



## NEWS ROUNDUP

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## BUSINESS MIRROR

### [Emerging Trends in Infrastructure](#)

TWENTY twenty three may represent an epoch unlike any other. Future generations may look back at 2023 with deep admiration or deep scorn. They may praise leaders for their foresight or damn them for their inaction. Leaders today have a choice. The repercussions of these choices can resonate for future generations.

## BUSINESS WORLD

### [DoF expects more businesses to go green this year](#)

By: Alyssa Nicole O. Tan

THE DEPARTMENT of Finance (DoF) is confident that it can persuade more businesses to go green this year, citing the possible passage of a bill easing tax payments as well as increased promotion of available incentives.

## CNN

### [Nearly 30 dangerous feedback loops could permanently shift the Earth's climate, scientists say](#)

By: Laura Paddison

Dangerous climate feedback loops are increasing global warming and risk causing a permanent shift away from the Earth's current climate, according to a new study.

## MANILA BULLETIN

### [Marcos vows to protect environment, enforce mining law](#)

By: Argyll Cyrus Geduco

President Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr. said that his administration would do a “meticulous balancing” to protect the environment and enforce the country’s law on responsible mining.

### [Proposed ‘carbon tax’ to appear on electricity bill, but what is it for?](#)

By: Ellson Quismorio

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### [UN chief ‘deeply concerned’ by rising violence in Africa](#)

ADDIS ABABA, Ethiopia – UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said on Saturday that Africa needed “action for peace” to combat rising violence and promote democratic freedoms on the continent.

## **PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER**

### [Nordic envoys urge public-private partnership for sustainable solutions to climate change](#)

By: Zacarian Sarao

MANILA, Philippines — Nordic ambassadors to the Philippines on Thursday called for close cooperation between the public and private sectors to find and employ new sustainable solutions to climate change.

## **PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY**

### [DENR's P500-K 'trash trap' projects in 2 CDO villages operational](#)

By: Ercel Maandig

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY - The Department of Environment and Natural Resources in Northern Mindanao (DENR-10) made operational the "trash trap" projects to reduce floating garbage in two barangays here on Friday.

## **POLITIKO**

### [Marcos cites need to balance protecting environment, enforcing mining law](#)

By: Prince Golez

His administration will strike a careful balance between protecting the environment and enforcing the country's responsible mining law, President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. said.

## **SUNSTAR**

### [Apec turns to tech, data science to tackle global food security](#)

MEMBERS of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (Apec) are intensifying efforts to ensure food security for people in the region and to address global climate change by drawing on sustainable productivity growth, innovation, science-based and risk-centered policies, to include the role of climate smart agriculture.

## THE MANILA TIMES

### Asean project aims to revitalize region's rivers

A five-year project aimed at reducing pollution and revitalizing rivers in the region was launched last week in Manila by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean).

### LPA off Surigao del Norte may intensify into a storm

By: Arlie O. Calalo

THE low pressure area (LPA) spotted off Surigao del Norte may develop into a tropical depression in the coming days, the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration said on Sunday.

## THE PHILIPPINE STAR

### Communities urge carbon majors to pay up for heating planet

By: Gaea Katreena Cabico

MANILA, Philippines — Members of communities affected by fossil fuel operations and extreme weather events in the country called on the world's most polluting companies to pay reparations for their contributions to the climate crisis.

### Rising sea level threatens stability of boundaries, Philippines warns

By: Pia Lee-Brago

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippines warned that rising sea level threatens the stability of its boundaries, as a United Nations agency highlighted coastlines being “pushed” inward thus affecting baselines from which countries’ maritime zones are measured.

### Why is WASH a crucial element of response and recovery from climate disasters?

By: Gaea Katreena Cabico and Ann Gabrielle Domingo

MANILA, Philippines — When Super Typhoon Odette (Rai) struck southern and central parts of the Philippines in December 2021, people’s access to clean drinking water and sanitation facilities was compromised, leading to increased risk of water-borne diseases.

## **CCC IN THE NEWS:**

**NET25**

### **PH Kailangang mag-double time sa pagtupad ng climate action plan vs. disasters**

By: Earlo Bringas

Para mabawasan ang pinsalang dulot ng climate change o global warming. Iginiit ng Climate Change Commission o CCC of the Philippines na dapat nang maipatupad ang climate action plan.

**PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY**

### **Del Carmen Mangrove Reserve headed for bigger things: CCC**

By: Azer Parrocha

MANILA – The Climate Change Commission (CCC) on Sunday lauded the Del Carmen Mangrove Reserve in Siargao -- one of the largest in the country spanning over 4,800 hectares -- for being recognized by the government as a Wetland of International Importance early this month.

### **LGUs, private sector urged to adopt edible landscaping**

By: Azer Parrocha

MANILA – Edible landscaping (EL) may just be the solution to achieve sustainable food security across the country, an official of the Climate Change Commission (CCC) said Sunday.

**Information and Knowledge Management Division**

## BUSINESS MIRROR

### Emerging Trends in Infrastructure

TWENTY twenty three may represent an epoch unlike any other. Future generations may look back at 2023 with deep admiration or deep scorn. They may praise leaders for their foresight or damn them for their inaction. Leaders today have a choice. The risk is that leaders allow the worst of our human nature to rule decision-making during this period of massive social, political, economic and environmental change; collaboration could falter, globalization could fail and society could fracture. The opportunity is that leaders allow the best of human nature to win the day. Society could unite in the face of danger, adapt to change and innovate in adversity.

The willingness to let go of the past may largely dictate how societies move into the future. They won't make much progress if they are shackled to sunk investments and entrenched systems. They won't innovate if they can't open their minds to new ideas and approaches. They won't adapt if they aren't looking ahead. And they won't unite unless they believe in a better future.

This mindset shift is important as the Philippines forge its path in a post-pandemic world. The infrastructure sector must adapt and develop in order to address the changing needs of society. KPMG in the Philippines Deal Advisory Head and Infrastructure Sector Head Michael Arcatomy H. Guarin further supports this saying, "it is a new era and we have to think differently in terms of tackling the challenges and opportunities that this presents to the infrastructure sector."

Guarin highlighted that "more than seeing it as risks, the emerging trends in infrastructure are great breakthroughs that could champion sustainable changes if addressed and implemented appropriately. These trends cut across different segments of society, from ESG, healthcare, finance, digital literacy and communication—a clear manifestation of the interconnection of each one."

