



## NEWS ROUNDUP

29 JANUARY 2024 [ 08:40 am]

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By: Jasper Y. Arcalas

The Insurance Commission (IC) was ordered by Finance Secretary Ralph G. Recto to be “more creative” in issuing and packaging products addressing disaster and climate risks.

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### [New renewable energy strategy pushed](#)

By: Elmer Recuerdo

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## **MALAYA BUSINESS INSIGHT**

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## **MANILA BULLETIN**

### **[Marcos orders agencies to focus on high-risk regions in implementing climate change plan](#)**

By: Betheena Unite

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## **MANILA STANDARD**

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

## **PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER**

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By: Ian Nicolas P. Cigaral -

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## **PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY**

### **[BFP conducts water rationing to drought-hit LGUs in Antique](#)**

By: Annabel Consuelo Petinglay

The Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP) conducts rationing to municipalities experiencing water shortage due to the El Niño phenomenon.

## **POLITIKO**

### **[Marcos To Gov't Agencies, LGUs: Focus On High-Risk Areas In NAP](#)**

#### **Implementation**

By: Prince Golez

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. calls on government agencies to prioritize high-risk regions in implementing the National Adaptation Plan, emphasizing the need for an aggressive information campaign to raise public awareness of climate risks.

## **THE MANILA TIMES**

### **[PH artists awarded UK grant tackle climate change](#)**

Filipino grant awardees from the British Council's Connections Through Culture Program in 2023 highlight the urgency of climate change through their art and media. Their projects used creative endeavors like comics, design installations and literature to highlight topics ranging from biodiversity protection, farming and fishing practices to youth participation in environmental preservation.

## **THE PHILIPPINE STAR**

### **['Bagong Pilipinas' rally goers urged to keep event trash-free](#)**

By: Gaea Katreena Cabico

A zero waste group called on the organizers and participants of the "Bagong Pilipinas" kick-off rally to keep the event litter-free.

### **Group wants schools installed with solar panels**

By: Neil Jayson Servallos

The Philippine government should “take drastic measures” to address difficulties faced by students and teachers during the dry and hot season instead of shifting to the old academic calendar, according to a youth climate activism group.

### **Plastic makes up 90% of Manila Bay litter — monitoring survey**

By: Gaea Katreena Cabico

Around 90% of the 12 million pieces of marine litter collected from Manila Bay's coastline were plastics, a new study revealed, highlighting the urgent need for stricter policy implementation and an integrated marine waste management plan.

### **Policies to address ecological impact of RE urged**

By: Richmond Mercurio

A group of international and Philippine-based think tanks and civil society organizations is calling for stronger collaboration across the renewable energy sector to integrate policies and practices that will allow the sector to respond responsibly to its ecological and social impacts.

**Information and Knowledge Management Division**

## **BUSINESS MIRROR**

### **'More creative' climate insurance sought**

By: Jasper Y. Arcalas

The Insurance Commission (IC) was ordered by Finance Secretary Ralph G. Recto to be “more creative” in issuing and packaging products addressing disaster and climate risks.

“Our vulnerability to disasters and climate change calls for the development of new products, implementation of innovative solutions and utilization of new technologies,” Recto said during the IC’s 75th-anniversary celebration last Wednesday.

“The Commission should take a leading role in pioneering creative, out-of-the-box solutions to tackle these emerging issues,” Recto added.

Recto advised the IC to “take advantage” of the “emerging” technological innovations in broadening the Filipinos’ access to financial products and services.

For one, the adoption of digital technology would provide wider access to financial products and result in a “more” responsive, reliable and effective insurance industry, Recto explained.

Recto also pointed out that the IC must expand the availability of insurance products toward overseas Filipinos.

“A credible insurance industry encourages more people to avail themselves of financial protection. That is important to strengthening our people’s financial resilience in the face of so many uncertainties,” he said.

Recto said the IC must also strengthen its implementation of the Financial Products and Services Consumer Protection Act.

“This will empower our consumers by providing them with confidence in accessing financial products and services within a secure environment that prioritizes their rights and interests,” he said.

