



NEWS ROUNDUP

22 JANUARY 2024 [07:40 am]

- A 'concrete' step to sustainability
- Explainer: What warming oceans mean for our planet
- Carbon PH Meeting
- Basrah gets boost
- DepEd urged: Let SY 2024-2025 return to old school calendar
- Assessment on resumption of talks on PH-EU trade deal eyed in Q1 2024
- UN climate panel approves new program
- DENR mobilizing \$278 million foreign-funded projects
- DOE urged to prioritize environment in expanding power projects
- [Opinion] The link among population, climate change, and poverty

CCC IN THE NEWS:

- Daunting task vs climate change
- Globe, DENR honor environmental champions at 2023 Mga Kuwentong KLIMA-likasan Awards

BUSINESS MIRROR

[A 'concrete' step to sustainability](#)

By: Manuel Cayon

Soon, undersea infrastructure construction will be seeing a new fad, this time one that actively pushes and expands the revitalization of marine resources.

ECO BUSINESS

[Explainer: What warming oceans mean for our planet](#)

By: Gabriel Lee

Last year, sea surface temperatures and the energy in the upper 2,000 metres of the ocean both hit record highs, according to a recent study in the journal *Advances in Atmospheric Sciences*.

JOURNAL ONLINE

[Carbon PH Meeting](#)

It marks a significant milestone for the Philippines as industry-leading companies came together on January 17 to support the country in its transitional aspirations for a lower carbon economy through investments in nature-based solutions, capacity building and inputs for policy development.

MANILA STANDARD

[Basrah gets boost](#)

A new climate change adaptation initiative is due to get underway in southern Iraq, after the Basrah Gas Company (BGC) and the UN World Food Program (WFP) signed an agreement last week in support of local farmers in the Al Zubair district of the regional capital.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

[DepEd urged: Let SY 2024-2025 return to old school calendar](#)

By: Luisa Cabato

The Department of Education (DepEd) should revert School Year 2024-2025 to the old school calendar, a House legislator said Saturday.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

[Assessment on resumption of talks on PH-EU trade deal eyed in Q1 2024](#)

By: Kris Crismundo

The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) is looking forward to the Philippines and the European Union (EU) concluding the assessment on the resumption of negotiations for free trade agreement (FTA) by the first quarter of the year.

THE MANILA TIMES

[UN climate panel approves new program](#)

The UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) approved a new six-year working program in Istanbul Saturday with an "emphasis on adaptation to climate change" and a conclusive synthesis report due by late 2029, it said in a statement.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

[DENR mobilizing \\$278 million foreign-funded projects](#)

By: Catherine Talavera

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) is mobilizing over \$278 million worth of foreign-funded projects this year for biodiversity, climate change and environment programs to strengthen environmental resiliency and sustainability in local government units (LGUs).

[DOE urged to prioritize environment in expanding power projects](#)

Environmental advocates of Protect VIP — a network that focuses on safeguarding the Verde Island Passage (VIP) marine corridor — have urged the Department of Energy (DOE) to exercise caution in its expansion of power generation projects in the marine biodiversity hotspot.

[\[Opinion\] The link among population, climate change, and poverty](#)

By: Atty Josephus Jimenez

Aside from geopolitics, world economic disruptions, and relentless changes, aside from wars and global realignment of forces, the overall climate of the planet earth determines the degree of happiness or unhappiness of the world's more than 8 billion people. The projected world population on January 1, 2024 is 8,019,876,189 or an increase of 75,162,541 people which is an increase of 0.95% compared to that of New Year 2023.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

DAILY TRIBUNE

[Daunting task vs climate change](#)

Climate change remains one of the most pressing challenges facing the global community, posing a severe threat to ecosystems, economies, and human well-being.

SUNSTAR

[Globe, DENR honor environmental champions at 2023 Mga Kuwentong KLIMAlikasan Awards](#)

Globe partnered with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) for the second straight year to honor outstanding achievements of individuals, organizations, and local government units (LGUs) in environmental conservation, climate change adaptation and mitigation, and disaster risk reduction.

Information and Knowledge Management Division

BUSINESS MIRROR

A 'concrete' step to sustainability

By: Manuel Cayon

Soon, undersea infrastructure construction will be seeing a new fad, this time one that actively pushes and expands the revitalization of marine resources.

The world's leading cement and construction manufacturer will conduct actual seawater tests to explore the use of construction aggregates and concrete, made from cement, for the construction or potential reconstruction of coral reefs.

That means it won't involve the typical practice of stitching and wiring discarded tires together to create an artificial reef structure, a method that has proven to be toxic in Philippine waters.

In February, the first artificial reef structure will be submerged undersea off the coast of Medina, Misamis Oriental, to restore or reconstruct the rich coral reef system in the area.

Zoe Sibala, chief sustainability officer of Holcim Philippines, said the aggregates are bioactive concrete specifically designed by the manufacturer for marine construction.