Ten trends in infrastructure

Trend 1: Tilting toward territorialism and shifting allegiances.

A big risk for 2023 is that all this geopolitical complexity and uncertainty that we're currently seeing can slow the pace of decision-making to a crawl. Right now, however, action is needed and lots of it. Populations need more infrastructure and more leadership, not less. Infrastructure players must keep their new geopolitical and supply

chain security lenses on a pivot. In a world ruled by unstable temporary alliances, awareness and agility may be key.

#### Trend 2: Backed into the sustainability corner.

This year, we expect to see individuals and organizations take serious steps to move from talk to action. Much focus will likely remain on mitigation (anything we can do to keep global warming and climate change to a minimum is welcome, even if humanity overshoots the 1.5-degree goal). But the growing focus will likely be placed on adaptation as people come to terms with what it means to live in a climate-stressed world. There may also be multiple paths to adaptation, though some require a fundamental shift in mindset.

Governments and infrastructure players must leave the old mindsets behind and factor sustainability into decision making now. Retrofitting using an old mindset is going to be more expensive, less effective and more disruptive. And history has proven you can't win this fight doing what you have done in the past.

#### Trend 3: The “Age of Mass Customization” emerges.

The “Age of Mass Customization” is about personalizing infrastructure to the user—both in its physical manifestation and in the way we use it. And that will require a step change in digitization, new business and services models. Focus can be placed on creating unique experiences for users while protecting their data, their privacy and their interests.

The challenge facing infrastructure providers and governments is two-fold. The first big challenge is how to remain relevant in an age where technologies and private players are already disrupting the service delivery model. Governments may need to rethink where and how they will play (or perhaps, just intervene) in the provision of infrastructure. In part, this requires new ideas and models that eschew the industrial age and embody the age of mass customization. It will likely also require some tough decisions about what to do with existing industrial-age assets.

#### Trend 4: Inflation, pricing and supply elevate the risk.

A health pandemic, followed by a supply chain pandemic, led to an inflationary pandemic. The big worry for infrastructure players is that the next stop is a bankruptcy pandemic.

The continued volatility and financial disruption of the past few months have certainly not been easy for infrastructure players. We are seeing infrastructure planners and owners struggling to budget for projects that will take years to deliver and decades to finance. As costs rise, return on investment equations rapidly change. As inflation bites, so does affordability.

To be sure, supply chain bankruptcy would be a worst-case scenario this year. But the risk of not building anything at all would be much, much more dangerous over the long term.

#### Trend 5: Getting the most from digital.

Digital transformation can deliver massive potential benefits for infrastructure owners, operators and users. The use cases are manifold. The value is quantifiable. The capabilities are plentiful.

This year, we expect to see significant pressure on contractors and developers to up their digital capabilities and integrate into the wider value chain. We also expect to see more infrastructure players work to overlay data with experience—applying human capabilities to drive real value from data.

#### Trend 6: Cities look for purpose.

This year, expect to see the city, regional and national governments start to engage in real and collaborative debates on what value cities can deliver. And, with that, expect to see a much greater focus on bringing together the essential ingredients to drive the work, play and live agenda.

#### Trend 7: Institutional players drive the climate agenda.

Governments have big ambitions for climate change. But they also know that the cost of the required structural changes will likely be enormous—some estimates suggest upwards of 7 percent of global GDP between now and 2050. This is at a time of massive pressure on government pocketbooks, rising inflation and justifiable debates on who holds the costs and reaps the benefits of climate change.

Perhaps not surprisingly, governments are looking to institutional investors to help finance the costs. Institutional investors are also long-term investors. This isn't just about patient capital. It's about investors who understand the long-term effects of climate change and are invested enough to want to do something about it. And over the

past few years, many have become much more active in their management of their assets, working with their investments to deliver real and measurable de-carbonization goals.

Over the coming year, we can expect institutional investors, governments and owners to become much more comfortable allowing the power of capital to drive climate outcomes.

#### Trend 8: Globalization gets buffeted by security.

This year, expect to see infrastructure players start to rework their supply chains into more dynamic supply webs that form around the security of supply. And don't be surprised to see some significant fallout as less-friendly markets and companies get dropped.

#### Trend 9: Dealing with sunk costs and abandoned assets.

Infrastructure assets are expensive. And they are made to last decades. So, there is an obvious reluctance to abandon them early. Yet society's needs and expectations have changed. Climate change has rewritten the value equation in many markets. And technological change has upped the risk of obsolescence.

The potential risks of trying to solve new problems within an old context and mindset are huge. It limits the imagination. It stifles innovation. It slows investment from flowing into new ideas and technologies. It increases costs, encourages waste and creates redundancy. If society is to move peacefully and confidently from the industrial age to the age of mass customization, it should become much more willing to abandon the status quo and encourage greenfield thinking.

#### Trend 10: The definition of infrastructure evolves.

In the past, it was pretty easy to identify infrastructure; it was stuff that governments built to deliver on citizens' needs and policy agendas. Now those lines are blurring. Infrastructure is no longer the remit of government alone. It does not always deliver on citizen needs or policy agendas. In many cases, the lines between sectors are rapidly blurring.

Given all of the trends we have raised in this report—the shift to issue-specific alliances, changing supply chain expectations, rising economic uncertainty, unsolved questions about existing assets, digitization and the shift to the age of mass customization,

encouraging this type of flexible federation of capabilities may prove to be the only way that governments may be able to execute on their agendas. They certainly can't do it alone. And jumping into bed with one big partner to the exclusion of others has proven to be unpopular with citizens who worry about who is controlling their infrastructure.

What is clear is that the definition of infrastructure is evolving. The competitive landscape is rapidly changing. Governments are no longer the sole purveyor of infrastructure. There will likely be implications for everyone in the sector. Discussions of these choices can resonate for future generations.

## BUSINESS WORLD

### DoF expects more businesses to go green this year

By: Alyssa Nicole O. Tan

THE DEPARTMENT of Finance (DoF) is confident that it can persuade more businesses to go green this year, citing the possible passage of a bill easing tax payments as well as increased promotion of available incentives.

Finance Undersecretary Maria Cielo D. Magno said that despite the incentive packages, the Philippines still has a low count of environment-friendly companies.

“Companies are still applying; we still have very few,” she said in an interview on the sidelines of the Nordic-Philippine Climate Executive Dialogue on Thursday.

However, she expects to see progress this year since “we’re just at the beginning of implementing it,” referring to incentive packages provided by the fiscal incentives review board.

