



NEWS ROUNDUP

14 FEBRUARY 2024 [08:00 am]

- UAE, Azerbaijan, Brazil join forces to limit global warming to 1.5C
- DENR backs LGU's disaster response and management
- [Opinion] Why disability inclusion is important for climate resilience
- Wetlands get spotlight in southern Metro Manila museum
- [Opinion] Biggest risk of climate change may be social unrest
- PH partners with Norway for clean energy transition
- Government pushes P839 billion water infrastructure projects

AL JAZEERA

[UAE, Azerbaijan, Brazil join forces to limit global warming to 1.5C](#)

The United Arab Emirates, Azerbaijan and Brazil, former and future hosts of UN climate summits, are joining forces to push for an international agreement to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit).

DAILY TRIBUNE

[DENR backs LGU's disaster response and management](#)

By: Jing Villamente

Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Maria Antonia Yulo Loyzaga on Tuesday said her department has partnered with local executives to integrate the use of hazard maps in decision-making to avert disasters and safeguard lives and livelihoods.

ECO BUSINESS

[\[Opinion\] Why disability inclusion is important for climate resilience](#)

By: Molly M King

Globally, more than a billion people have a disability. Most live in poverty and 80 per cent live in low- and middle-income countries, which are more susceptible to climate disasters. Because of this, and sometimes because they are also members of other minorities, disabled people are much more likely to experience the worst impacts of climate change.

PHILIPPINE INFORMATION AGENCY

[Wetlands get spotlight in southern Metro Manila museum](#)

By: Jumalynne Doctolero

Did you know there's a type of land that acts like a giant sponge, naturally soaking up pollutants and filtering our water? These unsung heroes are called wetlands, precious ecosystems often undervalued despite their critical role in protecting our environment and ourselves.

THE MANILA TIMES

[\[Opinion\] Biggest risk of climate change may be social unrest](#)

A growing number of climate scientists, among them some of the most renowned names in the field, are sounding the alarm about the destructive impacts of climate change — not the effects of a rapidly deteriorating environment itself but the dangerous social and political upheaval that it is likely to cause, and is even now beginning to spread. We have previously stressed the need to improve the public messaging on climate change, and it is becoming increasingly clear that need must be taken seriously, and acted upon quickly by climate scientists and policymakers alike.

[PH partners with Norway for clean energy transition](#)

By: Yashika F. Torib

The Philippine government is gearing toward a clean energy transition through a partnership with Norway's renewable energy sector.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

[Government pushes P839 billion water infrastructure projects](#)

By: Louise Maureen Simeon

The government is pursuing P839 billion worth of projects to boost the country's water resources in a bid to fuel economic development.

Information and Knowledge Management Division

AL JAZEERA

[UAE, Azerbaijan, Brazil join forces to limit global warming to 1.5C](#)

The United Arab Emirates, Azerbaijan and Brazil, former and future hosts of UN climate summits, are joining forces to push for an international agreement to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit).

On Tuesday, the UAE's Conference of the Parties (COP28) presidency said that it would form a "troika" to focus on ensuring that more ambitious CO2-cutting pledges are made ahead of a deadline at the COP30 summit to be held in 2025 in Belem, Brazil. Azerbaijan will host this year's United Nations climate event in November.

"We cannot afford to lose momentum, we must do everything we can to keep 1.5 C within reach," said Sultan Al Jaber, the Emirati president of last year's negotiations.

In 2015, almost 200 governments signed the unprecedented Paris climate agreement to phase out fossil fuels in favour of renewable energy in the second half of the century by capping global warming at 1.5C.

That target is fast slipping out of reach, as global greenhouse gas emissions continue to soar. The next round of countries' climate targets is seen as a crucial last chance to prevent global warming exceeding the 1.5C limit.

The troika partnership should "significantly enhance international cooperation and the international enabling environment to stimulate ambition in the next round of nationally determined contributions", read the final agreement reached at COP28.

Last week European climate monitors reported that for the first time global warming had exceeded temperatures of 1.5C over a 12-month period, in what scientists called a "warning to humanity".

Storms, drought and fires lashed the planet as climate change, as well as the El Nino weather phenomenon that warms the surface waters in the eastern Pacific Ocean, made 2023 the planet's hottest year in global records going back to 1850.

"The troika helps ensure we have the collaboration and continuity required to keep the North Star of 1.5C in sight – from Baku to Belem and beyond," Al Jaber said in a statement.

Taking into account current climate pledges, the world is still on track to warm between 2.5 and 2.9 degrees Celsius over this century, according to UN estimates.

