



NEWS ROUNDUP

08 FEBRUARY 2023 [08:00 am]

- 'Green' trade policy to help mitigate climate change impact — ADB
- Costs could rise even more in 2023—and thousands of CEOs blame climate change
- Climate change is contributing to the rise of superbugs, new UN report says
- DENR, PhilSA to establish natural resources database
- DOST calls on innovators in Metro Manila, South Luzon to avail of research funding
- DENR-EMB seeks zero waste goal
- Senate bills seek to protect more habitats across country
- Women's club conducts tree planting in La Mesa
- RCEP to help PH pursue energy blueprint: DOE exec
- New EDCA sites to be known once groundwork completed: DND
- Public participation urged for 2024 budget
- SEC participates in Philippine Investment Conference 2023
- DENR, PhilSA join forces to create natural resources geospatial database

BUSINESS WORLD

['Green' trade policy to help mitigate climate change impact — ADB](#)

By: Luisa Marica Jacinta Jocson

GREEN TRADE and investment policies are needed to help mitigate the impact of climate change in the Asia and the Pacific, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) said.

CNBC

[Costs could rise even more in 2023—and thousands of CEOs blame climate change](#)

By: Natasha Piñon

Thousands of CEOs say they expect 2023's high prices to rise even more over the course of the year. Their reason: climate change.

CNN

[Climate change is contributing to the rise of superbugs, new UN report says](#)

By: Janelle Chavez

Climate change and antimicrobial resistance are two of the greatest threats to global health, according to a new report from the United Nations Environment Programme.

CNN PHILIPPINES

[DENR, PhilSA to establish natural resources database](#)

Metro Manila (CNN Philippines, February 7) — The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the Philippine Space Agency (PhilSA) signed a memorandum of agreement on Monday to jointly create a national environment and natural resources (ENR) geospatial database.

MANILA BULLETIN

[DOST calls on innovators in Metro Manila, South Luzon to avail of research funding](#)

By: Dhel Nazario

The Department of Science and Technology is urging researchers to avail of its research and development (R&D) funding during the second leg of its Call for Proposals 2025 campaign at Acacia Hotel in Alabang, Muntinlupa on Wednesday, Feb. 1.

MANILA STANDARD

[DENR-EMB seeks zero waste goal](#)

By: Rio N. Araja

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) is urging the public to be part of the solution to take action to achieve zero waste.

[Senate bills seek to protect more habitats across country](#)

By: Macon Ramos-Araneta

Sen. Cynthia A. Villar is seeking to include more protected areas in the Philippines to preserve the country's biodiversity.

[Women's club conducts tree planting in La Mesa](#)

In observance of its 102nd founding anniversary, the National Federation of Women's Clubs of the Philippines (NFWC) led by its president Linda Gonzalez conducted a tree planting activity the other day at the Million Trees Nursery and Eco Learning Center inside the La Mesa Watershed in Quezon City.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

[RCEP to help PH pursue energy blueprint: DOE exec](#)

By: Kris Crismundo

MANILA – An energy official said on Tuesday the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) will help the Philippines achieve its long-term plan for energy security while contributing to mitigating the impacts of climate change.

[New EDCA sites to be known once groundwork completed: DND](#)

By: Priam Nepomuceno

MANILA – The locations of the four additional facilities under the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA) between the Philippines and the United States would be made public once necessary works and preparations are completed, the Department of National Defense (DND) bared Tuesday.

THE MANILA TIMES

[Public participation urged for 2024 budget](#)

By: Niña Myka Pauline Arceo

THE Department of Budget and Management (DBM) is urging the public to take part in the government's budget planning process to ensure responsive allocation and help the country achieve its development goals.

[SEC participates in Philippine Investment Conference 2023](#)

By: Kelvin Lester K. Lee

I HAD the honor of speaking alongside business leaders, the industry's top minds, and other members of the finance and investment community at the Philippine Investment Conference 2023 last January 25 to 27 at the Raffles Makati. The theme of this year's

event, hosted by CFA Society Philippines, was "The Way Forward: Working Toward an Inclusive, Resilient and Sustainable World."

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

[DENR, PhilSA join forces to create natural resources geospatial database](#)

By: Gaea Katreena Cabico

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Environment and Natural Resources has partnered with the Philippine Space Agency to create a national environment and natural resources geospatial database that will aid the agency in the implementation of government projects.

Information and Knowledge Management Division

BUSINESS WORLD

'Green' trade policy to help mitigate climate change impact — ADB

By: Luisa Marica Jacinta Jocson

GREEN TRADE and investment policies are needed to help mitigate the impact of climate change in the Asia and the Pacific, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) said.

“Asia generates around half of global carbon dioxide emissions, at the same time it also accounts for 40% of national disasters nationwide,” ADB Chief Economist Albert Park said in a virtual briefing on Tuesday.

