



NEWS ROUNDUP

24 JANUARY 2023 [08:00 am]

- Marcos: Philippines to import more to deal with rising prices
- Philippines in nuclear push as power crisis looms
- Sheltertech startups building sustainability in Southeast Asia
- Changes will come slowly if I'm not DA chief — Marcos
- Global elites took 150+ private jets to fight climate change in Davos
- Cynthia Villar cites gains of having good, quality seeds
- THE GREEN TEA — Postcards from Egypt: Why the Philippines should lead in climate action
- PBBM brings home investment opportunities from Davos
- 'Subli' launched
- Trade chief echoes DTI's support to accelerate inclusive, sustainable development
- [Opinion] Both the sensible and bizarre emerge from Davos 2023

CCC IN THE NEWS:

- Environmental Advocates Hold #PlasticFreeSenate Campaign, Back Bill Banning Single-Use Plastics
- Senate bill renews call to ban single-use plastics

BUSINESS WORLD

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By: Kyle Aristophere T. Atienza

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CNN PHILIPPINES

[Changes will come slowly if I'm not DA chief — Marcos](#)

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FOX NEWS

[Global elites took 150+ private jets to fight climate change in Davos](#)

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MANILA BULLETIN

[Cynthia Villar cites gains of having good, quality seeds](#)

By: Mario Casayuran

Senator Cynthia A. Villar, chairperson of the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Food, exhorted the public and all concerned government agencies to continue supporting the local seed industry, saying it is the foundation of a productive agriculture.

[THE GREEN TEA — Postcards from Egypt: Why the Philippines should lead in climate action](#)

Pyramids, deserts, and mysteries may come to mind when one thinks of Egypt. But far from mystery, Egypt became the stage for direction and clarity as the world faces a climate emergency. As the venue of the 27th United Nations (UN) Climate Conference, or COP 27 in short, more than 40,000 heads of state, ministers, activists, scientists, and

citizens descended upon the “gift of the Nile” last November 2022 to negotiate terms for our collective future.

PHILIPPINE INFORMATION AGENCY

[PBBM brings home investment opportunities from Davos](#)

By: Kate Shiene Austria

QUEZON CITY (PIA) -- President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. is pleased to report that he was able to discuss at the World Economic Forum the Philippine Development Plan, the 8-Point Socioeconomic Agenda of his administration, and various other policies and legislations that led to the country’s sustained economic growth amidst the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and current global economic downturn.

SUNSTAR

['Subli' launched](#)

By: Charlene A. Cayabyab

CLARK FREEPORT—The local government unit (LGU) of Angeles City and Abacan River and Angeles Watershed Advocacy Council, Inc. (ARAW-ACI) have officially launched SUBLI 2023 environmental campaign at SM City Clark on January 23.

[Trade chief echoes DTI’s support to accelerate inclusive, sustainable development](#)

TRADE Secretary Fred Pascual emphasized the significance of sustainable development in the shared efforts of the Philippine industry to attain inclusive growth for all, during the Financial Executives Institute of the Philippines (Finex) Inaugural Meeting and Induction with a theme “Forging Ahead: Accelerating Inclusive and Sustainable Growth” held on January 23, 2023.

THE MANILA TIMES

[\[Opinion\] Both the sensible and bizarre emerge from Davos 2023](#)

By: Yen Makabenta

First view

I SCANNED long and hard the international media for instructive reports and insights into the recently concluded World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos, Switzerland. So important an assembly, which rivals the United Nations General Assembly in size and clout, deserves more than a routinary glance.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

[Environmental Advocates Hold #PlasticFreeSenate Campaign, Back Bill Banning Single-Use Plastics](#)

EcoWaste Coalition and its member organizations together with their allies commemorate the annual Zero Waste Month today, January 23, 2023, by holding the #PlasticFreeSenate campaign, which includes activities such as a photo exhibit, documentary screening of “Ang Huling Plastic” and “The Story of Plastic,” a zero waste bazaar, and a legislative forum on waste-to-energy. Such activities aim to amplify the call to ban single-use plastics (SUPs), unmask single-use plastic production issues, false solutions, as well as highlight zero-waste businesses and mainstream zero-waste solutions.

[Senate bill renews call to ban single-use plastics](#)

MANILA – As the country observes National Zero Waste Month and the 22nd anniversary of the Ecological Solid Waste Management (ESWM) Act this month, Senate President Pro Tempore Loren Legarda joined the Climate Change Commission (CCC) and environmental groups in lobbying for the urgent passage of a national regulation to ban single-use plastics.

Information and Knowledge Management Division

BUSINESS WORLD

Marcos: Philippines to import more to deal with rising prices

By: Kyle Aristophere T. Atienza

President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. on Monday vowed to address rising food prices this year by importing more, saying the country's record inflation keeps him up at night.

"That's what I lose sleep every night over — how to bring down inflation," he told a briefing streamed live on state television. "I'm determined to make sure that inflation starts to come down."

Mr. Marcos said rising food prices were "alarming," hinting at a government plan to import more.

"In the short term, the increasing prices of food products are alarming," he said. "Whatever we do, we must import. It's an emergency situation... Our production is well below our demand, therefore we must import."

Still, Mr. Marcos said boosting local production is the best way to improve the lives of Filipino farmers who have to deal with climate change. "Hopefully, down the road, we no longer have to worry about nontraditional supply because we'll be able to produce enough for ourselves."

Mr. Marcos said being Agriculture chief is advantageous because it allows him to deal with issues at the agency directly.

Philippine Inflation hit 8.1% in December, the fastest since November 2008. It averaged at 5.8% last year, above the central bank's 2-4% target.

Aside from prices, the Southeast Asian nation also has to deal with record debt, which hit P13.644 trillion at the end of November.

Mr. Marcos said rising debt should be outpaced by economic growth, which the World Bank expects to slow to 5.4% this year from an estimated 7.2% last year. "We will pull ourselves out of debt via growth."

The president went to Davos, Switzerland last week to attend the World Economic Forum. He said he would cut his foreign trips with state officials this year, citing the need to follow up on commitments his government had secured from previous trips.

Mr. Marcos said he would attend the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit in November in the United States.

“APEC again is one of those that...a Philippine president should have to attend because it is the relationship essentially between the Association of the Southeast Asian Nations, the Philippines, and the rest of the world.”

The Philippines also struggles with geopolitical tensions, including its sea dispute with China.

On Saturday, the Philippine Coast Guard said the Chinese Coast Guard had driven away a Filipino fishing vessel at the Second Thomas Shoal, which is within the Philippines' exclusive economic zone.

This was after Mr. Marcos earlier this month met with Chinese President Xi Jinping in Beijing, where they talked about the sea dispute.

The Philippines would continue to file diplomatic protests against China if needed, he said.

Philippines in nuclear push as power crisis looms

By: Ashley Erika Jose

IRA C. CONCEPCION, 17, founded the Youth for Nuclear last year to try to debunk the myths and misconceptions about nuclear energy and push its use amid a looming power crisis.