The 1.5C limit will probably be reached between 2030 and 2035, according to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

Little progress

At COP28, the world agreed to “transition away” from fossil fuels, but there was no progress on unblocking financial flows to developing countries, a major sticking point in negotiations.

This issue is set to be a central theme of COP29 in Baku, Azerbaijan, where a new target is expected to be set for the financial support provided by developed countries for climate change.

According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, rich countries are about two years late in meeting their initial pledge of \$100bn in annual climate funding by 2022.

The UN’s high-level expert group on climate finance said in 2022 that developing nations, excluding China, need to spend some \$2.4 trillion a year on clean energy and climate resilience by 2030 – four times current levels.

“We are committed to leveraging our strength as a bridge builder between the developed and developing world as host of COP29, to accelerate efforts to keep 1.5 in reach,” said COP29 President-Designate Mukhtar Babayev, who is Azerbaijan’s minister of ecology and natural resources.

“Key to that will be establishing a new climate finance goal that reflects the scale and urgency of the climate challenge.”

DAILY TRIBUNE

[DENR backs LGU's disaster response and management](#)

By: Jing Villamente

Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Maria Antonia Yulo Loyzaga on Tuesday said her department has partnered with local executives to integrate the use of hazard maps in decision-making to avert disasters and safeguard lives and livelihoods.

“A hazard does not have to become a disaster,” Loyzaga explained as she sounded off the appeal in the wake of the landslide incident in Maco, Davao de Oro, stressing the DENR’s collaborative efforts with key national and local agencies to enhance the preparedness and resilience of affected communities.

Recalling the incidence of an earlier landslide in the area back in 2008, Loyzaga highlighted the significance of recognizing data-driven indicators for early warning and action. This includes the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration's (PAGASA) record of unusually high rainfall in January this year, which was four times the affected area’s monthly average in the nearest weather station.

Loyzaga likewise acknowledges the importance of local government units’ (LGUs) leadership in early action guided by hazard maps. She underscores that early warning should lead to early action.

The Environment chief also emphasized the critical role of a whole-of-society approach to face these challenges with the government, communities, private sector, and even the citizens. To facilitate early disaster readiness actions and promote science-based decision-making, especially in highly vulnerable areas, the DENR, through its Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB), continues to update the distributed hazard maps and conduct information, education, and communication campaigns. The agency issues tailored geohazard advisories for LGUs and concerned barangays.

This incident highlights the cooperation between DENR and the Philippine Space Agency. The timely sharing and processing of information can aid LGUs in conducting thorough disaster risk reduction measures.

The DENR in close collaboration with the Office of Civil Defense (OCD), provides hazard maps and advisories for proactive disaster preparedness in alignment with the latter agency’s disaster risk reduction and management program. It also provides crucial support to search and rescue operations through its MGB regional offices in Mindanao,

in partnership with the private sector in the region. MGB has deployed two ground penetrating radars for the use of responders on site in Maco.

ECO BUSINESS

[\[Opinion\] Why disability inclusion is important for climate resilience](#)

By: Molly M King

Globally, more than a billion people have a disability. Most live in poverty and 80 per cent live in low- and middle-income countries, which are more susceptible to climate disasters. Because of this, and sometimes because they are also members of other minorities, disabled people are much more likely to experience the worst impacts of climate change.

People with disabilities are two to four times more likely to be hurt or die in climate-related disasters such as heatwaves, wildfires and floods.

During the 2017 flooding in rural New South Wales in Australia, those with disabilities were disproportionately impacted by unstable housing, displacement, and post-traumatic stress disorder.

When northern Bangladesh faced unprecedented flooding in June 2022, many with disabilities did not receive sufficient support from the government to reach safety and access to shelter, healthcare, and food.

Sidelined in climate conversations

Even though the disability community is especially at risk from climate change, there has been a significant lack of attention from researchers, activists and government officials when it comes to studying and addressing climate change planning for this group.

The only international disability-specific policy is the 2006 United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which mandates that people with a disability are entitled to equality and freedom discrimination. The 2013 Incheon Strategy, specific to Asia and the Pacific, encourages disability-inclusive disaster preparedness by linking the strategy's goals to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.

Apart from these, people with disabilities are frequently left out of the planning and response strategies for climate-related disasters, exposing them to higher risks during extreme weather events and other emergencies tied to climate.

Furthermore, buildings and infrastructure are often not accessible, making it challenging to evacuate or access emergency services during a disaster. Many emergency management plans and policies fail to consider the specific needs of people with disabilities, heightening their vulnerability during disasters.

