth is quite commendable,” she added.

Georgieva said the IMF was ready to help its member countries, including the Philippines, achieve sustainable growth and push for economic policies to benefit more of their people. The Philippines joined the IMF on December 27, 1945.

“We have been really interested in engaging more deeply with our members to recognize the traditional challenges. They are still there,” she said.

In the meeting, President Marcos raised the need to “go back to the basics,” noting the number of challenges faced by the country, especially in the food supply.

“There are weaknesses in different systems like food supply, energy, infrastructure, and climate change. These are the basic problems that we need to be addressing,” he said.

Marcos also affirmed his administration’s push to scale up digitalization initiatives, which are vital in making the bureaucracy more efficient and effective.

“If you are adept with new technologies, you are already at [the] forefront... so that’s basically how we are approaching the problem,” he said.

The IMF, a special agency of the United Nations, focuses on promoting global monetary cooperation, ensuring financial stability, and facilitating international trade.

On Tuesday, the President and First Lady Louise Araneta-Marcos joined WEF founder and Chair Dr. Klaus Schwab and his wife, Hilde, in a private dinner.

Dr. Schwab invited President Marcos to attend the WEF during a meeting on the sidelines of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) summits in Phnom Penh.

[\[Opinion\] The other side of Davos: Reframing, rather than solving issues](#)

By: Diwa C. Guinigundo

This may not exactly be the best time to be attending the World Economic Forum (WEF) being held in Davos, Switzerland this week of Jan. 16-20. The Philippines is embroiled in serious domestic problems too many to cite.

To be sure, the President will talk about the country's macroeconomic resiliency that seemed to have motivated the establishment of the Maharlika Investment Fund. The Department of Foreign Affairs justified the trip and the announcement as "more of a soft launch." One member of Congress argued that WEF is very important in rallying such a gathering of world and business leaders and inviting them to invest in the Philippines.

But we all know the Maharlika idea is at best tentative with many fundamental flaws. Some observers have grown skeptical of WEF as launching pad. For them, WEF has not been solving the world's problems, but really just recasting the issues in another form.

C'est le ton qui fait la musique.

This is WEF according to Markus Giesler, a consumer sociologist and editor of the Journal of Consumer Research, in his great article on Jan. 28, 2015 for the Transnational Institute. Very much the synopsis of his article, his title is "Davos: Where journalism is PR and change is consumer choice."

Giesler disclosed the key findings of his study conducted with Ela Veresiu on the sociological impact of WEF. Using institutional analysis, their study provided empirical evidence on the other side of Davos: That this global forum is not "improving the state of the world." It's a counterpoint in that the summit's initiatives are found to even perpetuate those global drags of poverty and inequality, climate change and technology for years. He described WEF as "a master in redefining questions about political issues into questions about individual morality."

This process of converting big political issues into individual morality and decision is Giesler's "consumer responsabilization."

One good example is former US Veep Al Gore's argument that global warming is less of a political issue than a moral one. Everybody has a stake in it. "Each one of us is a cause of global warming, but each of us can make choices to change that with the

things we buy, with the electricity we use, the cars we drive.” Gore effectively threw back to society all the blame of moral pathologies including entitlement and indolence.

Consumer responsabilization involves four stages.

First, solving those big issues is shifted to you and me. Second, WEF champions the idea that to solve such a global problem, we need to nurture more ethical consumer behavior by making markets more inclusive. Third, WEF then encourages world leaders attending the forum to create new markets for these more inclusive approaches. Last, institutional and individual actors are encouraged to adopt new problem-solving ethos. In other words, how to reframe the issues and the problems.

Their study therefore found that WEF has not solved pressing issues including poverty and debt. It has conveniently transferred the burden of solving these problems from governments and business to individual consumers.

Even media is a party to this. Giesler claimed that their method of automated content analysis of media coverage over 10 years shows its drift towards the forum’s official narrative. Presentations during the week-long forum that are more provocative and contrarian rarely receive enough mileage. WEF has become an instrument of defending institutions rather than questioning their fundamentals.

Thus, journalism at Davos deteriorates into merely managing public relation. For a responsible journalist is one who uncovers reactionary forces by writing clearly about them and siding with the victims of oppression and injustice.

This is the global forum that President Marcos, Jr. is now attending. In CNN’s coverage last Monday, Jan. 16, it described the attendance as “record crowds” but qualified that “its relevance is fading.”