“It’s mostly the lack of information that makes Filipinos hesitant about nuclear power,” the senior high school student from the Ateneo de Manila University, who used to be against nuclear energy, said via Zoom. “We want to bring that information to them.”

The Philippines is facing a looming energy crisis as the Malampaya natural gas fields, which supply about a third of Luzon island’s energy needs, are expected to be depleted by 2024.

A rising population and some of the highest electricity costs in Southeast Asia present formidable energy production challenges for the country.

High electricity prices and the country’s heavy reliance on imported fuel pushed the Philippine government to revive plans to add nuclear energy to the country’s power mix despite safety warnings from environment experts.

President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. in his first address to Congress in July said it was time to reexamine state policy on nuclear energy.

In 2022, coal remained the country’s top energy source at 55%, followed by natural gas at 21%, geothermal at 10%, hydro at 8%, and at about 1% each for solar, wind, and biofuels and waste, according to the World Nuclear Association.

Energy Secretary Raphael P.M. Lotilla has said 80% of the country’s coal-fired power plants use imported coal.

In response to the 1973 oil crisis, the Philippines under the late president Ferdinand E. Marcos commissioned Westinghouse Electric Corp. to build the 621-megawatt electrical Bataan Nuclear Power Plant in the country’s west for \$1.9 billion (P104 billion).

It was completed in 1984 but was never commissioned due to safety and corruption concerns.

The nuclear plant became the target of anti-nuclear protests in the late 1970s and 1980s, criticized for being a threat to public health, especially since it was located in an earthquake zone connected to Mount Natib, a dormant Caldera Volcano in the province.

Critics have also raised health issues, reliance on imported uranium, high waste and the steep cost of decommissioning after Korea Hydro and Russia's Rosatom State Nuclear Energy Corp. submitted proposals in 2017 to rehabilitate the plant.

Aside from studying the feasibility of a nuclear power program including the revival of the Bataan plant, there are also proposals to build small modular reactors.

Pedro H. Maniego, Jr., a senior policy adviser at consultancy group Climate and Sustainable Cities, said nuclear power plants are the most "inflexible" and don't match the Philippines' energy demand profile.

But if the government really wants to push it, small modular reactors are the best option, he said in an e-mail, noting that these are "more flexible and can complement the needs of the grid." But it's a new technology with few units operating worldwide, he added.

In 2021 countries including Argentina, Canada, China, Russia and the United States were at the licensing stage to build small modular reactors, data from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) showed. There are more than 70 commercial designs being developed globally.

"More commercial information and viability data based on actual performance and costs are needed," Mr. Maniego said. "The Philippines should not be the testing ground for this new nuclear technology."

REVIVAL

Pangasinan Rep. Mark O. Cojuangco, who heads the House of Representatives Special Committee on Nuclear Energy, said that there's no reason to be afraid of nuclear power. "Regulations are in place," he said in a virtual interview.

But the country should rationalize regulation by setting up a Philippine Regulatory Atomic Authority, he said, adding that regulatory power should not be concentrated in the Philippine Nuclear Research Institute.

"We need an independent regulator," the congressman said. "All of the institute's regulatory powers should be transferred to this body. There is no need to amend

existing regulatory framework. Over the years we have established all the laws and regulations regarding ionizing radiation.”

The Philippines also has the Science Act of 1958, which was enacted to integrate and intensify scientific and technological research and development.

Mr. Cojuangco, who met with South Korean officials last month to seek help in reviving the Bataan plant, said the country’s high electricity costs stem from its reliance on imported fuel, whose prices are too volatile.

Government talks with South Korea had been on and off, he said, noting that the last offer to rehabilitate the plant stood at \$1.19 billion in 2017.

“With that amount, the return of investment will be easy,” he said in Filipino. “South Korea can facilitate the rehabilitation of the nuclear plant because they are the experts in this field. The amount might have to be fine-tuned. The Philippine and South Korean governments and the proponent — Korea Hydro & Nuclear Power Co. Ltd. — should coordinate.”

It may take a while before the Philippines fulfills its nuclear ambitions.

For one, it must conform to strict IAEA requirements including on safety, funding, regulation, emergency planning, nuclear waste management and environmental protection, Michael O. Sinocruz, officer-in-charge of the Energy department’s Energy Policy and Planning Bureau, said.

The country must also train workers to sustain the nuclear industry, Alvie Asuncion-Astronomo, an associate scientist at the Department of Science and Technology, told a forum last year.

Andrea Luz Nery, a senior research specialist at the Philippine Nuclear Research Institute, said there are plans to include nuclear research in the country’s high school program.

Ms. Concepcion, the student, thinks going nuclear is the only way to go for the Philippines to meet its rising energy needs.

“Nuclear power is reliable, cheap and clean,” she said. “It’s a very powerful thing.”

Sheltermtech startups building sustainability in Southeast Asia

By: Chelsey Keith P. Ignacio

As various issues continue to confront the housing sector, being able to live in a decent and sustainable home remains hard to attain by the general public. But, through innovation, some startups are improving access to such housing.

Over a billion people lived in urban slums in 2020, according to the United Nations (UN). The slum formation in developing regions is rooted in the shortfall in affordable housing options for low-income households, lack of housing finance, fast-paced urbanization and poverty, among many other reasons. By 2030, the UN estimated that three billion people would be in need of adequate and affordable housing.

“The summary of this is that the housing deficit is increasing around the world and is increasing in our region,” said Luis Noda, vice-president for Asia-Pacific (APAC) at Habitat for Humanity, during a conference held by the said global nonprofit last Jan. 16 in Makati City.

Living in the APAC region makes one also twice as likely to be affected by a natural catastrophe, according to Mr. Noda, and such disasters often mostly impact families residing in subpar housing.

Mr. Noda also noted that in several countries, the average housing-vulnerable person, or a person that could become homeless, is a woman 50 years or older.

“Vulnerable families are not only shocked by unachievable mortgage and financial income requirements. They are also unable to afford high-quality and durable building materials,” he added.

Mason Tan, director — Impact Investing at Providentia Wealth, also pointed out that local housing developers in Southeast Asia mostly build homes for the middle and upper classes in urban cities, and not for the poor.

He added that climate change has worsened the urgency of social housing issues in Asia.

“Imagine how the lack of a proper place to call home is affecting every member of the family, not just physically, but also emotionally, mentally, and spiritually,” Mr. Tan said.

Given these housing problems and their impacts on the people, particularly in Southeast Asia, innovations in housing services have been developed by some startups from the region to address such needs. This kind of innovation, being products and services that seek to make affordable housing more accessible, is called sheltertech.

“Sheltertech finds its niche in gathering innovations that can scale, streamline, digitize, or disrupt traditional housing services and generate social impact. At the center of this ecosystem, sheltertech startups leverage housing solutions as drivers of economic growth and equality,” Habitat for Humanity’s Mr. Noda said.

Habitat for Humanity’s recent conference, themed “Building a vibrant and investible sheltertech community in Southeast Asia,” brought together several sheltertech startups operating in Southeast Asia to showcase their housing-related innovations. Entrepreneur leaders and investors also joined the event. The conference was co-organized with innovation platform Plug and Play, startup incubator Villgro Philippines, Impact Pioneers Network, and the Manila Angel Investors Network.

