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Information and Knowledge Management Division

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A tandem of lawmakers has pushed for the establishment of a free weather index-based crop insurance (FIBCI) program with an automatic payout system to better protect small farmers from losses caused by climate change-related calamities.

“House Bill No. 6519 or the Weather Ready Farmers bill seeks to establish a scientific payout system with an automatic payout mechanism based measurable parameters. Through this, we can ensure that our small farmers receive timely compensation, administrative delays are minimized, and there are no disputes over loss verification,” Solid North Party-list Rep. Ching Bernos said.

The bill seeks to create a FIBCI Program overseen by the Insurance Commission, supported by a P5.8 billion Premium Subsidy Fund.

Targeted beneficiaries include farmers, agriculture and fisheries producers, and farmers’ cooperatives that register with their respective local government units for specific crop or production insurance programs offered by LGUs as group policies through accredited insurance providers.

Under the proposal, LGUs may also allocate local funds to complement premium subsidies from the national government, while farmers may opt to pay additional premiums for enhanced insurance features offered by providers.

Payouts will be automatically triggered once insurance parameters based on an agreed weather reference index—such as rainfall, wind speed, and temperature—are breached.

Bernos said that because the system is weather index-based, a declaration of a state of calamity by LGUs will no longer be required to trigger insurers’ obligation to compensate farmers and producers.

The bill also calls for the creation of a FIBCI Oversight Board, which will convene at least twice a year to monitor the program’s implementation and oversee all index-based agricultural insurance in the country.

The board will be chaired by the Insurance Commission and composed of the heads of the Department of Agriculture, Department of the Interior and Local Government, Cooperative Development Authority, National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council, PAGASA, and the DOST-Advanced Science and Technology Institute.

It will also include three farmer representatives from Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao to be appointed by the President, as well as three representatives from the insurance industry, including the Philippine Crop Insurance Corp. and two private-sector representatives.

Meanwhile, Abra lone district Rep. JB Bernos underscored the need to move away from what he described as the slow and costly processes of the traditional crop insurance system.

“Due to the traditional system, insurance payouts are playing catch-up. Dumating na ang kasunod na bagyo o baha, hindi pa rin nababayaran ang mga magsasaka. Kailangan nating baguhin ang sistema para mas mabilis tayong makapag-respond sa pangangailangan ng ating mga magsasaka,” he said.

Bernos warned that failure to help farmers and food producers recover after every calamity would have wider consequences for the country's food security.

[Trade, climate threaten Philippines' agri-food industry](#)

By: Mico Virata

The Philippines' agri-food industry faces growing challenges from global trade tensions, rising tariffs, and climate change, a new report warns. Experts are urging government support to strengthen the sector's resilience and competitiveness.

"The Economic Impact of the Agri-Food Sector in the Philippines," released Thursday in Makati by Oxford Economics, the ASEAN Food and Beverage Alliance, and Food Industry Asia, highlights the sector's contribution to the economy and calls on policymakers to support local producers and exporters to ensure food security. Groceries

"Our latest research shows the scale and importance of the sector. Overall, the sector contributed \$164.6 billion to the economy, around one-third of national GDP, and supported 18.8 million jobs, representing 38 percent of total employment," the report said.

The report warns that climate risks, trade tensions, and US tariffs on Philippine agri-food exports are raising costs and uncertainty. "Escalating tariffs could, in a worst-case scenario, leave global GDP 2.3 percent below baseline over five years, and volatility in global commodity prices could drive inflationary pressures in the net food-importing economy," it added.

James Lambert, director at Oxford Economics, said Philippine agri-businesses are likely to feel the impact of higher US tariffs, which could reduce US imports of Philippine agri-food products by about 25 percent.

Food price inflation is another concern. "The Philippines' net importer status and vulnerability to climate change shocks compound the pressures on local food prices," Lambert said. The country is also the most vulnerable among selected ASEAN nations to rising temperatures and extreme weather events.

The report highlights that the sector can turn challenges into opportunities through trade diversification and enhanced competitiveness. Key steps include upgrading export infrastructure—such as food safety systems, cold chain storage, and inter-island shipping—while improving access to financing and certification for small producers. Simplifying customs, reducing protectionist measures, and ensuring regulatory predictability are also recommended.

Long-term resilience requires investment in infrastructure and energy efficiency. The report highlights the need to expand port upgrades, farm-to-market roads, and logistics hubs, as well as boost renewable energy generation and improve grid efficiency. Strengthening the overall business environment through reforms is also essential to restore investor confidence.

MANILA BULLETIN

[The energy shift that's giving the planet a fighting chance](#)

By: Joyce Reyes-Aguila

The world is continuously presented with new ways of doing things better. In sourcing energy, for instance, fossil fuels now share space, rightfully so, with renewable options such as solar and wind. Both serve the same purpose, but the differences between them are significant.

