



NEWS ROUNDUP

02 FEBRUARY 2023 [08:00 am]

- Trees could cut urban heatwave mortality by a third: study
- US Defense chief in Manila; meeting with Marcos, Galvez set today
- Green energy investment tops \$1 trillion, matches fossil fuels
- New Canadian envoy seeks stronger ties with PH
- Poe seeks creation of a water management resource office
- Austin's Manila visit to bring deal on expanded base access—PH official
- 10 PH schools among world's most sustainable universities
- DENR-7 to strengthen protection of wetlands
- [Opinion] The playbook against anti-climate disinformation
- DoST opens call for proposals for 2025 funding
- RSU hosts national confab on climate change
- Marcos approves creation of water management office
- New law needed to manage minerals for clean energy shift — study

CCC IN THE NEWS:

- CHR urges gov't to hold liable businesses violating environment, human rights laws
- Scientific research vital in addressing climate change: CCC

ABS CBN

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By: Marlowe Hood, Agence France Presse

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MALAYA BUSINESS INSIGHT

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By: Mario Casayuran

The creation of the Water Management Resource Office is a significant initiative to better oversee and manage Philippine water resources, Senator Grace Poe said today.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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PTV

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SUNSTAR

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By: Earl Kim Padriona

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THE MANILA TIMES

[DoST opens call for proposals for 2025 funding](#)

THE Department of Science and Technology (DoST) opens its call for proposals for research and development (R&D) funding for the year 2025 in Mabalacat, Pampanga. On the first leg of its nationwide campaign in this city, DoST encourages researchers and scientists to submit their proposals for 2025 via the DoST Project Management Information System (DPMIS) from May 1 to 31, 2023.

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Students' Actions Vital to the Environment and Mother Earth Movement (SAVE ME) Volunteer Award held at Romblon State University Tablas Campus in Tablas Island, Romblon.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

[Marcos approves creation of water management office](#)

By: Helen Flores

MANILA, Philippines — A water resource management office will be created under the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to ensure sufficient water supply for the country.

[New law needed to manage minerals for clean energy shift — study](#)

By: Gaea Katreena Cabico

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippines needs a new mining law on the management of minerals needed for the shift to renewable energy and that law should make social and environmental justice a priority, according to the Legal Rights and Natural Resources Center.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

MANILA BULLETIN

[CHR urges gov't to hold liable businesses violating environment, human rights laws](#)

By: Czarina Nicole Ong Ki

The Commission on Human Rights (CHR) has urged the Climate Change Commission (CCC) “to adopt measures to help hold accountable businesses in violation of environmental and human rights laws.”

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

[Scientific research vital in addressing climate change: CCC](#)

By: Ruth Abbey Gita-Carlos

MANILA – The Climate Change Commission (CCC) on Wednesday sought cooperation and collaboration with the local research community to ensure the country's success in the fight against climate change.

Information and Knowledge Management Division

ABS CBN

Trees could cut urban heatwave mortality by a third: study

By: Marlowe Hood, Agence France Presse

PARIS, France - Planting more trees in urban areas to lower summertime temperatures could decrease deaths directly linked to hot weather and heatwaves by a third, researchers said Wednesday.

Modelling found that increasing tree cover to 30 percent would shave off 0.4 degrees Celsius (0.7 degrees Fahrenheit) locally, on average, during hot summer months, they reported in *The Lancet*.

Of the 6,700 premature deaths attributed to higher temperatures in 93 European cities during 2015, one third could have been prevented, according to the findings.

Currently, just under 15 percent of urban environments in Europe, on average, are covered by some kind of foliage.

The study is the first to project the number of premature deaths due to higher temperatures in cities that could be prevented by additional tree cover, said lead author Tamar Lungman, a researcher at the Barcelona Institute for Global Health.

"We already know that high temperatures in urban environments are associated with negative health outcomes, such as cardiorespiratory failure, hospital admission, and premature death," he said in a statement.

"Our goal is to inform local policy and decision-makers about the benefits of strategically integrating green infrastructure into urban planning in order to promote more sustainable, resilient and healthy urban environments."

Cities record higher temperatures than surrounding suburbs or countryside due to the so-called urban heat island effect.

This extra heat is caused primarily by a lack of vegetation, exhaust from air conditioning systems, along with dark-hued asphalt and building materials that absorb and trap warmth.

Climate change has already amplified the problem. Last year, Europe saw its hottest summer on record, and second warmest year.

Health benefits

Heatwaves around the world are seeing record-breaking peaks, and have increased in duration in recent decades.

Today, cold conditions still cause more deaths in Europe than hot weather. But climate models project that heat-related illness and death will present a bigger burden to health services within a decade.

"This is becoming increasingly urgent as Europe experiences more extreme temperature fluctuations caused by climate change," said lungman.