Recto urged IC to collaborate with schools and universities to expand financial education among Filipino students nationwide, which he pointed out would expand the number of people that would avail financial products.

“The Commission must also continuously strive to build financial literacy among our people. This will help cultivate a generation of financially literate individuals capable of making prudent financial choices from an early age,” he said.

“A financially literate population is crucial for the development of a robust capital market and a globally competitive Philippine economy,” he added.

The IC must also institute regulatory measures and enforcement mechanisms to ensure the financial stability of its regulated industry, Recto said.

“By effectively fulfilling its role as a regulator, the Commission ensures consumer protection and the reliability of insurance coverage,” he said.

“In turn, a credible insurance industry encourages more people to avail themselves of financial protection. That is important to strengthening our people’s financial resilience in the face of so many uncertainties,” he added.

## DAILY TRIBUNE

### [New renewable energy strategy pushed](#)

By: Elmer Recuerdo

Various international and Philippine-based think tanks and civil society organizations are calling for a stronger collaboration across the renewable energy sector to ensure the transition towards RE will be ecologically and socially responsible.

These groups said that there are emerging impacts in the energy transition including displacement of indigenous communities, threats to biodiversity and environmental pollution from end-of-life disposal, and could impede the country's energy transition.

On Friday, close to 100 representatives from industry, finance, civil society and policymakers gathered for the launching of Responsible Energy Initiative Philippines (REI Philippines) at the Astoria Plaza Hotel in Pasig City.

The new formation called for stronger collaboration to integrate policies, practices, norms and behaviors of the sector.

The Philippines is the second country to launch the Responsible Energy Initiative and the first in Southeast Asia, with the multi-country program first being established in India last 2021.

Among the organizers of the new formation are the Institute for Climate and Sustainable Cities, Oxfam Pilipinas, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Philippines, Forum for the Future, the Center for Empowerment, Innovation and Training on Renewable Energy and the Business and Human Rights Resource Centre.

The group said in a statement that while the benefits are widely acknowledged from decarbonization and expanding energy access to job creation, it notes that emerging ecological and social impacts of the energy transition, particularly from the production and deployment of utility-scale RE, are inadequately addressed.

Erika Geronimo, Oxfam Pilipinas executive director, noted the Philippine commitment to the Nationally Determined Contribution to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 75 percent in 2030 aligning with the 1.5C Paris Agreement target.

“We do need to accelerate our actions given the climate crisis, but any proposed solution must take into account the views and interests of marginalized communities,

who are most vulnerable to climate change impacts. A just energy transition reinforces the crucial role of civil society organizations to amplify the voices of these communities, especially of women and girls,” Geronimo said.

Angelo Kairos dela Cruz, executive director of ICSC, noted the potential of RE in the Philippines due to the significant impacts that were seen in ensuring affordable, reliable, and secure energy for Filipinos.

“Driven by our abundant clean and indigenous sources, the roadmap of our efforts for energy transition has long been underway,” Dela Cruz said.

Sumi Dhanarajan, managing director (Southeast Asia) of Forum for the Future, said that the transition away from fossil fuels towards renewable energy offers a unique opportunity to create a truly responsible energy system.

“To achieve this, the RE sector must pay attention to mitigating any adverse impacts that could arise and make every effort to bring about not only a fast, but a just transition. There is a way to produce and deploy renewables without harming people or the planet, and the Responsible Energy Initiative aims to make this the norm.”

## **MALAYA BUSINESS INSIGHT**

### **DBP lends P2-B for infra, climate change projects in Palawan**

The state-owned Development Bank of the Philippines (DBP) has extended a P2-billion loan to the Provincial Government of Palawan to support vital public infrastructure projects, including the upgrade of the province's road network and the enhancement of its disaster risk reduction initiatives, a top official said.

DBP president and chief executive officer Michael de Jesus said the loan assistance was granted through the Bank's Assistance for Economic and Social Development (ASENSO) for LGUs (Local Government Unit) Financing Program, a flagship lending facility that assists local government units in the implementation of projects geared towards promoting infrastructure and socio-economic development.

