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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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[\[Opinion\] Living in a climate-defined world](#)

By: Guillermo M. Luz

I am writing this column from New Zealand after the close of this year’s first meeting of the Apec Business Advisory Council (Abac). One of the areas of concern, among many on our agenda for the last few years, is climate change. Now, New Zealand is not a place one would automatically associate with the impacts of climate change. Yet three

weeks ago, and then again last weekend, New Zealand had experienced the effects of climate change firsthand.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

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By: Filane Mikee Cervantes

MANILA – The House of Representatives on Wednesday approved on third and final reading a measure providing for the development of sustainable cities and communities in the country.

THE MANILA TIMES

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A NEWLY released study by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has revealed that there is widespread awareness of climate change issues among Filipinos, and overwhelming support for government action on climate change adaptation and mitigation. This is certainly heartening news in the face of persistent disinformation about climate change, but more importantly, it is a clear signal to the government that the time to ramp up its climate response is now.

[World Bank to hold PH climate actions talk](#)

By: Leander C. Domingo

LOS BAÑOS, Laguna: Policy action and investments as well as the tools and instruments needed to substantially reduce damages caused by climate change will be discussed at the presentation of the World Bank's Philippines Country Climate and Development Report (CCDR).

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

[Rising seas threaten exodus of 'biblical' scale, warns Guterres](#)

By: Agence France Presse

UNITED NATIONS, United States — The UN Secretary-General warned Tuesday that global warming could force a mass exodus "on a biblical scale" as people flee low-lying communities and called for legal frameworks to be implemented in preparation, especially for refugees.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

[CCC sees need to enhance partnership with DA for agri ventures](#)

By: Ruth Abbey Gita-Carlos

MANILA – The Climate Change Commission (CCC) on Wednesday sought to strengthen its partnership with the Department of Agriculture (DA) for more agricultural ventures.

Information and Knowledge Management Division

BUSINESS WORLD

Marcos OK's adoption of hybrid rice

By: Kyle Aristophere T. Atienza

PRESIDENT Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. has approved the adoption of hybrid rice to increase rice production in the country, according to Malacañang.

He made the decision after a meeting with top executives of SL Agritech Corp., which the Presidential Communications Office (PCO) said had proposed to use hybrid rice seeds in 1.9 million hectares of land that are currently planted with certified seeds.

“President Marcos said he will implement a program to promote the shift by providing subsidies and facilitating loan financing to farmers,” the PCO said in a statement.

The company, which was represented by its Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Henry Lim Bon Liong during the meeting, is engaged in the development, production, and distribution of hybrid rice seeds and “premium quality rice,” the Palace said.

During the meeting, Mr. Lim Bon Liong said hybrid technology will give farmers better income and help the country achieve rice sufficiency.

Hybrid farmers have harvested around 7 to 15 metric tons (MT) per hectare as compared with the average 3.6 MT per hectare for inbred seeds, according to the Palace.

Citing a joint study by the Department of Agriculture (DA) and local government units (LGUs), the Palace said hybrid seeds have given 41% better yield than inbred conventional seeds.

“From January to November 2022, the National Rice Program served 1.06 million rice farmers and 3,528 farmer cooperatives through the provision of hybrid and inbred or certified seeds, production-related and post-harvest machinery, small-scale irrigation, as well as extension and training activities,” it said.

The Philippine government has been pushing for the hybrid rice system to increase the productivity of farmers for the short term and achieve rice self-sufficiency for the long term.

Climate change and the high costs of farm inputs including seeds affect the Philippines' ability to produce enough rice for its people.

The Philippines hybrid rice seed market could generate a compound annual growth of 5.2% from 2023 to 2027, according to a report by Mordor Intelligence, Inc.

The PCO said Mr. Marcos has also vowed to “apply the best practices being done by Central Luzon farmers to other areas in the country.”

It said state-run banks Landbank of the Philippines and Development Bank of the Philippines have granted P3.37 billion in zero-interest and non-collateral loans to 10,643 rice farmers and 197 borrower organizations and cooperatives under the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund Program.

CNN

[New Zealand's stunning landscape was carved from water. Now too much is risking lives](#)

By: Hilary Whiteman

New Zealand's Hawke's Bay is known for its fine wine, but many of the region's vineyards are now under water, along with homes and roads in the aftermath of Cyclone Gabrielle.