This is possible with the active decarbonizing program of the Holcim Group, which has already led to the manufacture of new cement products with low carbon emission, or none at all.

Sibala said the company would also construct artificial reef structure in Mati, Davao Oriental.

"We are exploring two areas in Mindanao to promote the natural development of coral reefs using these bioactive concrete," she said during the launching of Holcim Philippines' Innovation Hub in Davao City on Tuesday.

Sibala said the bioactive concrete would also be suited for coastal protection and prevent further erosion of the coastal areas. Bioactive concrete is actually designed for marine infrastructure and thus, would be the best material to construct ports and bridges.

"With the sharp deterioration of the Coral Triangle, Holcim would like to contribute this new innovation to revive marine biodiversity," she said.

Decarbonization

THE introduction of bioactive concrete specifically designed for marine construction is part of the array of new cement products in the market today that Holcim Philippines has offered to the construction industry. Their main feature is the reduction of carbon emission, one of the greenhouse gases (GHG) and the biggest source of ozone-depleting compounds.

Some of the new cement products were already introduced in the last two years.

Aside from the decarbonization of its new cement product lines, the Holcim company would also help the urban landscape with “more efficient and cost-effective buildings and help owners and occupants reduce their energy consumption.”

Ramakhrisna Maganti, head of Holcim’s infrastructure and industrial sales, said the company has developed another new cement product that has the characteristic of permeability to allow water to seep down back to the soil.

This is suited for road infrastructure in places that always suffer from flood during heavy downpour.

Maganti said the company has three major efforts to help address the climate crisis: reduce carbon emission, make buildings more energy efficient and encourage recycling of construction materials and the fuel to produce cement.

Fuel efficiency

THE company has also adapted recycling and the reuse of materials and waste to further up its ante in environmental-friendly pursuit of new products and services.

In the last five years, it has tapped solid waste for fuel and has been acquiring agricultural and municipal waste to help it wean away from using coal and fossil fuels for its operation.

It has worked with local governments to acquire their waste and has been successfully done in Pampanga, Bulacan and Manila areas around its Bulacan plant, said Sam Manlosa, head of Holcim’s Geocycle Philippines.

He said this recycling for fuel use would be used next in the Davao City plant.

2030 compliance

HORIA ADRIAN, president and CEO of Holcim Philippines, said the Holcim Group would strive to meet the 2030 climate-change targets in the Paris Agreement to substantially reduce global GHG emissions.

Citing the waste acquisition to be used for its fuel, Adrian told reporters that the manufacturer would strive to comply with reduced emission of GHG. He said the first batch of actions had been done by shifting to new fuel alternatives other than diesel, coal and other fossil fuels.

He mentioned that the innovation hub established in Davao City would serve as a connection point for consumers and construction partners to explore the advancements made by the manufacturer in developing new products with lower carbon emissions.

The innovation hub, he said, is a hive of ideas to come up with products that suit the specific needs of clients. “These new products are designed for specific uses to help clients in their construction project optimize the use of cement, prevent wastage.”

“We would ensure that our products assist our clients in coming up with more efficient building structures that aid in better energy conservation,” he said.

Holcim Philippines said it opened its innovation hub in its Davao plant to cement its upgrade to being the country’s leading building solutions provider and to advance as well its banner program on providing decarbonized cement and aggregate products in the market.

The innovation hub is linked to Holcim Group’s research center in Lyon, France, and Holcim Philippines said it wanted to showcase several innovations of its traditional cement products. These include cement that allows water to percolate to the ground and superior masonry feature to cement aggregates from demolished structures that could be recycled as new construction aggregates and new cement material.

A video presentation during the launching of the hub here on Tuesday said the Lyon, France, innovation hub has a group of researchers to design and formulate new products. Some 15 countries are now connected or have links to this main innovation center.

Top-ranking company officials launched the hub on Tuesday as they also disclosed that the improved and innovated products have low carbon emission or none at all.

ECO BUSINESS

[Explainer: What warming oceans mean for our planet](#)

By: Gabriel Lee

Last year, sea surface temperatures and the energy in the upper 2,000 metres of the ocean both hit record highs, according to a recent study in the journal *Advances in Atmospheric Sciences*.

In 2023, the oceans soaked up around 9 to 15 zettajoules more heat energy than in 2022, which is enough to boil 2.3 billion Olympic-sized swimming pools, said the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the Chinese Institute of Atmospheric Physics.

Analyses show that the amount of heat in the oceans has increased dramatically since the 1950s.

Why are ocean temperatures reaching uncharted levels?

Oceans, which cover 70 per cent of Earth's surface, are the largest heat sinks on the planet, absorbing more than 90 per cent of the warming that has occurred in recent decades, according to Dr Tan Koh Siang, senior research fellow at the Tropical Marine Science Institute (TMSI) in Singapore.