"This latest initiative with the Provincial Government of Palawan is a clear manifestation of DBP's steadfast commitment to support local government units in their pursuit of sustainable socio-economic growth through infrastructure development and climate change adaptation," de Jesus said.

De Jesus said that out of the total loan amount, P1.4 billion will be allotted for the upgrading of nearly 76 kilometers of gravel roads into two-lane concrete roads to better connect farmers and fishermen to the markets and speed up the transport of goods and people across the province.

He said DBP will also be funding the construction and rehabilitation of various flood control projects in the province to mitigate the adverse impact of climate change on communities, especially those located in the northern and southern portions of the province.

"DBP is hopeful that this partnership will pave the way for more meaningful engagements not just with the Palawan provincial government but also for the rest of MIMAROPA under the auspices of the regional development plan 2023 to 2028," de Jesus said.

As of the end of November 2023, total loan approvals under the DBP ASENSO Program have reached P104.41 billion for 372 LGU-borrowers, with total loan releases of P29.41 billion.

## MANILA BULLETIN

### [Marcos orders agencies to focus on high-risk regions in implementing climate change plan](#)

By: Betheena Unite

President Marcos has ordered government agencies to focus on high-risk regions in the country in the implementation of the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) aimed at mitigating the effects of climate change.

Marcos also directed concerned agencies to conduct an aggressive information dissemination campaign to raise public awareness on the adaptation plan, as well as the risks posed by the changing climate.

"It's a big, big (task). This covers three decades and the entire country. It's a completely different situation when it comes to climate change. Anyway, I think that's the approach that we should take," Marcos said in a meeting with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and other agencies.

"We have to try and work our way down through the system—the economic system—so that we can address the specific situations, the specific conditions (of each area)," he added.

According to the Presidential Communications Office (PCO), the President met with the agencies on Wednesday, Jan. 24, to discuss the key outcomes of the COP28 and present the Nationally Determined Contribution Implementation Plan (NDCIP) 2023-2030 and the Philippine National Adaptation Plan (NAP) 2023-2050.

He said all efforts under the NDCIP and NAP must be for the interest of the Philippines, especially those in high-risk areas.

"The best that we can do is number one, be very specific on what is necessary for the Philippines. If we take care of the Philippines, we can bet with confidence that we are doing our part. So, asikasuhin muna natin yung Pilipinas, kung what is good for us. So, the communities that are high risk, ano kailangan nila. Let's focus on that," the President said.

Marcos pointed out that different government agencies and local government units (LGUs) involved in carrying out the plan must fully understand the NDCIP and NAP and what they intend to achieve in order for them to implement them in their programs.

He also said ordinary people must also have a full grasp of the two plans as they relate to their own condition and environment.

Environment Secretary Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga told the President that there are several ongoing bilateral projects that actually deal with adaptation and resilience of LGUs.

These projects include the ongoing \$15-\$16 million Strengthening Institutions and Empowering Localities Against Disasters and Climate Change in the Philippines (SHIELD) project backed by Australian government and a US-funded project called Climate Resilient Cities focusing on metropolis.

## MANILA STANDARD

### [DENR alloting \\$278m to deal with biodiversity, climate change woes](#)

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

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

“Through strategic partnerships with multilateral and bilateral institutions, we can address environmental issues efficiently and effectively,” she said. Partners include Japan, Australia, United States, South Korea, and Canada, among others.

Loyzaga cited the importance of the partnership with the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG), Department of Finance (DOF), Department of Health (DOH), Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), Department of Tourism (DOT), Department of Agriculture (DA), Department of Science and Technology (DOST), and other agencies in a “whole of government” approach to accelerate LGU programs with global best practices in environmental management within the next five to six years.

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

Other initiatives include the Green Economy Program of the Philippines (GEPP) funded by the EU which focuses on solid waste management and plastic waste reduction in 60 LGUs over five years and the Enhancement of Marine Litter Management in Manila Bay to strengthen environmental protection efforts in the bay area and raise awareness about marine pollution reduction.

