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DAILY TRIBUNE

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By Maria Romero

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SUNSTAR PH

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THE MANILA TIMES

[242M children's schooling disrupted by climate shocks](#)

By Agene France-Presse

EXTREME weather disrupted the schooling of about 242 million children in 85 countries last year — roughly one in seven students, the UN children's agency reported Thursday, deploring what it said was an "overlooked" aspect of the climate crisis.

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ACCORDING to UNICEF, extreme weather last year disrupted the schooling of 242 million children in 85 countries around the world.

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Measuring mining emissions for a greener future

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Who says mining and sustainability can't dig into the same pit?

As the world scrambles to address the mounting urgency of climate change, Nickel Asia Corp. (NAC) is proving that even in the gritty world of mining, a greener future is within reach.

The company has broken new ground — literally and figuratively — by completing an inventory of its carbon emissions related to land use change.

And here's the kicker: NAC is the first company with mining assets in the Philippines to pull this off. This monumental achievement isn't just a gold star for the company; it's a shining beacon for others to follow. Responsible mining? NAC says, "Why not?"

For NAC, this bold move marks a milestone in its ambitious quest to achieve its Net Zero Carbon objective by 2050.

Armed with data that's sharper than a pickaxe, the company can now set measurable targets, align its initiatives with international climate standards, and even submit its goals to the Science Based Targets initiative, a global body that champions science-backed emissions reduction practices.

Teaming up with the University of the Philippines-Los Baños (UPLB), NAC commissioned a study that dove deep into the carbon emissions resulting from land use change at its mining sites. These include Cagdianao Mining in Dinagat Islands, Hinatuan Mining in Surigao del Norte, Rio Tuba Nickel Mining in Palawan, and Taganito Mining in Surigao del Norte.

Led by Dr. Florencia B. Pulhin, the research — titled "Carbon Emissions from Land Use Change in Nickel Mining" — was no small feat. It examined carbon pools in forests and soils, calculated how much carbon these areas store, and measured emissions triggered by mining operations.

"I have seen the reforestation areas of NAC, and I must say that they are truly serious in rehabilitating the areas they once mined," Pulhin said, giving credit where it's due.

Meanwhile, NAC senior vice president and chief sustainability officer Jose Bayani Baylon doubled down on the company's green commitment.

“This initiative reflects our serious commitment towards a greener future. By partnering with UPLB — a premier academic institution — we can ensure that our baselines and targets are complete and accurate. We will continue to prove, through our operations and our programs, that responsible and sustainable mining exists,” he said.

The pioneering project, which NAC fully funded, began in the last quarter of 2022 and wrapped up in December 2023. The two years of meticulous data collection and analysis underline NAC’s dedication to doing things right.

But NAC isn’t stopping there. The company is also working on its Scope 3 greenhouse gas inventory, which tracks emissions across its supply chain. With inventories for Scope 1 and Scope 2 already in the bag (covering direct and indirect emissions, respectively), NAC is checking all the sustainability boxes.

The carbon emissions inventory is just one part of NAC’s larger sustainability playbook.

Through extensive reforestation efforts, the company is not only offsetting its emissions but also bringing biodiversity back to areas impacted by mining. These efforts are helping to create a ripple effect that benefits local communities while setting the stage for a greener mining industry.

By leading the charge in carbon accountability, NAC is putting the “responsible” in responsible mining. Its efforts underscore a vital message: that sustainability isn’t just a buzzword but a necessity — even for industries historically associated with environmental challenges.

As the world rushes toward greener practices, NAC stands as a testament to what’s possible when vision, collaboration, and grit come together.

Mining may be a tough business, but as NAC shows, there’s room for heart — and a whole lot of hope.

[Legarda bill recognizes disaster workers](#)

By Lade Kabagani

Senator Loren Legarda has filed a measure recognizing the efforts and crucial role of Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (DRRM) workers amid the worsening impact of climate change on the country.