Fossil fuels are burned to generate power, producing greenhouse gas emissions that harm the environment. Renewable energy sources, on the other hand, are naturally replenished and generate little to no harmful emissions. Energy derived from these natural sources is also replenished faster than it is consumed, according to the United Nations in its article “Renewable Energy – Powering a Safer and Prosperous Future.”

While the transition to renewable energy requires substantial funding, infrastructure, technology and changes in policy and legislation, its most compelling advantage remains its clear pro-planet benefit. The United Nations has warned that global emissions must be reduced by nearly half by 2030 to avoid the worst impacts of climate change. Expanding the use of renewable energy will be critical to meeting that target. As the UN has emphasized, energy lies at the heart of climate change – and at the center of its solution. In its report *Seizing the Moment of Opportunity*, the organization described an “unprecedented” chance to invest in policies and infrastructure that can capitalize on falling costs, expanding manufacturing capacity and the abundance of renewable sources worldwide.

Green energy advocates have reason to be encouraged. In October, BBC climate editor Justin Rowlett reported that renewable energy had overtaken coal as the world’s largest source of electricity. Data from global energy think tank Ember showed that solar and wind power met 100 percent of the increase in global electricity demand. A representative from Ember noted that the shift shows how clean energy is keeping up with global growth. Rowlett also reported that solar power – 58 percent of which comes from developing countries – has met 83 percent of new electricity demand worldwide since 2022, making it the largest source of new electricity generation.

Investment figures further support this momentum. The UN reported that clean energy investments reached US\$2 trillion in 2024, exceeding fossil fuel investment by US\$800 billion. That same year, the global economy grew by more than 3 percent, while emissions declined by 0.8 percent. Renewable energy is also contributing to 10 percent of global GDP growth through job creation, among other factors. The International Renewable Energy Agency reported that 16.6 million jobs worldwide in 2024 were due to demands in the renewable energy sector.

Health benefits are equally significant. The UN estimates that poor air quality causes annual economic damage of about US\$8.1 trillion globally. The World Health Organization attributes seven million premature deaths each year to outdoor and household air pollution. Clean energy sources reduce pollution, protect public health and mitigate harm as global energy demand continues to rise, says the agency. Even the shift to cleaner cooking methods, the WHO notes, can improve indoor air quality.

In the Philippines, sustainable energy practices are increasingly evident across households, schools, hotels and businesses. Property developer SM Prime Holdings, Inc., for example, has reduced its carbon footprint through optimized building management systems, improved air-conditioning and ventilation and solar-powered outdoor spaces. More than half of the company’s energy consumption now comes from

renewable sources supplied by partners such as Aboitiz Renewables, Citicore Renewable Energy Corporation and TotalEnergies.

These initiatives have resulted in low-carbon, climate-smart office and retail spaces aligned with SM Prime's Net Zero by 2040 goal. A Manila Bulletin report published on Jan. 14 noted that the company's sustainability initiatives led to a 38 percent reduction in electricity consumption and saving of P2.3 billion in 2024.

Similarly, Philippine-founded multinational restaurant company Jollibee Group has anchored its sustainability efforts under its "Joy for Tomorrow" agenda. Among its initiatives is the installation of 16,800 rooftop solar panels across key manufacturing and logistics facilities nationwide. These provide a combined capacity of 9.1 megawatts — enough to supply 12 to 15 percent of the group's manufacturing and logistics power requirements.

The formula is clear. When green energy advances, the planet benefits. And when the planet is protected, human life stands a far better chance of continuing to thrive.

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The Philippines is steering the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in delivering outcomes that would help the region weather emerging challenges while promoting growth against the backdrop of deepening global economic and geopolitical uncertainties.

At an ISEAS - Yusof Ishak Institute lecture on Friday, Foreign Affairs Secretary Ma. Theresa Lazaro released the initial list of major outcome documents ASEAN is targeting to adopt by the end of the Philippines' chairship this 2026.

In the economic area, among the deliverables eyed are an ASEAN leaders' declaration on strategic trade management; an ASEAN leaders' declaration on cross-border movement of digital workers; the conclusion of the ASEAN-Canada free trade deal; an ASEAN semiconductor roadmap; and a leaders' statement on artificial intelligence.

ASEAN, Lazaro said, will also aim to complete the negotiations for the ASEAN Digital Economy Framework Agreement (DEFA), within 2026 or by November.

If adopted, the ASEAN DEFA will be the world's first region-wide digital economy arrangement, covering data flows, cybersecurity, e-payments, paperless trading, as well as AI and blockchain.

"DEFA will realize our ASEAN vision to develop a modern, comprehensive, and coherent digital transformation strategy. This will empower and connect ASEAN-based business closer together, including, most notably, MSEs to regional and global markets," Lazaro said.