They also include Promoting Resource Efficiency and Circularity to Reduce Plastic Pollution for Asia and Pacific, regional projects that aim to reduce plastic pollution and restore coastal and marine ecosystems' health; and the Reducing Marine Plastics in the East Asian Sea Region initiative, funded by Korea's Ministry of Ocean and Fisheries, which focuses on improving local governance in marine plastic management. DENR News

The DENR's collaboration with the World Bank, meanwhile, includes ongoing studies on municipal solid waste plans, recycling systems, plastic circularity opportunities and strategies to combat plastic waste crisis.

The Philippines has joined the Global Plastic Action Partnership through the World Economic Forum (WEF) to strengthen its commitment against plastic pollution. The Philippines also signed an agreement with WEF for the Blue Carbon Action Partnership in a side event during the UNFCCC COP28 in Dubai.

## PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

### [DBP grants P2-B loan for Palawan infra](#)

By: Ian Nicolas P. Cigaral -

State-run Development Bank of the Philippines (DBP) has made available a P2-billion loan to the provincial government of Palawan, intended to fund infrastructure projects meant to improve the province's road network and defenses against the impact of climate change.

In a statement on Friday, DBP president and CEO Michael de Jesus said the loan was granted through the bank's lending facility dubbed "Bank's Assistance for Economic and Social Development (Asenso)."

Through the program, DBP helps local government units (LGUs) in the implementation of projects that would promote infrastructure and socio-economic development.

As of November 2023, total loan approvals under the Asenso program was pegged at P104.41 billion. The amount benefits 372 LGU-borrowers, with total loan releases reaching P29.41 billion.

Palawan is mainly an archipelagic province and the second-largest contributor to the economy of Region 4-B or Mimaropa.

Flood control

The province has 23 towns, an independent city, and 467 barangays with an aggregate population of 939,594 based on the latest government data.

De Jesus said that out of the total loan amount, P1.4-billion will be allotted to the upgrading of nearly 76 kilometers of gravel roads into two-lane concrete roads to connect farmers and fishermen to the markets and speed up the transport of goods and people across the province.

He said DBP will also be funding the construction and rehabilitation of various flood control projects.

"This latest initiative with the provincial government of Palawan is a clear manifestation of DBP's steadfast commitment to support local government units," De Jesus said.

DBP is the eighth largest bank in the country in terms of assets.

## PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

### [BFP conducts water rationing to drought-hit LGUs in Antique](#)

By: Annabel Consuelo Petinglay

The Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP) conducts rationing to municipalities experiencing water shortage due to the El Niño phenomenon.

“As of Friday, our municipal fire stations in Bugasong, Tibiao, San Remigio, Culasi, Sibalom, and in Valderrama have already conducted a total of 20 water rationings using the firetrucks,” said BFP Antique information officer, Fire Officer 2 Eulie May Raymaro, in an interview Friday.

She said the rationing was in response to requests of local government units, particularly for their residents living in hilly or elevated areas where water is scarce.

They can use the water for bathing and washing dishes but not drinking.

Barangays needing water shall coordinate with their municipal governments, which provide gasoline for fire trucks.

BFP has 27 fire trucks in 18 municipalities ready for use in the water rationing.

Meanwhile, as part of the conservation measures, Raymaro said they minimize using water during their fire drill simulation in schools, barangays, and private business establishments.

“The 18 fire stations still conduct their fire drills, but during simulation, they are instructed to minimize the use of water or even to just perform the fire suppression exercise without the actual use of water anymore,” she said.

Their fire stations also target conducting tree planting twice a month or participating in the tree planting activities of LGUs to help in environmental preservation to mitigate the ill effects of climate change, such as the El Niño phenomenon.

## POLITIKO

### Marcos To Gov't Agencies, LGUs: Focus On High-Risk Areas In NAP

#### **Implementation**

By: Prince Golez

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. calls on government agencies to prioritize high-risk regions in implementing the National Adaptation Plan, emphasizing the need for an aggressive information campaign to raise public awareness of climate risks.