The DoF is giving incentives to companies that employ eco-friendliness and renewable energy, as well as those that introduce new technology.

“We are also working with Congress right now on the ease of paying taxes to simplify all the tax administration [and] tax payments,” Ms. Magno said, citing the inclusion of a provision that further simplifies invoicing requirements of companies.

She said the bill if passed would make it easier for export companies that are entitled to a value-added tax (VAT) refund to get their claim, benefits, and incentives given by the government.

Should the proposed bill be passed, it will remove the P500 annual taxpayer registration fee, introduce a medium-sized taxpayer classification, and remove the distinction between sales invoices and official receipts for purposes of recognizing VAT transactions.

“The [DoF] remains steadfast in mobilizing financing for climate change mitigation and adaptation,” Ms. Magno said.

The Finance department is currently establishing a sustainable finance ecosystem to synergize investments from the public and private sectors to yield green projects that

"will have a lasting and permanent effect on the environment and our people," she added.

Meanwhile, Ms. Magno said that in the extractive sector, which includes mining, and oil and gas exploration, "there is an active discussion within the MSG (multi-stakeholder group), the board of the EITI (Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative), to discuss stronger environmental and social monitoring," noting awareness for the increasing need for critical minerals.

On its website, the EITI describes itself as a platform to show the direct and indirect contributions of the extractive sector to the economy, among others.

Critical minerals such as copper, lithium, nickel, cobalt and rare earth elements are essential components in rapidly growing clean energy technologies — from wind turbines and electricity networks to electric vehicles, according to the International Energy Agency.

Demand for these minerals will grow as clean energy transitions gather pace, it added.

"Right now, the group is working on a grievance mechanism, so that the MSG will be more accessible," Ms. Magno said, adding the creation of more policies that target responsible mining.

"If we're able to really implement policies that would make responsible mining feasible, then I think it's good news for everyone, especially now that there's increasing demand for critical minerals," she said.

CNN

[Nearly 30 dangerous feedback loops could permanently shift the Earth's climate, scientists say](#)

By: Laura Paddison

Dangerous climate feedback loops are increasing global warming and risk causing a permanent shift away from the Earth's current climate, according to a new study.

Climate feedback loops are cyclical chain reactions that happen when one change triggers further changes, in a process that keeps on repeating itself. Some of these feedback loops drive down warming, but others amplify it.

Take Arctic ice, for example. Warming temperatures cause sea ice to melt, revealing the dark ocean water beneath. As dark surfaces absorb more heat than reflective surfaces like ice, the ocean warms and more ice melts.

A group of international scientists from institutions including Oregon State University, Exeter University and the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research in Germany, pored over climate literature to identify 41 climate feedback loops.

Of these, they found that 27 are driving up global temperatures, according to the study published Friday in the scientific journal One Earth, while just seven are helping to slow the pace of climate crisis.

William Ripple, Professor of Ecology at Oregon State University and a lead author on the study, told CNN that forest die-off, smoldering peatlands and thawing permafrost were particularly worrisome.

"These feedbacks may be large and are difficult to accurately quantify," Ripple told CNN.

The researchers were surprised by the large number of amplifying climate feedback loops they found, he added.

"To the best of our knowledge, this is the most extensive list available of climate feedback loops, and not all of them are fully considered in climate models," Christopher Wolf, a postdoctoral scholar at Oregon State University and the study's other lead author, said in a statement.

Climate feedback loops can also indirectly affect each other, according to the study, creating a complex web of interconnected changes that can accelerate the impacts of the climate crisis.

For example, planet-warming pollution released by thawing permafrost – the frozen layer of soil that blankets the Arctic and other parts of the planet's far north – increases global temperatures, which in turn helps create the hotter, drier conditions that make wildfires spread faster and burn more intensely. Wildfires release planet-heating pollution, further raising temperatures, and so on.

These interconnections “make it challenging to predict the precise impacts of climate change,” Ripple said.

There is a risk that some of these feedback loops could trigger climate tipping points. For example, feedback loops accelerating Arctic ice melt could ultimately cause the Greenland ice sheet to collapse.

“In the worst case, if amplifying feedbacks are strong enough, the result is likely tragic climate change that’s moved beyond anything humans can control,” Ripple said in a statement.

The study also found seven “dampening” feedback loops, which help stabilize the climate system. These included the ability of land and oceans to absorb planet-heating carbon emissions.

It’s important to “try to get a handle on the strength of all these feedbacks,” Tim Lenton, Chair in Climate Change and Earth System Science at the University of Exeter and one of the co-authors, told CNN, to better understand how they work within the complex climate system.

“We, already at 1.5 [degrees Celsius], are likely to cross multiple tipping points, causing feedback loops that would make our options for a safe climate future even fewer,” Johan Rockström, Director of the Potsdam institute and a co-author of the study, told CNN.

The authors called for “immediate and massive” reductions in planet-warming pollution, as well as increased research into climate feedback loops.

“It’s too late to fully prevent the pain of climate change, but if we take meaningful steps soon while prioritizing human basic needs and social justice, it could still be possible to limit the harm,” Ripple said.

## **MANILA BULLETIN**

### **Marcos vows to protect environment, enforce mining law**

By: Argyll Cyrus Geduco

President Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr. said that his administration would do a “meticulous balancing” to protect the environment and enforce the country’s law on responsible mining.

Marcos said this in response to a question about his policy on protecting the environment in the Cordillera, especially regarding mining.

According to the President, protecting the environment has always been essential to his administration’s policies.

“In terms of protecting the environment, it’s very clear what the position of this government has always been... It has been an important part of all our policies,” he said.

“We are environmentally conscious, moving the economy towards green technologies, moving our production of power towards renewables,” he added.

President Marcos noted that mineral exploration and extraction are essential to his administration’s economic plan.

However, he said the government wants to avoid unfortunate incidents like what happened in the past few years.

“So it is really a question of enforcing the law in terms of responsible mining, and that is what we will continue to do,” Marcos said.

“We will always make sure that the mining companies who come in, once they are finished mining, that they leave the site in the same condition as it was when they found it,” he added.

Meanwhile, Marcos said the country can now monetize its forest cover— giving it a peso or dollar value and taking advantage of being more active in promoting, monitoring, regulating, and encouraging the care of its forests.

“All our forest cover is important and must remain — that is giving the Philippines, we fall into the category of a carbon sink country because of our forest cover, and so that is a very valuable asset for the Philippines,” he said.