The researchers estimated mortality rates for people over 20 years old between June and August 2015, accounting for 57 million inhabitants in total.

This data was analysed in relation to daily average city temperatures in two modelling scenarios.

The first compared the city temperature with and without urban heat islands. The second simulating temperature reduction if tree cover was increased to 30 percent.

On average, the temperature in cities was 1.5C warmer during summer 2015 than in the surrounding countryside. The city with the highest difference -- 4.1C -- was Cluj-Napoca, Romania.

Across all cities, 75 percent of the total population lived in areas at least one degree warmer, while 20 percent experienced temperatures at least two degrees higher.

Overall, cities with highest temperature-related mortality rates were in southern and eastern Europe.

"This is an important piece of research," commented Laurence Wainwright, a lecturer at the University of Oxford's Smith School of Enterprise and the Environment.

"Urban tree planting — on the right scale, in the right places, and under certain other conditions — likely leads to a modest-yet-real reduction in heat-related deaths in many urban areas."

Earlier studies have shown that green spaces can have additional health benefits such as reducing cardiovascular disease, dementia and poor mental health, as well as improving cognitive functioning of children and the elderly.

MALAYA BUSINESS INSIGHT

[US Defense chief in Manila: meeting with Marcos, Galvez set today](#)

By: Victor Reyes

US DEFENSE Secretary Lloyd Austin is in the country to discuss various security issues with President Marcos Jr, Defense Secretary Carlito Galvez Jr, and other Philippine officials.

Austin is set to meet with the President in Malacañang this morning, according to the Presidential Communications Office. He will meet with Galvez in Camp Aguinaldo before noon today.

He arrived in the country on Tuesday night and flew yesterday to Zamboanga City where he met with Philippine and US troops.

“Wheels down in the Philippines where I’ll meet with Secretary of National Defense Galvez and other senior leaders to build on our strong bilateral relationship, discuss a range of security initiatives, and advance our shared vision of a free and open Pacific,” Austin said in his Twitter account when he arrived on Tuesday night.

Before noon yesterday, Austin flew to Zamboanga City primarily to visit members of the US Special Operations Team based inside Camp Navarro, headquarters of the AFP Western Mindanao Command (Westmincom).

Top Philippine military officials, led by AFP chief Gen. Andres Centino, Westmincom chief Maj. Gen. Roy Galido, and Navy chief Vice Adm. Toribio Adaci welcomed Austin upon arrival in the city at around 11:30 a.m.

Galido said Austin’s visit lasted for just about an hour, half of which he spent meeting with Philippine military officials and the other half talking to US troops.

“He visited US troops here, he is making sure they are okay,” said Galido.

Galido said the Philippine military’s relationship with the US is “very strong.”

“They are here to help us in our mission, especially counter-terrorism and HADR (humanitarian assistance and disaster response). That’s the emphasis,” Galido said.

“But the primary (objective) is visiting their troops here in Mindanao,” he added.

EDCA

Austin and Galvez will face the media after their meeting today.

This is Austin's second visit to the Philippines as defense secretary. The first was in July 2021 when he met with then Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana.

After the meeting, Lorenzana announced that then President Duterte has decided to recall a notice the Philippine government sent to US to terminate the Visiting Forces Agreement which provides legal cover for the conduct of joint military exercises, including "Balikatan," between the two armed forces.

The US defense department earlier said Austin will also meet with the President, Centino, and Foreign Affairs Secretary Enrique Manalo during his visit to the Philippines.

It said Austin will discuss the acceleration of the implementation of the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA) which allows the US to preposition troops and assets in the Philippines.

US officials have requested the Philippine military to allow the construction of US facilities in five sites in four provinces — Cagayan, Zambales, Palawan and Isabela.

The five are on top of five areas approved by Philippine authorities several years ago — Cesar Basa Air Base in Pampanga, Fort Magsaysay in Nueva Ecija, Lumbia Air Base in Cagayan de Oro City, Antonio Bautista Air Base in Palawan, and Benito Ebuena Air Base in Cebu.

"There's a push for another four or five of these EDCA sites," a senior Philippine official said. "We are going to have definitely an announcement of some sort. I just don't know how many would be the final outcome of that."

The official declined to be named because of the sensitivity of the matter.

EMERGING THREATS

The US defense department has also said the US and Philippine sides are looking to further improve the alliance between the two countries to address "new and emerging threats," including those in the South China Sea.

The US and the Philippines signed a defense treaty in 1951. The treaty requires both nations to respond to any armed attack in metropolitan territory of either party or on the island territories or on armed forces, public vessels or aircraft in the Pacific.

Washington is eager to extend its security options in the Philippines as part of efforts to deter any move by China against self-ruled Taiwan, while Manila wants to bolster defense of its territorial claims in the disputed South China Sea.

The Philippine official said increased US access needed to benefit both countries.