Dr Nicholas Yap, research fellow at the St John's Island National Marine Laboratory, added that ocean surface temperatures are rising due to human-induced climate change.

Dr Tan said that global warming causes air temperatures to rise by releasing heat-trapping greenhouse gases, such as carbon dioxide, into the Earth's atmosphere. Hot air warms the oceans since water is usually cooler than the air above it, he said.

Dr Patrick Martin, assistant professor at Nanyang Technological University's Asian School for the Environment (ASE) said that the ongoing El Nino event that causes the warming of waters in the eastern Pacific Ocean, is also responsible for the rise in ocean temperatures.

Ocean warming is unevenly distributed as there are local effects, such as seasonal oscillation, that moderate general climate trends, noted Leong Wai, research associate at TSMI.

Dr Joyce Ong, assistant professor at ASE, said that Singapore sits within the Indo-Pacific Warm Pool (IPWP), an area of the tropics with very warm sea temperatures

constantly. The IPWP has warmed and doubled in size over time because of climate change, she said.

Are rising ocean temperatures a bane or boon?

While some studies suggest that ocean warming might expand resource-rich marine areas, there is little evidence that indicates that ocean warming will bring long-term benefits, said Dr Yap.

But evidence relating to the problems caused by ocean warming is plentiful.

Rising ocean temperatures deplete the amount of dissolved oxygen available in the water, increasing the number of fish die-offs, said Leong.

Ocean warming can cause coral bleaching, which occurs when water becomes too warm and corals expel the algae within their tissues, noted Chen Mengli, research fellow at TSMI.

Leong said that warmer waters have been linked to harmful algal blooms and ecological transitions, such as coral reefs becoming algae-dominated due to more frequent bleaching.

In Singapore, a country that is looking to boost aquaculture to improve food security, the increased likelihood of fish kills and algal blooms will have a disruptive effect, he said.

Societal implications include a proliferation of jellyfish blooms that endanger public health and the possibility of dormant viruses being released when the polar ice melts, Dr Yap noted.

Warmer oceans also make hurricanes stronger for longer after reaching land, ramping up damage wrought on impact, according a 2020 study in the scientific journal Nature.

Simultaneously, sea levels are set to rise because of two factors related to global warming: added water from melting polar ice and glaciers, and the expansion of seawater as it warms.

Rising sea levels could lead to devastating outcomes, ranging from sand erosion to wetland flooding and agricultural soil contamination.

“Fire-ice”, or methane hydrate, a natural gas frozen deep beneath the ocean floor, could be thawed during ocean warming, releasing more heat-trapping methane and creating a positive feedback loop that amplifies climate change, according to a recent study in the scientific journal Nature Geoscience.

Marine heatwaves could cause polar species to go extinct, as with the collapse of the Alaska snow crab fishery in 2022 due to an unexpected. Large numbers of crabs starved to death as a result of their metabolic rates rising with higher water temperatures and an inability to find sufficient food.

Warmer waters are also not ideal for marine organisms in the tropics, since they are already living very close to their upper temperature limits for them to function normally, said Dr Tan.

Warmer oceans directly impact the physiology of marine organisms, for instance, by altering their metabolic mechanisms or interfering with their reproductive cycles, Dr Martin added.

Some fish, such as herring and whiting, for example, need stable water temperatures to spawn and maintain healthy populations, and sudden warming can decimate these fisheries.

Other fish, such as black seabream, are leaving coastal areas for deeper waters, exacerbating economic inequalities between big fisheries and under-resourced fishermen while worsening the livelihoods of coastal communities, said Dr Chou Loke Ming, research affiliate at TSMI.

Ocean warming in the United Kingdom has also driven fish such as cod to migrate north in search of colder water, disrupting food webs.

However, thanks to fish migration, Portuguese fisheries have reported nearly 20 new species from tropical or subtropical climates, according to a 2016 study in the journal Fisheries Research.

A raft of opportunity

Experts said that the best solution to prevent rising ocean temperatures is to curb man-made greenhouse emissions that contribute to global warming, and by extension, climate change.

“By switching to renewable energy, we can wean off our reliance on fossil fuels,” said Dr Martin.

There is also a need to cut down on agricultural land use, which accounts for one-tenth of global greenhouse gas emissions, he said.

Leong said that this can be done by reducing meat consumption or exploring plant-based substitutes such as alternative protein.

Dr Ong said that sequestering carbon can also reduce the amount of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. One way is to avoid cutting down carbon-storing forests, she added.

Technologies such as 3D printing offer hope by recreating artificial habitats to help displaced fish find new homes, while Artificial Intelligence could help to automate coral reef restoration.

JOURNAL ONLINE

[Carbon PH Meeting](#)

It marks a significant milestone for the Philippines as industry-leading companies came together on January 17 to support the country in its transitional aspirations for a lower carbon economy through investments in nature-based solutions, capacity building and inputs for policy development.