“International trade and investment have been drivers of Asia’s economic growth and industrialization. With climate change looming, trade and investment policies must be aligned to support climate action,” he added.

ADB Principal Economist Jong Woo Kang said that Asia’s regional integration relies on trade, investment and finance.

“The region has great potential to deepen value chains in high-tech and services industries. Digital technologies and regional cooperation could help streamline remittance inflows and accelerate tourism recovery,” he added.

However, he said that Asia has been both a net importer and exporter of carbon emissions due to its rapid economic growth and industrialization.

“As economic size grows, it produces more emissions. The region remains the most carbon intensive exporter and importer. We have classified most carbon intensive sectors. These sectors account for 61% of Asia’s exports, (showing) Asia’s bias towards dirtier industries,” he added.

Mr. Kang said that cross border investment could be subdued this year, particularly in mergers and acquisitions because of tightening liquidity conditions, a looming global slowdown, and the impact of the Ukraine war.

According to the ADB, digitalization could help lower transaction costs of remittances.

“Remittance inflows were quite resilient after dipping slightly by 1.5%. They rebounded quickly to 3.4% growth in 2021 and 2022 it is expected to increase by up to 4%,” Mr. Kang said.

“Remittance costs are the major bottlenecks. In terms of mode of payment, mobile money shows the most efficient mode of payment. The region can benefit from expanding digital infrastructure,” he added.

The ADB also said that tourism can be boosted with regional cooperation.

“Going forward, we believe regional cooperation will help to address border measures, expand tourism infrastructure, and harness digital technology,” Mr. Kang said.

Cooperation is also crucial for food and energy security, the ADB said.

“Going forward, we believe in prohibiting export restrictions through international cooperation to ensure seamless flow of essential goods,” he added.

The bank said that the region must better integrate trade and investment policy into climate action by shifting to more services-driven economies and taking advantage of technological advancements.

“Facilitating trade in environmental goods and services can help bring down the cost of adopting green technologies and promote knowledge spillovers,” Mr. Kang said.

CNBC

[Costs could rise even more in 2023—and thousands of CEOs blame climate change](#)

By: Natasha Piñon

Thousands of CEOs say they expect 2023's high prices to rise even more over the course of the year. Their reason: climate change.

A majority of company leaders expect to see anywhere from a “moderate” to “very large” impact on costs due to climate change within the next year, according to a recent survey of more than 4,400 CEOs from around the world, conducted by accounting and consulting firm PwC.

In recent months, climate-fueled disasters have killed crops, eroded infrastructure, impeded energy supplies and prevented workers' from staying on the job amid record heat. Such incidents have led environmental experts and economists to establish a link between climate change and inflation.

Climate change isn't considered a primary driver of today's inflation, but economists say the connection will deepen as the planet continues to warm — making the link more noticeable and acute.

“If we ignore it and don't do anything about climate change, it will become a staggering cost,” Suzi Kerr, chief economist at the nonprofit Environmental Defense Fund, told The Hill last year. “And it will have a huge impact not only on grocery bills, but many other aspects of our ordinary lives.”

At the corporate level, only CEOs who feel directly exposed to climate change are likely to take steps to address it, PwC's survey found.

That “creates risks of its own,” the report's authors wrote, adding that climate change “won't be solved if the only companies working on it are those that face immediate financial impact.”

Many company-driven climate efforts aren't even particularly successful, the report noted.

Popular decarbonization efforts, like moving toward zero-emissions electricity or increasing energy efficiency, are increasingly seen as too little, too late: There's already

enough carbon in the atmosphere to make increased warming all but inevitable, according to a 2022 report from the United Nations.

Then, there's the matter of "greenwashing" — overselling your environmental commitments to seem consumer-friendly. In Europe, 42% of "green claims" made by companies were found to be "exaggerated, false or deceptive," according to 2021 research from the European Commission and national consumer authorities.

Ironically, greenwashing actually damages a company's relationship with its customers, with the exception of brands so highly trusted that people are willing to give them a pass, research shows.

One potential solution: Find places where environmental impacts help your company either save or make more money, the report's authors suggest.

Nike, for instance, has spent the past decade using a form of fabric weaving that uses less material and labor time, according to the Los Angeles Times. The company's expenditures on materials, transportation and waste disposal have fallen — and millions of pounds of potential waste have been kept out of landfills, the Times reported in 2019.

Nestle's thinner plastic water bottles and Walmart's efforts to recycle trash into new products have had similar effects, the Times noted.

"We've moved past this concept that business versus the environment is a tradeoff," Environmental Defense Fund executive vice president Tom Murray told the Times. "The business benefits were always there, but more and more companies are going after them."

CNN

[Climate change is contributing to the rise of superbugs, new UN report says](#)

By: Janelle Chavez

Climate change and antimicrobial resistance are two of the greatest threats to global health, according to a new report from the United Nations Environment Programme.