Various factors contribute to this exclusion, such as the absence of accessibility in emergency shelters and communication systems. Barriers to safe evacuation can be even greater for those with mobility aids, wheelchairs or requiring a guide dog.

The failure to incorporate inclusive planning and response measures can leave people with disabilities even more susceptible to the adverse impacts of climate change.

Disability climate justice

An equitable approach to climate change vulnerability recognises that certain groups — including people with disabilities — are more susceptible to its effects.

Disability-inclusive climate justice advocates for all people with disabilities, but also takes into account other intersecting inequalities that make disabled people particularly vulnerable to exclusion from disaster planning, natural hazards and their aftermath.

Race, class, gender and nationality all affect disabled people's access to resources — or whether their community even has the proper resources. The harm caused by colonial history, which itself has contributed to the crises we face with the environment and society, influences how well different groups can adapt.

Disability climate justice seeks equitable access to resources, including information to help with planning and adaptation to climate-related risks.

There's no single solution, but change can start here

There is no single solution to disability inclusion, as people with different disabilities may have distinct needs. However, the responsibility should not be left on the individual to create their own accommodations and be constantly prepared for disaster to strike.

Ideally, individuals with disabilities should part of planning for climate resilience. Turning to people with disabilities to take charge in leadership and disaster planning, at all levels, could help with effective change, as they can recognise disability-specific needs and what resources are lacking.

Diversifying activism and policy advocacy in terms of disability — as well other identities like age, race and ethnicity, and location — would facilitate solutions that work for everyone and help people shape the future they want to live in.

Creating accessibility for everyone in programs aimed at generating green jobs, along with implementing policies that advocate for disability inclusion during transitions, provides a chance to enhance climate change adaptive capacity.

Ultimately, incorporating individuals with disabilities into discussions about climate adaptation planning will strengthen the resilience of communities.

PHILIPPINE INFORMATION AGENCY

Wetlands get spotlight in southern Metro Manila museum

By: Jumalynne Doctolero

Did you know there's a type of land that acts like a giant sponge, naturally soaking up pollutants and filtering our water? These unsung heroes are called wetlands, precious ecosystems often undervalued despite their critical role in protecting our environment and ourselves.

Almost 87 percent of wetlands have vanished in the past 300 years due to human activities, according to the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF). Yet, hope remains! The Philippines boasts of 342 protected wetlands, and now, one gets a well-deserved spotlight with the opening of the country's first wetland museum in Las Piñas-Parañaque Wetland Park (LPPWP) in Metro Manila.

This exciting initiative underscores the importance of recognizing these ecosystems and safeguarding them for future generations. Let's explore why wetlands deserve our appreciation and what we can do to ensure their survival.

Out of the 342, Metro Manila has five (5) important wetland areas, namely:

- The Tagalag Fishing Village - small fishing village that is home to several species of waterbirds in Valenzuela City;
- La Mesa Watershed - a natural basin and water reservation area in Quezon City, it drains parts of Caloocan City, Quezon City, Bulacan and Rizal Province;
- Tanza Marine Tree Park - mangrove enrichment area located in Navotas City, home to almost 12,000 bird species;
- Laguna de Bay - largest freshwater lake in the country and third largest in the Southeast Asian Region. The cities of Taguig and Muntinlupa share its ecosystem with other areas in Luzon; and
- The Las Piñas-Parañaque Wetland Park (LPPWP) - a protected area shared by both cities that consists of a beach, mangrove forest, mudflats, salt marshes, ponds, and lagoons.

What are wetlands?

The RAMSAR Convention, an intergovernmental treaty that recognizes the importance of wetlands defines it as “areas of marsh, fen, peatland, or water, either natural or artificial, permanent or temporary, that are covered with water, either static or flowing.” To put it simply, wetlands are lands covered with water.

Benefits of our wetlands:

- Home to various animal and plant species
- Fights climate change by its carbon storing ability
- Supports rice cultivation
- Act as a natural waste-water treatment facility, absorbs pollutants
- Acts as a flood control mechanism, protects shores from tsunamis
- Source of food, fiber, fuel and genetic materials
- Improve water quality and provide fresh water for drinking

Wetlands against climate change

According to WWF, wetlands can store 50 times more carbon than rain forests, keeping gasses that contribute to climate change like carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide out of the atmosphere.

Wetlands as natural water filter

Wetlands absorb pollutants like heavy metals and phosphorus in their soils. It can also physically and chemically break down bacteria.

Threats faced by our wetlands

However, with these benefits to the human population, wetlands still face a number of challenges such as:

- Pollution from domestic and industrial sources
- Climate change
- Over exploitation
- Conflicting policies
- Wrong and incompatible usage

What will happen if our wetlands disappear?