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. urged concerned agencies to prioritize high-risk regions in the country when implementing the National Adaptation Plan (NAP).

They must also conduct an aggressive information dissemination campaign to raise public awareness of the adaptation plan and the risks posed by the changing climate, Marcos Jr. said in a recent meeting with officials of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in Malacañang.

“It’s a big, big (task). This covers three decades and the entire country. It’s a completely different situation when it comes to climate change. Anyway, I think that’s the approach that we should take. We have to try and work our way down through the system—the economic system—so that we can address the specific situations, the specific conditions (of each area),” according to him.

The President said that all efforts under NAP and the Nationally Determined Contribution Implementation Plan (NDCIP) 2023-2030 must be for the benefit of the Philippines, particularly those living in high-risk areas.

“The best that we can do is number one, be very specific on what is necessary for the Philippines. If we take care of the Philippines, we can bet with confidence that we are doing our part. So, asikasuhin muna natin ‘yung Pilipinas, kung what is good for us. So, the communities that are high risk, ano kailangan nila. Let’s focus on that,” he added.

Marcos Jr. also said the various government agencies and local government units (LGUs) involved in carrying out the plan must fully understand the NDCIP and NAP, as well as what they hope to achieve, before implementing them in their programs.

Ordinary people must also have a full understanding of the two plans as they relate to their own situation and environment, the chief executive furthered.

The NAP aims to steadily reduce climate-related loss and damage as well as build the country's adaptive capacity towards transformative adaptation, resilience, and sustainable economic development by 2050.

The NDCIP is the Philippines' commitment to the Paris Agreement which aims to bring about sustainable industrial development; eradication of poverty and provision of basic needs; securing social and climate justice; and energy security.

## THE MANILA TIMES

### [PH artists awarded UK grant tackle climate change](#)

Filipino grant awardees from the British Council's Connections Through Culture Program in 2023 highlight the urgency of climate change through their art and media. Their projects used creative endeavors like comics, design installations and literature to highlight topics ranging from biodiversity protection, farming and fishing practices to youth participation in environmental preservation.

The grants help build long-term relationships and collaborations between East Asian and British artists, cultural professionals, creative practitioners, and art and cultural organizations. About 645,000 pounds in funding was awarded to 76 projects which were developed by the winners from countries like the Philippines, Australia, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Myanmar, New Zealand and Thailand.

Climate change was the first of the two subjects that the program focused on.

"Biosignals" is a collaborative project between the Philippines represented by Diego Maranan of the University of the Philippines' Open University-Faculty of Information and Communication Studies, the United Kingdom represented by Amy Holt and New Zealand (AwhiWorld). It aims to collect, process and transmit signals from local plant life at each site, addressing challenges posed by climate change and biodiversity loss.

"Comics Create a Better World" exchanges knowledge between the Philippines' Komiket and the UK's Lakes Arts Festivals to engage children and young people to create original work on climate change. Creators, selected from underrepresented communities in the two countries, received virtual training sessions and mentoring.

"Inspiring Creative Action to Help Artisan Communities Surmount Climate Change-Induced Disaster" aims to develop a practical toolkit for textile artisans in disaster-prone areas, drawing on experiences in Kerala, India, Sri Lanka and Peru. The toolkit focuses on pre-disaster planning and post-disaster recovery, supporting mainly women-led creative enterprises. This project is jointly developed by Filipino artist Twinkle Ferraren and the UK's League of Artists CIC.

Forests and farming

"Listen: Can you hear the fish cry?" is an embodied audio project with the Philippines' Binhi Creatives and the UK's Michelle Roche, co-founder of Play Inside. It will amplify underrepresented voices affected by climate change, particularly women.

Filipino artist Mica Cabildo and Curtis Cresswell of the UK collaborated on "The Possibility of Forests: Twin Installations in a Celtic Rainforest and a Tropical Cloud Forest." Connecting Celtic rainforests in Britain with tropical cloud forests in the Philippines, the project explores climate-sensitive biomes through interactive media, art and ecology practices.