The weather system didn't make landfall in New Zealand, but it caused widespread destruction, killing at least four people and displacing around 9,000 residents across the northeast region, emergency management minister Kieran McAnulty said Wednesday.

A day earlier, in an emotional address, climate minister James Shaw told parliament he struggled to find words to convey his thoughts about the disaster, which he said had followed years of inaction.

"I don't think I've ever felt as sad or as angry about the lost decades that we spent bickering and arguing about whether climate change was real or not," he said. "It is clearly here now, and if we do not act it will get worse."

What made this incident so shocking was that it came just two weeks after a short, sharp deluge in Auckland, the country's largest city of 1.7 million people, that caused flash flooding, landslides and contributed to the wettest month on record – all during what's typically one of the driest months of the year.

James Renwick, a weather and climate researcher at Victoria University of Wellington, said the destruction inflicted by Cyclone Gabrielle on top of January's Auckland floods, has been interpreted by many as a wake-up call on climate change.

"I think a lot of the country is taking it as warning that there was a climate change component, and that in the future those events are going to get more severe as time goes on," he said.

River cities increasingly vulnerable

New Zealand owes its stunning landscape partly to the country's long record of intense rainfall. Rain regularly dumped on its mountains has carved rivers that rage after downpours.

Many towns and cities sit on their banks – established to take advantage of access to ports and trade routes, which for a long time has served communities well.

“New Zealand is very good at building communities on floodplains – there’s a large fraction of the population that live close to rivers that tend to flood,” Renwick said. “There tends to be the attitude that we can build stop banks and that will protect the community, and it does most of the time, until you get a really big event.”

Those really big events are expected to become more frequent as global temperatures warm. New Zealand lies in the South Pacific Ocean, and is vulnerable to tropical cyclones that typically form in the north but can affect any part of the country in their path. This week, the northeast suffered the biggest hit as Cyclone Gabrielle whipped up winds and days of rain.

La Nina, a weather event that results in warmer air and sea temperatures, also contributed to Gabrielle’s strength.

Sam Dean, principal scientist at the National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research or NIWA, said climate change is not necessarily going to increase the frequency of tropical cyclones, but it will make them more powerful.

“They’re occurring over sea surface temperatures that are warmer than they were. The atmosphere is warmer and it’s holding more moisture, so there’s just more fuel, more energy available that makes them more intense, it makes them more damaging,” he said. “It makes the winds a little bit stronger. It makes the rainfall more significant.”

And cyclones like Gabrielle can form and move around just about any part of the country, he said, so the risk isn’t just in one part of the nation. “I don’t think there’s any part of New Zealand that isn’t at risk of extreme rainfall,” he said.

But heavy rainfall isn’t the only risk posed by climate change in New Zealand.

Parts of the country have experienced drought in recent years, and even a few years ago, Auckland – the city hit by a short bout of intense rainfall in January – was close to running out of water.

“The whole area is usually very dry and very close to drought this time of year. Now it’s soaking wet,” said Daithi Stone, a climate scientist at NIWA. “But that risk of drought hasn’t gone away, (and) in our predictions of how climate change is going to affect New

Zealand, that's a feature that seems to be fairly robust – that Northland (north of Auckland) will get drier.”

Heat waves could also become a risk in a country that's not accustomed to unbearably hot temperatures, Stone added.

“We're not used to heat waves ... over here, it's a novel concept. And I think we may get a fright sometime in the not too distant future,” he said.

Reducing emissions

With just 5 million people, New Zealand is a small player when it comes to global carbon emissions.

Last year, it produced 78.8 million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent – well below the biggest emitters, China and the United States. But the New Zealand government takes climate change seriously, and last year released its first emissions reductions plan to meet a goal of net zero emissions by 2050. It also released a national adaptation plan to mitigate climate disasters in the future.

Dean, from NIWA, said Cyclone Gabrielle was likely to prompt an acceleration of that plan. “You can see an urgency to get some of these things in place and I think that's been motivated, definitely, by this event,” he said.

Renwick, from Victoria University, said an obvious solution would be to move people away from coastlines and rivers that are at risk of more frequent flooding. But he said communities with long ties to the area will likely be reluctant to leave, and he predicted a greater emphasis on protection than relocation.