## Proposed ‘carbon tax’ to appear on electricity bill, but what is it for?

By: Ellson Quismorio

A group of Camarines Sur solons are batting for the imposition of a “carbon tax” on the use of electricity (CTE) as a way to raise extra funds for climate action initiatives.

One of them, Camarines Sur 2nd district Rep. LRay Villafuerte, said such landmark tax can help the country meet its ambitious decarbonization target of reducing greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) by 75 percent by 2030.

Under House Bill (HB) No.4939, the CTE will be equivalent to P1 for every kilogram (kg) of CO<sub>2</sub> emission per kilowatt hour (kWh). This will be tucked in the monthly electricity bills of consumers.

Villafuerte said the measure is urgent given the Philippines’ reputation as a “ground zero for climate disaster”.

“Abrupt climate change is not only imminent; it is here. It is consequently necessary for us to make a significant contribution to the global effort to stabilize GHG concentrations in the atmosphere,” said the National Unity Party (NUP) president.

However, HB No.4939 seeks to exempt from the payment of this climate or carbon tax: (1) households that each consume 60 kWh or below per month, and (2) those that use electricity generated from renewable energy (RE) sources.

For RE consumers to avail of the CTE exemption or refund, they are required under the bill to each secure a certificate from the Department of Energy (DOE) confirming that are harnessing RE power and not using electricity from the grid.

“The swift congressional approval of HB No.4739 will send a strong message to the global community of our country’s steadfast commitment to international climate action policy and the 19th Congress’ affirmation of the people’s right to a balanced and healthy ecology as well as the State’s paramount duty to safeguard such right for the present and future generations,” added Villafuerte, who filed a similar climate tax bill in the previous Congress.

“Proceeds from this climate or carbon tax plan are to be used solely for programs designed to help the most vulnerable Philippine communities better adapt to erratic weather patterns responsible for the worsening natural calamities,” he said.

"This measure, once approved, will be the first of its kind in the country. It recognizes the unfortunate status quo of the environment and encourages every Filipino to act now," stressed Villafuerte.

He further said that the CTE proceeds would be used to explore alternative and clean sources of energy, provide green public transportation and disseminate climate change awareness, among other objectives.

Carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) is one GHG linked to global warming, and a major source of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in the Philippines are the burning of fossil fuel for electricity, heat and transportation, he said.

Villafuerte's co-authors in HB No.4739 were Camarines Sur Reps. Miguel Luis Villafuerte (5th district) and Tsuyoshi Anthony Horibata (1st district), and Bicol Saro Party-list Rep. Nicolas Enciso VIII.

## UN chief ‘deeply concerned’ by rising violence in Africa

ADDIS ABABA, Ethiopia – UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said on Saturday that Africa needed “action for peace” to combat rising violence and promote democratic freedoms on the continent.

“I am deeply concerned about the recent rise in violence by armed groups in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and the rise of terrorist groups in the Sahel and elsewhere,” Guterres said at the start of the annual African Union (AU) summit in Addis Ababa.

African leaders are meeting to push for ceasefires in the Sahel hit by putschists and the eastern DRC where the M23 militia has seized swathes of territory and sparked a diplomatic row between Kinshasa and Rwanda, which is accused of backing the rebels.

There has been a wave of coups since 2020 in the Sahel countries of Mali, Guinea and Burkina Faso.

“The mechanisms for peace are faltering,” Guterres warned.

Nevertheless, he urged the bloc to “continue to battle for peace”.

The UN chief said Africa faced “enormous tests... on virtually every front,” adding that the continent was bearing the brunt of multiple crises it had no hand in generating, including the Russian invasion of Ukraine and climate change.

“The brutal injustice of climate change is on full display with every flood, drought, famine and heatwave endured on this continent,” he said.

At a mini-summit on Friday, leaders of the seven-nation East African Community called for all armed groups to withdraw from occupied areas in the eastern DRC by the end of next month.

Guterres met with several African leaders on Friday, including Rwandan President Paul Kagame, to discuss in particular the crisis in the Congo.

Junta-ruled Mali, Burkina Faso and Guinea, which have been suspended from the AU, cannot participate in this weekend’s summit.

But diplomats of the three nations are in Addis Ababa to push for readmission.

"I endorse your call for the restoration of civilian and democratically elected governments in Burkina Faso, Guinea, Mali and Sudan," Guterres said.

The two-day summit, bringing together the 55 countries on the continent, also aims to jumpstart a faltering free trade deal.

## PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

### Nordic envoys urge public-private partnership for sustainable solutions to climate change

By: Zacarian Sarao

MANILA, Philippines — Nordic ambassadors to the Philippines on Thursday called for close cooperation between the public and private sectors to find and employ new sustainable solutions to climate change.

This came as their embassies conducted a dialogue on climate change, promoting the Nordic Cooperation model and experience in combatting or adapting to global climate changes which they believe can be suitable for Southeast Asia.

Ambassadors Franz-Michael Mellbin of the Royal Danish Embassy, Juha Pyykkö of the Finland Embassy, Christian Halaas Lyster of the Royal Norwegian Embassy, and Annika Thunborg of the Embassy of Sweden led the talk at The Manila Hotel in Manila.

They reiterated their countries' commitments to help in achieving the sustainable development agenda and advancing climate action.

"The Nordic countries aim to be the most sustainable and integrated region in the world. I hope that the Nordic Cooperation model and experience, in general, is something of interest for this region, as well," said Pyykkö.

"Sustainable solutions can only be achieved by working together. Private and public sectors working together, creating an environment where we can share best practices and adapt new solutions to mitigate the global challenges," said Lyster.

Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga and Negros Oriental 1st District Rep. Jocelyn Limkaichong, vice-chair of the House committee on climate change, as well as local government officials also attended the dialogue.

Yulo-Loyzaga presented the climate situation in the Philippines and the climate challenges that the country is facing. She also enumerated the Philippine government's goals to address climate change, including its target to cut gas emissions by 75 percent.

Limkaichong, for her part, emphasized the importance of climate laws in the fight against the adverse impacts of climate change. She also reaffirmed during the dialogue

the House's commitment to create more regulations to address global warming and the climate crisis.

## PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

### DENR's P500-K 'trash trap' projects in 2 CDO villages operational

By: Ercel Maandig

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY - The Department of Environment and Natural Resources in Northern Mindanao (DENR-10) made operational the "trash trap" projects to reduce floating garbage in two barangays here on Friday.

DENR-10 Executive Director Henry Adornado identified the villages of Lapasan and Puntod as the two pilot areas for the project in the region amounting to PHP500,000.