Under regional peace and security, Manila is hoping to see ASEAN formalize its dialogue mechanism for the coast guard, as well as the highly anticipated Code of Conduct on the South China Sea, currently under negotiation with Beijing.

On the socio-economic pillar, Lazaro said the Philippines wants to see the bloc prioritizing inclusivity and empowering families as a foundation of society.

ASEAN, with Manila at the helm, she said, will advance regional health cooperation, ensure universal access to health services, and prepare the region against threats of another pandemic or health crisis.

The bloc, she said, is working to introduce a regional program for science, technology, and innovation on AI for health; an ASEAN declaration on strengthening alternative family-based care systems; a leaders' statement on the ASEAN network for family development, and the regional action framework on silver economy to empower older persons in economic sectors.

Other target key deliverables are:

ASEAN Implementation Plan for Regenerative and Resilient Agriculture

ASEAN Tourism Investment Outlook

ASEAN Critical Mineral Strategy for Regional Resilience and Sustainable Growth

ASEAN Leaders' Declaration on Foundational Learning

ASEAN Leaders' Statement for Youth Development

ASEAN Declaration on the Empowerment of Youth in Climate Action and Resilience

ASEAN Joint Statement on Climate Change

ASEAN Youth Statement on Biodiversity Conservation

ASEAN Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan

ASEAN Disaster Resilience Platform

"ASEAN has a clear picture of what we want our future to look like. By 2045, we hope to see a region that is resilient, innovative, dynamic, and people-centered," Lazaro said.

"We will continue to be a rules-based community of nations and an engine for peace, stability, and prosperity in the region."

The bloc, she said, will double down on work towards positioning the region as the world's fourth largest economy while sustaining ASEAN centrality, with it as "lead driver of regional architecture."

To achieve these targets, Lazaro said, ASEAN will also assert the "primacy of amity and cooperation," and affirm support for multilateralism amid growing unilateralism and disregard for international law.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

BUSINESS MIRROR

[CCC, Taguig LGU explore cooperation to promote urban resilience](#)

By: Jonathan L. Mayuga

To further boost urban resilience in the city of Taguig, the Climate Change Commission (CCC) and the local government unit led by Mayor Maria Laarni Lopez Cayetano met recently to discuss the city's climate initiatives, sustainable practices, and potential areas of cooperation to strengthen local climate action and urban resilience.

The meeting highlighted Taguig City's ongoing efforts in sustainability and climate governance, as well as opportunities to further enhance the implementation and mainstreaming of its local climate plans.

The discussions centered on nature-based and people-centered solutions that respond to the city's unique context as a lakeside urban community, with particular attention to protecting livelihoods dependent on Laguna Lake, following its trademark identity as a "Probinsyudad," a portmanteau of probinsya (province) and siyudad (city).

"These are not merely projects for their own sake; they are initiatives designed to address the real needs of our people, ensuring that no one, including fisherfolk, is left behind," said CCC Vice Chairperson and Executive Director Robert E.A. Borje. "Taguig City's Probinsyudad concept, which redefines progress and prosperity, offers a valuable policy lesson for other LGUs in Metro Manila to develop their own localized models of sustainable development."

"True progress is not measured only by infrastructure or economic growth, but by whether communities are safer, livelihoods are protected, and future generations inherit a stable and healthy home," Borje further pointed out.

For her part, Cayetano emphasized the city's commitment to urgent climate action, fostering partnerships, and advancing sustainability and community participation through initiatives, including youth-focused climate advocacy.

"Climate action is more urgent than ever, and our City continues to take meaningful steps by partnering with organizations that champion sustainability and community participation," Mayor Cayetano said. "Through collaborations on youth leadership and climate advocacy, we are moving closer to a sustainable and climate-conscious Probinsyudad."

The CCC recognized Taguig City's integrated approach to urban sustainability, which balances development with heritage conservation, livelihood protection, and inclusive growth, highlighting the city's approach as a potential model for other local governments. The Commission also emphasized that initiatives such as sustainable lakeshore management, urban and water-based farming, public open spaces, and climate-responsive urban planning are consistent with the National Adaptation Plan and the Nationally Determined Contribution Implementation Plan, both developed under the administration of President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.

The meeting also explored opportunities for capacity building and collaboration in climate planning, urban adaptation, sustainable agriculture, climate finance, youth engagement, and public awareness campaigns.

MANILA BULLETIN

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By: Jel Santos

The Climate Change Commission (CCC) called on vice governors to take a more active role in climate risk governance, citing their strategic position in driving policies that protect communities from climate impacts.