The report, titled “Bracing for Superbugs,” highlights the role of climate change and other environmental factors contributing to the rise of antimicrobial resistance. It was announced Tuesday at the Sixth Meeting of the Global Leaders Group on Antimicrobial Resistance in Barbados.

Antimicrobial resistance or AMR happens when germs such as bacteria, viruses and fungi develop the ability to defeat the medications designed to kill them.

“The development and spread of AMR means that antimicrobials used to prevent and treat infections in humans, animals and plants might turn ineffective, with modern medicine no longer able to treat even mild infections,” the UN Environment Programme said in a news release.

Roughly 5 million deaths worldwide were associated with antimicrobial resistance in 2019, and the annual toll is expected to increase to 10 million by 2050 if steps aren’t taken to stop the spread of antimicrobial resistance, according to the report.

In the US, there are nearly 3 million antimicrobial-resistant infections each year, and more than 35,000 people die as a result, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says.

Antimicrobials are commonly used in cleaning products, plant pesticides and medications to kill and prevent the spread of germs among people, animals and crops.

Drug resistance can develop naturally, but experts say the overuse of antimicrobials in people, animals and food production has accelerated the process. The microorganisms that survive these chemicals are stronger and more powerful, and they can spread their drug-resistant genes to germs that have never been exposed to antimicrobials.

The focus so far has largely been on excessive antimicrobial use, but experts say there is growing evidence that environmental factors play a significant role in the development, transmission and spread of antimicrobial resistance.

“Climate change, pollution, changes in our weather patterns, more rainfall, more closely packed, dense cities and urban areas – all of this facilitates the spread of antibiotic resistance. And I am certain that this is only going to go up with time unless we take relatively drastic measures to curb this,” said Dr. Scott Roberts, an infectious diseases specialist at Yale School of Medicine, who was not involved with the new UN report.

Climate change and antimicrobial resistance

The climate crisis worsens antimicrobial resistance in several ways. Research has shown that increased temperatures increase both the rate of bacterial growth and the rate of the spread of antibiotic-resistant genes between microorganisms.

“As we get a more extreme climate, especially as it warms, the gradients that drive the evolution of resistance will actually accelerate. So, by curbing temperature rises and reducing the extremity of events, we can actually then fundamentally curb the probability of evolving new resistance,” Dr. David Graham, a professor of ecosystems engineering at Newcastle University and one of the UN report’s authors, said at a news conference ahead of the report’s release.

Experts also say severe flooding as a result of climate change can lead to conditions of overcrowding, poor sanitation and increased pollution, which are known to increase infection rates and antimicrobial resistance as human waste, heavy metals and other pollutants in water create favorable conditions for bugs to develop resistance.

“The same drivers that cause environmental degradation are worsening the antimicrobial resistance problem. The impacts of antimicrobial resistance could destroy our health and food systems,” Inger Andersen, the UN Environment Programme’s executive director, said at the news conference.

Making diseases harder to treat

Environmental pressures are creating bugs that thrive in the human body, which experts say is unusual for some species.

“There’s one hypothesis from a prominent mycologist who suggests that the reason the body’s temperature is 98.6 is because that is the temperature where fungi can’t grow that well. And so, now we’re seeing *Candida auris* and some of the other new microbes that have come up that really grow quite well – even at temperatures of 98.6 in the human body. And so I think climate change, really selecting for these organisms to

adapt to a warmer climate, is going to increase the odds that there's infection in humans," Roberts said.

Such opportunistic infections jeopardize medical advancements like joint replacements, organ transplants and chemotherapy – procedures in which patients have a significant risk of infection and require effective antibiotics.

Drug-resistant infections can make treatment difficult or even impossible. Roberts says that resorting to "last-ditch treatments" is "never a good scenario from the patient level because there are reasons we don't use them up front," such as organ toxicity and failure.

"When somebody does present with a drug-resistant bacteria or fungus and we really need to rely on one of these last-line antibiotics, it's usually a challenge to treat from the outset. And so the patients really don't do as well as a result," he said. "In rare circumstances, we run out of options entirely, and in that case, there's really nothing we can do. Fortunately, those cases remain quite rare, but I am certain that with this growing antibiotic resistance problem, we'll see these increasing frequency over time."

Actions to fight antimicrobial resistance

Experts say that both climate change and antimicrobial resistance have been worsened by and can be improved by human actions. One critical step is to limit antibiotic overuse and misuse.

"Antibiotics and antifungals do not work on viruses, such as colds and the flu. These drugs save lives. But, anytime they are used, they can lead to side effects and antimicrobial resistance," the UN report's authors wrote.

The authors also emphasize that the health of people, animals, plants and the environment are closely linked and interdependent, and they call on governments to identify policies to limit antibiotic use in agriculture and reduce environmental pollution.