Legarda filed Senate Bill (SB) 2927, or the Magna Carta for Public Disasters Risk Reduction and Management Workers, as the Philippines has consistently topped the World Risk Index among 193 countries.

“The country as a whole faces natural hazards more than any other nation in the world. We face earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, and other natural and human-induced hazards,” said Legarda, who is a United Nations Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) Global Champion for Resilience.

SB 2927 seeks to institutionalize measures that would protect the DRRM workers’ welfare, promote professional growth, and enhance their capacity to deliver critical services.

The proposed measure also aims to improve the socio-economic and psychological well-being of DRRM workers by creating a better working environment, improving their terms of employment, and providing robust benefits.

The bill focuses on professionalizing the DRRM workforce by offering capacity-building opportunities.

“With the passage of this bill into law, we want the government to recognize the significance of their contributions by supporting those who consistently risk their lives to save others from certain destruction,” Legarda said.

She stressed the need to improve the working conditions of DRRM workers in terms of career advancement and psychosocial care to equip them to fulfill their roles.

“To be disaster resilient, we must be capable of covering all fields, including our DRRM workers that tirelessly risk their lives in the field,” Legarda said.

The measure proposes a hazard pay for high-risk activities, mandatory insurance coverage, overtime pay, night differential, and retirement pay for eligible DRRM workers, among other benefits.

“As we seek ourselves to be more capable against the power of Mother Nature and increase the chances of safety, we hope the passage of this bill into law can help inspire many to stay in this noble endeavor,” she said.

Legarda is a co-sponsor of the Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act of 2010, as well as the principal author of the PAGASA Modernization Act of 2015 aimed at making the country better prepared against typhoons.

DAILY GUARDIAN

[Seal of Good Local Governance Pushes Financing for Biodiversity Projects](#)

The World Meteorological Organization revealed that 2024 was the warmest year ever recorded, breaching 1.55° Celsius above pre-industrial levels. The summer of 2024 saw Philippine cities experiencing searing temperatures, with Metro Manila sweating through a deadly 45° Celsius heat index in April.

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To bolster the protection of local green spaces and other natural resources, stronger environmental safeguards will be included in the Seal of Good Local Governance (SGLG), a yearly award given by the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) to Local Government Units (LGUs) that meet performance standards in 10 aspects of governance, from financial sustainability to environmental management. Launched in 2014, the SGLG was designed to push LGUs to continuously enhance public performance.

“Our LGUS are the first line of defense when it comes to natural calamities like the stronger storms and droughts brought about by climate change,” says Dumaguete City Mayor Felipe Antonio Remollo.

From 23 to 28 January 2025, officers from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), United Nations Development Programme’s Biodiversity Finance Initiative (UNDP-BIOFIN), DILG and the LGUs of Negros Occidental, Negros Oriental and Siquijor, shall discuss ways to mainstream environmental safeguards into both the SGLG and the country’s LGU development plans, paving the way for more financial investments in biodiversity conservation.

The SGLG’s environment management governance section formerly focused on solid waste management and disaster preparedness. In 2023, it finally expanded to cover the establishment and upkeep of public parks and green spaces, plus the sustainable management of wetlands like coasts, rivers and lakes. In the coming years, it might further expand to cover wildlife conservation and protection, proper forest land-use plans and a requirement for LGUs to retain a Local Environment and Natural Resources Officer (LENRO).

“Governance is not limited to just human concerns – it also includes the care and stewardship of the natural systems that sustain our lives and communities,” said DILG Negros Island Regional Director Lailyn Ortiz through a message delivered by DILG Negros Oriental Provincial Director Farah Diba Gentuya.

“The DENR is committed to provide the necessary guidance, resources and technical assistance to help our LGUs comply with our new environmental indicators,” adds DENR Undersecretary for Luzon and Visayas Field Operations Atty. Juan Miguel Cuna. “No LGU shall be left behind in achieving these goals.”