An additional PHP100,000 of the fund was also turned over to the caretakers of the projects in the two villages, he said.

Adornado said the projects will be monitored by the DENR, while the management will be spearheaded by the barangays.

Installed in creeks and waterways, the trash traps target to reduce floating garbage in the city, leading to lesser incidents of urban flooding.

Forester Mercidita Barbarona, DENR-10 assistant chief for the conservation and development division, said the trash trap is an innovation for the city through the introduction of Adornado who patterned the successful project in Quezon province.

Meanwhile, Armen Cuenca, the chief of the city environment and natural resources office (Clenro), committed to implementing the project in the city's 80 villages with appropriate funding.

Cuenca said the city government has already allocated funds for the trash trap this year for a citywide implementation.

In the pilot villages, the Clenro office affirmed that it will buy the trash coming from the traps through its "Trash to Cash" program.

It also announced that the city government has constructed a recycling facility to densify the plastics trash.

## POLITIKO

### Marcos cites need to balance protecting environment, enforcing mining law

By: Prince Golez

His administration will strike a careful balance between protecting the environment and enforcing the country's responsible mining law, President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. said.

Marcos Jr. made the statement when asked about his policy direction towards protecting the environment in the Cordillera, especially regarding mining.

"In terms of protecting the environment, it's very clear what the position of this government has always been... It has been an important part of all our policies, that we are environmentally conscious, that we are moving the economy towards green technologies, we are moving our production of power towards renewables," the President said during a media interview after attending the Philippine Military Academy alumni homecoming in Baguio City.

"So in that regard, all our forest cover is important and must remain — that is giving the Philippines, we fall into the category of a carbon sink country because of our forest cover and so that is a very valuable asset for the Philippines," he added.

Marcos Jr. said the country can now monetize its forest cover by assigning it a peso or a dollar value, as well as benefit from being more active in promoting, monitoring, regulating, and encouraging forest care.

In terms of mining, the Chief Executive said that mineral exploration and extraction are critical components of his administration's economic strategy, but that the government does not want to repeat the mistakes of recent years.

"So it is really a question of enforcing the law in terms of responsible mining and that is what we will continue to do. We will always make sure that the mining companies who come in, once they are finished mining that they leave the site in the same condition as it was when they found it," he concluded.

## SUNSTAR

### [\*\*Apec turns to tech, data science to tackle global food security\*\*](#)

MEMBERS of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (Apec) are intensifying efforts to ensure food security for people in the region and to address global climate change by drawing on sustainable productivity growth, innovation, science-based and risk-centered policies, to include the role of climate smart agriculture.

“Climate change affects every aspect of the agrifood system,” said Allison Thomas, chairperson of the Apec Policy Partnership on Food Security as officials meet in Palm Springs, California, this week.

“The Covid-19 pandemic and supply chain disruptions have further exacerbated an already fragile food economy,” Thomas explained. “Adding to that, the current global conflict further hampers food distribution and production throughout the world.”

A recent report by the United Nation’s Food and Agriculture Organization highlighted that around 2.3 billion people lacked access to adequate food in 2021. That’s almost 30 percent of the world’s population.

“Severe food insecurity increased globally and in every region,” wrote the report.

In response to this, the United States, as the host of Apec 2023, is proposing the development of a common set of principles that can aid member economies in developing resilient agri-food systems and guide regional cooperation in a bid to drive regional conversations about sustainable development, economic security, environmental commitments and trade through the agricultural and food lens as Apec collectively moves towards enhancing regional food security.

Agriculture and food ministers last year endorsed an Implementation Plan of the Food Security Roadmap Towards 2030 to navigate and coordinate actions, projects and activities to achieve food security in the region.

This year, members are discussing specific actions to implement the Food Security Roadmap Towards 2030 that covers six focus areas: digitalization and innovation, productivity, inclusivity, sustainability, public-private partnerships and Smart goals.

“Our goal is simple and complex at the same time; we must ensure that people have enough food to eat, that the environment and the planet are safe and that farmers can stay in business,” Thomas explained.

“We have to focus on data-driven and science-based policy decisions. We have to focus on leveraging innovation and science, technology and new technology to afford our farmers, fishers, foresters and our producers with the tools that they need to be productive, resilient and effective.”

The Food Security Ministerial Meeting will be held in Seattle and is scheduled to take place in August this year.

## THE MANILA TIMES

### Asean project aims to revitalize region's rivers

A five-year project aimed at reducing pollution and revitalizing rivers in the region was launched last week in Manila by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean).

The Reducing Pollution and Preserving Environmental Flows in East Asian Seas Through the Implementation of Integrated River Basin Management (IRBM) project aims to develop practical and innovative ways for communities, industries and governments to work together, Asean said in statement.

It noted that many of the region's largest cities were built beside rivers: Ho Chi Minh City has the Saigon, Kuala Lumpur the Klang, Jakarta the Ciliwung, and Metro Manila the Pasig, which provide habitats for plants and animals, food production and water sources for millions of people.

Supported by Global Environment Facility and the United Nations Development Program, the project will establish functional IRBM mechanisms in Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Vietnam.

"It will integrate knowledge about the vital connections between rivers and seas. Best practices and pitfalls shall be shared for other rivers to emulate and avoid," said Inthavy Akkharath, chairman of the Asean Working Group on Water Resources Management.

The launch was inaugurated by Carlos Primo David, undersecretary at the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, who was quoted as having said that "effective governance will allow us to continue to utilize the water and other ecosystem services that river basins provide despite the threats of extreme events and climate change."

Selva Ramachandran, UNDP Resident Representative to the Philippines, added that "water use among Asean countries is growing rapidly, while water quality and quantity challenges threaten to derail much-needed economic growth."

"We're glad to help address the critical issue of freshwater governance in river basins beyond national jurisdictions, addressing transboundary issues such as pollution, watershed management, climate change impacts and disaster risks."

Ekkaphab Phanthavong, Asean deputy secretary-general, said "the project is a testament of Asean's collective and forward-looking action to improving water resources management in our region".

Partnerships in Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia, the implementing agency of the project, will work closely with the governments and stakeholders in Asean member-states to improve source-to-sea governance, as well as build the capacity to plan and strengthen river basin management mechanisms.

The launch was organized in conjunction with a project inception workshop and a project steering committee meeting to discuss implementation arrangements, among others.