“I suspect the main response is going to be protection works rather than moving people away. So building sea walls, building levees, stop banks, putting houses up on higher piles,” he said.

But aside from adapting, as a small country, New Zealand is reliant on the biggest emitters doing more to prevent global temperatures rising more than 1.5 degrees Celsius – the threshold scientists say is needed to prevent the more catastrophic effects of the climate crisis. The world is already at least 1.1 degrees Celsius warmer than it was before industrialization.

“What we need to see is China and the US, Australia, Canada, Brazil and the big emitters starting to pull their emissions down as well, and I hope we can provide a bit of inspiration, a bit of an example in this country to help other countries do the same,” Renwick said.

“We really want to stop warming the climate more because these extreme events will become overwhelming.”

FOX NEWS

[UN Security Council holds first-ever debate on sea level rise from climate change](#)

By: Angeli Gabriel

UNITED NATIONS - Members of the United Nations Security Council held their first-ever debate on sea level rise Tuesday, according to a UN press release.

Hosted in New York, the debate was titled "Sea-Level Rise: Implications for International Peace and Security."

Council members addressed the various implications of rising seas, such as increased competition for water and land, compromised economies and livelihoods and the destruction of homes and states.

"The impact of rising seas is already creating new sources of instability and conflict," said UN Secretary-General António Guterres, who opened the meeting.

Increasing rate of sea level rise

Guterras cited the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), which stated that global average sea levels have risen faster since 1900 than over any preceding century in the last 3,000 years.

According to the WMO, the rate of sea level rise has doubled since 1993, with a 10 millimeter (0.4 inch) increase since January 2020 to a new record high in 2022.

"Although this is still measured in terms of millimetres per year, it adds up to half to 1 meter (1.6 to 3.1 feet) per century and that is a long-term and major threat to many millions of coastal dwellers and low-lying states," the WMO said.

According to the UN, this danger is especially acute for about 900 million people living in coastal zones – or 1 in 10 people on Earth.

Legal, economic and social implications of climate change

Other officials also addressed the UN Security Council on the threats posed to those in high-risk environments.

President of the UN General Assembly Csaba Kőrösi cited estimates that between 250 million and 400 million people may need to be relocated in less than 80 years, due to rising sea levels.

He also warned of the climate impacts on food-producing river deltas, and noted the role of climate action as a key tool for peace building.

"What is needed now – as ever – is the political will to act," Kőrösi said.

The legal implications were also addressed by Bogdan Aurescu, Romanian foreign minister and co-chair of the International Law Commission Study Group on Sea-Level Rise.

Aurescu stressed the need to better harness international law to support countries most at risk from sea level rise, according to the UN.

The connection between climate impact and legal action on the international stage was emphasized by Coral Pasasi, director of Climate Change of the Pacific Community and president of the non-governmental organization Tofia Niue.

"This is a security issue of paramount importance to the Pacific Region," Pasasi said.

According to the UN, Pasasi also expressed her hope that the UN General Assembly will adopt a resolution that requests an advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice on the obligations of nations in regards to climate change.

MANILA BULLETIN

[Aboitiz Power intensifies pitch for nuclear power](#)

By: Myrna M. Velasco

Aboitiz Power Corporation is intensifying its pitch for nuclear as a pathway for the Philippines to achieve decarbonization, that in turn, will aid the world in combating climate change risks.

In a presentation at the APEC Business Advisory Council (ABAC), Aboitiz Group First Vice President and Chief Reputation & Sustainability Officer Ginggay Hontiveros primarily sounded off their company's particular interest on small modular reactors (SMRs), which can be deployed in the range of 10 megawatts to 300MW configuration, and are ideal to cater to the energy needs of off-grid domains.

On the core investment trajectory of the Aboitiz group, there is no definitive blueprint cast yet on nuclear power investments; although company executives indicated that they have had preliminary discussions with American firms NuScale and Rolls-Royce for opportunities on this technology deployment space

Being the biggest power generator with massive fleet of coal plants, Aboitiz Power is being prodded to take aggressive steps on lowering its carbon footprints, similar to what other corporate environment offenders have been doing in various parts of the world.

In advancing its inclination for nuclear deployment, the executive of the Aboitiz group cited that investment into nuclear could yield high profits to investors and it is a technology that is not also hurdled by cyclical weather patterns.