“We don’t want it to be directed to just for the use of the United States purely for their defense capabilities ... it has to be mutually beneficial,” he said.

“And obviously, we want to make sure that no country will see ... anything that we’re doing ... was directed towards any conflict or anything of that sort,” he added.

Manila’s priorities in its agreements with Washington were to boost its defense capabilities and interoperability with US forces and to improve its ability to cope with climate change and natural disasters, the official said.

He said that after cancelling an agreement for the purchase of heavy-lift helicopters from Russia last year, Manila had reached a deal with Washington to upgrade “a couple” of Black Hawk helicopters that could be used for disaster relief.

“The deal with Russia was very attractive because for a certain budget we were able to get something like 16 of these heavy-lift helicopters,” the official said. “Now with the United States, obviously their helicopters are more expensive, so we’re looking at how we can fit in the budget that we’ve had.”

Gregory Poling, a Southeast Asia expert at Washington’s Center for Strategic and International Studies think tank, said access to sites in northern Luzon would help US efforts to deter any Chinese move against Taiwan by putting the waters to the south of the island within range of shore-based missiles.

He said US and Philippine marines were pursuing similar capabilities with ground-based rockets, with Manila’s particular interest being to protect its South China Sea claims.

The Philippines is among several countries at odds with China in the South China Sea and has been angered by the constant presence of vessels in its exclusive economic zone it says are manned by Chinese militia. China is also Manila’s main trading partner.

MANILA BULLETIN

[Green energy investment tops \\$1 trillion, matches fossil fuels](#)

By: Agence France Presse

PARIS, France — Investment in cleaner energy is on the verge of overtaking spending on fossil fuels for the first time ever after exceeding \$1 trillion last year, a report on Tuesday said.

Despite the milestone, spending on energy transition technology must immediately triple to meet the target of net-zero emissions by 2050 to combat climate change, according to research group BloombergNEF.

Investment in sectors such as renewables, nuclear, zero-emission vehicles or recycling projects totalled \$1.1 trillion last year, matching spending on fossil fuels, the report found.

This is up 31 percent on the previous year, and marks the first time the investment total has been measured in trillions.

The increase was driven by the energy crisis that followed Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the report said.

"Investment in clean energy technologies is on the brink of overtaking fossil fuel investments, and won't look back," said Albert Cheung, head of global analysis at BloombergNEF.

China — the world's biggest polluter — was by far the largest investor in energy transition, with the United States a distant second.

Nearly half of the total global investment was in China, particularly in steel recycling and the renewable energy and electric vehicles sectors.

Germany has retained its place in third position, largely due to a sizable EV market.

But a drop in offshore wind deals saw investment in Britain fall by nearly a fifth, the report found.

Globally, renewable energy was the biggest sector for investment at \$495 billion, followed by electrified transport projects.

With the exception of nuclear power, the researchers said all other sectors saw record levels of investment.

The growth in energy transition technology also comes as many countries saw an increase in fossil fuel investment in a bid to shore up energy security.

The war in Ukraine caused disruption to the global power supply as Russia, a major producer of fossil fuels, cut gas supplies to Europe Union countries and was hit by sweeping sanctions over the invasion.

A separate report by Ember, an energy think tank, said on Tuesday that wind and solar energy generated 22 percent of EU electricity, surpassing gas (20 percent) for the first time.

Hydro and nuclear power still represented the biggest share of electricity generation in the 27-nation bloc, accounting for 32 percent.

[New Canadian envoy seeks stronger ties with PH](#)

By: Joseph Pedrajas

Canada is seeing strengthened ties with the Philippines in the fields of defense, trade and investment, environment, climate change and human rights over the coming years.

David Bruce Hartman, the new ambassador of Canada to the Philippines who replaced James Peter MacArthur, made the pronouncement as he presented his credentials to President Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr. at the Malacañang Palace on Tuesday night.

In meeting with the chief executive, Hartman highlighted the unlimited potential of the Philippine-Canada bilateral relationship as both countries “are bound by extensive people-to-people ties” and are committed “to peace and stability, democracy and rules-based international order.”

The fight against climate change, poverty, economic downturn and food insecurity are also shared by both countries, he added.

The diplomat then cited the Filipino contributions to Canadian society as they were recognized for their “hard work, diligence and warmth.”

“The bridge these ties have built span the Pacific, setting the stage for the continued growth of the Canada-Philippines bilateral relationship,” Hartman said.

The future of the two countries “is one filled with opportunity,” Hartman asserted as he noted of Canada’s launching of its new Indo-Pacific Strategy, which identified the Philippines as “a key partner.”

Before his appointment, Hartman served as director general of Global Affairs Canada’s South Asia Bureau. He also served as executive director of the same agency’s division in Greater China.

