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CCC IN THE NEWS:

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BUSINESS WORLD

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By: Adrian Halili

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CCC cites role of youth in fight vs climate change
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The Climate Change Commission (CCC) underscored the role of the youth as future climate leaders and partners in building resilient communities as the Philippines continued to face the intensifying impacts of climate change.

Information and Knowledge Management Division

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The Philippines may face risks to funding for disaster preparedness and climate resilience programs following the US withdrawal from several international treaties, analysts said, warning that reduced participation by Washington in multilateral frameworks could weaken development assistance flows.

Chester B. Cabalza, founding president of Manila-based think tank International Development and Security Cooperation, said the US exit from international conventions could erode support for climate and humanitarian initiatives, areas where the Philippines has long relied on external assistance.

While Manila continues to benefit from strong defense ties with Washington, the US decision to step back from multilateral organizations "could reduce or remove international development aid, particularly for climate change and natural disaster response," he said in a Facebook Messenger chat.

US President Donald J. Trump this month issued a memo ordering the country's withdrawal from dozens of international organizations and treaties, many of which focus on climate change and environmental cooperation.

Among them is the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, a key global treaty aimed at addressing global warming, along with about 30 other UN-linked bodies and 35 non-UN groups.

Mr. Trump, at the start of his second term, also cut funding for several UN programs, including those supporting climate adaptation and disaster preparedness, raising concerns among aid-dependent countries vulnerable to extreme weather events.

The US Embassy in Manila did not immediately respond to a Viber message seeking comment.

Mr. Cabalza said Washington's retreat from multilateral institutions could signal a broader weakening of international norms, potentially allowing major and middle powers to sidestep established rules.

"This creates challenges for countries like the Philippines, which seeks to uphold international law and a rules-based order, particularly as a middle power," he said.

Manila has consistently stressed its commitment to international rules, especially in relation to its maritime disputes in the South China Sea.

Other analysts, however, said the immediate impact on the Philippines may be limited. Francis M. Esteban, associate dean at the Far Eastern University Institute of Arts and Sciences, said the country's core relationship with the US remains anchored on longstanding defense arrangements.

"As far as the Philippines is concerned, our bilateral relations with the US center on the Mutual Defense Treaty, so this move may not directly affect us," he said in a Facebook chat.

The 1951 Mutual Defense Treaty commits both sides to help each other in the event of an armed attack in the Pacific region.

Josue Raphael J. Cortez, a diplomacy lecturer at De La Salle-College of St. Benilde, said Manila should continue broadening its partnerships to reduce exposure to uncertainty arising from policy shifts by any single ally.

"This is important so the Philippines avoids overdependence, especially during a period marked by volatility and uncertainty," he said in a Messenger chat.

The Philippines has stepped up efforts to forge economic and defense agreements with other countries in recent years, aiming to diversify trade links and strengthen its capacity amid tensions in the South China Sea.

"At the same time, we will continue close collaboration with the US, as shown by the roughly 500 joint military activities slated for 2026, while also maintaining other alliances," he added.

Mr. Cortez also said Manila could use its bid for a nonpermanent seat on the United Nations Security Council to advocate continued support for climate and disaster-related agreements.

"It can use that platform to engage other nations, particularly in the Global South, to ensure these agreements continue to shape the international order," he said.

Elections for five nonpermanent Security Council seats are expected by mid-2026, with successful candidates serving two-year terms.

ECO BUSINESS

Adopting low-cost ‘healthy’ diets could cut food emissions by one-third

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In addition to the lower emissions, diets composed of low-cost, healthy foods would cost roughly one-third as much as a diet of the most-consumed foods in every country.

The study, published in Nature Food, compares prices and emissions associated with 440 local food products in 171 countries.

The researchers identify some food groups that are low in both cost and emissions, including legumes, nuts and seeds, as well as oils and fats.

Some of the most widely consumed foods – such as wheat, maize, white beans, apples, onions, carrots and small fish – also fall into this category, the study says.

One of the lead authors tells Carbon Brief that while food marketing has promoted the idea that eating environmentally friendly diets is “very fancy and expensive”, the study shows that such diets are achievable through cheap, everyday foods.