In harmony to that, Hontiveros reiterated that the ABAC's Sustainable Growth Working Group "recognizes nuclear energy's viability to fuel the energy transformation of society given its high energy return on investment (EROI) and its weather independence."

She similarly gave a glimpse of "opportunities and potential challenges" if the Philippines will take serious steps into its nuclear renaissance pathway.

"Research and technical development with key stakeholder groups and subject matter experts are paramount to the success of energy transformation," she stressed.

Hontiveros similarly conveyed the long-time crusade of many companies in the Philippines for the energy sector to finally clean its acts – chiefly to support global goals

of limiting temperature warming to 1.5 degrees C – as missing that target will mean catastrophic future for the entire humanity.

On that score, Hontiveros has called on ABAC to “democratize information” on climate risks as well as the gaps experienced by countries on pursuing their decarbonization strategies.

“The climate threat is a shared risk and responsibility. A unified platform for free data on climate risk scenarios that helps one economy would help all,” the Aboitiz executive noted.

'One Million Malunggay' project launched in Caraga

By: Mike Crismundo

BUTUAN CITY – The “One Million Malunggay” project was launched in Northeastern Mindanao or the Caraga region recently to help mitigate climate change

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Commission of Higher Education (CHED) to materialize the project.

The advocacy program aims to plant one million malunggay (*Moringa oleifera*) trees across Caraga which is composed of five provinces and six cities in one year with the help of all higher education institutions and partner-agencies in the region.

“The project really intends to help mitigate climate change, restore greenery within the surrounding environment, and for communities to have easier access to malunggay trees and their many health benefits,” DENR Caraga Regional Director Nonito M. Tamayo said.

“Hindi lang pangkalusugan ang bigay nito, pang kalikasan pa (It’s not only for the health but also for the environment),” Tamayo added.

Tamayo urged other government and private entities to plant malunggay trees in their vacant lands.

Meanwhile, Tamayo and Gov. Santiago B. Cane Jr. turned over last month 7,667 armchairs to the Department of Education (DepEd) in Agusan del Sur represented by Schools Division Superintendent Dr. Minerva T. Albis and Bayugan City Schools Division Superintendent Dr. Imelda N. Sabornido in a simple ceremony at the Datu Lipus Makapandong Naliyagan Cultural Center, Government Center, Patin-ay, Prosperidad, Agusan del Sur.

These armchairs that will be used by students in 143 public schools were fabricated out of the 498.31 cubic meters of confiscated logs and fitches donated by the DENR to the Provincial Government of Agusan del Sur (PGAS) last year.

Tamayo signed the MOU with CHED led by Regional Director (RD) Dr. George M. Colorado at the Hero Auditorium of the Caraga State University in Barangay Ampayon, Butuan City.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

[Hardly a drop of water to drink](#)

By: Inez Ponce de leon

Last week, I joined a roundtable discussion with representatives of the World Bank. They had recently released “Overcoming Poverty and Inequality in the Philippines” and the Philippines’ Country Climate and Development Report.

Central to our discussion, and intertwining both reports, were two things. The first is the demand for clean water.

We are surrounded by ocean on all sides and rain from above—but it is fresh water we need, for irrigation, industries, agriculture, our homes. For many places in the country, simply giving people access to fresh water was enough to boost morale and inspire the community to live and do better.

There is no system in place to ensure that water is properly distributed, which is a tall order for our country’s over 30 water-related institutions with multiple overlapping, sometimes contradictory policies. Climate change will make the problem worse, and it’s not solvable by simply having more rain: Heavy rainfall also increases water turbidity, which increases the cost and time needed to treat water.

To solve our country’s water problems, we need integrated solutions: harmonize plans across fewer agencies, retrofit and rehabilitate dams instead of building new ones, pour money into subsidies for farmers so that they can efficiently irrigate their fields while diversifying their crops, and increase forest cover.

Our cities also need master plans for flood management—and to this, I would add that all cities should be involved, with nonparticipants penalized. Floods don’t stop at city boundaries.

The second idea central to our discussion was that of inequality.

Poverty is often framed in terms of who has what. Inequality nuances the issue further: Many are poor because of circumstances outside their control, and in ways that are pervasive and self-propagating.