"Song and Sovereignty: Food Justice and the Preservation of Local Farming Culture" by the UK's Tilted Axis Press and the Philippines' Gantala Press Inc. preserves the literary culture of women in the Philippines amid changing farming practices due to climate change and political instability. It will record folk songs, poetry and recipes. Literary translation workshops and collaborations with Filipino migrants in the UK will contribute to diverse publications.

"Where The Flowers Bloom: Transforming the Colonial study and artistry of Philippine-UK Botanicals through weaving identity in the retelling of Biodiversity amid the Ecological Crisis" is a collaboration between the UK's Beatriz Gemperle and the Philippines' TAYO House of Culture & Creativity. It deconstructs and reimagines the colonial study of Philippine botanicals by weaving Filipino identities such as myths, patterns, stories, relationships and rituals into a collaborative process of botanical preservation.

The second subject highlighted by the program is diversity and inclusion. Filipino projects awarded in this area are "God Save The Queers, Bless The Badings," "Performing Diwata: ecotransfeminism in precolonial Philippine mythology" and the "Wild Patch."

## THE PHILIPPINE STAR

### 'Bagong Pilipinas' rally goers urged to keep event trash-free

By: Gaea Katreena Cabico

A zero waste group called on the organizers and participants of the “Bagong Pilipinas” kick-off rally to keep the event litter-free.

The rally, expected to gather a large crowd, will take place Sunday afternoon as the observance of the Zero Waste Month draws to a close.

EcoWaste Coalition urged the participants of the government-led mobilization in Rizal Park to bring their own food and water in reusable containers, avoid throwing trash, and refrain from bringing plastic tarpaulin banners.

It also asked the organizers to designate people who will remind and monitor the attendees' compliance with Rizal Park's no littering, no smoking, and no vaping policy.

“We appeal to the rally leaders to foster environmental citizenship among the participants by exhorting them to keep the park and adjacent areas litter-free,” said Ochie Tolentino, zero-waste campaigner of EcoWaste Coalition.

“We hope this Sunday's rally will not see a sad repeat of the trashing of Rizal Park during the Traslacion of the venerated image of the Black Nazarene after being put off for three years due to the COVID-19 pandemic,” she added.

The Philippine Information Agency said the “Bagong Pilipinas” kick-off rally, scheduled Sunday afternoon, “aims to ignite hope and inspire participation in building a better Philippines through collective action.”

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. is expected to attend the event, which will also offer some services such as provision of payouts for beneficiaries of government assistance and civil registration services.

Some critics have raised concern that the rally will be used to drum up support for initiatives to change the Constitution, a claim government officials have denied.

## Group wants schools installed with solar panels

By: Neil Jayson Servallos

The Philippine government should “take drastic measures” to address difficulties faced by students and teachers during the dry and hot season instead of shifting to the old academic calendar, according to a youth climate activism group.

The Stewards and Volunteers for the Earth Philippines said solar panels should be installed in schools and fossil fuels need to be abandoned.

As for the academic calendar, teachers’ groups earlier confirmed that the Department of Education agreed to start classes on July 29 for the coming school year as part of the gradual return to the old June-March schedule that would fully take hold three school years from now.

“The plan of the government to shift the school calendar like what they did in the past to avoid typhoons during school days does not solve the actual problem that is the climate crisis, rooted in the destruction of the environment and continuous reliance on fossil fuels that is the leading cause of the global rise in temperature,” the youth group said in a statement.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, public schools had to start the school year in October 2020. The academic calendar opened in August when full onsite classes resumed last year.

Various groups had called for the previous school calendar to return due to the heat experienced in March and April.

The previous year was recorded as the warmest since 1850. The dry and hot season was felt throughout schools with dozens of students hospitalized due to dehydration.