Meanwhile, a separate Nature Food study found that reforming the policies that reduce taxes on meat products in the EU could decrease food-related emissions by up to 5.7 per cent.

Costs and emissions

The study defines a healthy diet using the “healthy diet basket” (HDB), which is a standard based on nutritional guidelines that includes a range of food groups with the needed nutrients to provide long-term health.

Using both data on locally available products and food-specific emissions databases, the authors estimate the costs and greenhouse gas emissions of 440 food products needed for healthy diets in 171 countries.

They examine three different healthy diets: one using the most-consumed food products, one using the least expensive food products and one using the lowest-emitting food products.

Each of these diets is constructed for each country, based on costs, emissions, availability and consumption patterns.

The researchers find that a healthy diet comprising the most-consumed foods within each country – such as beef, chicken, pork, milk, rice and tomatoes – emits an average of 2.44 kilograms of CO2-equivalent (kgCO2e) and costs US$9.96 (£7.24) in 2021 prices, per person and per day.

However, they find that a healthy diet with the least-expensive locally available foods in each country – such as bananas, carrots, small fish, eggs, lentils, chicken and cassava – emits 1.65kgCO2e and costs US$3.68 (£2.68). That is approximately one-third of the emissions and one-third of the cost of the most-consumed products diet.

In comparison, a healthy diet with the lowest-emissions products – such as oats, tuna, sardines and apples – would emit just 0.67kgCO2e, but would cost nearly double the least-expensive diet, at US$6.95 (£5.05).

This reveals the tradeoffs of affordability and sustainability – and shows that the least-expensive foods tend to produce lower emissions, according to the study.

Dr Elena Martínez, a food-systems researcher at Tufts University and one of the lead authors of the study, tells Carbon Brief this is generally true because lower-cost food production tends to use fewer fossil fuels and require less land-use change, which also cuts emissions.

Ignacio Drake is coordinator of the fiscal and economic policies at Colansa, an organisation promoting healthy eating and sustainable food systems in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Drake, who was not involved in the study, tells Carbon Brief that the research is a “step further” than previous work on healthy diets. He adds that the study “integrates and consolidates” previous analyses done by other groups, such as the World Bank and the UN Food and Agriculture Organization.

Food group differences

The research looks at six food groups: animal-sourced foods, oils and fats, fruits, legumes (as well as nuts and seeds), vegetables and starchy staples.

Animal-sourced foods – such as meat and dairy – are typically the most-emitting, and most-expensive, food group.

Within this group, the study finds that beef has the highest costs and emissions, while small fish, such as sardines, have the lowest emissions. Milk and poultry are amongst the least-expensive products for a healthy diet.

Starchy staple products also contribute to high emissions too, adds the study, because they make up such a large portion of most people’s calories.

Emissions from fruits, vegetables, legumes and oil are lower than those from animal-derived foods.

The following chart shows the energy contributions (top) and related emissions (bottom) from six major food groups in the three diets modelled by the study: lowest-cost (left), lowest-emission (middle) and most-common (right) food items.

The six food groups examined in the study are shown in different colours: animal-sourced foods (red), legumes, nuts and seeds (blue), oils and fats (purple), vegetables (green), fruits (orange) and starchy staples (yellow). The size of each box represents the contribution of that food to the overall dietary energy (top) and greenhouse gas emissions (bottom) of each diet.

Prof William Masters, a professor at Tufts University and author on the study, tells Carbon Brief that balancing food groups is important for human health and the environment, but local context is also important. For example, he points out that in low-income countries, some people do not get enough animal-sourced foods.

For Drake, if there are foods with the same nutritional quality, but that are cheaper and produce fewer emissions, it is logical to think that the "cost-benefit ratio [of switching] is clear".

Other studies and reports have also modelled healthy and sustainable diets and, although they do not exclude animal-sourced foods, they do limit their consumption.

A recent study estimated that a global food system transformation – including a diet known as the "planetary health diet", based on cutting meat, dairy and sugar and increasing plant-based foods, along with other actions – can help limit global temperature rise to 1.85°C by 2050.