A classic example: Poor families do not have enough money to feed their children nutritious (often expensive) food. Relief goods or donations are most often sodium-rich,

with few nutrients. Children from poor families are underdeveloped, physically and mentally, from the womb. They do not perform well in school and end up in low-paying, often contractual jobs. They can afford inexpensive (often non-nutritious) food for their families. The cycle begins anew.

In terms of water and climate change, the poor are at a severe disadvantage. Less water means fewer crops, more expensive goods, a greater proportion of income taken up by food. The cycle is not broken.

Education is no great equalizer, in this case: School is often treated as a stepping stone to a job, rather than a place to learn lifelong skills, such as verifying information, curiosity, asking questions. Simply plugging more lessons on climate change, financial prudence, and health will congest a curriculum that has not yet been tested for its ability to address students in their context. Not all classes have been designed so that students can see how knowledge fits into their experiences.

Water is everywhere, even in our idiomatic expressions—but the most appropriate one today is perhaps that which is often quoted from Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s “The Rime of the Ancient Mariner.”

Coleridge’s poem is about a sailor’s tale of his tragic voyage. He speaks of how his ship was once caught in peaceful waters beneath an unforgiving sun, where his crew dies of thirst in a cursed sea. There is water, water everywhere, nor any drop to drink.

But what led to this tragedy? The mariner blames himself: He shot down an albatross that led them through a storm and, the crew presumes, to safety. Though trivial, it is a crime that haunts him throughout the poem, enough for the crew to punish him by hanging it around his neck.

Like all good poems, “The Rime” can be interpreted as both a prophecy of humanity’s undoing and a mirror to nature unchanging.

It is a reminder that people are sometimes forced into situations that they can neither control nor understand. They must find ways to survive, though they might be stigmatized. The farmer whose family survives on salt and rice, the mother from the slums who feeds her children instant noodles. They bear their own albatross around their necks.

It is a reminder that we are at the mercy of nature, and if we cannot vanquish inequality, then all of us are poor.

[\[Opinion\] Living in a climate-defined world](#)

By: Guillermo M. Luz

I am writing this column from New Zealand after the close of this year's first meeting of the Apec Business Advisory Council (Abac). One of the areas of concern, among many on our agenda for the last few years, is climate change. Now, New Zealand is not a place one would automatically associate with the impacts of climate change. Yet three weeks ago, and then again last weekend, New Zealand had experienced the effects of climate change firsthand.

Three weeks ago, Auckland experienced three months' rainfall in roughly four hours. The extremely heavy rainfall caused floods in Auckland, which is not the kind of place which experiences floods in the same we do in Manila. The airport flooded inside the terminal, and domestic and international flights were canceled for over a day.

Last weekend, as I was en route to Auckland for the Abac meeting, so was Cyclone Gabrielle. It had formed somewhere over the Coral Sea and was heading toward the eastern seaboard of the North Island. New Zealand's meteorological service, the airlines, and even our meeting organizers kept us regularly informed of the storm's progress; once our flight landed, emergency messages and distress signals were all texted to us on every phone, which was turned on inside the plane. Citizens were advised to stay home and avoid unnecessary trips. Sandbags were provided by the government for the protection of buildings and homes as weather forecasters projected up to 300 millimeters of rainfall (about 12 inches) over the next 72 hours. Again, the airport was closed to domestic and international traffic for over a day. Those of us from Southeast Asia attending the meeting were frankly quite surprised at the level of preparation and warnings we received for what appeared to be an "ordinary" storm by our standards. But in a place not used to strong storms in relatively quick succession, it was quite understandable.

What is interesting about New Zealand is that it has long paid attention to climate issues and its effects on health and weather, and takes a proactive position on climate action. Well over a decade ago, it had already seen (and felt) the effects of the depletion of the ozone layer over New Zealand. More recently, it passed national legislation to cut carbon emissions by 50 percent by 2030, and to be net zero carbon by 2050. That's a pretty tall order for most companies; that's an altogether daunting challenge for an entire country. If any country stands a chance of doing it, I imagine New Zealand has a better chance than most.

Over this last week, I've had a chance to learn about three separate projects, which address environmental challenges. At our Abac meeting, meals were made from sustainably or organically grown ingredients, including net zero carbon lamb rack and beef. Naturally, I was curious how one raises net zero carbon livestock. Initially, I thought that growers might be buying carbon credits. However, it turned out that inspectors were auditing farms' vegetation cover to measure their level of carbon capture and benchmarking that against the number of livestock being raised.