It’s not difficult to see why. Economic decision makers since 2020 have been playing the game differently. Multinational companies have moved supply chains closer to home economies; they have become less globalized. Free trade has given way to geopolitical risks; trade and investment as a percent of global output has declined. Localization is the new buzzword.

While top CEOs from key multinationals have enlisted, the forum will miss the heads of state of the major economies and key emerging markets. Only a couple would take the main stage.

Most important, a quick glance at the daily program from Jan. 16 through Jan. 20 shows that numerous events are taking place at the same time. For example, yesterday, between 5-6 p.m., nine events were scheduled. But only two of them were starred by the WEF as “must-watch sessions.” These events featured Ukraine’s Volodymyr Zelensky at 5-5:15 p.m., followed by a panel discussion on restoring security and peace at 5:15-6 p.m.

Unfortunately, the presentation by President Marcos, Jr. was unstarred and slated as a conversation at 5:30-6 p.m.

With participants being given the choice to attend these simultaneous events who could have attended his session?

As we write this column, we have yet to see whether the Palace advisers did the President justice by asking him to address one of the simultaneous events without the WEF “must-see” stars in a forum that seems to have lost its luster over the years. It would be perfect to avoid any mention of Maharlika. The President could focus more on our success in bouncing back from the pandemic lockdown, our new six-year development plan supported by structural reforms and infrastructure development in the last 25 years. Recognizing the problems that haunt us to this day would demonstrate that we intend to solve rather than simply reframe them.

But perhaps not in Davos, but in more appropriate forums like ASEAN+3 and APEC’s summit meetings. His cabinet secretaries should do the investment roadshows instead.

A modest delegation would also make his message more authentic.

More renewable energy sources expected in Mindanao

By: Antonio Colina IV

DAVAO CITY – The Mindanao Development Authority (MinDA) said more sources of renewable energy will be added to the Mindanao grid between 2023 and 2028 that will balance out the current power mix of the island at 70-30 in favor of fossil fuels.

MinDA Assistant Secretary Romeo Montenegro said that the islands may have additional 2,000 megawatts of renewable energy of which 400 megawatts (MW) are already committed applications and 1,600 MW are indicative.

He said the government hopes to reverse the island's power mix in compliance with its obligations under the Paris Agreement by promoting more investments in clean energy.

The multilateral agreement, which entered into force on Nov. 4, 2016, targets to limit "global warming to well below 2, preferably to 1.5 degrees Celsius, compared to pre-industrial levels" as part of global efforts to combat climate change and adapt to its effects.

Under the agreement, countries "aim to reach global peaking of greenhouse gas emissions as soon as possible to achieve a climate neutral world by mid-century."

The Philippines signed the Paris Agreement on April 23, 2016, and it was subsequently ratified by the Senate on March 23, 2017 under the administration of former President Duterte.

According to Montenegro, Mindanao is not expecting new applications for the construction of coal-fired power plants after the Department of Energy declared in 2020 a moratorium on endorsements for greenfield coal power plants.

Montenegro said the island has a total of 4,000 MW installed capacity, of which between 2,700 and 2,800 MW is the available capacity.

Mindanao's power supply is supplied mainly by coal-fed power plants.

He added that there are applications for solar, hydro, biomass, and other possible sources of renewable energy on the island.

“If these are implemented, and fully developing power to the grid, that will definitely turn the tide in favor of renewable energy by 2028. However, it’s not easy to go through the several challenges,” he said.

Montenegro added that among the challenges investors in renewable power encounter include the financial agreements between the proponents and financial institutions and the available market.

[Tulfo files bill establishing evacuation centers in every city, municipality in PH](#)

By: Mario Casayuran

Senator Raffy Tulfo has filed a bill seeking to establish well-equipped evacuation centers in all 1,488 municipalities and 146 cities in the country.

In filing Senate Bill (SB)1652, Tulfo underscored the need for evacuation centers that have basic facilities, accessible location and adequate emergency supplies, such as water, medicine and relief goods considering that the Philippines is one of the most typhoon-prone countries in the world.

“When disaster and calamities strike, covered courts, gymnasiums, schools, and even churches serve as evacuation areas to shelter affected residents and families,” Tulfo said in the explanatory note of the bill.

“These areas are jam-packed when the situation worsens. Diseases; existing and unforeseen may also spread because these areas do not meet standard measures for a proper and well-ventilated evacuation center,” it added.