## LPA off Surigao del Norte may intensify into a storm

By: Arlie O. Calalo

THE low pressure area (LPA) spotted off Surigao del Norte may develop into a tropical depression in the coming days, the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration said on Sunday.

However, the weather disturbance has a slim chance of intensifying into a storm in the next 48 hours, weather forecaster Grace Castañeda said.

"We still did not rule out the possibility that it may eventually escalate into a tropical depression in the coming days," she told The Manila Times.

The LPA was last spotted 195 kilometers northeast of Surigao City, Surigao del Norte or 160kms east of Tacloban City, Leyte.

Visayas, Caraga, Northern Mindanao, Bicol Region, Quezon, Romblon and Marinduque will have cloudy skies with scattered rain showers and thunderstorms due to the LPA.

"Flash floods or landslides due to moderate to heavy with at times intense rains are possible in these areas," Castañeda said.

Meanwhile, the northeast monsoon is affecting Cagayan Valley, Cordillera Administrative Region and Aurora where cloudy skies with rains may prevail, Pagasa said.

The rest of Mindanao and the rest of MIMAROPA (Mindoro, Marinduque, Romblon and Palawan) will have partly cloudy to cloudy skies with isolated rain showers or thunderstorms..

The northeast monsoon is also affecting Metro Manila and the rest of Luzon where partly cloudy to at times cloudy skies with light rains is likely.

## THE PHILIPPINE STAR

### [Communities urge carbon majors to pay up for heating planet](#)

By: Gaea Katreena Cabico

MANILA, Philippines — Members of communities affected by fossil fuel operations and extreme weather events in the country called on the world's most polluting companies to pay reparations for their contributions to the climate crisis.

Representatives of the Nuclear and Coal-Free Bataan Movement, Young Bataeños for Environmental Advocacy Network (YBEAN) and Greenpeace Philippines on Thursday delivered letters to the local offices of Chevron and British Petroleum, and the offices of legal counsels for ExxonMobil, Marathon Oil, Apache Corporation and ConocoPhillips Corporation.

They demanded the five carbon majors — or companies with the largest carbon emissions — to pay up for the economic and human costs caused by climate change, stop plans for fossil fuel expansion, and commit to a just transition away from fossil fuels.

"Our communities live with the reality of climate impacts. We feel it in our pockets and in our guts, with each climate disaster carving up wounds that will never heal. Despite our suffering, you will continue to drill for more oil and expand your fossil fuel business," read the letter signed by representatives of 35 communities and organizations across the country.

"The science is as clear as ever: Fossil-related activities accelerate climate change to catastrophic levels, wrecking lives, livelihoods, communities and cultures in the Philippines and around the world," they added.

Jochelle Magracia, a member of YBEAN and resident of a community near a coal-fired plant in Bataan, also called on the government to take concrete steps to stop the country's dependence on planet-warming fossil fuels.

"The coal plant destroyed our waters, which used to be very clean. It has almost killed the lives and livelihoods of the fishermen and those in our community who depend on what the environment provides," she told Philstar.com.

In a report released in 2022, the Commission of Human Rights said the willful obfuscation of fossil fuel and cement companies of the risks posed by climate change

and the obstruction for efforts toward a global transition to renewable energy are immoral.

The CHR recommended that carbon majors desist from activities that undermine the findings of climate science, cease further exploration of new oil fields and keep fossil fuel reserves in the ground, and contribute to a Green Climate Fund for the implementation of mitigation and adaptation measures.

The CHR report stemmed from the petition filed by civil society organizations and typhoon survivors in 2015, which asked the commission to investigate the responsibilities of carbon majors such as Shell, Chevron, Exxon, BP and Total for human rights impacts aggravated by climate change.

At the COP27 climate talks in Sharm El Sheikh, a loss and damage fund was created, which is an important win for poor nations ravaged by strong cyclones, devastating flooding, extreme droughts and sea level rise.

However, it will likely take several years to hammer out details of the fund for climate victims such as the timelines for establishing the facility and the sources of funding.

## Rising sea level threatens stability of boundaries, Philippines warns

By: Pia Lee-Brago

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippines warned that rising sea level threatens the stability of its boundaries, as a United Nations agency highlighted coastlines being “pushed” inward thus affecting baselines from which countries’ maritime zones are measured.

During a UN Security Council meeting on sea level rise and its implications for international peace and security held recently, Ambassador and deputy permanent representative Ariel Rodelas Peñaranda, chargé d'affaires of the Philippine mission to the United Nations, asserted that the convergence of scientific opinion should guide UN member states in pursuing a common security agenda on sea level rise.

He said the Philippines, with more than half of its cities and communities located along its coasts, is one of the most vulnerable to sea level rise due to anthropogenic climate change.

The Philippines has observed sea level rise at 60 centimeters, about three times that of the global average.

He noted that the impacts of sea level rise threaten all the elements that encompass the national security of the Philippines.

“The nation’s sovereignty and territorial integrity, the people’s well-being, core values, and way of life, among others, are being threatened, especially those living in the coastal areas,” Peñaranda said.

He said that it is important that discussions on the implication of sea level rise on peace and security be always people-centered.

As sea level rise threatens stability of boundaries, Peñaranda warned against inference in favor of ambulatory baselines, and stressed the importance of certainty, predictability and stability in boundaries, which will also serve to prevent conflict.

He said that the UN, especially the Security Council, should take into account the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report, including their projections and recommendations.

According to recently released data from the World Meteorological Organization, global average sea levels have risen faster since 1900 than over any preceding century in the last 3,000 years.

It warned that, even if global warming is “miraculously” limited to 1.5 degrees, the planet will still see a sizeable rise in sea water levels.

Bogdan Aurescu, Romanian foreign minister and co-chair of the International Law Commission Study Group on Sea-Level Rise, agreed that climate change-related sea level poses a real risk to over two-thirds of UN member states.

Outlining a range of sea level rise implications, he said coastlines are being “pushed” inward, affecting baselines from which countries’ maritime zones are measured and therefore threatening countries’ access to resources.

While several actions are available to protect countries’ coastlines, including physical barriers, their costs remain out of reach for many of the countries worst affected.

UN Secretary General Antonio Gutteres said some nations’ coastlines have already seen triple the average rate of sea level rise as he warned that, in the coming decades, low lying communities and entire countries could disappear forever.

“The danger is especially acute for nearly 900 million people who live in coastal zones at low elevations — that is one out of 10 people on earth,” Gutteres said. “We would witness a mass exodus of entire populations on a biblical scale, and we would see ever-fiercer competition for fresh water, land and other resources.”