During the 103rd Year-End National Assembly of the League of Vice Governors of the Philippines (LVGP), CCC Vice Chairperson and Executive Director Robert E.A. Borje said Vice Governors occupy “the critical intersection where plans meet priorities, where evidence meets action, and where strategy becomes alignment across the entire province.”

According to Borje, this strategic position empowers Vice Governors to spearhead efforts that protect lives, sustain livelihoods, and safeguard the long-term future of their provinces.

Borje connected the leadership role of vice governors to national policy frameworks, citing the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) as a key guide for communities in identifying locally appropriate adaptation practices and projects tailored to specific vulnerabilities

CCC said the NAP embodies the administration’s vision and plan of action for achieving a climate-smart and climate-resilient Philippines.

“These insights allow Vice Governors to understand—not vaguely, but precisely—what hazards your provinces face and how those hazards intersect with population, livelihoods, and infrastructure,” he stated.

Per Borje, the Local Climate Change Action Plans (LCCAPs) must be anchored in the NAP to ensure provincial strategies are science-driven, evidence-based, and aligned with national priorities.

“Such alignment strengthens risk governance by making adaptation actions responsive, measurable, and sustainable,” CCC said.

As such, Borje underscored the People’s Survival Fund (PSF) as a key financing mechanism for local adaptation initiatives.

“From 2023 to 2025, the PSF Board significantly accelerated the approval of projects and Project Development Grants, resulting in a sharp increase in fund utilization from just over 30 percent to near full commitment,” the agency said.

“By May 2024, the initial Php 1 billion allocation had been fully committed and exceeded by Php 321.6 million.”

The CCC said an additional P1 billion was appropriated under the 2025 General Appropriations Act (GAA) to sustain the expanded pipeline, raising the portfolio to 15 projects and nine Project Development Grants (PDGs) with a total value of approximately P1.4 billion.

“These developments make the PSF a more accessible and reliable financing option, helping local governments secure funds to strengthen climate resilience in their communities,” he said.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

[CCC launches Bamboo Campaign “Kawayan: Kabalikat ng Klima at Komunidad” for Nature-Based Solutions](#)

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Featuring a series of informational materials released through the Commission’s Facebook and Instagram platforms, the campaign aims to raise public awareness on bamboo’s role in climate action and promote inclusive and sustainable development that places communities at the center of resilience building.

Bamboo offers multiple benefits to communities, as it absorbs carbon emissions that drive global warming, stores water, and provides natural protection against climate impacts such as strong winds and flooding.

The Philippines has an estimated 39,000 to 53,000 hectares of land suitable for bamboo cultivation. This vast potential highlights opportunities to strengthen community livelihoods while contributing to a more resilient and progressive economy, particularly in rural and climate-vulnerable areas.

CCC Vice Chairperson and Executive Director Robert E.A. Borje emphasized bamboo’s strategic value as both an ecological solution and an economic driver, underscoring the need to expand and diversify bamboo species as part of the country’s long-term climate and development agenda.

“Bamboo is a powerful partner in climate action. It captures carbon, reduces the impact of strong winds and storms, and supports ecosystem stability. These outcomes reflect the strength of nature-based solutions anchored in the National Adaptation Plan to advance science-based and evidence-driven adaptation efforts,” Borje said.

“With wider and well-planned bamboo development, we can strengthen climate resilience, reinforce adaptation measures, and protect communities, especially those most exposed to climate risks,” he added.

The National Adaptation Plan (NAP) serves as the country’s primary policy framework for climate adaptation, providing a science-based and evidence-informed roadmap for reducing climate risks. Developed under the administration of President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr., the NAP advances the government’s vision for climate-smart development and more effective, coordinated adaptation action.

Borje further noted that bamboo contributes to national economic growth, particularly through furniture manufacturing and engineered bamboo products that offer strong domestic and global market potential.

“Engineered bamboo alone has the capacity to generate up to ₱400 billion in annual revenue. This figure does not yet account for the many small-scale enterprises that depend on bamboo for crafts, housing materials, and local products. Through bamboo cultivation, we create jobs, support local industries, and advance climate action at the same time,” Borje said.

The Philippines is home to around 70 bamboo species, 21 of which are endemic and found only in the country. This biodiversity reflects the country's natural wealth and supports its position as the sixth-largest bamboo exporter globally, while opening pathways for green jobs that align with global climate goals.

THE MANILA TIMES

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According to the CCC, the Philippines has an estimated 39,000 to 53,000 hectares of land suitable for bamboo cultivation.

This vast potential highlights opportunities to strengthen community livelihoods while contributing to a more resilient and progressive economy, particularly in rural and climate-vulnerable areas, the commission said.

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The CCC is the lead policy-making body of the government tasked to coordinate, monitor, and evaluate government programs and ensure mainstreaming of climate change in national, local, and sectoral development plans towards a climate-resilient and climate-smart Philippines.

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