Notably, approximately 19 to 20 tropical cyclones (tropical depression, storms, typhoons enter the Philippine Area of Responsibility (PAR) annually, with seven to nine making landfall, according to Climate Change Knowledge Portal for Development Practitioners and Policy Makers.

Under SB 1652, each location for every evacuation center shall be determined by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), in close coordination with the local government units (LGUs) concerned.

The location must be centrally located in the community, must be of a safe distance from large trees and structures with hazardous materials, must be near a health facility, must be located on geotechnically stable land, must not be located near military base camps and camps of insurgent groups.

Its structure must also be calamity-resilient and built with sturdy materials, and must have the capacity to accommodate a large number of evacuees.

Tulfo also proposed that under the bill, the LGUs concerned should be primarily responsible for the operation, supervision, and management of evacuation centers.

The local sanggunian, meanwhile, shall promulgate guidelines and procedures for the use and operation of the evacuation center under its jurisdiction.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Crying over onions

By: Anna Cristina Tuazon

When does an economic issue turn into a mental health issue? The world of mental health is quite expansive. It interacts with practically every facet of our lives. The moment something affects the way we think and feel, that already becomes mental health. Counter to stereotype, mental health is not just about psychiatric disorders or talking through our feelings. It also includes our experience with stability and security.

When our economy becomes so unstable that it starts affecting our daily lives, it can affect our mental health. Reports were recently made about onion farmers who have taken their lives in despair over their financial situation, with insurmountable debts and very little assurance that relief is coming. All this while onion prices are at shockingly high prices. You would think that the farmers should, at the very least, benefit from the high prices. But apparently, both farmers and consumers are suffering greatly. (Which begs the question: Who, then, is benefiting from this?)

A farmer's life is a high-risk life. If stability and security contribute to good mental health, it makes sense that our farmers are one of the most vulnerable groups. Depending on nature for your livelihood is essentially risky: You may experience bounty in one season, and devastation in the next. But we can't completely blame nature for their suffering; farmers and fishermen have long understood how to work with nature instead of against it. Increasingly, human factors have intruded on this delicate balance to create unnecessary chaos and uncertainty. Man-made climate change has spiked the uncertainty and unpredictability of weather and caused more extreme events, such as typhoons and extended droughts. Patchwork protections and regulations from a short-sighted government have impeded farmers' capacity to develop and implement long-term plans for sustainability.

Our colonial legacy has crippled how farmers view what it means to have ownership of their land. Even with agrarian reform, our farmers were handed such small parcels that it becomes impossible to sustain without capital investment, leading them to sell back to their former landlords (or to real estate developers). Middlemen have choked our agricultural industry by the neck: The limited number of mills and refineries have led to almost nonexistent bargaining power for our farmers who have no choice but to sell at low farmgate prices despite high consumer demand. Government could focus on establishing public or cooperative cold storage and warehouses as well as processing centers, but that would mean going up against the powerful middlemen. The logistics of

delivering produce from farm to table adds greatly to losses on the farmer's end and prices on the consumer side. The lack of a robust cargo rail and dedicated cargo truck routes has forced the hand of some farmers to let their precious produce rot rather than incur more losses from exorbitant trucking fees. Our dependency on gas-fueled and road-based transportation has allowed our prices to be especially vulnerable to oil prices and traffic.

Where is a lot we can do to increase farmers' sense of stability and security. There are many empty platitudes of farmers as heroes. Behind that, however, has been a systematic stripping away of their right to self-determination. Rather than a symbiotic working relationship with nature and their land, they have been pulled back and forth, swayed helplessly by external political and economic forces. First, let them take the lead in determining farmgate prices that are just and reasonable. Instead of a top-down approach, let the farmers decide the price that will allow them to recuperate their losses, feed their families, and save for their future. If this results in a price that is too prohibitive for consumers, government should collaborate with farmers on how to increase efficiency, and thereby reduce price increases attributed to crop losses.

The Department of Science and Technology has long been developing many technologies and innovations for this. It is time to allow them to implement this on a wide scale, instead of deprioritizing research and development in governmental budgets. Investments in infrastructure that allow more efficient and long-term storage allow us to plan for surplus and shortages in a way that minimizes fluctuations in price. Investing in transport infrastructure and increasing a variety of cargo transport modes ensure that delivery of produce remain unimpeded, which will further lower the final price.