The Security Council Open Debate is aimed at highlighting the risks to international peace and security posed by sea level rise, and exploring ways how the Council can address these risks in the global security architecture and invest in preventive mechanisms.

## **Why is WASH a crucial element of response and recovery from climate disasters?**

By: Gaea Katreena Cabico, Ann Gabrielle Domingo

MANILA, Philippines — When Super Typhoon Odette (Rai) struck southern and central parts of the Philippines in December 2021, people's access to clean drinking water and sanitation facilities was compromised, leading to increased risk of water-borne diseases.

Typhoon-ravaged residents were left with no money to buy drinking water or were forced to rely on water from open springs and on hand pumps contaminated by mud, flood and sea waters.

According to the International Federation of Red Cross, there were over 400 cases of diarrhea and gastroenteritis, likely resulting from contamination of water sources, in Odette-hit areas. Eight people reportedly died due to diarrhea.

In the town of Del Carmen on Siargao Island, a child died after drinking contaminated water. While it was an isolated case, according to the town mayor, the incident highlighted the nexus of health and climate change.

"If we didn't lack water supply due to the emergency, maybe [the death of the child] wouldn't happen, there wouldn't be a reaction to drink the water in the tank," said Jerlyn Rabaca, administrator of Espoir School of Life. Espoir, which is situated on a resettlement area in Del Carmen, is a non-profit organization that provides free education to underprivileged children.

### **Damaged water infra**

According to the United Nations Children's Fund, some 2.4 million people needed water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) support following 'Odette.' The typhoon also damaged 141 water structures and over 410 sanitation facilities.

"During climate disasters, infrastructure gets damaged. Not just electricity, communication, but most importantly, water," said Jenica Dizon, country director of Waves for Water Philippines. The presence of Waves for Water in the country began in 2013 as a response to Super Typhoon Yolanda (Haiyan), one of the most powerful tropical cyclones ever recorded in the world.

Extreme weather events and other climate impacts contaminate water supply, increasing risk of water-borne illnesses such as diarrhea and cholera to which children are particularly vulnerable.

Dr. Renzo Guinto, who specializes in planetary and public health, has observed this reality in coastal municipalities in the Philippines. Guinto found that Alabat in Quezon province and Ajuy in Iloilo province are more prone to water-borne diseases due to intensifying flooding from sea-level rise.

In 2050, climate change could be responsible for approximately 32,954 additional diarrheal deaths worldwide among children aged 0 to 15, the World Health Organization estimated.

The WHO stressed that investing in water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) is a core element in both preparedness and response, and prevention and mitigation of the impacts of future emergencies.

"It's paramount to plan for and create more resilient water infrastructure because access to clean water is a human right and a basic need. Without water, there really is no life," Dizon said.

### **Crucial need**

With water infrastructure damaged and essential health services crippled by the pandemic, access to clean water is an immediate need to prevent the spread of infectious and water-borne illnesses, and life-threatening dehydration.

In the case of Del Carmen, the town's mangrove forest protected the residents from large waves brought by Odette, allowing owners of water refilling stations to immediately continue their operations, Mayor Alfredo Coro II said.

However, the water coming from the municipality's water provider "took a while to be stabilized" after the storm, he said.

According to Coro, children aged five and below, pregnant and lactating mothers, senior citizens and persons with disabilities were prioritized in the provision of clean drinking water after the onslaught of Odette. The local government also focused on providing water supply to island barangays.

Non-profit organizations like Waves for Water played an important role in the response to the storm. Waves for Water deploys clean water filtration systems, water pump generators, and catchment tanks to disaster-hit areas.

### **DOH, WHO guidelines**

Besides ensuring proper facilities, Guinto believes that normalizing WASH practices are crucial elements in disasters and humanitarian settings.

In July 2020, the Department of Health issued the “National Policy on Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) in Emergencies and Disasters” in recognition of the country’s disproportionate vulnerability to disasters and emergencies.

The administrative order’s main objective is to “institutionalize and implement the WASH cluster approach at all levels of governance to ensure the coordinated delivery of appropriate, effective and timely WASH services in emergencies and disasters.”

For the WHO, the top three priorities in promoting WASH for vulnerable communities are ensuring sufficient amounts of safe water, arranging basic sanitation necessities and promoting good hygiene practices.

The United Nations health agency said the first priority necessitates that each person be provided with 15 liters of water, but this can be limited to 7.5 liters after a disaster. Water sources must also be protected in the case of contamination.

Toilet facilities should be provided immediately when sanitation structures are damaged due to disasters, it added. Securing toilet facilities prevents the further spread of contamination to community members or water sources.

If toilet systems are damaged beyond immediate repair, the community should be given designated defecation fields and provided shovels for families to dig small holes into to bury excretions.

Lastly, good hygiene should still be promoted to prevent disease transmission. To ensure that good hygiene practices are followed, enough water should be provided for rinsing after excretion. The water can also be used for handling infants’ wastes and food preparation.

While the DOH and the WHO have already integrated WASH into their disaster setting guidelines, Guinto believes that simply providing recommendations is not enough.

“What needs to be further enhanced is the way we implement these guidelines,” said Guinto, who is also the inaugural director of the Planetary and Global Health Program of the St. Luke’s Medical Center College of Medicine.

“Further, we must find ways to ensure the sustainability of WASH infrastructure after the disaster response phase. When communities return to normalcy, their water systems must not only be restored, but made even much better,” he added.

### **WASH and education**

“After the typhoon, because of what happened, we’ve also learned that water is important and that now we give value to it and people also saw the need of the island to have clean water,” Espoir’s Rabaca said.

The resettlement area of Espoir has a water system with 30 faucets that can be accessed by community members and a dry compost toilet.

Rabaca also emphasized that access to water plays a big role in the learning of students.

“We connect water to the education that we are giving by making sure that they go to school healthy, that they go to school after taking a bath. We’re making sure that if they go home, their dishes have been washed, that they can wear uniforms on the next day because they can wash their clothes,” Rabaca said.

She added that Espoir, in partnership with other private firms, plans to put up a “STEM Lab for Humanities” which will tackle the importance access to access to water inside classrooms.

## **CCC IN THE NEWS:**

**NET25**

### **PH Kailangang mag-double time sa pagtupad ng climate action plan vs. disasters**

By: Earlo Bringas

Para mabawasan ang pinsalang dulot ng climate change o global warming. Iginiit ng Climate Change Commission o CCC of the Philippines na dapat nang maipatupad ang climate action plan.