Finally, experts say, steps to reduce climate change are steps to limit antimicrobial resistance.

"Whatever we can do on an individual level to kind of reduce the impact of climate change, really, that's kind of only worsening this problem, as well as pollution and urbanization and in dense, crowded areas. Although I know from the individual level that's a hard thing to change," Roberts said.

CNN PHILIPPINES

[DENR, PhilSA to establish natural resources database](#)

Metro Manila (CNN Philippines, February 7) — The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the Philippine Space Agency (PhilSA) signed a memorandum of agreement on Monday to jointly create a national environment and natural resources (ENR) geospatial database.

“A geospatial platform is fundamental for us in terms of establishing the physical basis of our natural resources, and in terms of our wanting to inventory them for strategic and critical development of our country,” DENR Secretary Antonia Loyzaga said in a statement.

Under the agreement, PhilSA will be responsible in “developing and generating maps, systems and tools on a national level that analyzes vulnerabilities and impacts of climate change and disasters, among many others.”

Meanwhile, the DENR will provide information or data required by PhilSA to develop and generate maps and other field data.

With this project, a Geospatial Database Office was also established within the DENR which will be composed of science experts and representatives from the academe.

MANILA BULLETIN

[DOST calls on innovators in Metro Manila, South Luzon to avail of research funding](#)

By: Dhel Nazario

The Department of Science and Technology is urging researchers to avail of its research and development (R&D) funding during the second leg of its Call for Proposals 2025 campaign at Acacia Hotel in Alabang, Muntinlupa on Wednesday, Feb. 1.

In a statement, DOST stated that the event converged members from industry, the academe, government agencies, communities, and associations to share their ideas and support the country's innovation environment.

"Anticipating future changes and laying out strategic investments for innovation are key factors to national progress," said DOST Secretary Renato U. Solidum, Jr.

"We believe R&D output creates the foundation for our country's continuous development. The proposals submitted today may be the next inspiring initiative towards a better future for the Philippines," he added.

DOST stated that for years, it has invested in high-impact and sustainable programs that are significant in addressing national concerns. This is aligned with the research priorities along four major areas, namely: human well-being promotion, wealth creation, wealth protection, and sustainability.

One of the funded R&D projects in support of the country's fight against Covid-19 is the study led by Dr. Benedict Maralit of the Philippine Genome Center (PGC) related to biosurveillance or the monitoring of COVID-19 cases through whole genome sequencing of the virus from patients. This project aims to use a genomic epidemiology perspective to track the virus and develop a deeper understanding of its characteristics.

As early as 2012, the DOST through the Philippine Council for Health Research and Development (PCHRD) invested more than 900 million pesos in Omics research for health. This funding was used for programs in human multi-omics research which identified possible genetic markers among Filipinos associated with non-communicable diseases such as hypertension, stroke, diabetes, and heart attack. This investment also gave way to the establishment of the PGC not only in Luzon but also its satellite facilities in Visayas and Mindanao, and the launch of the Clinical Genomics Laboratory,

the services of which were in the forefront of the response and genomic biosurveillance during the height of the pandemic.

On the other hand, with the rising oil prices and the negative impact of global warming, DOST poured funds into the E-mobility program which supported the electrification of the transportation system. It brought about the development of e-trikes, e-boats, and the conversion of tricycles in the country.

With the Philippine Council for Industry, Energy, and Emerging Technology Research and Development, an entire ecosystem of electric transport was developed which also included chargers for electric vehicles, research on storage, as well as parts that can be locally fabricated for the maintenance of these new vehicles.

Meanwhile, the Philippine Council for Agriculture, Aquatic, and Natural Resources Research and Development (PCAARRD) of DOST pursued its Industry Strategic S&T Programs (ISPs) in the agriculture, aquatic, and natural resources (AANR) Sector. The council brands its initiatives and outputs as GALING, an acronym for Good Agri-aqua Livelihood Initiatives towards National Goals. In 2016-2022, the council funded programs and projects that led to significant findings in genomics, biotechnology, nanotechnology, and smart farming. Moreover, PCAARRD also noted important milestones in socioeconomics including impact assessment and policy, as well as in technology transfer and promotion.

In August 2015, the National Research Council of the Philippines initiated the country's first comprehensive research program for Lake Lanao, the second-largest lake in the country. Six projects were funded for a comprehensive study of the physical, chemical, biological, socioeconomic, and political impacts of the lake. The projects were conducted by NRCP members from Mindanao State University-Institute of Technology (MSU) and MSU-Marawi to save the lake from degradation caused by human activities. The results of the project provided valuable baseline data for future research and recommendations for the holistic conservation of the lake, which supplies 70% of the power requirements of Mindanao. This initiative is the Council's call for SAKLAW (Sustainable Communities), a priority area under the National Integrated Basic Research Agenda (NIBRA), that supports the protection and sustainability of Philippine lakes.