If the onion crisis is man-made, then it is—and must—be solvable. When the prices are stable and it leads to financial security for our farmers, then our farmers can hope for good mental health.

[World Economic Forum projection: Debt, inflation biggest threats to PH](#)

By: Kurt Dela Peña

MANILA, Philippines—In the next two years, natural disasters and extreme weather events will be the top risks for the Philippines, which is considered as the “most disaster-prone” country in the world.

This was revealed in the Global Risks Report 2023, which was released by the World Economic Forum (WEF) last week, Jan. 11. The report presented “some of the most severe risks we may face over the next decade.”

According to WEF, business leaders in the Philippines, who were part of more than 12,000 respondents for its Executive Opinion Survey (EOS), identified five risks for the country in the next two years—natural disasters and extreme weather events were considered the greatest.

The second biggest risk is a debt crisis, as reflected in the results of the EOS, which was conducted between April and September last year. The rest of the risks are rapid or sustained inflation, misinformation, and geopolitical disputes over resources.

As explained by WEF, the EOS asked thousands of respondents across 121 economies to select the top five risks from a list of 35, including prolonged economic stagnation, which was considered the greatest risk for the Philippines last year.

Looking back, the Global Risks Report 2022 stated that the top five risks for the country last year were prolonged economic stagnation, digital inequality, extreme weather events, employment and livelihood crisis, and failure of public infrastructure.

This, as it was only in 2022 when the Philippine economy started to reopen as COVID-19 restrictions were relaxed. The think tank Ibon Foundation, however, stressed that “there is far from any recovery in the sense of the economy returning to where it should have been without the protracted lockdowns.”

“It may take a decade or even more for this to happen especially with the six years of austerity to come, euphemistically called fiscal consolidation, and amid very uncertain and volatile global economic conditions,” it said.

But as extreme weather events hit the country last year, with close to 20 typhoons entering the Philippine Area of Responsibility, concerns shifted as to how natural

disasters would impact the Philippines and its economy that was brought to a standstill by the COVID-19 crisis.

Serious threat

Last year, Souleymane Coulibaly, lead economist of the World Bank, said climate change, which manifests itself through rising temperatures, increasing sea levels, more intense droughts and stronger typhoons, will significantly threaten the global economy.

According to him, without interventions from government and private institutions, extreme weather events will likely slash gross domestic product (GDP) by 13.6 percent by 2040 and inflict a heavy burden, especially on the poorest of the poor.

“We have estimated that the average loss of GDP by 2030 is at least 3.2 percent rising to at least 5.7 percent by 2040. However, the impact could be much worse reaching 7.6 percent of GDP by 2030 and 13.6 percent by 2040,” he said.

Based on the World Risk Index 2022, which calculates the disaster risk for 193 countries, the Philippines, with an index score of 46.82, is the “most disaster-prone” because of high risk, exposure, and vulnerability.

Next to the Philippines were India with an index score of 42.31, Indonesia with 41.46, Colombia with 38.37, Mexico with 37.55, Myanmar with 35.49, Mozambique with 34.37, China with 28.70, Bangladesh with 27.90, and Pakistan with 26.75.

“The risk assessment in the WorldRiskReport is based on the general notion that the emergence of a disaster not only depends on how severely natural hazards hit a society but also on how vulnerable society is to their effects,” said World Bank.

According to Coulibaly, the consequences of climate change are expected to negatively impact economic growth as it is seen to erode natural and physical capital, lessen work productivity, weaken financial stability, and alter domestic and external competitiveness.

He said “modeling shows that if no measure is taken to address climate change by 2040, the poverty rate will increase by nearly a percentage point, economic insecurity by 3 points and inequality by 0.3 points.”

Debt crisis?

Based on data from the Bureau of Treasury (BTr), the Philippine government's outstanding debt stood at P13.644 trillion as of end-November 2022, increasing by P3.15 billion or 0.02 percent from the end-October 2022 level.

However, the debt increased by P1.92 trillion or 16.33 percent since end-December 2021.

The BTr said domestic debt amounted to P9.43 trillion, which was P72.73 billion or 0.78% higher than the previous month's, while external debt amounted to P4.22 trillion— P69.58 billion or 1.62% lower than the end-October 2022 level.