The recently held meeting of the Carbon PH initiative witnessed the convergence of the private sector aspiring for a significant impact on the country's transition towards a better future. Companies that participated in the meeting include Aboitiz Equity Ventures, UnionDigital Bank, Aboitiz Data Innovation, GT Capital Holdings, Foundation for Economic Freedom, Ramon Aboitiz Foundation, SM Investments Corporation, Jollibee Group Foundation, Sibol, SGV, Filinvest Development Utilities, Chroma Hospitality, Lucio Tan Group, JG Summit Holdings, Cebu Pacific, Research Triangle Institute International, and Coca-Cola Foundation.

At the heart of this collaboration is a shared dedication to sustainable development, aligning efforts to address climate change through practical solutions and policy advocacy. The Carbon PH initiative recognizes the private sector's pivotal role in implementing nature-based solutions as companies contribute essential resources, expertise, and innovation.

Ginggay Hontiveros-Malvar, Aboitiz Group's Chief Reputation and Sustainability Officer and one of the project lead contributors, emphasized the significance of private sector involvement, stating, "The private sector plays a crucial role in implementing nature-based solutions. These companies bring forth the necessary resources, expertise, and innovation needed to drive and contribute to sustainable development."

The synergies within the private sector are strategic, aimed to enhance the scale and effectiveness of nature-based solutions. Leveraging their extensive experience in implementing sustainability initiatives, these companies are well-positioned to shape an enabling environment with policy recommendations supporting nature-based solutions.

The Carbon PH initiative signifies a historic milestone for the Philippines, marking a transformative step towards a more sustainable and environmentally conscious future. As these leading companies join forces, they set a powerful precedent for corporate responsibility, collaboration, and the pursuit of a greener economy in the Philippines and beyond.

MANILA STANDARD

[Basrah gets boost](#)

A new climate change adaptation initiative is due to get underway in southern Iraq, after the Basrah Gas Company (BGC) and the UN World Food Program (WFP) signed an agreement last week in support of local farmers in the Al Zubair district of the regional capital.

The initiative is designed to increase incomes and boost agricultural production.

The project will introduce tested solutions to combat desertification and support water conservation in the farming sector. WFP and BGC will collaborate closely with the Directorate of Agriculture, the Farmers' Association, and local farmers in the implementation phase, the UN agency said in a press release.

The initiative will train farmers on applying smart agriculture techniques, modern farming methods such as so-called "soilless farming" and water-saving irrigation systems.

The project will also focus on empowering female farmers by building capacity and self-employment in cooperation with the designated local authorities in the district.

This collaboration, which was finalized during the COP28 climate change conference in Dubai last month, comes at a critical moment for global transformative climate action.

"Our strategic approach in Al-Zubair aligns with the urgent need to combat the effects of climate change in southern Iraq. Al-Zubair district is one of the regions in Basrah most affected by climate change. There are frequent sandstorms, heatwaves, water scarcity, pollution, and salinity," said WFP Country Director and Representative for Iraq Ally-Raza Qureshi.

"This project underscores our joint commitment to promoting sustainable livelihoods, community cohesion, and effective adaptation strategies for the evolving agricultural landscape in Basrah." UN News

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

DepEd urged: Let SY 2024-2025 return to old school calendar

By: Luisa Cabato

The Department of Education (DepEd) should revert School Year 2024-2025 to the old school calendar, a House legislator said Saturday.

Surigao del Norte Rep. Robert Ace Barbers said the return to a June-March school calendar “is a huge leap forward for our students, parents, and teachers” amid worsening climate change. He also noted that going back to the old school calendar would be a big boost to domestic tourism.

“With the worsening climate change, they need not suffer under extreme conditions and risk their health,” Barbers said in a statement Saturday.

“With summer vacation returning, our domestic tourism will have a most needed boost as families can again enjoy going on vacations around the country, a tradition that was lost when the school calendar was changed years ago. This will greatly contribute to the recovery of the local economy,” he also said.

Barbers added that the old school calendar could allow the youth to help their parents whose livelihood involves farming during harvest time.

Barbers expressed confidence that Vice President and concurrent DepEd Secretary Sara Duterte will heed the call.

“Children can enjoy playing outside once again, something they lost when the break fell during the rainy season. Playing is vital in the social formation of the children. It is not a trivial matter and we know that VP Sara fully understands. Let us all hope that she will make the right decision in restoring our culture and traditions,” he said.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

Assessment on resumption of talks on PH-EU trade deal eyed in Q1 2024

By: Kris Crismundo

The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) is looking forward to the Philippines and the European Union (EU) concluding the assessment on the resumption of negotiations for free trade agreement (FTA) by the first quarter of the year.

In a recent interview with DTI Undersecretary Allan Gepty, he said the stocktaking exercise was launched last year following the visit of European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen here on July 31 last year, announcing EU's interest to resume talks for the FTA with the Philippines.