Some of the priority areas for Industry, Energy, and Emerging Technology include energy; construction; utilities; transportation; food; process; mining and minerals; metals and engineering; advanced materials and nanotechnology. Some Health Research and Development, priority areas are Drug Discovery & Development (Tuklas Lunas®),

functional foods, nutrition and safety, reemerging and emerging diseases, OMIC technologies for health, diagnostics, biomedical engineering for health, digital and frontier technologies for 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.

“From health innovations, nutrition, agricultural and aquatic breakthroughs, to technologies that will support our industry, most especially the MSMEs, R&D promotes excellence and provides the potential to elevate our country’s status and encourage economic growth,” said DOST Undersecretary for R&D Leah J. Buendia.

“We hope that through this Call Conference, we may again fund the next big milestone in supporting our country’s socio-economic goals,” she added.

The period of submission is from March 1 to May 31, 2023. Interested parties may visit the DOST Project Management Information System (DPMIS) at this website <https://dpmis.dost.gov.ph/>

MANILA STANDARD

[DENR-EMB seeks zero waste goal](#)

By: Rio N. Araja

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) is urging the public to be part of the solution to take action to achieve zero waste.

The agency through its Environmental Management Bureau called on the people that it is high time to take responsibility and do their “best to properly dispose waste with zero waste living—reuse, reduce, recycle—on top of everyone’s mindset.”

The DENR said each person’s action matters as the country is already suffering from garbage overload, lack of land to serve as sanitary landfills and even the mismanagement of solid waste disposal systems.

The bureau said it is vital that households and communities have zero waste strategies in place, especially since Republic Act 9003 or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000 has been in effect for 22 years now.

It expressed confidence the newly enacted Extended Producers Responsibility (EPR) Act of 2022 or RA 11898 would remarkably aid in addressing the country’s solid waste and plastic pollution problems.

The EPR Act that lapsed into law on July 30, 2022 mandates enterprises to establish EPR programs that focus on waste reduction, recovery, and recycling of plastic packaging. It also promotes the development of environment-friendly products that advocate sustainable= consumption and production, circular economy, and full responsibility

throughout the life cycle of products.

In January, DENR spearheaded several activities for the dual celebration of National Zero Waste Month with the theme “Stepping Up Solid Waste Management through Efficient Extended Producers’ Responsibility,” and the 22nd anniversary of the signing of RA 9003.

On Feb. 9-10, the EMB will host a conference of various stakeholders for sharing of initiatives toward an efficient EPR and a ceremonial commitment of the industry sector to EPR compliance and submission to the EPR program.

Senate bills seek to protect more habitats across country

By: Macon Ramos-Araneta

Sen. Cynthia A. Villar is seeking to include more protected areas in the Philippines to preserve the country's biodiversity.

Villar, chairperson of the Senate committee on environment and natural resources, said there are still many places in the country experiencing high rates of habitat degradation and biodiversity loss.

In her opening remarks during Tuesday' committee hearing on the country's protected areas, Villar lamented that hotspots have lost around 86% of their original habitat. They are also considered to be significantly threatened due to man-made exploitation and by climate change.

"Hence, there are still many areas in the country, such as wetlands, marine sanctuaries, tropical forests, watersheds, wildlife sanctuaries, among others, that remain under-protected and one certain way of affording protection to these areas is by designating them as protected areas through legislation," she said.

The senator noted that adding more protected areas becomes even more urgent and relevant now due to the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, which runs from 2021 to 2030.

This was declared so that all nations can massively scale up the restoration of destroyed ecosystems in their respective jurisdictions.

Due to this, Villar said it is an opportune time to discuss the merits of the seven bills on six proposed protected areas.

The following bills are:

- Bill expanding the area of an existing legislated protected area;
- SB No. 354 and SB No. 1259 referring to the Paoay Lake Protected Landscape in Ilocos Norte;
- SB No. 1536 referring to the expansion of the Las Pinas-Paranaque Wetland Park, a protected area in Las Piñas and Parañaque;

- SB No. 1691, which refers to the San Francisco Protected Landscape (commonly known as the Mulanay Watershed Forest Reserve) in Quezon Province;
- SB No. 1725 referring to the Alibijaban Protected Landscape and Seascape also in Quezon Province;
- SB No. 355 referring to the Taklong and Tandog Group of Islands Natural Park in Guimaras; and
- SB No. 517, which refers to the Bantayan Group of Islands Protected Landscape and Seascape in Cebu.

Villar recalled that during the 17th Congress, he strongly pushed for the passage of RA No. 11038 or the ENIPAS Act of 2018, which strengthened the legal framework for the establishment, management and maintenance of all designated protected areas in the country.