## Plastic makes up 90% of Manila Bay litter — monitoring survey

By: Gaea Katreena Cabico

Around 90% of the 12 million pieces of marine litter collected from Manila Bay's coastline were plastics, a new study revealed, highlighting the urgent need for stricter policy implementation and an integrated marine waste management plan.

A report by zero-waste group EcoWaste Coalition in collaboration with the Korean International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), De La Salle University-Dasmariñas, and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources found that 11 million pieces of plastic waste were collected along Manila Bay.

The 2023 monitoring survey assessed the marine litter profile of 10 coastal areas in Metro Manila, Central Luzon and Calabarzon.

The study found that most of the collected plastic litter consisted of hard and film plastics, such as single-use food sachets and plastic bags. The production, distribution and litter of single-use plastic products pose a major threat to environmental and human health.

The report also revealed that plastic waste accounted for nearly 60% of the total weight of marine litter along Manila Bay

"The study shows that we have a long way to go to eliminate the ubiquitous problem of single-use plastics and marine litter as a whole," said Von Vladimir Defuntorum, a project lead with EcoWaste Coalition.

A 2021 World Bank report noted that a high dependence on single-use plastics like multilayer sachets and pouches "has led the Philippines to become a 'sachet economy' that continues to worsen the alarming levels of marine plastic pollution in the region." This can be attributed to the accessibility and convenience of using sachets.

The study recommended the strict implementation of the Solid Waste Management Act of 2000, Clean Water Act of 2004, Operational Plan for the Manila Bay Coastal Strategy, and the continuing mandamus issued by the Supreme Court compelling authorities to perform their duties in cleaning and rehabilitating the polluted body of water.

It also called on government agencies to devise an integrated marine litter management plan for Manila Bay, and various stakeholders to conduct regular coastal cleanups and conserve mangroves.

"We hope that this study will lead to the execution of an impactful cost-effective policies and management practices towards prevention and reduction of marine pollution in the Manila Bay by urging a multi sectoral initiative to strengthen the environmental protection system in the Bay," said Yuna Lee, manager of Our Sea of East Asian Network's international cooperation team.

Filipino environmentalists have long called for a ban on single-use plastics to address the country's plastic waste problem.

The Philippines has an Extended Producer Responsibility Act, which aims to uphold circularity by requiring large enterprises to recover or offset their plastic packaging footprint.

In his second State of the Nation Address in 2023, President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. asked Congress to pass a measure imposing excise taxes on single-use plastics.

## Policies to address ecological impact of RE urged

By: Richmond Mercurio

A group of international and Philippine-based think tanks and civil society organizations is calling for stronger collaboration across the renewable energy sector to integrate policies and practices that will allow the sector to respond responsibly to its ecological and social impacts.

The Responsible Energy Initiative (REI) Philippines said not attending to emerging risks in utility-scale renewable energy value chains may likely slow down the energy transition in the country.

REI Philippines, a multi-year program designed as a collaborative platform, is currently led by the Institute for Climate and Sustainable Cities (ICSC), Oxfam Pilipinas, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Philippines, Forum for the Future, the Center for Empowerment, Innovation and Training on Renewable Energy, and the Business & Human Rights Resource Centre.

“The Philippines’ renewable energy transition is best described by a single word: potential. Driven by our abundant clean and indigenous sources, the roadmap of our efforts for energy transition has long been underway. This is supported by the significant impacts that we have seen of renewable energy helping to ensure affordable, reliable, and secure energy for Filipinos,” ICSC executive director Angelo Kairos dela Cruz said.

REI Philippines noted that while the benefits of renewable energy such as decarbonization, expanding energy access and job creation are widely acknowledged, emerging ecological and social impacts of the energy transition, particularly from the production and deployment of utility-scale renewable energy, are inadequately addressed.

These impacts include displacement of indigenous communities, threats to biodiversity and environmental pollution from end-of-life disposal, and could impede the country’s energy transition, it said.

“We do need to accelerate our actions given the climate crisis, but any proposed solution must take into account the views and interests of marginalized communities, who are most vulnerable to climate change impacts,” Oxfam Pilipinas executive director Erika Geronimo said.

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