The innovators

Climate change and the lack of proper housing are endeavored to be addressed by Malaysia-based startup Affordable Abodes. In building low-cost homes, the startup utilizes kenaf plants to manufacture bio-composites. Affordable Abodes calls its core technology KENAFCRETE. These are prefabricated structural wall panels, which are lighter, faster to build with, and save costs.

With a vision of creating homes that could address climate change, Singapore-based BillionBricks have built net-zero homes in the Philippines and India. One of the features of BillionBricks’ innovation is a utility-scale solar roof, which then does not need a sub-roof.

“We benefit the homeowners by making homeownership about 20% cheaper in terms of direct cash back and free electricity. To the property developer, we provide an opportunity to upgrade your real estate assets to be ESG (environmental, social, and governance)-compliant. For energy partners, renewable energy assets are unlocked closer to where the power is needed,” said Denis Lucindo, the startup’s managing director.

Also building sustainable homes in the Philippines is the CUBO Modular. This Manila-based startup, according to its Chief Executive Officer and Co-Founder Earl Forlales, seeks to address the challenge of building more houses fast without further

harming the environment. CUBO's modular house is built from engineered bamboo, which could be assembled in just a few days.

Beyond the construction itself, some sheltertech startups also developed services that people would need at home. In Cambodia, TapEffect is supplying clean and safe tap water to rural communities, which they could get at their own homes. By developing and operating its piped water systems, TapEffect seeks to address the lack of access to safe water in rural areas.

Social Light, meanwhile, brings connectivity to low-income communities. The Philippine-based startup does this by offering Wi-Fi to people in exchange for their plastic waste.

In Indonesia, Gradana provides a fintech peer-to-peer lending service focused on property-related financing. "We make it more affordable for people to get a more decent place to stay, whether to purchase, for renovating, or to renting," Gradana Co-Founder Angela Oetama said.

Another startup aiming to address the housing shortage is My Dream Home. Based in Cambodia, the startup creates interlocking bricks, which are composed of waste materials and abandoned soil bought from local farmers. By using its interlocking bricks, My Dream Home enables less cement use and labor in construction.

Meanwhile, in Myanmar, Pounamu is doing bamboo design and construction, as well as providing services dealing with sustainable bamboo forestry and bamboo treatment.

Sampangan, another startup in Indonesia, seeks to address two problems concerning housing: the lack of affordable housing materials and the lack of construction knowledge among the people, which leads to structurally unsafe housing, said Co-Founder and Chief Product Officer Hana Purnawarman.

Hence, while a waste processing company, Sampangan attends to shelter matters by creating raw materials that could be used for building construction. For construction, the startup is currently focused on activated carbon and light concrete foaming agent. These products together could make carbon concrete construction materials.

To date, Habitat for Humanity has supported more than a hundred startups across six accelerator programs.

CNN PHILIPPINES

Changes will come slowly if I'm not DA chief — Marcos

Metro Manila (CNN Philippines, January 23) — Until the Department of Agriculture (DA) is reorganized and all the boxes on his “bucket list” are ticked, President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. has yet to transfer control over the agency to a Cabinet secretary.

In a media interview on Monday, Marcos explained that the “multifaceted problems” in the agriculture sector could only be addressed faster if the president is the head of the DA.

“For me [in] DA, there really are things that I can do that if there was a secretary and he or she did it, magagawa pero matagal, madaming diskusyon [it will be done but it will be slow, there will be discussions],” he said.

“The President, they cannot say no to. And ‘pag hindi nila ginawa ‘yung utos ko, puwede kong sitahin [If they don’t do what I order, I can reprimand them],” he added.

Marcos earlier said that he would appoint a “full-time” agriculture secretary when he has all items on his “bucket list” ticked off, which include helping local farmers, adopting new crop varieties, and developing technology.

The most highlighted issue in the president’s list is local production. He stressed that local production remains the root of the agriculture sector’s problems.

“But we come back to the problem of production. Once I know that the value chain has already been put together — never mind that it is functioning yet, but we already know what needs to be done in each part of that value chain and we have the means and we have a plan — then, we will have a secretary who will then take my place and will implement that plan,” Marcos said.

The chief executive further said he still has to “restructure the bureaucracy” within the DA “for the simple reason that we are doing different things from what they were doing — what we were doing before.”

Sourcing non-traditional supplies to address climate change

As climate change remains an overarching issue in agriculture, Marcos said he is eyeing sourcing “non-traditional” supplies to address the country’s constantly changing weather and to help with local production.

He explained that non-traditional suppliers refer to having multiple sources of basic commodities or agricultural products that the country can resort to in times of need.

“With the shocks that have hit the global economy and with the supply chain problems that we see everywhere, then that is...something that we have to work around. And the way to do it is to have many sources of supplies so that whatever happens we have somewhere to go,” Marcos said.

“Hopefully down the road, in a few years, we no longer have to worry about non-traditional supply because we will be able to produce enough for ourselves,” he added.

The president also said he has already reached out to his counterparts in other countries regarding non-traditional supply.

FOX NEWS

[Global elites took 150+ private jets to fight climate change in Davos](#)

By: Thomas Catenacci

Business executives, celebrities, billionaires and government officials traveled to the World Economic Forum (WEF) summit last week largely using private jets, according to a Fox News Digital analysis of flight data.

During the conference, which began on Jan. 16 and concluded Friday, at least 150 private jets flew into three of the closest airstrips near WEF's headquarters in Davos, Switzerland, according to data obtained from flight tracking software Flightradar24. The data suggests that conference attendees spewed hundreds of thousands of pounds and thousands of metric tons of carbon as a result of their private jet usage.

"Europe is experiencing the warmest January days ever recorded and communities around the world are grappling with extreme weather events supercharged by the climate crisis," Klara Maria Schenk, a campaigner for environmental group Greenpeace International, said in a statement ahead of the conference.

"Meanwhile, the rich and powerful flock to Davos in ultra-polluting, socially inequitable private jets to discuss climate and inequality behind closed doors," she continued.

Private jet travel is by far the most carbon-intensive mode of transportation. They are about 10 times more carbon-intensive than commercial planes and 50 times more carbon-intensive than trains, according to a 2021 report from the group Transport & Environment.

The flight data broadly showed private jets traveling to the region from various cities around Europe and others from the U.S. and Asia.

For example, on Jan. 15, a Gulfstream G650 jet traveled from Salt Lake City, Utah, to Friedrichshafen Airport, a small airstrip two hours north of Davos. The nine-hour flight burned an estimated 44 metric tons of carbon, according to an emissions calculator created by the firm Paramount Business Jets.

Another long-distance private jet flight — from West Palm Beach, Florida, to Friedrichshafen Airport on a Bombardier Global 6000 jet on Jan. 16 — burned roughly 42 metric tons of carbon. And a four-hour flight on Friday from Baku, Azerbaijan, to St.

Gallen–Altenrhein Airport on the same model aircraft emitted about 23 metric tons of carbon.

By comparison, the average person worldwide has an estimated annual carbon footprint of four tons.