The Expanded NIPAS Act of 2018 facilitated the legislation of ninety four (94) more protected areas or PAs, in addition to the 13 PAs individually legislated under the original NIPAS law or RA No. 7586.

In the 18th Congress, 7 more areas were declared protected which brought to a total of 114 protected area in the Philippines.

Women's club conducts tree planting in La Mesa

In observance of its 102nd founding anniversary, the National Federation of Women's Clubs of the Philippines (NFWC) led by its president Linda Gonzalez conducted a tree planting activity the other day at the Million Trees Nursery and Eco Learning Center inside the La Mesa Watershed in Quezon City.

"This is a milestone project for NFWC as we observe our anniversary by planting trees and becoming a new partner of the Million Trees Foundation Inc. in our collective effort to save the watersheds that are sources of water and in our fight against climate change," Gonzales said.

Other prominent NFWC officers present include past presidents Mary Jane Ortega and Ester Santa Ana, and officers VP Erlinda Tiu, VP Merlinda Sualibios, Lariden Honorio, Marilyn Aggabao, Maria Theresa Timbol, Fe Soriano.

In a video message, MWSS Trustee and NFWC Director Melanie Lambino cited the importance of planting trees and protecting the watersheds for water security.

For his part, MTFI president and executive director Melandrew Velasco, who served as guest speaker, lauded NFWC and its members for their continuing effort to serve God, country and home by embarking on a nationwide advocacy to plant trees for Mother Earth.

"Thank you for continuing with your mothering duties and in loving and serving our country, this time by joining the movement to plant million of trees to protect our watersheds. I am one with NFWC having published a book on Angela Valdez Ramos, mother of former President Fidel V. Ramos. Angela or Ilang Ramos was one of the leading icons and leaders for women's right to vote in 1937 and in NFWC's eminent role in then led by its president Josefa Llanes Escoda taking care of the Prisoners of War (POW) at Camp O' Donnel in Capas, Tarlac during World 2," Velasco said.

He said that staging their event at Eddie's Barn (dedicated in honor of FVR) or otherwise known as SMC Multi Purpose Center, is serendipitous since the NFWC credo runs parallel with FVR's 4 Ms -Makadiyos, Makatao, Makabayan at Makakalikasan.

In 2005, Velasco was commissioned by FVR to write and publish a book on Angela Valdez Ramos titled "In A Class of Her Own" which was launched at the Manila Hotel in time for the centennial celebration of the Feminist Movement in the Philippines.

To cap the NFWC event, Ylang Ylang samplings were planted at the vicinity of Million Trees Nursery and Eco Learning Center.

For her part, NFWC Foundation President Mary Jane Ortega lauded the Million Trees Foundation for its accomplishments through the Annual Million Trees Challenge of MWSS that has so far planted more than five million trees in seven critical watersheds that provide water to Metro Manila and its environs

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

[RCEP to help PH pursue energy blueprint: DOE exec](#)

By: Kris Crismundo

MANILA – An energy official said on Tuesday the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) will help the Philippines achieve its long-term plan for energy security while contributing to mitigating the impacts of climate change.

“We are utilizing this agreement to pursue the Philippine Energy Plan that works towards energy security,” Department of Energy (DOE) Undersecretary Felix William Fuentebella said during the hearing of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations on RCEP.

Under the Philippine Energy Plan 2020-2040, the DOE is paving the path in moving toward a clean energy future by pursuing policies that would attract more investments in renewable energy, institutionalizing energy efficiency and conservation programs, and promoting the use of clean energy.

Fuentebella said concurring the regional free trade agreement (FTA) will allow the country to attract more energy investments, which is capital-intensive and would require technology transfer.

“The Department of Energy believes that investments, energy security, and access to technologies are inevitable. Why we have concurred with this agreement is, one, we need investments. It is our view that the energy sector is a capital-intensive undertaking, where Filipino capital may not be sufficient,” he said.

He added that having an FTA with developed countries, such as China, Japan, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand, which have advanced technological capabilities in the energy sector, could enhance technology transfer to the local counterparts. These countries are part of the 15 nations that signed RCEP.

The DOE official said their technology will help the Philippines in pursuing its clean energy goals by exploring and utilizing the country’s indigenous energy sources.

“International energy cooperation is seen as vital in pursuing collaborative activities with other countries to realize our goal to have self-sufficiency, energy security, and sustainability,” Fuentebella said.

The Philippines is the only signatory country in RCEP that has not yet concurred with the FTA.

The Senate is still hearing the position of some industries, especially the agriculture sector, which aired their concerns on the possible negative effects of the regional pact to local players.

New EDCA sites to be known once groundwork completed: DND

By: Priam Nepomuceno

MANILA – The locations of the four additional facilities under the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA) between the Philippines and the United States would be made public once necessary works and preparations are completed, the Department of National Defense (DND) bared Tuesday.