Around 100 participants are slated to attend the workshops, which will help LGUs comply with the SGLG’s new biodiversity requirements, while eventually developing toolkits to help both the DENR and DILG in assisting participating LGUs. “Hopefully, our workshops will allow every LGU in the country to meet SGLG standards, greatly enhancing their capacity to protect their respective natural resources,” says UNDP-BIOFIN Philippines National Project Manager Anabelle Plantilla. “As a bonus, LGUs that meet the new SGLG standards shall in turn be rewarded with a special budgetary allotment.”

UNDP-BIOFIN has been working closely with the DILG and DENR to mainstream biodiversity conservation since 2019. UNDP-BIOFIN and the DENR’s Biodiversity Management Bureau pushed for the adoption of a national roadmap for conservation – in 2016, the Philippine Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (PBSAP) was adopted by the DENR through Administrative Order No. 2016-12.

PBSAP however, faced major budgetary gaps. As a solution, biodiversity conservation was gently integrated into the development and investment programs of national agencies, local governments and private sector groups.

Active in over 40 countries, UNDP-BIOFIN has successfully helped raise over USD84 million for 107 Legislated Philippine Protected Areas by pushing for increased congressional financing since 2020. Its Year of the Protected Areas campaign captivated public interest in visiting the country’s protected areas after the COVID-19 pandemic. UNDP-BIOFIN continues to work with public and private sector partners to mainstream sustainable funding for biodiversity projects. Operations in the Philippines are slated to conclude in 2027.

“These SGLG learning workshops are a welcome development for our LGUs. We hope they will enhance the LGU’s understanding of the unique biodiversity of Negros and our other regions,” concludes Philippine Biodiversity Conservation Foundation, Inc. Executive Director Lisa Paguntalan-Martel. “We want to help improve their capacity to

develop activities and programs that will make tomorrow's cities and towns more resilient to the challenges of changing times.”

SUNSTAR PH

Nearly 250M children missed school in 2024 because of extreme weather

C APE TOWN, South Africa -- At least 242 million children in 85 countries had their schooling interrupted in 2024 because of heatwaves, cyclones, flooding and other extreme weather, the United Nations Children's Fund (Unicef) said in a new report Friday, January 24, 2025.

Unicef said it amounted to one in seven school-going children across the world being kept out of class at some point in 2024 because of climate hazards.

The report also outlined how some countries saw hundreds of their schools destroyed by weather, with low-income nations in Asia and sub-Saharan Africa hit especially hard.

But other regions weren't spared the extreme weather, as torrential rains and floods in Italy near the end of the year disrupted school for more than 900,000 children.

Thousands had their classes halted after catastrophic flooding in Spain.

While southern Europe dealt with deadly floods and Asia and Africa had flooding and cyclones, heatwaves were “the predominant climate hazard shuttering schools last year,” Unicef said, as the earth recorded its hottest year ever.

More than 118 million children had their schooling interrupted in April alone, Unicef said, as large parts of the Middle East and Asia, from Gaza in the west to the Philippines in the southeast, experienced a sizzling weeklong heatwave with temperatures soaring above 40 degrees Celsius (104 Fahrenheit).

“Children are more vulnerable to the impacts of weather-related crises, including stronger and more frequent heatwaves, storms, droughts and flooding,” Unicef executive director Catherine Russell said in a statement. “Children’s bodies are uniquely vulnerable. They heat up faster, they sweat less efficiently, and cool down more slowly than adults. Children cannot concentrate in classrooms that offer no respite from sweltering heat, and they cannot get to school if the path is flooded, or if schools are washed away.”

Around 74 percent of the children affected in 2024 were in middle- and low-income countries, showing how climatic extremes continue to have a devastating impact in the poorest countries. Flooding ruined more than 400 schools in Pakistan in April.

Afghanistan had heatwaves followed by severe flooding that destroyed over 110 schools in May, Unicef said.