In addition, dozens of the private jet trips tracked by Fox News Digital were short-distance flights from bordering countries.

In one example, on Tuesday, an Embraer Phenom 300 jet traveled just 31 minutes from Milan, Italy, to St. Gallen–Altenrhein Airport. On Thursday, a Cessna 680A Citation Latitude flew 53 minutes from Prague, Czech Republic, to the same airport.

Other short-distance flights came from Buochs, Switzerland; Speyer, Germany; Frankfurt, Germany, Turin, Italy; Salzburg, Austria; Nice, France; Lyon, France and Cannes, France.

Meanwhile, the WEF conference's agenda focused largely on environmental issues like climate change and achieving net-zero ambitions. The conference's program highlighted the top priority as "addressing the current energy and food crises in the context of a new system for energy, climate and nature."

And several high-profile climate activists and officials, such as Special Presidential Envoy for Climate John Kerry and former Vice President Al Gore, attended the summit, imploring fellow attendees to double down on climate commitments.

"When you start to think about it, it's pretty extraordinary that we — select group of human beings because of whatever touched us at some point in our lives — are able to sit in a room and come together and actually talk about saving the planet," Kerry remarked on Tuesday. "I mean, it's so almost extraterrestrial to think about 'saving the planet.'"

While the three airports — St. Gallen–Altenrhein Airport, Samedan Airport and Friedrichshafen Airport — analyzed by Fox News Digital are popular airstrips for individuals traveling to WEF summits, previous studies of private jet travel to Davos have tracked flights into four additional airports including Geneva Airport and Zurich Airport, two major international travel hubs.

Such studies have determined that between 1,000-1,500 private jets traveled to all the surrounding airports near Davos during past WEF summits. In 2019, WEF responded to

criticism, acknowledging that attendees had taken about 500 jets to the summit that year, but said attendees were "taking the environmental impact of their travel more seriously."

"We have been offering incentives to participants to use public transport for some years," WEF said in a statement in January 2019. "We also ask that they share planes if they have to use them; something that has been gaining popularity in recent years."

WEF didn't respond to a request for comment.

MANILA BULLETIN

Cynthia Villar cites gains of having good, quality seeds

By: Mario Casayuran

Senator Cynthia A. Villar, chairperson of the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Food, exhorted the public and all concerned government agencies to continue supporting the local seed industry, saying it is the foundation of a productive agriculture.

“Continuous production and development of seeds is necessary because the availability of quality seeds are the key to successful farming,” Villar said during the 5th National Seed Summit at Great Eastern Hotel Aberdeen Court Exterior in Quezon City.

“In return, quality seeds results to increased production and income for the farmers,” added Villar in the summit initiated by the Bureau of Plant Industry – National Seed Industry Council (BPI- NSIC) with the theme, “Sustaining the Gains of the Seed Industry towards Productivity and Food Security”.

The event aims to gather stakeholders in the seed sector such as farmers, seed growers, seed dealers and technical experts to discuss issues confronting the seed industry.

In her speech, Villar also cited the UN – Food and Agriculture Organization, which stated that seed system is one of the pillars of agricultural development and food security.

“They make an important contribution to ensure and support food security and nutrition. Good seeds play an important role in maintaining the resistance to pests, diseases and climate change,” she stressed.

Villar said this is reason why in the 2023 national budget deliberation, she pushed for additional P100 million budget for the Bureau of Plant Industry. (BPI).

The additional funding , she said, would bankroll the development of the 5 BPI Centers located in Baguio and Los Baños, Laguna in Luzon, La Granja, Negros Occidental and Guimaras in Visayas, and Davao in Mindanao.

She said this would capacitate the centers to develop quality seeds of vegetable and fruit varieties and teach the seed growers to promote them to other farmers.

Furthermore, the lady lawmaker mentioned Republic Act (RA) 7308, or the Act to promote and develop the seed industry in the Philippines and create a National Seed Industry Council which shall have the direct responsibility for the production distribution and regulation of breeder, among others.

The law also provides that UP Los Banos shall provide leadership in plant biotechnology activities. The Philippine Rice Research Institute (PHILRICE) shall develop an appropriate rice variety designed under Philippine conditions and propagate them.

The Board of Investment (BOI) shall promulgate necessary rules for the development of the seed industry while the private sector of the seed industry shall direct their collective efforts towards an increased and more active cooperation and coordination with the government agencies.

Farmers' organizations shall take active part in the conservation of the plant genetic resources of the nation.

[THE GREEN TEA — Postcards from Egypt: Why the Philippines should lead in climate action](#)

Pyramids, deserts, and mysteries may come to mind when one thinks of Egypt. But far from mystery, Egypt became the stage for direction and clarity as the world faces a climate emergency. As the venue of the 27th United Nations (UN) Climate Conference, or COP 27 in short, more than 40,000 heads of state, ministers, activists, scientists, and citizens descended upon the “gift of the Nile” last November 2022 to negotiate terms for our collective future.

What made this COP special? Branded as the “Implementation COP,” it was going to be focused on action rather than talk. For the first time in its history, there was going to be a Youth Pavilion, where youth-focused organizations can hold discussions and showcase their projects on the sidelines of the negotiations. “Loss and Damage” became part of the formal agenda for the first time as well — where countries most affected by the climate crisis would finally be compensated by those who have accelerated our predicament.

Filipinos have borne the brunt of this crisis, to say the least. The 2022 World Risk Index report ranked the Philippines as the country most exposed and most vulnerable to natural hazards.

In this fight against the climate crisis, advancing civil society action is key — we are already taking action to prevent, minimize, and repair climate losses and damages, but it’s nowhere near the necessary scale. To this end, my sister Ann, who is a managing trustee at the Masungi Georeserve Foundation and a National Geographic Explorer, was invited to share her experience at COP 27 by no less than the UN Climate Action High-Level Champions Dr. Mahmoud Mohieldin and Nigel Topping.

This was our first live participation at a UN Climate Conference and one that we knew was a rare opportunity to share our story on mobilizing civil society to restore forests. It is one of the most cost-effective ways of mitigating climate change (the conference, in the past, has been known to spare little space for civil society).

For the last five years, we have been working on a project to reforest degraded watershed areas around the Masungi limestone formations in Rizal in what we call the “Masungi Geopark Project.”

Our key message: “To my fellow civil society actors here in COP, we are not mere observers, not in this COP and certainly not in global climate action. We are the

co-captains of this ship that we are all in — a ship that is in danger of sinking more and more from unfulfilled promises. The faster we and the government can recognize that we are drivers, not observers, the faster we can go past the illusion of progress, and elevate and accelerate solutions for a just and immediate climate action.

If Masungi Georeserve, an organization with a humble beginning but enormous determination and conviction can do this, imagine what could be accomplished by civil society and the big organizations with their influence, resources, and power. Imagine what government leaders and genuine advocates can do together.”

Our message was simple but powerful: we can survive tomorrow but only if we do it together. Our participation, and those of many other Filipino advocates at COP 27, reminded me that as with many things, our greatest struggle can also be our greatest opportunity.