Hartman, who has a master’s degree in History from the University of Ottawa and a bachelor’s degree from Queen’s University, joined Canada’s foreign service in 1998.

He took up a public sector and governance program at the University of Ottawa and a management and leadership program at the University of Oxford.

Poe seeks creation of a water management resource office

By: Mario Casayuran

The creation of the Water Management Resource Office is a significant initiative to better oversee and manage Philippine water resources, Senator Grace Poe said today.

Poe said the specter of water scarcity has always haunted the country amid rising demand, climate change, population growth, among other factors, that necessitate immediate and comprehensive government response.

“We expect that the formation of the new office will pave the way for the establishment of a Department of Water Resources that we have been advocating in the Senate,” she emphasized.

“What we need now is a body mandated by law to lead and consolidate the comprehensive development and management of water resources in the country,” she pointed out.

The proposed department shall set the policy for water supply, sewerage and septage management, and ensure that consumer welfare is prioritized.

“We must develop and manage well this precious resource as every Filipino deserves access to clean and safe water,” Poe stressed.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

[Austin's Manila visit to bring deal on expanded base access—PH official](#)

WASHINGTON — U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin's visit to the Philippines this week is expected to bring an announcement of expanded U.S. access to military bases in the country, a senior Philippines official said on Tuesday.

Washington is eager to extend its security options in the Philippines as part of efforts to deter any move by China against self-ruled Taiwan, while Manila wants to bolster defense of its territorial claims in the disputed South China Sea.

U.S. officials have said Washington hopes for an access agreement during Austin's visit, which began on Tuesday, and that Washington has proposed additional sites under an Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA) dating back to 2014.

"There's a push for another four or five of these EDCA sites," the a senior Philippines official said. "We are going to have definitely an announcement of some sort. I just don't know how many would be the final outcome of that."

The official declined to be named because of the sensitivity of the matter.

Manila and Washington have a mutual defense treaty and have been discussing U.S. access to four additional bases on the northern land mass of Luzon, the closest part of the Philippines to Taiwan, as well as another on the island of Palawan, facing the disputed Spratly Islands in the South China Sea.

EDCA allows U.S. access to Philippine bases for joint training, pre-positioning of equipment and building of facilities such as runways, fuel storage and military housing, but not a permanent presence. The U.S. military already has access to five such sites.

The Philippines official said increased U.S. access needed to benefit both countries.

"We don't want it to be directed to just for the use of the United States purely for their defense capabilities ... it has to be mutually beneficial," he said.

"And obviously, we want to make sure that no country will see ... anything that we're doing ... was directed towards any conflict or anything of that sort," he added.

Manila's priorities in its agreements with Washington were to boost its defense capabilities and interoperability with U.S. forces and to improve its ability to cope with climate change and natural disasters, the official said.

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PTV

10 PH schools among world's most sustainable universities

By: Gabriela Baron

Ten Philippine schools were included among the world's most sustainable universities, according to the 2022 Universitas Indonesia (UI) GreenMetric World University Rankings.

The De La Salle University-Dasmariñas (DLSU-D) emerged as the most sustainable university in the country at the 274th place with a total score of 7,100.

DLSU-D was followed by De La Salle University Manila with a total score and Tarlac Agricultural University at 302nd and 317th spots, respectively.

Other Philippine universities that made it to the list were: Batangas State University (351), Mariano Marcos State University (356), Bataan Peninsula State University (567), Mindanao State University Iligan-Institute of Technology (650), Xavier University Ateneo de Cagayan (664), Ateneo de Davao University (758), and Manila Central University (804).

The Netherlands' Wageningen University & Research topped this year's ranking with a total score of 9,300.

This year's rankings featured 956 universities in 80 countries.

Universities are ranked based on 39 indicators in six criteria, including setting and infrastructure, energy and climate change, waste, water, transportation, and education and research.

SUNSTAR

[DENR-7 to strengthen protection of wetlands](#)

By: Earl Kim Padriona

An OFFICIAL of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR-7) told the public to protect, preserve, and maintain the wetlands in the region as it is crucial in combating climate change.

Reginaldo Bueno, an Officer of the DENR Conservation and Development Division said in "Kapihan sa PIA" program on Wednesday, February 1, 2023, that wetlands provide protection as they serve a natural water impounding area and can be a source of food and water not only for humans but also for the animals.

He added that the world will be celebrating 'World Wetland Day' tomorrow, February 2, 2023, as a global awareness program to reverse the rapid loss and preservation of wetlands across the world. In Central Visayas, Bueno said that the agency has identified 56 inland wetlands and over 316 across the country.

He added that the agency has declared some wetlands as protected areas such as the Danao Lake in Camotes Island and Lake Lanao in Daanbantayan. One of the most recognized wetlands in the region is the Olango Island Wildlife Sanctuary which supports a large concentration of migratory birds and other wildlife in the country.