But debt watcher Moody's Investors Service said the Philippines' debt may ease this year as the economy continues to recover from the consequences of one of the longest and harshest COVID-19 lockdowns in the world.

"For only a few sovereigns, including Fiji, Maldives and the Philippines, debt burdens will decline by several percentage points in 2023, driven by high nominal GDP growth," Moody's said last Jan. 9.

However, it stressed that "their debt burdens will still hover far above pre-pandemic levels."

High inflation

As stated in the Global Risks Report 2023, respondents also identified rapid and/or sustained inflation, which is the rate of increase in prices, as the third greatest risk for the Philippines over the next two years.

Based on data from the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), inflation in the Philippines went up even higher at 8.1 percent last month from 8 percent in November 2022, bringing the full-year average to 5.8 percent.

It said the inflation spike in December 2022 was mainly because of the higher annual increase in the index of food and non-alcoholic beverages at 8.4 percent, from 8.2 percent in November 2022.

This was followed by restaurants and miscellaneous goods and services index which recorded a 6.2 percent year-on-year increment in December 2022, from 6 percent in November 2022, the PSA said.

The acceleration in prices of basic goods and services weighed most heavily on poor and low-income families, especially the 18.6 million households that did not have any savings as of the fourth quarter, based on Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas data.

But President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. said despite inflation “running rampant and out of control,” the Philippines is still on track “to maintain a strong economic performance” and achieve the government’s growth target.

Greatest global risk

WEF said all over the world, the cost-of-living crisis will be the biggest global risk over the next two years as inflation is still at sky-high levels after energy and food costs spiked last year because of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.

“Continued supply-chain disruptions could lead to sticky core inflation, particularly in food and energy. This could fuel further interest rate hikes, raising the risk of debt distress, a prolonged economic downturn and a vicious cycle for fiscal planning,” WEF said.

“Without significant policy change or investment, the interplay between climate change impacts, biodiversity loss, food security and natural resource consumption will accelerate ecosystem collapse, threaten food supplies and livelihoods in climate-vulnerable economies, amplify the impacts of natural disasters, and limit further progress on climate mitigation.”

As stressed by WEF, the persistence of a global cost-of-living crisis could result in a growing proportion of the most vulnerable in society being priced out of access to basic needs, fueling unrest and political instability.

Some of the global risks identified, aside from a cost-of-living crisis, are natural disasters and extreme weather events, geo-economic confrontation, failure to mitigate climate change, erosion of social cohesion and societal polarization, and large-scale environmental damage incidents.

This week, thousands of government and business leaders, mostly billionaires, are in Davos, Switzerland for the WEF 2023, which is a global business forum attended by world and business leaders alike to come up with ideas and plans to address challenges facing the economy.

This year's WEF, with the theme "Cooperation in a Fragmented World," is the forum's first in-person gathering since 2020.

But the WEF, which is often criticized as out of touch and an elitist gathering of the rich, is becoming "totally irrelevant," Rana Foroohar, a Financial Times columnist, told CNN on Monday (Jan. 16).

As stated by Silvia Amaro in a CNBC article, the WEF is "an annual meeting where a global elite of business leaders, politicians and economists make bold predictions and try to set the agenda for the year ahead — but they don't always get it right."

SUNSTAR

CSF residents urged to support green programs

By: Jovi De Leon

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO The city government of San Fernando is urging residents and businessmen here to support its environment programs to avert the negative effects of climate change.

Mayor Vilma Caluag underscored the importance of cleanliness and health as San Fernando observes the Zero Waste Month.

Caluag and the City Environment and Natural Resources Office called on people to conserve water, save electricity, avoid using single-use plastic.

The Fernandinos were also asked to practice waste segregation as basic measures to negate the ill-effects of climate change like flooding, unsanitary surroundings and diseases.

"The problem of climate change is not for the government alone to resolve but for everybody. It is a personal responsibility of each Fernandino. Let us all observe Zero Waste Month and follow our environmental laws and keep San Fernando clean, safe and healthy," Caluag said.

The protection and preservation of the environment is one of the priorities of the Caluag administration.

The city government strictly implements environmental laws under the Ecological Waste Management Act of 2000.

The city has sustained the operations of its Central Materials Recovery Facility and continues to pursue measures to avert environmental degradation through regular waste collection and segregation, as well as information campaigns against the negative effects of climate change.