Months of drought in southern Africa exacerbated by the El Niño weather phenomenon threatened the schooling and futures of millions of children.

And the crises showed little sign of abating. The poor French territory of Mayotte in the Indian Ocean off Africa was left in ruins by Cyclone Chido in December and hit again by Tropical Storm Dikeledi this month, leaving children across the islands out of school for six weeks.

Cyclone Chido also destroyed more than 330 schools and three regional education departments in Mozambique on the African mainland, where access to education is already a deep problem.

Unicef said the world's schools and education systems “are largely ill-equipped” to deal with the effects of extreme weather. (AP)

PHILSTAR

[SEC, IFC team up for sustainable finance](#)

By Richmond Mercurio

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MANILA, Philippines — The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) is joining forces with the International Finance Corp. (IFC) to accelerate sustainable finance in the country.

The SEC said it has formalized a cooperation agreement with the IFC to support the 30by30 Zero Philippines Program, an initiative that aims to grow the climate-related lending of financial institutions to 30 percent of total portfolio on average with near zero coal exposure by 2030.

Under the agreement signed by the SEC and IFC last week, both parties will undertake capacity-building initiatives for thematic bond issuers, investors and domestic external reviewers.

The SEC and IFC will also conduct a stocktaking survey on the Philippine Thematic Capital Market and explore other potential areas for collaboration.

SEC commissioner McJill Bryant Fernandez said that the partnership is important given the Philippines' urgent climate challenges.

"The Philippines faces the immense challenge of mitigating climate change while ensuring inclusive and sustainable economic growth. Through this partnership, we aim to channel long-term funding into climate-focused initiatives that prioritize both people and the planet," Fernandez said.

The 30by30 Zero Philippines Program was developed by IFC and the World Bank with funding from the German government's International Climate Initiative.

The program is expected to strengthen the role of financial institutions as aggregators of climate financing, integrating green finance strategies into investment plans to mitigate climate risks and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

IFC regional manager for East Asia and the Pacific Christina Ongoma lauded the SEC for its support and collaboration with IFC since 2023.

"We are grateful for our partnership with the SEC and are delighted to formalize our collaboration. Through this, we will continue to jointly host dedicated technical workshops and training sessions to further enhance the awareness and capacity of the capital market players regarding climate thematic instruments and opportunities," Ongoma said.

POLITIKO

[Piso para sa Kalikasan tax: Villafuerte bats for win-win measure to support climate action agenda](#)

By Billy Begas

National Unity Party president and Camarines Sur Rep. LRay Villafuerte has proposed implementing the country's first-ever carbon tax on electricity (CTE) to augment government revenue while keeping the Marcos administration on track for its ambitious goal of a low-carbon economy.

"One win-win revenue measure that the government can consider is a CTE or Piso para sa Kalikasan tax to help it raise extra funds beginning this year for higher public spending and for debt servicing and at the same time keep the Philippines on track to fighting climate change by reducing its GHG (greenhouse gas) emissions by 75% by the year 2030," Villafuerte said.

Villafuerte has introduced House Bill 2894, which seeks a carbon tax on the consumption of electricity equivalent to P1 for every kilogram of CO2 emission per kilowatt hour (kWh). Camarines Sur Representatives Miguel Luis Villafuerte and Tsuyoshi Anthony Horibata along with the Bicol Saro party-list co-authored the measure.

“Collections from this proposed Piso para sa Kalikasan tax are to be used for programs on climate-change mitigation and adaptation,” Villafuerte said.

He added that exempted from paying CTE are households that consume 60 kWh or below per month, and those that use electricity generated from renewable energy sources.

The solon stressed the urgency of implementing a tax for decarbonization, pointing out that the Philippines is “considered ground zero for climate disasters.”

“A Piso para sa Kalikasan tax will help our country meet its ambitious target of cutting our GHG emissions by 75% come 2030,” he added.