Bueno added that wetlands host a wide range of ecosystems such as wildlife and plants.

The Republic Act No. 11038 or "National Integrated Protected Areas System (NIPAS) Act of 1992" states that Wetlands involve a variety of inland habitats such as marshes, peatlands, floodplains, rivers, and lakes, and those in the coastal areas such as saltmarshes, mangroves, intertidal mudflats, and seagrass beds, and also coral reefs and including other marine areas that are no deeper than six meters at low, as well as it considers human-made wetlands such as dams, reservoirs, rice paddies, and wastewater treatment ponds and lagoons. (EHP)

[\[Opinion\] The playbook against anti-climate disinformation](#)

By: John Leo Algo

THE road to COP28 is already off to a rough start. The appointment of Sultan al-Jaber as COP28 President-designate received heavy criticism and backlash. While currently the climate envoy of host country United Arab Emirates, he is also the head of the Abu Dhabi National Oil Company, one of the world's biggest oil companies.

This presents an evident conflict of interest, with the burning of coal, oil, and gas being the primary cause of the climate crisis. Yet it also points to an even deeper issue: that of fossil fuel interests having a more prominent voice in recent climate negotiations.

Last year's summit in Egypt saw a 25 percent increase in representation from oil and gas corporations, which further adds to the emerging trend of inclusivity issues in recent COPs. Their influence at the negotiating table led to the conference completely failing to enhance commitments to curb greenhouse gas emissions aligned with limiting global warming to 1.5°C.

With a known oil advocate now at the helm of the Dubai climate talks, expect the fossil fuel industry to be even more emboldened in their lobbying against genuine solutions that our world actually needs. Part of this is spreading misinformation, if not outright denial of the nature and severity of the climate crisis.

'Wokewashing'

With the reality of the climate crisis no longer to be convincingly denied due to scientific consensus, fossil fuel interests have now shifted to delaying or blocking meaningful climate action. A recent study shows that these groups chose to spread anti-climate messaging on social media based on common narratives.

One of these narratives is that fossil fuels are still necessary for long-term human development. This is complemented by a new trend known as “wokewashing,” featuring claims that climate actions would actually worsen environmental destruction and social injustices. They frequently cite how green technologies have far more negative impacts, using electric vehicles (EVs) as an example.

It is true that minerals are needed for powering EVs and other green technologies, which brings up concerns about the environmental and social impacts of mining. However, it has already been proven by scientists that these adverse effects do not

outweigh the benefits of EVs, especially when compared to technologies based on traditional fuels.

Anti-climate attacks have also criticized the establishment of a loss and damage finance mechanism at COP27 as being an "unfair transfer of wealth to the developing world." Such posts used arguments like costs of living in developed nations as basis, which gained some traction within nations such as the United States and Australia

Yet these variations of the "wokewashing" narrative conveniently leaves out the undisputed fact that the burning of fossil fuels is by far the largest reason for the climate crisis and its devastating impacts. It is blatantly insensitive and unjust to developing countries like the Philippines, whose millions of residents are among the most vulnerable to said impacts caused by these carbon majors.

While climate denial still got significant social media engagements during COP27, branding climate actors as alarmists has become among the most popular of the anti-climate narratives. Some of these social media posts claimed that protesters and activists are elitist and delusional.

Others delved into outrageous comments and conspiracy theories that are eerily similar to the ones that spread around to downplay the severity, if not invalidate the threat of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Yet we all know how devastating the pandemic has been on our economies and societies, years after its onset. The impacts of Covid-19 on every aspect of our life and our world are as real as that of the climate crisis.

Road to Dubai

Steps have begun to be taken within UN processes to address disinformation. At COP27, an expert group report presented recommendations to address greenwashing, specifically the net-zero pledges made by corporations. It criticized these commitments as weak and deceiving, stating that entities that are still investing in fossil fuel expansion and other environmentally-harmful activities, and selectively promoting their green practices while hiding pollutive ones cannot be truly net-zero.

Among their key recommendations is ensuring that the commitments of these corporations are aligned with the pathways of limiting global warming to 1.5°C, as assessed by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. Such pledges must be accompanied by detailed and concrete transition plans away from pollutive energy

sources and into renewable energies, reinforced by accountability and transparency mechanisms.

Climate advocates also need to enhance their monitoring of social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter that have been hotbeds of disinformation in recent years. Activities may range from calling on leaders and managers of these platforms to remove accounts and pages that spread false news to engaging in online educational and awareness-raising campaigns to counter anti-climate communications.

Throughout the months leading to and during COP28, advocacy groups and individuals must also maximize all available spaces and platforms for meaningful engagements with policymakers across all levels of governance. They must be prepared to challenge any claims to be made by fossil fuel lobbyists, to ensure that adequate and appropriate policies and solutions related to mitigation, adaptation, loss and damage, and other key workstreams will be enacted and implemented.