The stocktaking meetings between technical experts from the Philippines and EU were also completed in the last quarter of 2023.

The meetings provided a glimpse on the expectations in renegotiating the FTA that has been in hiatus since 2017.

"Of course, there were many developments already, there were many changes, and the issues are also evolving, so we have to sit down again, try to discuss what are the things we have to consider should we decide to resume the FTA negotiations," Gepty told trade reporters.

He said the Philippine side is taking into account the EU trade agenda, aiming to get the same benefits that other countries get from their free trade deals with the EU.

On the other hand, EU wants to see the elements of sustainable development agenda, such as environment and climate change, among others.

"The value and importance of expanding our FTA network and trade relations cannot be over emphasized," Gepty, the country's lead negotiator for FTAs, said. "FTAs have opened new markets and ensured preferential tariff commitments for the country."

"We intend to use trade negotiations as a tool to push for export competitiveness and ensure that the rules of trade are fair, transparent, non-discriminatory, and trade restrictive non-tariff measures are addressed," he added.

Currently, the Philippines has three bilateral FTAs -- with Japan, South Korea, and the European Free Trade Association.

Aside from the ongoing bilateral FTA engagements with the EU, the country is also pushing for FTAs with the United Arab Emirates and India.

THE MANILA TIMES

[UN climate panel approves new program](#)

The UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) approved a new six-year working program in Istanbul Saturday with an "emphasis on adaptation to climate change" and a conclusive synthesis report due by late 2029, it said in a statement.

The IPCC produces comprehensive scientific assessment reports to inform governments on their climate policies, which are published every five to seven years, with the sixth cycle having ended last year.

The new program was adopted by "more than 300 delegates from 120 governments" on Saturday after four days of debates and one night of additional negotiations, reflecting challenges in reaching a consensus.

It follows previous models of releasing several voluminous intermediary reports capped off with a final synthesis.

Global emissions, which have not yet peaked, must fall by 43 percent between 2019 and 2030 in order to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial emissions, a target set by the 2016 Paris Agreement, according to the IPCC.

Like the previous reporting cycle, three working groups have been set out to investigate the physical science basis of climate change, adaptation and vulnerabilities of humanity and ecosystems, and solutions to limit global warming.

It will also produce an additional "Special Report on Climate Change and Cities" and another on the capture and storage of carbon dioxide.

In the current reporting cycle, "there is a notable emphasis on adaptation to climate change," said IPCC Chairman Jim Skea.

It means the IPCC will establish new indicators and recommendations to measure adaptation efforts such as flood- and drought-resistance and protective infrastructure.

Many scientists and environmentalists were calling for more rapid reporting to keep pace with the urgency of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and to contribute to annual climate negotiations in this crucial decade.

The next such report will not be ready till 2029, too late to take in the second global assessment of the landmark Paris Agreement on climate change, which is due the previous year, the American NGO Union of Concerned Scientists lamented.

The first "global stocktake" at COP28 in Dubai in December produced a landmark call for the world to move away from fossil fuels despite major concessions to the oil and gas industry and producer countries.

Established in 1988, the IPCC does not conduct studies but synthesizes the academic consensus in all fields concerning climate change to produce the key scientific reference for global climate negotiations.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

[DENR mobilizing \\$278 million foreign-funded projects](#)

By: Catherine Talavera

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) is mobilizing over \$278 million worth of foreign-funded projects this year for biodiversity, climate change and environment programs to strengthen environmental resiliency and sustainability in local government units (LGUs).

During the recent High-level Discussion on the Philippines' National Adaptation Plan, Environment Secretary Maria Antonia Yulo Loyzaga stressed the need to secure foreign funding to bridge financial gaps for successful program implementation.

“Through strategic partnerships with multilateral and bilateral institutions, we can address environmental issues efficiently and effectively,” she said.

Among the country's strategic partners include Japan, Australia, the US, South Korea, and Canada, among others.

Loyzaga said the agency is collaborating with development partners, including the Global Environment Facility (GEF), United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), and the European Union (EU) to implement a circular economy approach with the Circular Solutions to Plastic Pollution Integrated Program.

Other foreign-funded projects include the Green Economy Program of the Philippines (GEPP) funded by the EU focusing on solid waste management and plastic waste reduction in 60 LGUs over five years as well as the Reducing Marine Plastics in the East Asian Sea Region initiative, funded by the Republic of Korea's Ministry of Ocean and Fisheries which focuses on improving local governance in marine plastic management.

The DENR is also collaborating with the World Bank for ongoing studies on municipal solid waste plans, recycling systems, plastic circularity opportunities and strategies to combat plastic waste crisis.

It noted that the Philippines has also joined the Global Plastic Action Partnership through the World Economic Forum (WEF) to strengthen its commitment against plastic pollution and has also signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with WEF for the Blue Carbon Action Partnership in a side event during the UNFCCC COP28 in Dubai.