In another example, a food technology incubator worked with food innovation startups to maximize value out of food products, including their byproducts which were typically thrown away as waste. After using the edible parts of an agricultural or marine product, companies focused their attention on byproducts such as marine shells, fruit rind, and coffee grounds to extract proteins and compounds, which could be used for nutraceuticals or "cosmeceuticals." The objective was to reduce waste, extract the maximum value added, and create entirely new products.

Finally, I had the chance to catch up with a former staff of ours at the Philippine Disaster Resilience Foundation, who now works at a climate action and innovation hub for the Auckland City Council. With the new legislation in place for net zero carbon by 2050, her job is to look for climate action solutions not only for the city but to also offer advice and mentoring to small- and medium-scale companies to help them get to net zero carbon.

When I first started the Liveable Cities Challenge project several years ago, we used to say we are entering a climate-defined future. That is no longer the case. Today, we already live in a climate-defined world.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

[Bill on developing sustainable communities gets House final nod](#)

By: Filane Mikee Cervantes

MANILA – The House of Representatives on Wednesday approved on third and final reading a measure providing for the development of sustainable cities and communities in the country.

With 243 affirmative votes, 3 negative votes, and no abstention, the chamber passed House Bill 6715, which seeks to mandate all cities and municipalities, classified as urban, to conform with and implement plans, programs, and activities guided by Ambisyon 2040, as well as the Philippine Standards for Sustainable Cities and Communities.

Speaker Martin Romualdez said the proposal aims to create neighborhoods that can provide decent living conditions to Filipinos, especially the poor, including comfortable shelter and recreation facilities, basic services and employment opportunities.

Romualdez said poor people from rural communities migrate to cities and other urban areas principally to find jobs and earn money for their families.

“We can prevent such migration if we could build sustainable urban areas, towns and communities and balance national development,” he said.

House Committee on Housing and Urban Development chair Jose Francisco Benitez said the development of sustainable cities and communities should be guided by the principles, concepts and commitments of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the New Urban Agenda of the United Nations.

He added that urbanization should also follow the Philippine standards for sustainable cities and communities and the guiding principles of inclusive urban circular economy, spatial justice, urban renewal, urban mobility, digital connectivity, urban safety, ecological balance, disaster resilience, climate change adaptation, cultural diversity, participatory urban governance and the alignment of economic, social and environmental policies.

"These objectives are ambitious, but directing the development and the planning of our cities and communities toward these goals is an urgent imperative," he said.

Under the measure, the Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development (DHSUD), in consultation with relevant government agencies, local government units (LGUs) civil society groups, the private sector, and the academe, shall harmonize existing national housing and urban development plans with the proposed Sustainable Cities and Communities Act.

The DHSUD, in coordination with the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) and Philippine StatA, shall formulate a national housing and urban development plan to achieve the goals of the proposed law.

National agencies and LGUs are directed to participate in the formulation of such plan.

The DHSUD, in consultation with the DILG, NEDA, PSA, League of Cities of the Philippines, League of Municipalities of the Philippines, civil society groups, the private sector, and the academe, shall issue implementing rules and regulations.

THE MANILA TIMES

[\[Opinion\] Public views on climate change are a policy opportunity](#)

A NEWLY released study by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has revealed that there is widespread awareness of climate change issues among Filipinos, and overwhelming support for government action on climate change adaptation and mitigation. This is certainly heartening news in the face of persistent disinformation about climate change, but more importantly, it is a clear signal to the government that the time to ramp up its climate response is now.

The IMF study, which was released last week, is entitled "Public Perceptions of Climate Mitigation Policies: Evidence from Cross-Country Surveys," and was conducted among 30,000 respondents from 28 countries, including the Philippines.

The study's findings with respect to Philippine perceptions of climate change issues and policy were remarkable, to say the least. Awareness of climate change and regard for it as a serious problem is almost universal in the Philippines; 96 percent of the survey respondents here said that climate change is a "very serious problem" or "fairly serious problem," the highest percentage — along with Mexico — of all the countries surveyed.

In terms of when people perceive the ill effects of climate change will be felt, an overwhelming majority of Filipinos answered, "right now," with 69 percent of those respondents saying that their own households are experiencing adverse effects of climate change, and 89 percent believing that other Filipinos are experiencing climate change impacts. Between 91 and 95 percent of Filipinos believe adverse effects will be experienced, either by themselves or by others in the Philippines, between now and 10 years from now.