For so long, fossil fuel giants and their allies have been allowed to manipulate the truth at the expense of the well-being of billions worldwide. This time, we have a chance to change the script and push forward global actions to the level needed to address the climate crisis.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres once said that there must be "zero tolerance" for greenwashing. It is up to the COP28 Presidency to prove there will be no room for anything other than what is true and what is needed in the best interests of humankind at the forefront of global climate action.

THE MANILA TIMES

[DoST opens call for proposals for 2025 funding](#)

THE Department of Science and Technology (DoST) opens its call for proposals for research and development (R&D) funding for the year 2025 in Mabalacat, Pampanga. On the first leg of its nationwide campaign in this city, DoST encourages researchers and scientists to submit their proposals for 2025 via the DoST Project Management Information System (DPMIS) from May 1 to 31, 2023.

DoST Secretary Renato Solidum Jr. led the event, saying: "Our role here would be to support innovation and provide a nurturing environment for researchers in the country. Ultimately, all our efforts are geared towards attaining higher productivity for industry, boosting our economy and attaining a better quality of life for every Filipino through technological and innovative solutions."

The call for proposals has set priority areas from the four R&D councils of DoST.

For Industry, Energy and Emerging Technology category, project proposals should focus on the following priority areas: energy, construction, utilities, transportation, food processing, mining and minerals, metals and engineering, advanced materials and nanotechnology, optics and photonics, information and communication technologies, electronics, artificial intelligence (AI), space technology application, convergence of emerging technologies/industry 4.0 and smarter cities, environment, disaster risk reduction-climate change adaptation (DRR-CCA), unmanned vehicle systems, creative industries (games, animation and film); capability development; and science communication.

For Health Research and Development, priority areas are Drug Discovery and Development (Tuklas Lunas), functional foods, nutrition and safety, re-emerging and emerging diseases, OMIC technologies for health, diagnostics, biomedical engineering for health, digital and frontier technologies for health, disaster risk reduction and climate adaptation in health, and mental health.

For agriculture, priority research areas in crops include mango, coffee and sugarcane. DoST is also looking for R&D projects in managing economically important emerging pests and animal feeds resource enhancement.

In basic research, priority areas are: 1) those that generate discoveries and new scientific knowledge/information; 2) those that forge linkages between the government

particularly local government units (LGUs), academe, industry sector, and civil society; 3) those that serve as basis for evidence-based policy making and program development, through the fusion of science and the arts, technology and innovation; and 4) those that ensure translation and transfer of social technologies to the people and various publics.

DoST encourages early submission of quality and relevant research proposals. Interested parties may visit the DoST Project Management Information System (DPMIS) at this website <https://dpmis.dost.gov.ph/>

RSU hosts national confab on climate change

THE Romblon State University (RSU) hosted recently the 12th National Convention on Disaster Risk Reduction and Management, and Climate Change Adaptation and the 3rd Students' Actions Vital to the Environment and Mother Earth Movement (SAVE ME) Volunteer Award held at Romblon State University Tablas Campus in Tablas Island, Romblon.

According to RSU President Merian Catajay-Mani, the confab's theme was "Future Thinking: Localizing Post-Pandemic Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Resiliency."

During the opening program, Bohol Island State University (BISU) President Elpidio Magante read the message from President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr.

BISU will be the host in next year's national convention.

Ten outstanding volunteers received the SAVE ME Movement's Awards including Mani as Mover for Environment Education and Advocacy.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

Marcos approves creation of water management office

By: Helen Flores

MANILA, Philippines — A water resource management office will be created under the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to ensure sufficient water supply for the country.

President Marcos approved a proposal seeking to establish the new office during a multisectoral meeting at Malacañang yesterday.

“That’s why we have to strengthen the mandate of the Water Resources Management Office (WRMO). We have to bring them together so that they are all following the overall plan,” Marcos said.

Marcos stressed the importance of having a roadmap for all water management agencies.

“So that whatever the relationship we come to with MWSS (Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System), the Local Water Utilities Administration (LWUA) and the Water Board, DENR and this new Water Management Office, it has to be cohesive in the sense that the recommendation of the management office must be followed,” he said.

The President suggested that the WRMO’s first action should be reducing the country’s reliance on groundwater and deep wells as well as managing surface water supply.

“That’s as far as I could tell. We have sufficient... there’s enough water in the Philippines, we don’t just use (water), we also waste it,” he said partly in Filipino.

According to the Presidential Communications Office, an executive order will be crafted to enable the National Water Resources Board, MWSS and LWUA and the other water-related agencies of the DENR to have a collaborative mechanism under the WRMO to implement water management programs.

The WRMO will be under the DENR and will be a transitory body pending the creation of a Water Resources Department, one of the priority measures of the Marcos administration.