The latest EAT-Lancet Commission report found that a global shift to healthier diets could cut non-CO2 emissions from agriculture, such as methane and nitrous oxide, by 15 per cent. The report recommends increasing the production of fruit, vegetable and nuts by two-thirds, while reducing livestock meat production by one-third.

Dr Sonia Rodríguez, head of the department of food, culture and environment at Mexico's National Institute of Public Health, says that unlike earlier studies, which project ideal scenarios, this new study also evaluates real scenarios and provides a "global view" of the costs and emissions of diets in various countries.

Increasing access

The study points out that as people's incomes increase, their consumption of expensive foods also increases. However, it adds, some people with high income that can afford healthy diets often consume other types of foods, due to reasons such as preferences, time and cooking costs.

The study stresses that nearly one-third of the world's population – about 2.6 billion people – cannot afford sufficient food products required for a healthy diet.

In low-income countries, primarily in sub-Saharan Africa and south Asia, 75 per cent of the population cannot afford a healthy diet, says the study.

In middle-income countries, such as China, Brazil, Mexico and Russia, more than half of the population can afford such a diet.

To improve the consumption of healthy, sustainable and affordable foods, the authors recommend changes in food policy, increasing the availability of food at the local level and substituting highly emitting products.

Martínez also suggests implementing labelling systems with information on the environmental footprint and nutritional quality of foods. She adds:

“We need strategies beyond just reducing the cost of diets to get people to eat climate-friendly foods.”

Drake notes that there are public and financial policies that can help reduce the consumption of unhealthy and unsustainable foods, such as taxes on unhealthy foods and sugary drinks. This, he adds, would lead to better health outcomes for countries and free up public resources for implementing other policies, such as subsidies for producing healthy food.

Separately, another recent Nature Food study looks at taxes specifically on meat products, which are subject to reduced value-added tax (VAT) in 22 EU member states.

It finds that taxing meat at the standard VAT rate could decrease dietary-related greenhouse gases by 3.5-5.7 per cent. Such a levy would also have positive outcomes for water and land use, as well as biodiversity loss, according to the study.

GMA NEWS

Global warming intensifies PH's vulnerability to climate crisis, says group

Global warming is escalating the Philippines' vulnerability to the climate crisis, the international non-government organization 350.org said, as 2025 was recorded as the third-warmest year on record.

Citing a study of ClimaMeter, 350.org said warm sea surface temperatures made last year's Super Typhoon Ragasa 10 to 40 times more likely.

"Extreme weather is rapidly becoming the norm, and the poorest, most vulnerable nations that contributed least to the climate crisis are paying the price," Joanna Sta. Isabel, 350.org Asia Network Coordinator, said in a statement provided to GMA News Online.

She added that though the Philippines' per capita emissions are only a third of the global average, the country still has a responsibility to meet its climate commitments, including phasing out fossil fuels and tripling renewable energy by 2030.

According to think tank Ember, the Philippines relied on fossil fuels for 79% of its electricity in 2024 while its emissions per capita were just a third of the global average.

"It must transition to clean energy—fast and fairly. However, the shift to renewables must not replicate the exploitative model of fossil fuels, and must center on community ownership and participation," Sta. Isabel said.

She suggested that the country could join the 'coalition of the willing,' where over 80 countries o are charting a roadmap to transition away from fossil fuels.

"Within the UNFCCC (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change), it should demand that rich countries or historic polluters pay up to finance loss and damage and the transition to clean energy," Sta. Isabel said.

"It is the only way justice can be served to climate-vulnerable communities who suffer most," she added.

The data from the European Union's European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts (ECMWF) found that average temperatures have exceeded 1.5 degrees Celsius of global warming over three years from 2023 to 2025.

The hottest year on record was 2024.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Coffee eyed as climate shield for Bukidnon

The provincial government of Bukidnon is pushing for the widespread propagation of Arabica coffee as a key strategy for climate resilience and ecological restoration.

In the past days, the provincial government held a climate risk assessment in which Arabica coffee farming as livelihood support for poverty-stricken communities figured prominently.