If wetlands disappear, our drinking water will be much more expensive. Birds and fish species will be displaced and die, threatening food security and livelihood. Communities will experience much worse floods, storm surges can easily progress to inland cities.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) - NCR is primarily responsible for the conservation and management of the wetlands in the region. They manage and assess wetlands to be able to optimize its benefits, without harming its natural ecosystem.

Cleanup drives and tree planting activities are a regular initiative in and around these wetlands to maintain its preservation. Apart from these, the agency also advocates to spread awareness of the fascinating world of wetlands, its characteristics, benefits and how people can help preserve this crucial ecosystem by conducting educational tours and information drives.

First wetland museum in PH

In celebration of the World Wetlands Day (WWD) 2024, the DENR-NCR through its Protected Area Management Office unveiled the first wetland museum in the country on February 2.

It will serve as a platform for advocating wetland conservation. It aims to let people appreciate and help preserve wetlands, not just in NCR, but also around the Philippines.

Present in the event were Senator Cynthia Villar, Parañaque City Mayor Eric Olivarez, DENR-NCR OIC Assistant Regional Director for Technical Services Engr. Henry P. Pacis, and other officials and employees of the DENR-NCR.

In a statement, Senator Villar, who also sits as the chairperson of the Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources recognizes the importance of wetlands for the benefit of future generations.

“We actively protect and strongly defend the breadth and depth of our territories to ensure that the future generation of Filipinos will still have the opportunity to take pride and find joy in our country’s rich biodiversity,” she said.

“The Wetland Museum serves as a testament to the collaborative efforts dedicated to the preservation and appreciation of our natural heritage, strategically nestled within the renowned LPPWP, aims to serve as a beacon of awareness and understanding about the significance of wetlands in the ecological balance,” said OIC Engr. Pacis for his part during the inauguration and ribbon cutting ceremony of the museum.

Surprise your loved ones with a visit

The Wetland Museum is in its initial phase of development but visitors can expect an immersive experience featuring interactive displays, educational exhibits, and captivating installations showcasing the diversity and importance of wetland environments. It sheds light on the threats experienced by wetlands like habitat loss and pollution, encouraging community engagement in protecting these precious areas.

DENR-NCR, is steadfast in its commitment to advancing the museum's capabilities. It plans to transform the space into a vibrant hub for wetland education and advocacy, fostering a community that values and actively participates in the preservation of these vital ecosystems.

How to visit the Wetland Museum?

The Wetland Museum is located inside the Wetland Centre Complex in Las Piñas-Parañaque Wetland Park (LPPWP). Its entrance can be accessed right before the first toll gate of Cavite southbound.

The admission is free and it is open from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm. For inquiries, contact the LPPWP Protected Area Management Office via mobile phone at 0991-771-2566.

THE MANILA TIMES

[\[Opinion\] Biggest risk of climate change may be social unrest](#)

A growing number of climate scientists, among them some of the most renowned names in the field, are sounding the alarm about the destructive impacts of climate change — not the effects of a rapidly deteriorating environment itself but the dangerous social and political upheaval that it is likely to cause, and is even now beginning to spread. We have previously stressed the need to improve the public messaging on climate change, and it is becoming increasingly clear that need must be taken seriously, and acted upon quickly by climate scientists and policymakers alike.

In an interview at the end of January for "Inside Climate News," Reinhard Steurer, a climate researcher at the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences in Vienna, explained the fundamental problem with the oft-cited "1.5 degrees Celsius" benchmark for climate change action. It is generally accepted now by climatologists that the world probably surpassed that target, which represents the amount the global average temperature has increased from the pre-industrial period, sometime last year; by how much is still a matter of debate, with different analyses calculating a range between about 1.54 C and 1.7 C.

That does not really matter, Steurer suggests, because "[i]t's language nobody really understands, unfortunately, outside of science." He said: "You always have to explain that 1.5 means a climate we can adapt to and manage the consequences, 2 degrees of heating is really dangerous, and 3 means collapse of civilization."

Along with that, "The real danger is that there are so many other crises around us that there is no effort left for the climate crisis," he said. "We will find all kinds of reasons not to put more effort into climate protection because we are overburdened with other things like inflation and wars all around us."