Under HB 4739, collections from the proposed climate tax shall be used exclusively for programs to explore and promote the use of alternative and clean power sources like renewable energy; assist communities in adapting to climate change and managing disaster risks; improve the resiliency of critical infrastructure; provide better public transportation; disseminate climate change awareness; protect environmental quality and wildlife; and meet international commitment made by the Philippines to assist with climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction and management.

Under its climate action agenda, the Philippines’ grand objective is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 75% by 2030, under its National Determined Contribution (NDC) to the Paris Climate Accords of 2015.

“Given the government’s tight fiscal space arising from its past enormous spending on COVID-19 response, the enactment into law of this tax on electric power consumption, to be included in the monthly electricity bills of consumers—is of urgent importance,” Villafuerte said.

Villafuerte recalled that Finance Sec. Ralph Recto, in a recent Technical Working Group (TWG) Meeting for Preparing Carbon Pricing Instruments for the Philippines, said that carbon pricing instruments make up a “powerful fiscal tool” as they let the government “incorporate the social and external costs associated with carbon emissions.”

“Congressional action on the pending CTE tax plan will send a strong message to the global community of our country’s steadfast commitment to international climate action

policy and the 19th Congress' affirmation of the people's right to a balanced and healthy ecology as well as the State's paramount duty to safeguard such right for the present and future generations," Villafuerte added.

THE MANILA TIMES

242M children's schooling disrupted by climate shocks

By Agene France-Press

EXTREME weather disrupted the schooling of about 242 million children in 85 countries last year — roughly one in seven students, the UN children's agency reported Thursday, deploring what it said was an "overlooked" aspect of the climate crisis.

Heat waves had the biggest impact, the report showed, as Unicef Executive Director Catherine Russell warned children are "more vulnerable" to extreme weather.

"They heat up faster, they sweat less efficiently and cool down more slowly than adults," she said in a statement.

6 countries stress need for maritime security

"Children cannot concentrate in classrooms that offer no respite from sweltering heat, and they cannot get to school if the path is flooded, or if schools are washed away," Russell said.

Human activity, including the unrestricted burning of fossil fuels over decades, has warmed the planet and changed weather patterns.

Global average temperatures hit record highs in 2024, and over the past few years, they temporarily surpassed a critical 1.5 degrees Celsius warming threshold for the first time.

That has left the wet periods wetter and the dry periods dryer, intensifying heat and storms and making populations more vulnerable to disasters.

The 242 million figure is a "conservative estimate," the Unicef report said, citing gaps in the data.

Students from kindergarten to high school saw classes suspended, vacations moved, reopenings delayed, timetables shifted, and even schools damaged or destroyed over the year due to climatic shocks, the available data showed.

At least 171 million children were affected by heat waves — including 118 million in April alone, as temperatures soared in Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Thailand and the Philippines.

In the Philippines, in particular, thousands of non-air-conditioned schools were closed, with children at risk of hyperthermia.

September, which marks the start of the school year in many countries, was also heavily impacted.

Classes were suspended in 18 countries, notably due to the devastating typhoon Yagi in East Asia and the Pacific.

South Asia was the region hardest hit by climate-related school interruptions, with 128 million schoolchildren affected.

India had the most children affected — 54 million, mainly by heat waves. Bangladesh had 35 million also affected by heat waves.

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The figures are likely to rise in coming years as temperatures continue going up, with half the world's children — around one billion — living in countries at high risk of climate and environmental shocks.

If the emission of greenhouse gases continues on its current trajectory, eight times as many children will be exposed to heat waves in 2050 as in 2000, according to Unicef projections.

More than three times as many would be exposed to extreme floods and 1.7 times more to wildfires, the projections showed.

Beyond the immediate impacts, Unicef voiced fears that the damage could increase the risk of some children — girls in particular — dropping out of school altogether.

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Already, some two-thirds of children around the world cannot read with comprehension by age 10, it said, adding: "Climate hazards are exacerbating this reality."