“The establishment of the National Blue Carbon Action Partnership (NBCAP) in the Philippines through the DENR will facilitate the inclusive, whole-of-society approach to developing a shared ambition for blue carbon, community resilience and inclusive development,” the DENR said.

The partnership would also unlock the Philippines’ potential to provide nature-based climate solutions for the rest of the world while supporting its programs for protected areas and preparing the country for participating in the new blue economy.

The department said these efforts will complement the DENR’s partnership with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) Philippines Accelerating NDC through Circular Economy in Cities Project, which supports the implementation of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) Act of 2022.

“These initiatives demonstrate the DENR’s commitment to environmental sustainability and resilience while addressing pressing challenges. With effective implementation, they will contribute to an improved environment for all Filipinos,” Loyzaga added.

The environment chief also highlighted the importance of the partnership with other government agencies, emphasizing the need for a whole of government approach to accelerate LGU programs with global best practices in environmental management within the next five to six years.

Its partner agencies include the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG), Department of Finance (DOF), Department of Health (DOH), Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), Department of Tourism (DOT), Department of Agriculture (DA), and Department of Science and Technology (DOST).

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

[DOE urged to prioritize environment in expanding power projects](#)

Environmental advocates of Protect VIP — a network that focuses on safeguarding the Verde Island Passage (VIP) marine corridor — have urged the Department of Energy (DOE) to exercise caution in its expansion of power generation projects in the marine biodiversity hotspot.

In a statement on Friday, Protect VIP warned of the potential social and environmental impacts of pursuing more power projects, including the destruction of marine resources and decline in fish catch in areas near existing and new gas facilities.

The group's appeal comes after the DOE's clearance of 175 power generation projects for system impact studies (SIS) in 2023, with the largest being the 3,038-megawatt (MW) NOM FL1 offshore wind farm by Vind Energy Corp. in Batangas and Occidental Mindoro.

Fr. Edwin Gariguez, the lead convenor of Protect VIP, acknowledged the government's strides in promoting renewable energy in response to the climate crisis. However, he stressed the necessity of a balanced approach, saying: "We note that the energy transition needs not come at the expense of key biodiversity hotspots and the communities residing in them."

Gariguez emphasized the need for meticulous impact studies and screening of proposed projects by the DOE, pointing out potential risks associated with unchecked expansion.

He also cited a 2023 study by the Climate Analytics Institute that suggested that the Philippines could transition to a 100% renewable energy-based power sector while safeguarding key biodiversity and protected areas.

The DOE's list of power generation projects endorsed for SIS in the previous year included 13 wind and solar projects totaling nearly 7,000 MW in VIP provinces.

Gariguez highlighted the importance of protecting marine and coastal environments, cautioning against potential impacts such as water contamination, noise pollution, bird strikes, and increased turbidity of coastal waters during construction.

Gerry Arances, executive director of the Center for Energy, Ecology, and Development (CEED), and co-convenor of Protect VIP, emphasized that the energy transition should prioritize the well-being of both people and the environment.

“The country’s shift to a power sector fully powered by renewables can be designed in a manner that prevents potential repercussions while facilitating the empowerment of communities and preservation of critical ecosystems - such as through developing decentralized and community-based renewables,” Arances said.

The VIP is one of the most productive ecosystems in the world and is home to a variety of species such as whale sharks, sea turtles, and an impressive array of corals. The strait also hosts over 300 coral species, underwater rock canyons and reef formations, and 60% of all known shore fish species in the world within a ten-kilometer area.

In 2023, oil spill from the sunken motor tanker Princess Empress in Oriental Mindoro reached Verde Island, stoking concerns from advocates that the polluted waters could affect one of the country's primary marine reserves.

[Opinion] The link among population, climate change, and poverty

By: Atty Josephus Jimenez

Aside from geopolitics, world economic disruptions, and relentless changes, aside from wars and global realignment of forces, the overall climate of the planet earth determines the degree of happiness or unhappiness of the world's more than 8 billion people. The projected world population on January 1, 2024 is 8,019,876,189 or an increase of 75,162,541 people which is an increase of 0.95% compared to that of New Year 2023.

More people means more destruction of forests, more pollutants in rivers, lakes, and seas, and more pressure on the natural habitat as more and more humans share the land, the waters, the air, and the overall natural habitat. It also means more traffic, more housing congestion. It can result in more workers competing for less and less jobs and shrinking livelihood opportunities. If the income of a family remains constant because the size of the farms remain the same, that means less and less food for each member of a growing household. If a nation's economy remains the same or even gets smaller, while its population keeps rising, that could only mean lesser per-capita income and the quality of life suffers. This is, of course, the pessimists' point of view.