During a recent three-day workshop that focused on “consequence scoring, risk ranking and adaptation options,” Gov. Rogelio Neil Roque emphasized that coffee offers environmental benefits that go beyond income generation for farmers.

“Coffee has a unique environmental advantage. Aside from its economic value, it is a sustainable species for reforestation in our upland ecosystems,” Roque said.

He said planting and nurturing Arabica coffee can help rehabilitate degraded areas within the Mt. Kalatungan and Mt. Kitanglad mountain ranges, while also supporting watershed protection and enhancing biodiversity.

The workshop served as a validation platform for climate risks affecting the Arabica coffee livelihood system and explored adaptive measures to help communities cope with climate-related threats.

The provincial government had set a target of developing 10,000 hectares of coffee farms throughout the province, especially in its deforested upland areas. The scale, according to Roque, will allow local growers to command a far better deal from the market.

Roque said that given its good market prospects, coffee is a sustainable crop to achieve not just economic but also environmental goals.

Support
Bukidnon’s coffee program had attracted the support of, among others, the Global Affairs Canada through its Governance for Climate and Disaster Resilience (Gov-CDR) initiative, and the European Union.

The Gov-CDR program aims to assist communities and local governments in developing systems for disaster risk assessment, mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery from climate impacts.

It is being implemented in six provinces nationwide, with Bukidnon among the pilot areas. Localities covered in Bukidnon include the cities of Malaybalay and Valencia, and the

municipalities of Lantapan, Libona, Maramag, Manolo Fortich, Quezon, Pangantucan and Talakag.

Provincial officials said the initiative underscored Bukidnon's efforts to align livelihood development with climate adaptation, positioning Arabica coffee as both an economic driver and a tool for environmental protection.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

Plastics everywhere, and the myth that made it possible

By: Issam Ahmed

If there's one material that defines modern life more than any other, it's plastic: present from the moment we're born in newborn stool, in product packaging, in the soil beneath our feet and the air we breathe.

Hard as it is to imagine, it wasn't always thus -- and doesn't have to remain this way, argues Judith Enck in her new book, "The Problem with Plastics."

"Half of all plastic ever produced was since 2007," the year the iPhone debuted, she told AFP in an interview.

"We have a fighting chance to reduce plastics because it's very much a contemporary issue."

Enck, a former senior environment official under Barack Obama, is clear-eyed about the challenges posed by the "rabidly anti-environmental" President Donald Trump.

Last year, the administration helped derail a global plastics treaty and reversed a phase-out of single-use plastics in national parks.

Nevertheless, she sees momentum building at the state and local level -- hailing, for example, New Jersey's "Skip the Stuff" law enacted this week, which requires restaurants to provide single-use cutlery only upon request, a measure shown to significantly reduce waste.

'Myth' of plastic recycling

Enck's book traces the history of plastic: from its earliest incarnation in 1909, when Belgian chemist Leo Baekeland invented Bakelite, through the "myth" of plastic recycling promoted by industry from the mid-20th century onward.

Along the way, Enck argues that responsibility for the crisis has been systematically shifted onto consumers, even as plastic production continues to soar.

"In the United States, only five to six percent of plastics actually get recycled," she notes. Unlike metal, paper or glass, consumer plastics are made up of thousands of different types, or polymers, making large-scale recycling economically unviable.

Early advertising campaigns helped popularize terms like "litterbug," while today the focus has shifted to "chemical recycling," promoted by industry as a way to break plastics down into their basic building blocks.

Dig deeper, though, and this too is a "false solution," Enck said: a report by the Beyond Plastics nonprofit she leads found just 11 such facilities handling about one percent of US plastic waste -- three of which have since shut down.

Around 33 billion pounds of plastic enter the ocean every year, "the equivalent of two large garbage trucks filled with plastic being dumped into the ocean every minute."

Microplastics, along with ultra-tiny nanoplastics, can kill or severely sicken marine life before entering the food web and ultimately ending up on our plates.

Research into the health effects is ongoing, and some findings are contested. But a 2024 study found that people with microplastics in their heart arteries face an increased risk of heart attack, stroke and premature death.