Marcos said the agency would set policies and implement structural reforms on water management to address issues including the critical supply of fresh water.

The WRMO's main functions include formulating and ensuring the implementation of the Integrated Water Management Plan (IWMP), which will integrate various plans of different agencies.

The IWMP, which will serve as the main guiding document for the WRMO, will respond to the current environmental challenges and manage water resources through a concerted government effort engaging various sectors.

The WRMO is also tasked to champion, together with the Presidential Legislative Liaison Office, the passage of a law creating an apex body, collaborate closely with all relevant agencies including local government units, private sector, civil society and the communities as well as perform other functions under the DENR.

The Philippines ranks among the world's rapidly urbanizing countries, with over 47 percent of its population living in cities in 2021, requiring large water projects including bulk water supply and sanitation infrastructure.

It also has a significant part in the country's energy mix, as hydropower represents seven percent of the total energy production in the country, and its contribution can be increased by as much as 15 percent by 2030.

[New law needed to manage minerals for clean energy shift — study](#)

By: Gaea Katreena Cabico

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippines needs a new mining law on the management of minerals needed for the shift to renewable energy and that law should make social and environmental justice a priority, according to the Legal Rights and Natural Resources Center.

The Philippines is the fifth most mineral-rich country in the world, producing minerals used in clean energy technologies such as chromium, cobalt, copper, nickel, and silver.

In 2020, the Philippines was the second biggest producer of nickel, accounting for 14% of the world's total supply. It also has the fourth largest copper and cobalt reserves.

Mining accounts for less than one percent of the country's gross domestic product. The extraction of minerals needed for renewable energy technologies, meanwhile, drives deforestation and the climate crisis, threatens water sources, and displaces people.

According to a discussion paper published by the Legal Rights and Natural Resources Center, 60% of mineral deposits and 49% of mining projects in the Philippines are found in ancestral domains — areas where the rights of indigenous peoples' communities are protected by law. The extractive sector has been also linked to human rights violations and the killings of environmental defenders.

LRC called for the passage of the Alternative Minerals Management Bill, which proposes a transformation of the present minerals regime by balancing the need for minerals with environmental, social, and economic considerations. A bill filed by Sen. Risa Hontiveros has been pending at the Senate's environment committee since July 2022.

"The bill is anchored in the climate justice discourse and rationalizes mining under a national industrialization framework, where only strategic minerals will be mined," said Maya Quirino, advocacy coordinator of LRC, said.

There is no counterpart measure at the House of Representatives yet, although Makabayan lawmakers have filed the People's Mining Bill. The bill also seeks to create a new regime for the mining industry that is anchored on social justice, respect for people's rights and welfare, environmental conservation, and national industrialization.

The LRC noted the country's current mining framework under the Mining Act of 1995, "merely echoed the investment-centered, export-oriented track of the liberalizing national economic policy at the time."

New mining regime

The AMBB has an exhaustive list of no-go mining zones that include old growth forests, mangrove forests, prime agricultural lands, critical watersheds and habitats, climate-vulnerable areas, small-island ecosystems, sacred sites, and burial grounds.

The proposed legislation also puts decision-making in the hands of communities and local government unit and will "ensure the right to free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) and rights of redress for affected communities as well as being informed by an assessment of the true costs and benefits of mineral extraction," the LRC paper reads.

LRC also stressed that just mineral transition should be integrated in government policy blueprints such as the Philippine Development Plan and the Philippine Energy Plan. The proposed sunset review of the Renewable Energy Act could also interrogate the role of transition minerals.

More local ordinances creating no-go zones are also needed, the legal and policy research institution added.

Just minerals transition

The concept of just transition means that shifts to cleaner forms of energy and transport should address how these will affect the rights of workers, and consider the human rights issues in the wind and solar value chain.

LRC stressed that a just minerals transition goes beyond mere "responsible mining" or "climate-smart mining," as it attempts to minimize or optimize the role of mining in a low-carbon future.

"A just minerals transition has the following attributes, based on and synthesizing current literature: it is post-extractivist; it is based on justice; it integrates, but also recognizes the limits to circularity; and it reinforces accountability in mineral sourcing," the paper read.

"A just minerals transition must be rights-based, upholding the entitlements of mining-affected communities," it added.

Former President Rodrigo Duterte pursued mining as an economic recovery strategy from the COVID-19 pandemic by lifting a ban on open pit mining. This is echoed by President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

MANILA BULLETIN

[CHR urges gov't to hold liable businesses violating environment, human rights laws](#)

By: Czarina Nicole Ong Ki

The Commission on Human Rights (CHR) has urged the Climate Change Commission (CCC) “to adopt measures to help hold accountable businesses in violation of environmental and human rights laws.”

The CHR’s suggestion was aired as it welcomed the inclusion of an accelerated climate change agenda in the Philippine Development Plan (PDP) for the years 2023 to 2028.