Steurer laments that public climate information has focused on the 1.5 C target, a view that is echoed by other climate luminaries such as James Hansen and Peter Kalmus. The outcome of the recent COP28 climate summit, which objectively failed to initiate any substantial action to combat anthropogenic warming but was characterized as a "success" that "kept the 1.5 C goal alive, is cited as an example of what the climate message has become: performative politics that suggest something is being done when it really isn't so that when the inevitable harsh effects of a heating world arrive, all the policy and action (or lack thereof) that emerges from that message will be thoroughly discredited.

Apart from encouraging procrastination on climate mitigation and adaptation, the ambiguity of the 1.5 C peg has also enabled a great deal of climate disinformation. Part of that is from self-interest on the part of economic sectors that stand to lose if real climate action is taken, and part of that, social scientists say, is the natural tendency of most people to meet potential crises with denial, as that is the easiest answer to reach for, at least at first. In the scientists' view, the current rise of right-wing populism in the US, in Europe, and in other places like Argentina, which recently elected a right-wing extremist as president, is a reflection of that.

As climate effects become more extreme and more undeniable, the scientists fear they will lead to extreme reactions on both sides. On the one hand, as Peter Kalmus explained in the same article, the increasingly desperate environmental situation and rising authoritarianism will drive climate activists to increasingly radical action, something we have already begun to see in the past couple of years. There will naturally be an increasingly harsh public and government backlash against that, further discrediting the climate message and encouraging governments, especially those with a populist bent, to move toward an "armed lifeboat" outlook toward the rest of the world — secure the borders, secure one's own sources of food and energy, and keep out "the rest of them."

All of this amounts to a very grim prognosis indeed, but if there is any hope of salvaging the situation and preventing the ultimate collapse of civilization, it lies in how the message is presented. The entire approach now must be changed, and the climate information problem and possible solutions, even if they are only partial ones, recast in simpler, more relatable terms that address real-world social and economic worries.

PH partners with Norway for clean energy transition

By: Yashika F. Torib

The Philippine government is gearing toward a clean energy transition through a partnership with Norway's renewable energy sector.

In a recent bilateral delegation meeting, representatives from the Philippines' Department of Energy, Department of Transportation, Philippine National Oil Co. and other private organizations explored future cooperation with Norway's renewable energy sector.

An official statement released by the Royal Norwegian Embassy-Manila said the meeting focused on offshore wind and other emerging renewable energy technologies such as floating solar.

The program also included briefings, site visits, and meetings with government agencies and Norwegian companies that can be valuable partners of the Philippine government toward a cleaner energy transition.

"The Embassy sees this bilateral delegation trip as a positive contribution to an already vibrant cooperation between our two countries within the renewable energy sector," it said.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

Government pushes P839 billion water infrastructure projects

By: Louise Maureen Simeon

The government is pursuing P839 billion worth of projects to boost the country's water resources in a bid to fuel economic development.

During an investment forum organized by the UK government yesterday, Finance Undersecretary Catherine Fong maintained that water remains an overlooked resource in the world.

"Many of our communities still suffer from a lack of potable water while others endure the devastating effects of flooding year after year due to climate change," Fong said.

She said there is a need to urgently address such challenges by forging sustainable solutions through investments in surface water sources in partnership with the private sector.

Under the Build Better More program of the government, there are 44 infrastructure flagship projects aimed at boosting water resources, with an indicative cost of P839.13 billion.

This is part of the bigger P8.78 trillion in total infrastructure projects that the administration wants to pursue.

Of the 44 water resource projects, the biggest is the P115.05-billion Central Luzon-Pampanga River Floodway Control Project that covers the construction of a 56-kilometer floodway channel.

The project is under preparation and will be funded through official development assistance (ODA). It is likely to be completed after the Marcos administration.

This is followed by the P102.21-billion Parañaque Spillway Tunnel Project, which would drain excess lake water from Laguna de Bay into Manila Bay through an underground drainage channel.

It will be funded via Japanese loan and awaits government approval.

Other big projects include the Ambal Simuay and Rio Grande de Mindanao River Flood Control and Riverbank Protection Project and the Davao City Flood Control and Drainage Project.

Much of the projects would be funded by the national budget as well as ODA from China, Japan and South Korea and multilaterals Asian Development Bank, World Bank and Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank.

Implementing agencies include the Department of Public Works and Highways, Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System and the National Irrigation Administration.

Fong said the Department of Finance (DOF) is refining the Corporate Recovery and Tax Incentives for Enterprises Act to better address concerns and tailor-fit incentives for more strategic investments.

To improve the entire water system, the DOF is also pushing for the passage of a law creating the Department of Water Resources.

“At present, there are over 30 agencies that manage the country’s water resources. Their overlapping functions result in disjointed planning and uneven quality execution,” Fong said.

=END=