THE MANILA TIMES

[IMF to help PH achieve growth](#)

By: Catherine S. Valente

DAVOS, Switzerland: The International Monetary Fund (IMF) said it is willing to help its member countries, including the Philippines, achieve sustainable growth and push economic policies that will benefit more Filipinos.

Kristalina Georgieva, IMF managing director, made the commitment during a bilateral meeting with President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum (WEF) here in Davos.

Georgieva commended Marcos for his leadership amid the numerous "complex challenges" faced by the country.

"We found the Philippines to be an exceptionally well-performing country ... what you have done in the last year of turbulence to sustain growth is quite commendable," she told the President.

"We have been really interested to engage more deeply with our members to recognize the traditional challenges ... they are still there," she added.

Marcos raised the need to "go back to the basics," noting the number of challenges faced by the country.

"There are weaknesses in different systems like in food supply, like in energy, infrastructure, climate change ... these are the basic problems that we need to be addressing," he said.

The President also affirmed his administration's push to scale up digitalization initiatives, which are vital in making the bureaucracy more efficient and effective.

"I hold a lot of hope and confidence in the new technologies ... if you are adept with new technologies, you are already at [the] forefront ... so that's basically how we are approaching the problem," Marcos added.

7 percent growth

Marcos is optimistic that the Philippine economy could grow at a faster pace of 7 percent this year despite rising inflation and a dimmer global economic outlook.

In an interview with Bloomberg TV, he said the Philippines expects gross domestic product (GDP) growth to go beyond 6.5 percent and "hover" around 7 percent this year.

"We'll be able to achieve a projection of 6.5 percent growth for this year. Again, we're optimistic that the growth rate can actually go beyond 6.5 percent and hover maybe around 7 percent in 2023," Marcos said.

"I believe that certainly; there's so much space, room to grow in the sense that we are starting very many new things now — I suppose like every other economy. The basics in our economy have been rather stable, our growth rate has remained above 6 and half percent for 2022, and I think 2023 will be the same situation," he added.

The President cited the country's unemployment rate, which he said, "is continuing to go down."

The Philippine Statistics Authority earlier reported that the unemployment rate stood at 5 percent in September last year, bringing the number of jobless Filipinos down to 2.5 million.

"Inflation is the one thing that we are having to deal with," he added.

"But for the Philippines, we project our economy to grow by around 7.0 percent in 2023," Marcos said during the Country Strategy Dialogue at the WEF.

The President said the Philippines' "strong macroeconomic fundamentals, fiscal discipline, structural reforms and liberalization of key sectors instituted over the years have enabled us to withstand the negative shocks caused by the pandemic and succeeding economic downturns and map a route toward a strong recovery."

"We have seen inflation accelerating globally in recent months. We are mindful that while protectionist policies may be appealing, even necessary in the short term, there will ultimately be no long-term winners," Marcos said.

The President also stressed the importance of economic and technical cooperation to assist the development of smaller economies and enable their participation, especially those of "small businesses and economic segments with untapped potential in the global economy.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

DWIZ

[Pagkakasama ng climate change agenda sa pdp 2023-2028 ikinalugod ng CCC](#)

By: Gilbert Perdez

Ikinalugod ng Climate Change Commission (CCC) ang pagkakasama ng accelerated climate change agenda sa Philippine Development Plan (PDP) 2023-2028.

Partikular na binanggit ni CCC Vice Chair and Executive Director (VCED) Robert E.A. Borje ang “Chapter 15: Accelerate Climate Action and Strengthen Disaster Resilience” na napabilang sa PDP.

Ayon kay Borje, mahalaga ito upang mas mapalakas pa ang commitment ng gobyerno sa paglalapat ng mga karampatang aksiyon laban sa pabago-bagong klima.

“The PDP Chapter 15 reflects the Philippine Government’s commitment and dedication to enhance the nation’s overall resilience to climate change and its impacts, putting a premium on the need for integrated and comprehensive climate action between and among government, partners, and all stakeholders,” wika ni Borje.

Tinukoy naman sa Chapter 15 ng PDP ang mga layunin sa mga komunidad, institusyon at natural at built environment para maging mas matatag o resilient sa mga epekto ng natural hazards at climate change sa tinurang panahon.

Ang PDP, na kumakatawan sa six-year vision ni Pangulong Ferdinand Romualdez Marcos Jr., ay binuo ng National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), kasama ang ilang government agencies at stakeholders.