With an average of 20 typhoons a year, the Philippines could become the world’s expert in disaster management and resilience. We are one of the most biodiverse countries in the world — we are best positioned to be a leader in working models of nature-based solutions like reforestation and rewilding. Having the highest social media usage in the world as well, Filipino movements and campaigns that change the status quo could serve as a benchmark for others.

Because the impacts of climate change are felt here more than in other areas of the world, climate action should form our national identity and inform our national priorities. Taking the lead in climate action and negotiating for compensation is imperative to our nation’s survival.

No less than President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. has already spoken about climate justice in his international engagements. It is now critical to follow through on this and build an effective culture of climate justice and environmental conservation in the entire government and citizenry.

However, climate action is nothing without empathy. Amid all the talk, news, research, and debates, our compassion for people most affected by stronger typhoons, displacement, and harassment from environmentally destructive interests should be at the heart of our efforts.

One person reminds me of leadership and empathy.

Standing out in a park ranger's uniform in an ocean of people in suits, Ann and I met Carlos Manuel Rodriguez in Egypt in 2018 during the UN Biodiversity Conference. He is famous for being the Costa Rican environment minister who reversed deforestation in his country.

While handing my sister Ann and me one of our first international recognitions, he whispered, "Promise me you won't give up no matter what," as if knowing what lies ahead for young conservationists like us. Four years later, Ann met Carlos Manuel again during COP 27. He said to her, "I hope you have good news for me!" She began to tell Carlos about our project's pits and peaks in recent years. Ann smiled knowing that we kept our promise to Carlos four years ago — we did not give up, and we never will.

PHILIPPINE INFORMATION AGENCY

[PBBM brings home investment opportunities from Davos](#)

By: Kate Shiene Austria

QUEZON CITY (PIA) -- President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. is pleased to report that he was able to discuss at the World Economic Forum the Philippine Development Plan, the 8-Point Socioeconomic Agenda of his administration, and various other policies and legislations that led to the country's sustained economic growth amidst the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and current global economic downturn.

During his 5-day productive travel to Davos, the Chief Executive was also able to articulate in several discussions about the budget, strategies, policies, programs, and projects for climate-resilient infrastructure and the flagship "Build Better More" of his administration. He also emphasized the country's active policies toward public-private partnerships and other forms of collaboration in infrastructure.

President Marcos Jr. then highlighted the effort of his administration to develop various sectors.

"I also drew attention to the Philippines' work across trade and investment, monetary and fiscal policies, food and energy security, climate action, structural reforms, digitalization, public-private partnerships, health and nutrition, education, and other social services," the President said.

World Economic Forum (WEF) President Børge Brende lauded the Philippines during a one-on-one dialogue with the President for its high gross domestic product (GDP) growth, surpassing other countries in Southeast Asia.

In his opening remarks during the Panel Session on "Moving Towards Nutrition Security", President Marcos Jr. raised the idea of using climate-resilient technologies and promoting urban and vertical farming to enhance food production.

The President reiterated that food security remains at the forefront of the national agenda, envisioning a resilient and secured Philippines by 2040. He underscored the country's efforts in achieving this in the midst of global food and energy shortage, stressing that government spending will be redirected at boosting the agricultural sector.

The Chief Executive also had the opportunity to promote the proposed Philippine sovereign wealth fund or known as the 'Maharlika Investment Fund' (MIF). He consulted

other executives on how to efficiently and strategically manage the potential investments that would be most advantageous for the Philippines.

Around 1,000 of the world's largest companies are members of the World Economic Forum (WEF) with the aim of contributing to the betterment of the world state. The President was fortunate to meet with some key executives of these companies such as DP World, Glencore, and Morgan Stanley which will open an office in the Philippines.

At the sideline of the forum, the president also had the opportunity to meet and exchange views with a few leaders of countries and organizations, such as WTO Director-General Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, World Bank Managing Director for Operations Axel Van Trotsenburg, IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva, and former UK Prime Minister Tony Blair to push for common priorities and support the multilateral trading system to benefit all.

“The trip has yielded beneficial outcomes relative to new trade and investment opportunities, and key partnerships forged to support our development program, a better appreciation for Filipino workers and professionals, and the promise of an increased level of cooperation with various countries around the world,” President Marcos Jr. said.

World Economic Forum Founder and Chairman Emeritus Klaus Schwab and President Marcos Jr. further discussed partnerships and collaboration to help the Philippines sustain equitable and inclusive growth and provide for a better quality of life for Filipinos.

According to the country's economic team, the President's sharing of the country's interest in the forum with businessmen and fellow world leaders was effective following the declaration of several investors to invest in the Philippines, particularly in the mining sector, transportation, logistics hubs, and operations of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs).

“This trip is fairly unique for the medium to long-term goodwill and interest we have generated for our country, our enterprises, and our people. Through the multi-stakeholder platform provided by World Economic Forum, the Philippines is able to articulate and exchange views on pressing issues that impact the lives and livelihood of all Filipinos,” he said.

Wrapping up his successful participation in the WEF, President Marcos met with the Filipino community at a gathering in Zurich, Switzerland. He commended the overseas Filipino workers for their hard work and dedication citing their important role in keeping

the economy afloat even during uncertainties as they send billions of dollars in remittances to the Philippines annually.

Switzerland is host to around 14,000 Filipinos, including those who hold dual citizenship.

SUNSTAR

'Subli' launched

By: Charlene A. Cayabyab

CLARK FREEPORT—The local government unit (LGU) of Angeles City and Abacan River and Angeles Watershed Advocacy Council, Inc. (ARAW-ACI) have officially launched SUBLI 2023 environmental campaign at SM City Clark on January 23.

SUBLI 2023 is a whole-year information and education campaign (IEC).

SUBLI, a Kapampangan acronym which stands for Subli ing Upaya, Bie, at Lugud king Indung Gabun.

Renato "Abong" S. Tayag Jr, ARAW-ACI president, said the integrated environmental drive aims to create massive awareness about water security, reforestation, climate change action, and the rehabilitation and development of the Angeles Watershed in Barangay Sapangbato.

Tayag added that the campaign will feature face-to-face public events and activities, traditional and social media information drive, and a school caravan.

The events are Botanical and Art Exhibit on January 23-February 6 (SM City Clark Events Center), Film-showing on January 23-29 (SM City Clark Cinema 6), Pasarela Fashion Show on January 28 (SM City Clark Events Center), Earth Day Concert on April 22, and a caravan to 50 public and private schools in Angeles City from February 3-August 30.

The school caravan will be conducted in cooperation with the Department of Education (DepEd) Angeles City.

Tayag added that the media information drive will start on February 1 and will run until November 30.

“The main target of SUBLI 2023 is the youth. We want to bridge the advocacy to our children and grandchildren because they are the future of Angeles City and Pampanga. They are the future leaders and decision-makers. What we do right now at the Angeles Watershed is intended for the next generations,” Tayag said.

ARAW-ACI and the Angeles LGU have partnered for the rehabilitation of the city watershed in 2019. Under the watershed rehabilitation project, ARAW-ACI introduced the Adopt-A-Watershed Reforestation Program (AWRP)

The group has been encouraging private sector groups to adopt planting sites at the city watershed and help maintain the sites for three years.