For those living in the shadow of the expanding petrochemical industry, the impacts of toxic emissions have long been felt. Nowhere is this more evident than Louisiana's "Cancer Alley," where cancer rates are seven times the national average.

"Our zip code is dictating our health, and plastics therefore are a major environmental justice issue, because these are communities of color and low-income communities," Enck said.

No to shaming

The recent surge in plastic production, she argues, is driven by a "glut" of gas generated since the mid-2000s by the hydraulic fracturing industry, which has sought new markets for its product even as it fuels climate change.

It may be easy to lose hope, but Enck says it is not too late to make a difference -- pointing to a twofold approach that combines personal action with collective pressure. Her book is replete with advice on how to organize, lobby local governments and advance model legislation.

While Enck would prefer consumers shop at stores that sell toiletry refills, ditch plastic coffee pods and take other steps, she acknowledges that such choices are not yet realistic for many people.

"I am not into plastic shaming," she said. "We don't have a lot of choice when we go to the supermarket, so you do the best you can. But what we really need is systemic change -- and what I mean by that is new laws that require less plastic."

CCC IN THE NEWS:

BUSINESS MIRROR

CCC highlights role of youth, SUCs in building resilient communities
By: Jonathan Mayuga

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While Sultan Kudarat is categorized under medium to low exposure to climate hazards based on the National Adaptation Plan (NAP), the province continues to experience intense heat and flooding, which directly affect communities and livelihoods.

“When floods hit Lambayong, Lutayan, and Palimbang, it is not statistics that suffer—it is families.

When drought affects Esperanza and Isulan, it is not reports that go hungry—it is the farmers,” CCC Vice Chairperson and Executive Director Robert E. A. Borje said in a statement.

“Statistics that suffer—it is families. When drought affects Esperanza and Isulan, it is not reports that go hungry—it is the farmers,” CCC Vice Chairperson and Executive Director Robert E. A. Borje said in a statement.

Borje stressed that climate change is no longer a distant or theoretical issue, but a lived reality for Mindanao communities—making education and youth participation critical to the country’s climate response.

With more than 15,000 students across seven campuses, SKSU was recognized as a strategic center of talent whose academic excellence can translate into meaningful climate action at the local level.

Borje encouraged students to become proactive contributors and problem-solvers, emphasizing that knowledge must lead to service.

“Ang talino ninyo ang magiging panangga ng bayan. Ang kaalaman ninyo ang magiging sandigan ng lalawigan. At ang puso ninyo ang magiging lakas ng Republika,” he said.
Your intelligence will be the shield of the nation. Your knowledge will be the foundation of the province. And your heart will be the strength of the Republic," he said.

Borje's pronouncement also highlights the role of state colleges and universities and higher education institutions in implementing the National Adaptation Plan, noting that adaptation efforts are built not only in policy spaces, but in classrooms, laboratories, farms, and communities.

Borje encouraged SKSU to further strengthen its role as a technical partner of local government units in developing climate-resilient solutions.

SKSU offers a wide range of academic programs aligned with the development priorities of the province, including agriculture, engineering, information technology, education, and health sciences.

Its growing academic excellence is reflected in the recent achievement of three SKSU graduates who topped the licensure examinations for nursing, education, and engineering—underscoring the university's impact in producing professionals vital to local development and resilience-building.

The event, which also marked SKSU's 16th University Day, recognized students who demonstrated academic excellence, perseverance, and commitment to service.

Present during the celebration were Governor Datu Pax Ali Mangudadatu, SKSU President Dr. Samson L. Mooa, Prof. Masrullizam Bin Mat Ibrahim, representative of Universiti Teknikal Malaysia Melaka, along with university officials, faculty members, and students.

THE MANILA TIMES

CCC cites role of youth in fight vs climate change

By: Catherine S. Valente

The Climate Change Commission (CCC) underscored the role of the youth as future climate leaders and partners in building resilient communities as the Philippines continued to face the intensifying impacts of climate change.

During the Academic Recognition and 16th University Day of Sultan Kudarat State University (SKSU), CCC Vice Chairman and Executive Director Robert Borje said that climate change is no longer a distant or theoretical issue but a reality for Mindanao communities making education and youth participation critical to the country's climate response.

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