Education is one of the services most frequently disrupted by climate hazards, Russell said.

"Yet it is often overlooked in policy discussions," she warned. "Children's futures must be at the forefront of all climate-related plans and actions."

Unicef called for investment in classrooms that are more resistant to climate hazards.

[Impact of climate change on children overlooked](#)

By The Editorial Board

ACCORDING to Unicef, extreme weather last year disrupted the schooling of 242 million children in 85 countries around the world.

"Children cannot concentrate in classrooms that offer no respite from sweltering heat, and they cannot get to school if the path is flooded or if schools are washed away," Unicef Executive Director Catherine Russell pointed out.

6 countries stress need for maritime security

If the climate crisis continues at its present rate, half the world's children — around 1 billion — could be vulnerable to climate and environmental shocks, the UN agency warned.

South Asia was the region hardest hit by climate-related school interruptions, with 128 million schoolchildren affected.

In the Philippines, an unprecedented heat wave during the summer months last year forced the closure of schools to spare students from heat-related illnesses.

In April, with temperatures soaring past 42 Celsius, the Department of Education suspended classes in 5,000 schools, and more than 3.6 million students had to receive their lessons online.

Schools were again closed during the rainy season as a series of devastating storms and a hyperactive monsoon triggered widespread flooding. Some schools also doubled as evacuation centers, preventing students from returning earlier to their classrooms.

During the past few years, rising global temperatures have shot past the 1.5 Celsius warming threshold for the first time. The past year, 2024, was the hottest year on record.

As the planet continues to warm, wet and dry periods have become more intense and prolonged, making populations more vulnerable to disasters.

Children make up the segment that is most at risk from climate hazards such as pollution, deadly diseases and extreme weather.

6 countries stress need for maritime security
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"They heat up faster, they sweat less efficiently and cool down more slowly than adults," Russell said.

Regrettably, the dangers posed by climate change to children have been largely overlooked in global policy discussions. And many governments refuse to acknowledge the impact of the climate crisis on children's health.

Higher temperatures and increased rainfall, for example, result in crop failures and rising food prices, which worsen child malnutrition.

Extreme heat is also linked to an increase in mental health problems in children and adolescents, Unicef said.

"The climate crisis is not just changing the planet — it is changing children," it lamented.

Yet the world is not doing nearly enough to protect them. "Only 2.4 percent of climate finance from key multilateral climate funds support projects incorporating child-responsive activities," Unicef said.

At the 2023 climate conference in Dubai, Unicef proposed the inclusion of children and climate-resilient essential services in the Global Goal for Adaptation (GGA).

It also suggested making the Loss and Damage Fund more receptive to children's rights.

The reception to the Unicef proposals was, at best, lukewarm.

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The global failure to confront the climate crisis has, in Unicef's view, "created a child rights crisis. It is jeopardizing every child's fundamental right to health and well-being."

Adapting essential services, compensation for loss and damage, disaster risk reduction, early warning and increased investment in decarbonization "can make the difference between life and death, a future or disaster, for the planet's children."

Taking children's rights into account would lead to more ambitious and effective policies on environmental protection, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child has pointed out.

The Philippines has been making inroads into highlighting awareness of the impact of climate change on children. In 2022, the Department of Education started to promote climate education through its programs, projects and activities.

While climate change concepts are already integrated with the K-12 curriculum, "there is a need to strengthen its presence in the curriculum by refining learning competencies and standards and monitoring learning delivery," the department said.

It also reiterated its commitment "to reviewing learning competencies relevant to Climate Change Education (CCE) and coordinates various offices and experts with the enhancements needed in developmentally appropriate and multi-disciplinary climate change education."

For Unicef, however, it is crucial that all governments are obligated "to ensure a clean, healthy and sustainable environment to protect and fulfill children's rights."

Unicef's appeal that children's futures "must be at the forefront of all climate-related plans and actions" is a call to arms that the world must heed.

INFORMATION AND KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT DIVISION