The optimists would argue that the more people there are, the more human resources could be tapped to create value and produce goods and services. I remember by late father who was an incurable optimist and who sired no less than 18 children with one woman, my late mother. Whenever I confronted my father about too many children while our house remained small, our cornfield remained the same in hectareage and production, he would always reprimand me and said: "Whenever a child is born, do not look at the mouth to be fed. Look at the hands and the feet, another warm body to help plow the fields, plant the corn and help build the nation." Well, I was a pessimist and a realist like my grandmother. Every time a child is born, the size of the farm should be expanded.

Let's look at the 15 most populated countries: India, with 1,428,627,663; China, 1,425,671,352; USA, 339,996,563; Indonesia, 277,534,122; Pakistan, 240,485,658; Nigeria, 223,804,632; Brazil, 216,422,446; Bangladesh, 172,954,319; Russia, 144,444,359; Mexico, 128,455,567; Ethiopia, 126,527,060; Japan, 123,294,513; Philippines (number 13), 117,337,368; Egypt, 112,716,598; and the Democratic Republic of Congo, 102,262,808. Among these 15 countries, only three can be considered, not poor: USA, Japan, and Russia. The poorest include Ethiopia, Bangladesh, Congo, Nigeria, and Pakistan. The poor countries are also those most hit by famine due to drought and other consequences of climate change.

In Bangladesh, the population density is 1,329 people per square kilometer, the highest in the whole world. Poverty incidence is also one of the highest there with people living

in subhuman conditions. This is also the country that is most often hit by flood and other natural calamities brought about by the devastation of the country's natural environment. India's population density is 481 and Pakistan's is 312. Contrast that to the USA which has only an average of 17 people per square kilometer. Russia has only nine people per square kilometer while China has 152. What is the population density of the Philippines? It is 394 which is very much higher than China, the US and Russia. Indonesia has only 153 and Japan 338.

You don't have to be a rocket scientist to figure out that the natural resources are shrinking and more and more people are competing for limited food, space, energy, air, and land. Life becomes more and more difficult as population increases and the weather gets warmer and warmer. The biggest problem is the uneven sharing of resources. Fewer and more powerful people are controlling the supplies while the vast majority of the powerless, marginalized, and voiceless poor continue to suffer in hunger and social injustices. Their only weapons of self-defense are terrorism, crimes, and war. Thus even the rich and the powerful are not secure. The world can explode when the suffering majority can no longer bear the pain of oppression and injustices.

There should be a better solution to the increasingly difficult existence on the planet earth. Humans should come together and reengineer the planet and change the overall paradigm of humanity. That or we all perish from our combined callousness and indifference.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

DAILY TRIBUNE

[Daunting task vs climate change](#)

Climate change remains one of the most pressing challenges facing the global community, posing a severe threat to ecosystems, economies, and human well-being.

The Philippines, an archipelagic nation vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, has established the Climate Change Commission to address these challenges. It faces a daunting task as the world intensifies its efforts to combat climate change.

Admittedly, the commission says there's plenty of work to be done in the context of the global efforts against climate change.

Without a doubt, climate change is no longer a distant threat; it is a present reality with far-reaching consequences. The Philippines, being highly susceptible to typhoons, sea-level rise, and extreme weather events, has experienced firsthand the devastating impacts of climate change. Rising temperatures, changing precipitation patterns, and the increasing frequency of extreme weather events demand urgent and decisive action.

The international community recognizes the need for coordinated efforts to mitigate climate change.

The Paris Agreement, a landmark accord adopted in 2015, brings countries together to limit global temperature rise below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.

Each participating nation is required to submit nationally determined contributions (NDCs) outlining their specific climate action plans. As a signatory to the Paris Agreement, the Philippines has committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and enhancing its resilience to the impacts of climate change.

Established in 2009, the CCC is the lead agency tasked with coordinating, monitoring, and evaluating climate change programs and policies in the Philippines. The commission is pivotal in aligning national strategies with international climate goals, ensuring a cohesive approach to climate action.

As the world intensifies efforts to combat climate change, the CCC faces a multifaceted agenda that includes policy development, mitigation measures, adaptation strategies, and international cooperation.

One of the primary tasks of the CCC is developing and implementing comprehensive climate policies. This involves creating frameworks integrating climate considerations into national development plans, energy policies, and disaster risk reduction strategies.

The commission must work collaboratively with various government agencies, the private sector, and civil society to ensure the effective implementation of these policies. Additionally, the CCC should regularly review and update existing policies to stay abreast of evolving climate science and global best practices.

Reducing greenhouse gas emissions is a critical component of global climate action. The CCC must spearhead initiatives to transition to a low-carbon economy, promote renewable energy sources, and enhance energy efficiency.

Implementing sustainable transportation solutions, reforestation projects, and waste management strategies are also essential in mitigating the country's contribution to climate change. Collaborating with industries to adopt environmentally friendly practices and technologies is crucial for achieving emission reduction targets.

Given the inevitability of some degree of climate change impact, the CCC must focus on developing robust adaptation strategies. This includes enhancing infrastructure resilience, implementing early warning systems, and promoting climate-smart agriculture.