ARAW-ACI is working with 12 private sector partners under the AWRP.

“We were able to implement AWRP and now SUBLI 2023 because we have the full support of the Angeles City Government led by Mayor Carmelo Lazatin Jr. and Vice Mayor Vicky Vega-Cabigting. We extend our sincerest gratitude to them and also to the Chief Adviser to the Mayor Ma’am IC Calaguas,” Tayag said.

During the launching, ARAW-ACI and the Angeles City LGU awarded plaques of recognition to the AWRP partners including Converge ICT Solutions, Inc., Pampanga Press Club (PPC), Porac Bank, Philippine Academy of Family Physicians (PAFP) Angeles City, Holy Family Academy Batch ‘80, Scrubbed.Net, De La Salle Alumni Association (DLSAA) Pampanga Chapter, Rotary Club of Angeles Kuliat, Jocson College, Balibago Waterworks Systems, Inc. (BWSI), DKL Manufacturing Corp. and Angeles City Water District (ACWD).

The grand prize winners of SUBLI 2023 Documentary Film/Video and Songwriting contests were also recognized during the program.

The top winners for the documentary film/video category are Mhonsour Sunga, Russel Montalban, and Angelica Mamangun with their work titled “Tara, Share Tayo”.

Nino L. Vitto bagged the top prize in the songwriting competition for his song “Inang Kalikasan”.

Bishop Pablo Virgilio “ Ambo” David, president of the Catholic Bishop Conference of the Philippines (CBCP), was the guest of honor and speaker.

In his video message, he emphasized the importance of SUBLI to the advocacy for environmental protection and climate change action.

Participating visual artists to the Art Exhibit were also cited for their valuable contribution to the campaign.

They are Abel de Luna, Andy Ramos, Aurelio De Guzman, Bernadette Tiotuico, Minerva Arceo, Billy Corcuera, Derick Maniego, Edwin Catli, Enrie Nicdao, Erwin Torio, Heidi Macabenta, Iwag Pallatao, Jing Torno, Jojo La Madrid, Ramil Tumampos, Dr. Vittorio Pantig and Norman Tiotuico, the SUBLI 2023 Art Exhibit Director.

One of the official SUBLI 2023 infomercials was also shown during the program.

The infomercials are projects of the ARAW Youth Ambassadors led by Chito Arceo Jr., ARAW Youth president. These infomercials will be aired in two radio stations and three regional TV stations this year.

[Trade chief echoes DTI's support to accelerate inclusive, sustainable development](#)

TRADE Secretary Fred Pascual emphasized the significance of sustainable development in the shared efforts of the Philippine industry to attain inclusive growth for all, during the Financial Executives Institute of the Philippines (Finex) Inaugural Meeting and Induction with a theme “Forging Ahead: Accelerating Inclusive and Sustainable Growth” held on January 23, 2023.

“Our premise is that to build a more competitive economy, we must enable inclusive and sustainable industrial development. Science, technology, and innovation (STI) define DTI’s industrialization policy,” Pascual said.

STI is essential in transforming Philippine industries, allowing them to be more competitive in domestic and export markets. With the promotion of a globally competitive industry, generating more jobs will pave the way for the achievement of shared prosperity for all, he added.

Pascual also mentioned that to facilitate industrial transformation, the Philippines focuses on four industrial clusters that are also seen as sources of growth: Industrial, Manufacturing, and Transport (IMT); Technology, Media, and Telecommunication (TMT); Health and Life Science (HLS); and Modern Basic Needs and Resilient Economy (MBNRE).

These clusters will allow the country to upgrade, diversify, and reposition its Global Value Chain (GVC) participation.

Alongside its aim to promote GVC participation, advancing sustainable development will also require a transition to renewable energy sources.

Being a part of the global community, the current administration recognizes the need to prioritize climate change mitigation. Hence, President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.'s recent State Visit to China focused on gathering investment pledges in the field of renewable energy (RE).

Aside from this, DTI’s aim to strengthen the role of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) has become more evident with the strategic initiatives of upgrading, upskilling, and upsizing MSMEs by launching Negosyo Centers that serve as mentoring hubs for MSMEs.

In terms of financial assistance, DTI, in partnership with the Small Business Corporation (SBCorp), has launched Pondo sa Pagbabago at Pag-asenso (P3) to assist small enterprises in their recovery from the effects of the pandemic.

The department is also keen on ushering the digital transformation of MSMEs, enabling them to reduce operational costs and reach larger markets.

"With these strategic directions and initiatives, the DTI is positioned to contribute to accelerating inclusive and sustainable growth. In attaining the government's industrial transformation agenda, we will rely on active collaboration among government, industry, academic and training community, and development partners," said Pascual.

With this, he acknowledged the importance of continuous collaboration between various sectors of the society to accelerate inclusive development.

He also stressed the importance of connecting communities to widen the network of our industries by connecting them to broader ecozones and logistic hubs. Diversifying trade centers across the country will allow more balanced growth for urban and rural communities. The establishment of Regional Inclusive Innovation Centers (RIICs) will ensure that industrial development will reach the grassroots.

The Finex Inaugural Meeting and Induction was also attended by 2023 Finex Foundation Chairman Michael H. Guarin, 2023 Finex president Wilson P. Tan, 2023 Finex Academy chairman Francisco Ed Lim, and former Finex president Jose Jerome R. Pascual III.

THE MANILA TIMES

[\[Opinion\] Both the sensible and bizarre emerge from Davos 2023](#)

By: Yen Makabenta

First view

I SCANNED long and hard the international media for instructive reports and insights into the recently concluded World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos, Switzerland. So important an assembly, which rivals the United Nations General Assembly in size and clout, deserves more than a routinary glance.

Key takeaways

In its wrap-up of Davos 2023, Reuters summarized what emerged from the frank exchange of views over how the world can tackle the biggest issues in 2023:

Economy: Gloom and doom heading into Davos turned into cautious optimism by the end with the global economic outlook for the year ahead looking better than feared.

But the WEF's annual meeting was filled with discussion of plenty of risks, including inflationary pressures from China's reopening and rising debt distress in the developing world.

"Things are not great, but they are much better than they could have been." – Daniel Pinto, JP Morgan's (JPM.N) president and chief operating officer.

Ukraine: For Ukraine's allies, Davos was all about doubling down on better weapons and financial support for Kyiv to defend itself against Russia. Outside the West though, fears of an economic downturn highlighted global divisions as some delegates encouraged a quick return to the negotiating table.

"This week listening to the politicians, I was surprised in a way because I got the feeling that no-one really knows exactly where we are heading and what the solutions can be." – Tanja Fajon, Slovenia deputy prime minister and foreign minister.

"If we want a negotiated peaceful solution tomorrow, we need to provide more weapons today." – NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg.

Trade: Be careful of friendshoring, warned the World Trade Organization's Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala as the Big 3 trading powers of the United States, Europe and China pushed their new industrial policies.