"The Philippines and US sides agreed to designate four new 'Agreed Locations' under EDCA (Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement) in strategic areas of the country. These sites will be announced in due time, i.e., when all the necessary consultations, coordination, staff work and other requirements are completed or complied with," said DND spokesperson Arsenio Andolong in a message.

He also clarified that a consensus has already been reached on the four new "agreed locations" by the two nations.

"A consensus was reached on the 'Agreed Locations', however, these will be finalized and announced only when appropriate requirements are fulfilled," Andolong said.

Sought for comment on the opposition of Cagayan Governor Manuel Mamba to the establishment of an EDCA site in his province, Andolong said they are urging local officials to look at the positive impact of these facilities.

"We respectfully enjoin our local chief executives to consider the potential foreign investments and economic development that EDCA sites will bring to their communities, as well as the enhancement of the protection of our areas that are vulnerable to the effects of climate change, and the quicker disaster response and mitigation when our front-liners are called to action," Andolong said.

Finalized after eight rounds of talks in August 2013, the EDCA which was signed in 2014 allows US troops access to designated Philippine military facilities, the right to build facilities, and preposition equipment, aircraft, and vessels, but rules out permanent basing.

The Philippine government is working with the US to build the future facilities at the Cesar Basa Air Base in Floridablanca town, Pampanga province; Fort Magsaysay Military Reservation in Nueva Ecija province; Lumbia Airfield in Cagayan de Oro City; Antonio Bautista Air Base in Puerto Princesa City, Palawan; and Benito Ebuena Air Base in Cebu province.

THE MANILA TIMES

[Public participation urged for 2024 budget](#)

By: Niña Myka Pauline Arceo

THE Department of Budget and Management (DBM) is urging the public to take part in the government's budget planning process to ensure responsive allocation and help the country achieve its development goals.

In an interview over the SMNI News Channel program "Business and Politics" hosted by The Manila Times Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Dante Francis "Klink" Ang 2nd, Budget Secretary Amenah Pangandaman encouraged national government agencies (NGAs), government-owned and -controlled corporations (GOCCs), and even the local government units (LGUs) to take part in the consultations for the preparation of the 2024 national budget.

"We want the people to participate so that we ensure our budget is something that is responsive in adherence to our 8-point socioeconomic agenda and our PDP (Philippine Development Plan)... to reach our goal of single-digit poverty level, decrease our deficit and achieve the high-middle-income status of the country," she added.

Pangandaman said the DBM started its series of budget consultations with NGA and GOCCs, as well as with LGUs, the private sector and the academe as part of the preparatory stage for the drafting of the National Expenditure Program for Fiscal Year 2024.

"Our team will go around the country, after the consultation with the departments and GOCCs, we will also consult with private sectors, LGUs and [the] academe just to come up with the budget framework by April 2023," she added.

Pangandaman reiterated that as departments present their budget, the infrastructure projects should be shovel-ready, programs must be implementation-ready and should adhere to the government's 8-point socioeconomic agenda.

"They [public and private sectors] should ensure that they are able to spend their 2023 budget before they ask for a hefty amount for 2024," she said.

Moreover, also part of the reforms or the common legislative agenda of DBM is the institutionalization of a cash-based budgeting system, or only implementation-ready projects will be funded.

"As early as January, I already asked the departments to go on with the procurement of all your projects. [To] those that have not been awarded yet, make sure that you procure them early and implement them early," Pangandaman said.

Also, one of the priority programs of the Marcos administration are climate change and green projects.

"First, that is in our budget, we ensure that we climate tag, or we tag our green projects," she said.

Meanwhile, the 2023 budget that President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. signed into law in December 2022 was intended to achieve the economic goals set forth in the Medium-Term Fiscal Framework, Pangandaman stressed.

"The P5.268-trillion budget that the President signed is consistent with that 8-point socioeconomic agenda," Pangandaman said.

According to the DBM, the 2023 budget supports the administration's overarching objectives of reviving job growth and reducing poverty by re-directing the economy toward a high growth path in the short term and maintaining high, inclusive and resilient growth until 2028.

"The budget sets the path to attain the headline goals of the Marcos Jr. administration, such as bringing down the deficit to 3 percent of GDP (gross domestic product) by 2028; achieving less than 60 percent debt-to-GDP ratio by 2025; and reaching a 9 percent or single-digit poverty rate by 2028," DBM said in a statement on Tuesday.

The DBM's priority programs and long-term goals include digital transformation, the institutionalization of the Open Government Partnership and the passing of important legislative reforms such as the Progressive Budgeting for Better and Modernized Governance Bill, Budget and Treasury Management System, and the National Government Rightsizing Program.