Awareness of the government's existing climate commitments is also fairly high among Filipinos at about 60 percent of respondents, putting the country among the top 9 or 10 in this category in the survey. Filipinos are also reasonably well-informed about the existence of laws and regulations to limit greenhouse gas emissions (70 percent), and policies for subsidizing renewable energy (66 percent).

The IMF study did devote a significant amount of attention to public perceptions of carbon pricing concepts and policies, which is a complex topic that might be best discussed separately, particularly since the government currently has no carbon pricing policies, nor any apparent plans to formulate them in the foreseeable future.

However, there were other findings of the study that were revealing, and broke preconceived notions about who should be responsible for funding climate adaptation and mitigation.

'Everyone should pay'

First, the study found that nearly 75 percent of Filipinos believe that collective global action is necessary to combat climate change; a majority of respondents across all countries agreed with that, but the Philippines is among the highest. Second, contrary to the assumptions of the government and many other observers, only a rather small minority of Filipinos — about 22 percent — believe that the responsibility for paying for climate action should fall only on the rich countries responsible for the lion's share of global emissions. By contrast, about 73 percent of Filipinos believe that "everyone should pay," which tends to cast some doubt on public support for the government's existing emissions reduction commitments under the 2015 Paris Agreement, more than 90 percent of which are "conditional" on receiving funding from other countries or multinational institutions.

The message for the government from the findings of this most revealing study can be summed up quite simply. Filipinos believe that climate change and its adverse effects are an immediate, serious problem; they broadly support — and expect — government policies to address climate change, and they are willing to pay a fair share of the cost of the global effort.

The Philippine governments, despite serving for a single, non-renewable term, have always been keen to take advantage of positive public sentiment to advance a policy agenda, and the findings on public perceptions toward climate change policy are offering a political win on a silver platter to the Marcos administration. The government should strike while the iron is hot, so to speak; shift some of its focus from contentious goals of unclear necessity or benefit, and ramp up its efforts to combat climate change.

[World Bank to hold PH climate actions talk](#)

By: Leander C. Domingo

LOS BAÑOS, Laguna: Policy action and investments as well as the tools and instruments needed to substantially reduce damages caused by climate change will be discussed at the presentation of the World Bank's Philippines Country Climate and Development Report (CCDR).

Hosted by the Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (Searca) at its headquarters on the campus of the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) on Thursday, February 16, the presentation will be delivered by WB economists at Searca's Agriculture and Development Seminar Series.

They are Dr. Stefano Pagiolo, World Bank senior environmental economist, and Dr. Souleymane Coulibaly, World Bank lead economist and program leader for Equitable Growth, Finance and Institutions Practice Group for Brunei, Malaysia, Philippines and Thailand.

The event will be held at the Searca Umali Auditorium and livestreamed via Zoom and Facebook.

According to Searca, the recommended policy actions and investments are intended to protect valuable infrastructure from typhoons, and to make agriculture more resilient through climate-smart measures that could reduce negative climate impacts by two-thirds.

Searca said the CCDR comprehensively analyzes how climate change will affect the country's ability to meet its development goals and pursue green, resilient and inclusive development, and provides an in-depth analysis of challenges and opportunities for climate-related actions in agriculture, water, energy and transport.

Moreover, the CCDR has identified opportunities for climate action by both the public and private sectors, and prioritizes the most urgent development challenges impacted by climate change in the Philippines.

"Searca is promoting the findings of the World Bank climate and development report to help increase awareness, encourage action, foster collaboration, and influence policy decisions related to climate change and sustainable development," Searca director Dr. Glenn Gregorio said.

Gregorio added that this is aligned with Searca's priority focus on enhancing agricultural and rural development toward climate resilience.

Also speaking during the seminar are Dr. Ndiame Diop, World Bank country director for the Philippines, Malaysia, Thailand, and Brunei; Dr. Rico Ancog, professor and dean; and Dr. Patricia Ann Sanchez, professor, both of the UPLB School of Environmental Science and Management.