What was not clear was how the rest of the world fits in to new trade policies that protect workers and redefine supply chains.

"This becomes a rich-country game, right? We can subsidize this, you can subsidize that — what about the poor countries, who have limited fiscal room? They get left out in the cold." – Raghuram Rajan, former governor of the Reserve Bank of India.

Climate: The carbon crowd received a warm reception as the renewable industry rubbed shoulders with Big Oil executives. Awash with cash after a year of high oil prices, fossil fuel producers have the firepower to invest in green energy. But efforts on CEO green pledges and climate financing appeared sluggish.

"How do we get there? The lesson I have learned in the last years ... is money, money, money, money, money, money, money, money, money, money." – US climate envoy John Kerry on meeting the Paris Agreement's global warming target.

Davos juxtaposed the energy industry's potential and peril.

Businesses are "under enormous cost pressure. They need to find ways to do the same things cheaper." – Alex Karp, CEO of Palantir Technologies

China: China declared itself open for business in a speech by Vice Premier Liu He that was broadly welcomed but also raised inflationary fears and left people waiting to see what this would mean for existing tensions with the United States.

"The growth forecast now for China is 4.5 percent. I would not personally be surprised when that would be topped." – Credit Suisse Chairman Axel Lehmann

Inflation Reduction Act: Dubbed a game changer for climate change by IEA head Fatih Birol, the Europeans had plenty to gripe about when it came to America's Inflation Reduction Act.

The European Union said it would mobilize state aid and a sovereignty fund to keep firms from moving to the US.

Financial service: Global financial institutions are grappling with how to right-size for a slowdown, while dealing with a host of other headwinds. With the threat of inflation still hanging over central banks, financiers are facing demands from regulators for higher capital levels to prepare for a downturn, making some businesses unprofitable.

"We shall stay the course until such a time when we have moved into restrictive territory for long enough so that we can return inflation to 2 percent in a timely manner." – Christine Lagarde, IMF
Insanity on display?

Issues and Insights took a dim view of what happened in Davos in an editorial on January 20, titled, "Insanity on display":

"John Kerry, former senator, former secretary of state, and now chief climate alarmist for the Biden administration, said in so many words Tuesday during his World Economic Forum rant that it's too late to save the planet from global warming. Yet he claimed climate programs still need more "money, money, money, money, money, money, money." The only reason he's not the worst person in the world is because he had so much competition at Davos.

What Kerry actually said was that he is "not convinced we're going to get there in time to do what the scientists said, which is avoid the worst consequences of the crisis," meaning that he doubts that the global temperature will stay under the cap of 1.5 degrees Celsius above the pre-industrial temperature set by scientists (though it is actually a random figure with no scientific support).

Yet he continues to crusade for a cause that hopes to strip Westerners of both their wealth — yes, he said "money" seven times — and freedom to move about.

With absolutely zero self-awareness, the man who flies in private jets, has multiple homes (which most of us would consider mansions) and more cars than most families, and up until a few years ago owned a yacht, preached about "the way we live," and thundered against "the incredible sort of destructive process of growth the way we interpret it." He called it "robber-baron growth."

But his luxurious lifestyle and those of the other wealthy men and women fighting global warming must be OK, because he assured members of his fawning audience that they are all special, "a select group of human beings" who "are able to sit in a room and come together and, uh, actually talk about saving the planet."

No less nauseating was the performance of another failed US presidential candidate, Al Gore, the mother of the global warming cult. He came off like the crazy uncle that the family tries to keep away from the outside world. Author and columnist Michael Walsh said that Gore is a man who appears to need help. During his tirade, Gore gesticulated "wildly, his face reddening, his voice rising," said Walsh. "The former vice president of the United States became a man in the deadly grip of a panicked, violent, superstitious reaction to ... the weather."

Kerry and Gore were not the only dastards in Davos. Nor is the global warming scare the lone weapon the elites are using to exercise greater control over humanity. The unelected of the WEF are eager to push the world toward a universal collectivist state that would be held down under their boot and funded by a global tax. They would stamp out free speech, crush dissent, and quash privacy."

Plot vs free speech

Washington Post columnist James Bovard denounced an even more sinister turn, a plot by the Davos crowd to curtail freedom of speech and the press, He wrote:

"If you expect billionaires and political weasels to save the Earth, then you'll love the World Economic Forum at Davos, Switzerland. The Swiss government assigned up to 5,000 Swiss troops to protect its attendees — except from prostitutes charging them \$2,500 a night. Self-worship is obligatory in Davos.

"John Kerry, Joe Biden's special climate envoy, hailed his fellow attendees as 'extraterrestrial' for their devotion to saving the Earth. Never mind that they all flew there on private jets.

"WEF is whooping up the 'Great Reset' — 'building back better' so that economies could emerge greener and fairer out of the pandemic.'

"But people around the globe are still recovering from the last time WEF stampeded policymakers. 'WEF was hugely influential, championing every form of Covid control from lockdowns to vaccine mandates,' observed Jeffrey Tucker, president of the Brownstone Institute.

"Freedom of speech is the greatest barrier to inflicting the Great Reset. Accordingly, the biggest peril the self-proclaimed 'Global Shapers' are targeting is 'The Clear and Present Danger of Disinformation.'

"WEF is calling for a 'Global Framework To Regulate Harm Online.'

"The star of the panel was New York Times publisher A.G. Sulzberger, who proclaimed that disinformation is the 'most existential' of 'every other major challenge that we are grappling with as a society.' Sulzberger boasted.

"When we make mistakes, we acknowledge them in public and we correct them.' Except for RussiaGate, its 1619 Project fairy tale, and a few dozen other howlers. Former New York Times editor Jill Abramson slammed the Times for being part of the Davos 'corrupt circle-jerk.'

"The Davos pro-censorship fervor was epitomized by panelist Vera Jourová, European Commission vice president. She declared that the US 'will have soon' laws prohibiting 'illegal hate speech' like Europe has.

"WEF 's 'Global Framework To Regulate Harm Online' means worldwide censorship. But the WEF offers one of the best illustrations of how denunciations of 'disinformation' are self-serving shams.

"This bizarre notion was no WEF aberration. Last July, WEF proposed slashing ownership of private vehicles around the globe. And then there was the WEF pitch to save the planet by having people eat insects instead of red meat.

"According to WEF, individual freedom is a luxury that citizens can no longer afford. Would-be tyrants can always find lofty pretexts to enchain their victims. Yes, John Kerry, you are extraterrestrials — from one of those movies where the aliens try to conquer the Earth."

CCC IN THE NEWS:

[Environmental Advocates Hold #PlasticFreeSenate Campaign, Back Bill Banning Single-Use Plastics](#)

EcoWaste Coalition and its member organizations together with their allies commemorate the annual Zero Waste Month today, January 23, 2023, by holding the #PlasticFreeSenate campaign, which includes activities such as a photo exhibit, documentary screening of “Ang Huling Plastic” and “The Story of Plastic,” a zero waste bazaar, and a legislative forum on waste-to-energy. Such activities aim to amplify the call to ban single-use plastics (SUPs), unmask single-use plastic production issues, false solutions, as well as highlight zero-waste businesses and mainstream zero-waste solutions.