Upang masuportahan at mapagana ang PDP 2023-2028, sinabi ni Borje na ina-update na rin ng CCC ang National Climate Change Action Plan (NCCAP), gayundin ang Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC), habang pinaigting din ang implementasyon ng National Climate Risk Management Framework (NCRMF), at isinusulong ang National Adaptation Plan (NAP).

Aminado naman si Borje na kailangan nilang magdoble-kayod, katuwang ang ilang ahensya ng gobyerno, upang maisakatuparan ang mga ito.

Maglalaan aniya ang gobyerno ng P453.1 bilyon upang magamit ng National Government Institutions (NGIs) para sa adaptation at mitigation programs.

“CCC is working very closely with the Department of Budget and Management to achieve the objective of increasing overall NGI submissions significantly,” ani Borje.

Samantala, isiniwalat ni Borje na mas palalakasin pa nila ang kapasidad ng mga komunidad at lokal na pamahalaan o LGUs sa pamamagitan nang pagbubuo, pagpapabuti at pagsusumite ng Local Climate Change Adaptation Plan (LCCAP).

“The CCC will continue to further strengthen its public-private-community engagements to further develop public awareness and understanding on climate change, and further improve the quality of risk and vulnerability assessments,” pahayag ni Borje.

Sa 1,715 LGUs, kabuuang 1,397 na ang nakapagsumite ng kanilang LCCAPs noong 2022 kumpara sa 715 submissions mula sa mga lokal na pamahalaan noong 2021 na nangangahulugang nagkaroon ng 42% na pagtaas.

Maliban dito, sinabi ni Borje na patuloy silang makikipag-ugnayan sa Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) upang maabot ang kanilang target na bilang.

“We will intensify our partnerships with the private sector, CSOs and other stakeholders as necessary, as well as provide CCC technical support to build the capacities of our LGUs and enhancing LCCAPs, including in the areas of risk and vulnerability assessment, greenhouse gas inventory, and local climate budget tagging,” dagdag pa ng opisyal.

PHILIPPINE COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE

[Pagkakasali ng Climate Change Agenda sa Philippine Development Plan 2023-2028, pinuri](#)

Pinuri ni Climate Change Commission (CCC) Vice Chair and Executive Director Robert Borje ang desisyong isali sa Philippine Development Plan (PDP) 2023-2028 ang layuning palakasin ang aksyon ng pamahalaan hinggil sa climate change

Pahayag ni Borje, salamin ito ng dedikasyon ng gobyerno na maging climate change resilient ang bansa at magbigay daan sa transisyon tungo sa low-carbon economy.



SMNI NEWS

[Desisyong isali sa PH Development Plan ang layong palakasin ang aksyon ukol sa climate change, pinuri](#)

By: Cresilyn Catarong

PINURI ni Climate Change Commission (CCC) Vice Chair and Executive Director Robert Borje ang desisyong isali sa Philippine Development Plan (PDP) 2023-2028 ang layuning palakasin ang aksyon ng gobyerno patungkol sa climate change.

Partikular na tinukoy ni Borje ang pagdaragdag ng isang buong chapter sa climate change sa PDP 2023-2028, ito ang “Chapter 15: Accelerate climate action and strengthen disaster resilience.”

Aniya, ang PDP Chapter 15 ay sumasalamin sa pangako ng pamahalaang Pilipinas na pahusayin ang pangkalahatang katatagan ng bansa sa pagbabago ng klima at mga epekto nito.

Dagdag pa ni Borje, sumasalamin din ito sa dedikasyon ng administrasyon na maging climate change resilient ang Pilipinas.

Magbibigay-daan din aniya ito sa transisyon tungo sa low-carbon economy.

Tinukoy ng naturang kabanata ang layunin para sa komunidad, mga institusyon at natural at built environment, na maging mas matatag mula sa mga impact na dala ng natural hazards at climate change pagsapit ng 2028.

Mababatid na mayroong kabuoang Php453.1 billion ang nakalaang alokasyon para sa climate change expenditure ng national government institutions, na gagamitin para sa adaptation at mitigation programs.

Inilalahad ng PDP ang 6-year vision ng Marcos administration tungo sa isang upper middle-income at low-carbon development, at climate-smart at climate-resilient na Pilipinas.

Ang PDP ay dinevelop ng National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), kasama ang iba pang government agencies at stakeholders.

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