Other speakers are Dr. Rodel Lasco, executive director of the Oscar Lopez Center for Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Management Foundation Inc.; Dr. Rex Victor Cruz, professor emeritus, UPLB College of Forestry and Natural Resources and Searca senior fellow; Gregorio; and Dr. Nur Azura Adam, Searca deputy director for Programs.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

[Rising seas threaten exodus of 'biblical' scale, warns Guterres](#)

By: Agence France Presse

UNITED NATIONS, United States — The UN Secretary-General warned Tuesday that global warming could force a mass exodus "on a biblical scale" as people flee low-lying communities and called for legal frameworks to be implemented in preparation, especially for refugees.

"The danger is especially acute for nearly 900 million people who live in coastal zones at low elevations—that's one out of ten people on Earth," Antonio Guterres told the UN Security Council.

"Low-lying communities and entire countries could disappear forever... We would witness a mass exodus of entire populations on a biblical scale," he said.

It is not only small island states at risk as sea levels rise, he added.

Countries such as Bangladesh, China, India and the Netherlands are all in danger, Guterres said, while "mega-cities on every continent will face serious impacts"—from Cairo to Jakarta to Los Angeles to Copenhagen.

The UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) says sea levels rose by 15-25 centimeters (6-10 inches) between 1900 and 2018.

If the world warms by just two degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit) compared to the pre-industrial era, then those levels will rise again by 43 centimeters by the year 2100.

But if it warms by three or four degrees Celsius, sea levels could rise by as much as 84 centimeters, the IPCC says.

The problem must be addressed "across legal and human rights frameworks," Guterres warned.

Rising sea levels means shrinking land mass, he said, which could drive possible disputes over land and maritime space.

"The current legal regime must look to the future and address any gaps in existing frameworks," including in international refugee law, he said.

It must also provide for the future of states that face losing their land territory completely.

Guterres said the Security Council has a "critical" role to play in addressing "the devastating security challenges arising from rising seas."

The issue has been controversial in the past: In 2021, Russia vetoed a resolution linking climate change and global security, which was supported by the majority of the Council members.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

[CCC sees need to enhance partnership with DA for agri ventures](#)

By: Ruth Abbey Gita-Carlos

MANILA – The Climate Change Commission (CCC) on Wednesday sought to strengthen its partnership with the Department of Agriculture (DA) for more agricultural ventures.

In a statement, CCC Commissioner Albert dela Cruz Sr. said jumpstarting new agriculture ventures with DA would help local government units (LGUs) and other stakeholders establish a "whole-of-nation and community" approach to addressing climate change and global warming.

Dela Cruz issued the statement, as he emphasized the need to pursue agro-industrial initiatives to ensure food and human security in the country.

In line with the Marcos administration's climate action advocacy for sustainable development through the Local Climate Change Action Plan (LCCAP), dela Cruz went to Ocampo, Camarines Sur to discuss climate action plans with the town mayor, Ronald Allan Go, the CCC said.

The meeting, also attended by Presidential Adviser Undersecretary Rex Villegas, other municipal officials, and private proponents, was held at Go's office.

The CCC said dela Cruz and Go are eyeing a collaboration to make Ocampo town become the "country's food basket," particularly in the Bicol region.

"With regard to plans of action within Ocampo town, dela Cruz conferred with Mayor Go the possibilities of ensuring safe and compliant slaughterhouse facilities in the municipality through the National Meat Inspection Service," the commission said. "Aside from this, dela Cruz likewise discussed with the local government chief executive how the CCC could assist in the formulation of a comprehensive land use plan that would benefit his constituents and the whole country."

On Monday, CCC Vice Chairperson and Executive Director Robert Borje pledged to continue stepping up cooperation with various sectors to help the country achieve climate-resilient agriculture practices.

The Philippines' geographical location and archipelagic formulation make it one of the most vulnerable nations in the world to climate change.

Dela Cruz, along with fellow CCC commissioner Rachel Ann Herrera, repeatedly emphasized the importance of partnerships with LGUs for the speedy implementation of climate action nationwide to attain sustainable development.

Dela Cruz and Herrera both believed that the creation of more green jobs and other pro-environment efforts would mitigate the impact of climate change, as well as help the country adapt and gain benefits from the phenomenon.

“Climate action has no political color like what our beloved President Ferdinand ‘Bongbong’ Romualdez Marcos Jr. has repeatedly said. It is an issue we should all face in unity and with each other’s help,” dela Cruz said.

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