The five-year PDP was developed by the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) together with other government agencies and stakeholders.

Chapter 15 of PDP entitled “Accelerate Climate Action and Strengthen Disaster Resilience,” identifies specific goals for communities and institutions to build climate resilience and reduce disaster risks, the CHR said.

It pointed out that the PDP program is crucial since there are only seven years left until the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change meets its deadline to reduce global gas emissions by half in 2030.

In 2022, the CHR released an inquiry on climate change and made several recommendations to the government. These were collaboration of government agencies towards innovative climate solutions, adoption of a National Action Plan on business and human rights to support the implementation of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, and a just transition towards an environmentally stable economy.

“CHR notes that developments have been made regarding the above-listed recommendations –PDP 2023-2028 includes integrated and comprehensive climate action between and among government, partners, and stakeholders.

In addition, the CHR said the five-year plan names strategies for enhancing ecosystem resilience and enabling transition to a ‘low-carbon’ economy.

It also recognized the CCC for “updating the National Climate Change Action Plan and the country’s Nationally Determined Contributions.”

With all these government’s efforts, the CHR said it will “continue to pursue meaningful collaboration with government actors by advising them on climate migration and adaptation through policy advisories, as well as in the development of laws and legal frameworks based on international climate agreements.”

It assured that the CHR “will also engage in active dialogue with businesses and the private sector in order to eliminate acts of obfuscation and conduct due diligence of environmental and human rights impacts, including redress mechanisms for victims of climate change-related events.”

It then pointed out the pronouncement of President Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr. during the UN General Assembly meeting on Sept. 21, 2022 – “inequalities and inequities within and among countries continue to persist, and they continue to demand urgent action.”

“Until climate justice is achieved, CHR commits to be faithful to its mandate, particularly for those severely impacted but have least contributed to the climate crises,” it stressed.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

Scientific research vital in addressing climate change: CCC

By: Ruth Abbey Gita-Carlos

MANILA – The Climate Change Commission (CCC) on Wednesday sought cooperation and collaboration with the local research community to ensure the country's success in the fight against climate change.

During the 34th Regional Symposium on Research and Development Highlights in Batac City, Ilocos Norte province, CCC vice chairperson and executive director Robert Borje acknowledged the importance of scientific research in addressing climate change.

Borje said research and development played a vital role in strengthening the local communities' capacity to implement climate change adaptation and mitigation plans.

"Science is key for our collective success. The 34th Regional Symposium on Research and Development Highlights is critical to the advancement of home-grown and developed science to drive decision-makers to make climate change policy decisions that matter, up to the barangay (village) level," he said.

"To our local researchers present here today, we need you. The country needs you. And most importantly, our shared future needs you," he added.

Borje also pledged that the CCC will continue building and strengthening partnerships with the academe, private sector, development partners and relevant stakeholders such as scientists and innovators to deliver and implement more climate actions "with tangible results."

Borje, accompanied by CCC Commissioners Rachel Anne Herrera and Albert dela Cruz Sr., graced the opening ceremony of the annual symposium organized by the Mariano Marcos State University (MMSU) and the Ilocos Agriculture, Aquatic Resources Research and Development Consortium.

The CCC delegation was welcomed by Dr. Shirley Agrupis, MMSU president, and Dr. Nathaniel Alibuyog, MMSU vice chairperson for research and extension, and member of the CCC's National panel of technical experts.

Herrera and Dela Cruz also expressed their support for MMSU's strong and successful implementation of programs related to environmental sustainability and climate action.

This, as Herrera acknowledged the Ilocos region's efforts in implementing climate change adaptation and mitigation measures to develop "resilient and adaptive" communities.

"This vision, together with the tools of science, will help us prepare for climate change as a region and as a climate vulnerable developing country," she said.

Considering that climate change is a "big problem," Dela Cruz said scientific research and development would serve as the foundation to have a "sustainable food security" in the country.

With the theme, "Pagkain sa Bansa ay Siguraduhin, Likas-yamang Produksyon ng Agrikultura't Pangisdaan ay Isulong Natin Ayon sa Pagbabago ng Panahon," the annual symposium, which will be held from Feb. 1 to 3, will focus on the presentation and recognition of research and development technologies and breakthroughs.

The three-day event will be attended by representatives from the national government agencies, academic and scientific communities, local government units, the private sector, and non-governmental organizations at the MMSU's Teatro Ilocandia in Batac.

The MMSU, in collaboration with the CCC, also organized the Local Planners Forum to discuss the development and enhancement of Local Climate Change Action Plans (LCCAPs) and access to the People's Survival Fund (PSF).

The forum will be attended by planning officers, environment and natural resources officers and disaster risk reduction and management officers from 24 local government units in Ilocos Norte.

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