The commission should likewise engage in community-based initiatives that empower vulnerable populations to adapt to changing climate conditions. Additionally, integrating indigenous knowledge and local expertise into adaptation plans can enhance their effectiveness and cultural relevance.

Climate change knows no borders; thus, global collaboration is imperative. The CCC must actively engage in international forums, negotiations, and partnerships to leverage support for climate initiatives. This involves participating in conferences, sharing best practices, and seeking financial assistance for climate projects. As a developing nation, the Philippines should also advocate for fair and just climate finance mechanisms that consider the unique challenges faced by countries with limited resources.

As the world grapples with the escalating impacts of climate change, the work of the Climate Change Commission in the Philippines becomes increasingly crucial. It must navigate the complex landscape of policy development, mitigation measures, adaptation strategies, and international cooperation to align the nation with global climate goals.

The challenges are formidable, but the urgency of the climate crisis demands unwavering commitment, innovation, and collaboration. The success of the CCC in

addressing these challenges will not only safeguard the future of the Philippines but will contribute significantly to the global fight against climate change.

SUNSTAR

[Globe, DENR honor environmental champions at 2023 Mga Kuwentong KLIMA-likasan Awards](#)

Globe partnered with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) for the second straight year to honor outstanding achievements of individuals, organizations, and local government units (LGUs) in environmental conservation, climate change adaptation and mitigation, and disaster risk reduction.

The “2023 Mga Kuwentong KLIMA-likasan Tungo sa Katatagan: A Climate and Disaster Resiliency Recognition Awards,” a joint initiative of Globe and the DENR Climate Change Service and Gender and Development Office, was held as part of the observance of the National Climate Change Consciousness Week to celebrate environmental stewardship and innovation.

The awards highlighted exceptional efforts to promote a sustainable lifestyle and net zero future. These initiatives, marked by strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and encourage sustainable resource use, played a key role in fostering awareness and inspiring collective responsibility.

"Recognizing the challenge posed by climate change globally, we understand the effort needed across all sectors to address it. Our individual winners and groups this year exemplify the level of diligence, innovative mindset and commitment it takes to make a real difference in what is perhaps the greatest challenge the world is facing right now," said Yoly Crisanto, Chief Sustainability and Corporate Communications Officer at Globe.

"We are committed to continuing our collaboration with all relevant stakeholders to amplify our contributions to climate action. It's through these collective efforts that we can develop effective solutions and ensure the successful attainment of our shared goals for a sustainable future."

In the Individual category, the top spot went to Paul Lester Dellosa, who established CICCADA, a fashion brand advocating for a waste-free environment by using scrap materials to make new clothes and other items. Meanwhile, Nida Collado, farmer and community leader, won second place and the Gender Equality, Women's Empowerment, and Climate Change Award for her leadership in forest protection in Palawan as part of the Macatumbalen Community-Based Forest and Coastal Management Association.

Perlito Cabautan, inventor and electronics technician, was presented with the Climate Technology for Resilience Award for his innovation called Nuvitron, an engine enhancement device that can potentially help reduce vehicle emissions.

The Group category was equally competitive. Sultan Kudarat State University claimed first place and the Climate Tech Award for its multifaceted climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction strategies, which include the deployment of technologies like automated weather stations, water quality monitoring systems, and geographic information systems (GIS).

In second place was the Hijo-MPA Seagrass Meadows of Trinity Project, which was recognized for its impactful conservation efforts of the marine protected area (MPA) in the Davao Gulf. On the other hand, the Compostela Elementary School - SPED Center received the Gender Award for its inclusive environmental programs involving a wide range of stakeholders.

The LGU category saw the City Government of Tagum winning first place and the Climate Tech Award for its innovative Reef Enhancement through Ecosystem Fortification (REEF) Project, which utilized GIS technology for conservation. The Provincial Government of Palawan placed second for its community-centered disaster risk reduction and management programs.

The Gender Award in this category went to the LGU of Kasibu, Nueva Vizcaya, for its comprehensive solid waste management program that integrates vermicomposting, recycling, and upcycling with significant women's involvement.

The panel of judges included Commissioner Rachel Herrera from the Climate Change Commission, Director Jose Harry Barber from the Department of National Defense-Office of Civil Defense, and Globe.

The ceremony not only honored the achievements of the awardees but also served as a reminder of the importance of collaboration in environmental conservation and climate action.

"As we celebrate these remarkable initiatives, we envision many more years of inspiring a sustainable movement for the well-being of future generations as there is still a lot of ground to cover, a lot of minds to enlighten, and a lot of innovative solutions to develop," said Director Elenida Basug of DENR Climate Change Service.

Globe acknowledges that effective climate action and environmental conservation demand involvement from all stakeholders. The company remains dedicated to fostering collective efforts such as KLIMA-likasan to encourage more people to make a clean, healthy and sustainable environment.

=END=