[SEC participates in Philippine Investment Conference 2023](#)

By: Kelvin Lester K. Lee

I HAD the honor of speaking alongside business leaders, the industry's top minds, and other members of the finance and investment community at the Philippine Investment Conference 2023 last January 25 to 27 at the Raffles Makati. The theme of this year's event, hosted by CFA Society Philippines, was "The Way Forward: Working Toward an Inclusive, Resilient and Sustainable World."

In one way or another, we have all experienced the effects of recent developments such as the Covid-19 pandemic, Russia-Ukraine war, the rise of non-fungible tokens or NFTs, Metaverse and climate change. All these and more have significantly changed the way we live, work and think.

The three-day hybrid forum brought together industry professionals and market participants from the Philippines and the wider Asia-Pacific region to be part of meaningful discussions about the effect of global events, the current state-of-play in the market, and the shifts in the market paradigm as we know it, following these recent developments.

I always enjoy opportunities to share the work of the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) and give updates about the Philippine capital markets. However, what I like most about these events is the opportunity to hear from market participants and distinguished guests and delegates firsthand their experience, insights and learnings from the ground up.

While the market outlook for 2023 is mixed, one thing is clear — there will always be investment opportunities in the Philippine capital markets. This is why the SEC is focused on formulating policies and regulations that help create an enabling market ecosystem that is attuned with the times, but at the same time adhere to the commission's strict mandate of investor protection.

One such initiative is sustainable finance. Since the issuance of the Asean Green Bond Standards, the first-ever sustainable finance initiative, in 2017, both the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) and Philippine sustainable finance markets have grown rapidly.

As of December 2022, a total of \$30.64 billion bonds and "sukuk" or Islamic bonds have been issued and labeled collectively under the Asean Green, Social and Sustainable

Bond Standards, demonstrating how such thematic bonds have gained traction in recent years.

The Philippines has the third-highest number of issuances in Southeast Asia, and the share of green, social and sustainable (GSS) bonds have been increasing steadily relative to total corporate bond issuances in our country.

As I shared during the conference, market participants can expect SEC guidelines to remain aligned with international standards, whenever applicable to our local setting. The commission recently approved the guidelines on the issuances of sustainability-linked bonds (SLBs). This is in connection with the Asean Sustainability-Linked Bond Standards or Asean SLBS published by the Asean Capital Markets Forum in October 2022.

This allows our local issuances to be competitive and interoperable with bonds in the international capital markets. Moreover, as more and more of these asset classes come up, the SEC is also geared toward releasing relevant rules and regulations governing such upcoming thematic asset classes. Rules and regulations that are in the SEC pipeline include Blue Bonds.

We have seen some very favorable response from the market on the SEC's efforts to promote GSS bonds in the domestic capital market. Corporate bond issuances relating to GSS have often been oversubscribed. As of December 2022, our total outstanding GSS bonds amount to \$5.241 billion or 18 percent of total outstanding GSS bonds in Southeast Asia.

Given these, the SEC encourages market participants to align with the standards set, as these are at par with international capital markets. This will not only help the SEC achieve its goal for the Philippines to be the top issuer of GSS bonds in Southeast Asia, but at the same time, help ensure that your company-issued bonds remain competitive with the rest of the world.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

[DENR, PhilSA join forces to create natural resources geospatial database](#)

By: Gaea Katreena Cabico

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Environment and Natural Resources has partnered with the Philippine Space Agency to create a national environment and natural resources geospatial database that will aid the agency in the implementation of government projects.

DENR Secretary Antonia Loyzaga said the partnership with PhilSA will support the development of strategies for “a science-based, risk-informed, ethical and equitable stewardship of the environment.”

“A geospatial platform is fundamental for us in terms of establishing the physical basis of our natural resources, and in terms of our wanting to inventory them for strategic and critical development of our country,” Loyzaga said.

The memorandum of agreement for the collaborative project covers the National Greening Program (NGP) progress monitoring, and the establishment of a comprehensive national geospatial database for the Environment and Natural Resource Accounting program, which includes the collection of climate information and conduct analysis.

PhilSA will develop maps, systems and tools on a national level that analyze vulnerabilities and impacts of climate change and disasters. It will also assist DENR in monitoring NGP areas and other forests using satellite remote sensing, artificial intelligence and geographic information systems.

The DENR, for its part, will provide information needed by PhilSA to generate maps and other field data, and coordinate with relevant bureaus and attached agencies for the implementation of the activities covered in the agreement.

Environment Undersecretary for Integrated Environmental Science Carlos Primo David led the establishment of a geospatial database office.

The joint project will then be integrated into the creation of a national capital accounting system led by the DENR and the National Economic and Development Authority.

“We are trying to build a domestic space ecosystem, and that includes agencies like the DENR that take such space-borne capabilities, and create value out of it,” PhilSA Director General Joel Joseph Marciano Jr. said.

=END=