Nakapaloob dito ang mga policy na dapat sundin sa pagbabago ng klima, para maibsan ang mga disaster dito po sa ating bansa.

## PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

### [Del Carmen Mangrove Reserve headed for bigger things: CCC](#)

By: Azer Parrocha

MANILA – The Climate Change Commission (CCC) on Sunday lauded the Del Carmen Mangrove Reserve in Siargao -- one of the largest in the country spanning over 4,800 hectares -- for being recognized by the government as a Wetland of International Importance early this month.

In a news release, CCC vice chairperson and executive director Robert Borje said the recognition serves as a “precursor” to its formal listing as the country’s ninth wetland of international importance under the 1971 Ramsar Convention.

The declaration of Ramsar sites is provided under the Ramsar Convention, an inter-governmental environmental treaty established in 1971 by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) for the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands.

“We rely on these mangroves for a lot of things: shoreline stabilization, surge protection, food security, flood control, water purification, groundwater replenishment, and climate change mitigation,” Borje said.

He also expressed confidence that Del Carmen Mangrove Reserve and the entire Siargao Island Protected Landscapes and Seascapes (SIPLAS) would be headed for “bigger things.”

Del Carmen Mayor Alfredo Coro II pointed out that the process of getting the Del Carmen Mangrove Forest to be recognized as a Wetland of International Importance can be traced back as early as 2011.

To recall, the CCC formulated the National Climate Change Action Plan (NCCAP) to address urgent and immediate needs and concerns regarding the adverse effects of climate change.

Under the NCCAP, an ecologically sound, stable, and economically resilient town was built in Del Carmen.

“We started with the CCC program Ecotown that allowed us to understand and appreciate the value of the mangrove forest,” Coro said.

"We have conducted extensive targeted research with the Department of Science and Technology-National Research Council of the Philippines, Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Biodiversity Management Bureau, and Department of Agriculture-Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, and are currently updating the Ramsar Information System to be forwarded to UN [United Nations] Ramsar for evaluation," he added.

Coro said the local government of Del Carmen is also leading the campaign to transition from Ramsar Listing to UNESCO Global Geoparks which will cover the entire island of Siargao.

UNESCO Global Geoparks are geographical areas where sites and landscapes of international geological importance are managed with a holistic approach to protection, sustainable development, and education.

There are currently 177 UNESCO Global Geoparks in 46 countries.

Likewise, Del Carmen is working closely with various partners to gather additional data to support the Ramsar and UNESCO Global Geoparks application.

USAID's Philippine Sustainable Interventions for Biodiversity, Oceans and Landscapes, Metro Pacific Investments Foundation's Shore It Up, Rare, Caraga State University, and University of the Philippines Los Baños are some of the development partners.

The Philippines currently has eight Ramsar Sites, including the Tubbataha Reefs Natural Park and Puerto Princesa Subterranean River National Park in Palawan.

However, the country is yet to be included on the UNESCO Global Geoparks list.

The CCC continues to provide capacity-building programs and technical assistance for local planners and disaster risk reduction management officers to increase the capacities of local government units on local climate change action plan formulation, and climate change mainstreaming process, regardless of where they are.

"The Climate Change Commission has been working with various local stakeholders and the international community, engaging all important members of the society in a one-country team approach. The convergence of resources – the convergence of hardware, the software, and the humanware – will be critical to achieving success," Borje said.

## LGUs, private sector urged to adopt edible landscaping

By: Azer Parrocha

MANILA – Edible landscaping (EL) may just be the solution to achieve sustainable food security across the country, an official of the Climate Change Commission (CCC) said Sunday.

Albert Dela Cruz Sr., Climate Change Commissioner, urged local government units (LGUs) and the private sector to adopt EL as part of their climate action plans following his recent visit to Kalinga province to meet with local officials.

He noted that the use of technologies developed for food production that are applicable to “household-level” crop production would be advantageous in many ways.

“If most of our householders were to utilize the open space within their properties, they could benefit by having their own sources of food even at the smallest scale possible,” he said in a news release.

Dela Cruz also said that such production systems and technologies can be adopted and practiced with increased enthusiasm “when the basic tenets of landscape design become the guiding principles.”

EL should not be considered only as crop production because it entails a complex activity of planning, design, implementation, and maintenance, as is similarly done in conventional landscaping, according to Dela Cruz.

“EL can be combined with bio-intensive gardening (BIG), which is commonly used in small spaces to increase productivity. BIG is a crop production method designed to maximize the use of space and utilize the resources present in the surrounding environment. The aim is to produce safe and readily available nutritious food for the family and the community while creating an attractive and functional edible landscape and maximizing the use of all resources present in the site,” he added.

Dela Cruz said initiating EL and gardening could help the private sector utilize mechanisms provided under the Department of Agriculture’s Adaptation and Mitigation Initiative in Agriculture (AMIA), where institutional risks could be minimized in the appropriation of funds even as government investments would be protected as well.

“Through AMIA, development programs, projects, and approaches could be adjusted to address climate change risks and this would not only benefit those who will invest in this

new concept of edible landscaping and gardening but the whole country as well,” he said.

He explained that sources of food and production centers are relatively far from target populations, which causes additional concern with regard to product quality and increasing health hazards because of the need to add chemicals to prolong the postharvest life of produce.

“Depressed communities in urban areas are the most vulnerable to problems of food availability. Within these zones, no tillable land is readily available and food commonly comes from external sources. These increasing concerns about food availability provide good reason for the government and the public to search for the solutions needed to produce safe and readily available food,” he said.

Currently, Dela Cruz is in the process of authoring and sponsoring a climate change policy for all public sectors to utilize a portion of their public funds to make use of edible landscaping and gardening instead of ornamental plants.

EL is an innovative concept that could promote green and edible vegetation and through it, various principles of landscape design are combined with existing technologies for small-scale crop and utilizes vegetables, herbs, and fruit crops as major softscape materials to substitute for the ornamental plants commonly used in conventional landscaping.

To date, EL is being intensively promoted in the Philippines and is open for further development to cater for a wider scope of crop production.

In his inaugural State of the Nation Address in July 2022, President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. said food as “not just a trade commodity but is an existential imperative and one that is moral.”

“Without (food), people weaken and die; societies come apart. It is more than a livelihood; it is an existential imperative and a moral one. Agriculture damaged and diminished by unfair competition will have a harder time, or will have no prospects at all, of recovering.” Marcos said.

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