The group kicks off the week with a photo exhibit that illustrates the alarming state of plastic pollution in the Philippines. The exhibit showcases the works of veteran photojournalists and green activists in the country today.

They also pledged support for Senator Loren Legarda’s Senate Bill 246, also known as the Single-Use Plastics Regulation and Management Act of 2022, a new step toward a comprehensive and national ban on single-use plastics with the following salient points:

Coverage: Shall apply to the manufacture, importation, use, recycling, and disposal of all SUPs used in business, retail, and consumer transactions.

Effectivity: After one year from the Act’s effective date, all businesses must phase out SUPs sold to consumers.

Incentives for reuse: Consumers who bring their own reusable or recyclable containers will receive a P50 discount on food and beverage takeouts.

Incentives for industries: Industries switching to alternatives will receive incentives from the Philippine Cooperative Code of 2008, the Barangay Micro-Business Enterprises Act of 2002, the Magna Carta for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises, the Omnibus Investment Code of 1987, or the Green Jobs Act of 2016.

Public Participation: Citizens suit for the purpose of enforcing the provisions and implementing rules and regulations. Any citizen may file an appropriate civil, criminal, or administrative action with the proper court or body. Suits and strategic legal action against public participation (SLAPP) are also provided for in the Act.

The urgent campaign to ban SUPs is taking place on multiple fronts, from the national level ban to seeking corporate accountability and responding to the global call for a plastic treaty.

Further, the group explained that the bill is a timely development amid the proliferation of false solutions across the country.

Coleen Salamat, Plastic Campaigner of EcoWaste Coalition pointed out that: “As plastic production continues as usual, so do efforts to curb plastic pollution. We remain vigilant over environmental efforts that lead to greenwashing. We urge the general public to exercise vigilance over false solutions such as waste-to-energy incineration, co-processing of plastic waste in cement kilns, among others, that are not only detrimental to the environment but to people’s health.”

Parallel to this, green groups also seek to hold corporations accountable for plastic pollution. It can be recalled that in November 2022, environmentalists and consumers filed a complaint against Coca-Cola, Pepsi-Cola, Nestle, Unilever, Procter and Gamble, Colgate Palmolive, and Universal Robina Corp (URC) at the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) Fair Trade Enforcement Bureau- Mediation and Adjudication Bureau.

Miko Aliño, Project Coordinator for Corporate Accountability of the Break Free from Plastic (BFFP) movement, asserted that: “The government should be wary of false solutions, like burning plastic waste in cement kilns, which undermine reduction efforts such as the proposed SUP ban. Corporations are likewise urged to pursue ambitious plastic reduction plans without the need for such greenwashing gimmicks.”

EcoWaste Coalition and member organizations, who are consequently part of the global BFFP movement, laud Senate Bill 246 as it could be the Philippines’ response to the global call for a plastics treaty to end plastic pollution. The Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) was tasked with drafting the global plastics treaty and held its first session last November with the mandate “End plastic pollution: Towards an international legally binding instrument.”

Marian Ledesma, Zero Waste Campaigner of Greenpeace Philippines, explained that: “Beyond generating obvious and notable benefits for people, our climate, and the environment, passing the SUPs Regulation and Management Act has become increasingly crucial because the global plastics treaty is expected to be finalized by the end of 2024.”

She emphasized that a national ban which reduces plastic production and use prepares the Philippines for the subsequent developments that come with this legally binding international instrument’s adoption. Ledesma added “more importantly, having a law in place before 2024 will allow for a just transition for all stakeholders involved as we move towards a reuse economy.”

Further strengthening the call for a national SUP ban, Miriam Azurin, Deputy Director of Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives (GAIA) Asia Pacific said: “The increasing interest in waste-to-energy incinerators is a dangerous and costly option for disposing of problematic waste streams like SUPs as WTE does not recycle them into energy. It is merely transformed into other forms of pollution, thus creating more problems than solutions. The bill proposes a sustainable alternative for these plastics that can’t be recycled. It contributes to a system shift—a just transition where zero waste is the norm.”

The #PlasticFreeSenate campaign is organized by EcoWaste Coalition, Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives, Greenpeace Philippines, Health Care Without Harm Southeast Asia, Mother Earth Foundation, and Oceana Philippines International, together with the Climate Change Commission, and the Office of Senator Loren Legarda.

Senate bill renews call to ban single-use plastics

MANILA – As the country observes National Zero Waste Month and the 22nd anniversary of the Ecological Solid Waste Management (ESWM) Act this month, Senate President Pro Tempore Loren Legarda joined the Climate Change Commission (CCC) and environmental groups in lobbying for the urgent passage of a national regulation to ban single-use plastics.

Legarda filed a bill last year calling for the regulation and management of single-use plastics by providing penalties, levies and incentives for industries and consumers, according to a news release on Monday.

The measure states that for single-use plastics which cannot be avoided, business enterprises must ensure that these are recycled while each single-use plastic already manufactured and in circulation at the time must be charged PHP5, to be paid by the consumer.

The collected amount shall be reflected in the official receipt, with 20 percent going to the business enterprise to cover the cost and 80 percent to be remitted monthly, quarterly, or semi-annually to the Special Plastic Fund that will be created by the bill.

After a one-year period, businesses enterprises as well as the consumers' use of single-use plastics shall be prohibited.

"This measure will provide an ambitious yet comprehensive' approach to solving the problem of single-use plastics and supporting the development and use of more eco-friendly products and packaging. We will continue to lobby against single-use plastics and foster discussions on initiatives that advance real, demonstrable and lasting solutions to the plastic pollution crisis in the country," Legarda said during the ribbon-cutting ceremony of the #PlasticFreePilipinasSaSenate photo exhibit on Monday.

The National Solid Waste Management Commission bans "unnecessary" single-use plastics in national government agencies, local government units (LGUs) and all other government controlled-offices.

The CCC has also imposed a plastic ban in its office operations, with disposable plastics, such as straws, stirrers, utensils, food wrappers, grocery bags, instant food packaging, lids, drinking bottles and caps prohibited within office premises during official meetings, conferences and other activities.

The ESWM mandates LGUs to be primarily responsible for the segregation and collection of solid waste at the barangay (village) level, specifically for biodegradable, compostable and reusable wastes.

The collection of non-recyclable materials and special wastes shall be the responsibility of the municipality or city.

A report by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) last year said global plastics consumption will rise from 460 million tons (MT) in 2019 to 1,231 MT in 2060 in the absence of bold new policies.

“Growth will be fastest in developing and emerging countries in Africa and Asia, although OECD countries will still produce much more plastic waste per person (238 kilograms per year on average) in 2060 than non-OECD countries (77 kilograms),” the report said.

The Senate photo exhibit features a documentary screening of "The Story of Plastic" and "Ang Huling (The Last) Plastic" to spread awareness on the single-use plastics problem.

The photo exhibit and a Zero Waste Bazaar that will showcase viable alternatives to single-use plastics will run until Feb. 22 while the documentaries will be screened on Feb. 2 and 9.

=END=