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GMA NEWS

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MANILA BULLETIN

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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By: Noel B. Lazaro and Reeno E. Febrero

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THE GUARDIAN

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DAILY TRIBUNE

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On 4 February 2025, diplomats, government leaders, and business executives gathered in Makati City for the New Zealand Partners' Night, marking the country's Waitangi Day celebrations with a focus on deepening ties with the Philippines. Hosted by the New Zealand Embassy at the Official Residence, the event showcased growing bilateral cooperation, highlighted by recent high-level visits and cultural exchanges.

Information and Knowledge Management Division

BUSINESS MIRROR

Groups to voters: Elect 'green' bets

By: Rizal Raoul Reyes

Environment advocacy group Philippine Business for Environmental Stewardship (Pbest) and think tank Stratbase on Wednesday urged Filipinos to vote for candidates who champion sustainable development, circularity and green policies.

In a recent forum organized by Pbest and the Climate Reality Project (CRP) Philippines, environment experts and other key stakeholders gathered to discuss and boost environmental accountability and transparent governance in the national climate agenda.

In his statement, Stratbase President and Pbest Lead Convener Victor Andres Manhit cited the 2025 midterm elections as an opportunity to drive transformative change in environmental issues through wise public voting.

“We, the Philippine Business for Environmental Stewardship, urge our fellow Filipinos to support proactive leaders with green policies to drive a national climate agenda that could build a climate-resilient, sustainable Philippines,” Manhit said.

He emphasized that Filipinos consider environment as a national priority, noting the recent survey commissioned by Stratbase, where 87 percent of voters will support candidates with advocacies addressing climate change impacts and enhancing disaster resilience.

“By choosing leaders who advocate strategic climate action, decarbonization, and the circular economy, we can foster environmental resilience and national sustainability necessary to drive long-term socio-economic stability,” said Manhit.

“Effective climate action requires strategic collaboration with all sectors of society, and these actions should be anchored in transparent and accountable governance,” he added.

Similarly, Environment Undersecretary Jonas Leones emphasized the importance of supporting green policies. He cited the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) Act as beneficial in encouraging public-private partnerships to ensure a comprehensive approach to waste management and resource recovery.

He said the Department of Environment and Natural Resources is coordinating with the Departments of Finance, of Labor and Employment, and of Social Welfare and Development to create incentives for the circular economy efforts of enterprises.

The three departments hope to provide these incentives by the end of the current quarter. “Investing in infrastructure, strengthening enforcement mechanisms, and

simplifying administrative processes are also essential in creating a more supportive environment for circular economy,” said Leones.

Meanwhile, CRP Branch Manager Nazrin Castro highlighted that EPR compliance is an opportunity to innovate, cut costs, and meet the growing demand for responsible business and sustainability. “Climate action isn’t a one-time discussion; it requires ongoing inclusive and solutions-driven dialogue across all sectors. The only way forward is through this sustained collaboration,” said Castro.

DENR Climate Change Service Director Elenida Basug explained that community participation enhances in developing green solutions, citing public consultations, reporting, and citizen oversight mechanisms as key to ensure national efforts reflect the public’s needs.

“Our ongoing partnerships with government agencies, academic institutions, civil society, and international organizations exemplify the power of collective action in enhancing environmental and climate governance,” said Basug.

Rustico Binas, European Union Technical Assistance Support to the Philippines Community Resilience, Climate Change, and Disaster Risk Management expert and team leader, said that strategic collaboration empowers local entities to serve as central coordination points in national initiatives.

“Community involvement in government decision-making is crucial for effective disaster risk reduction and emergency response,” said Binas.

“The community organizing tradition in the Philippines fosters collective action, sustainable solutions, and risk-informed planning, ultimately risk reduction, to avert natural disasters,” he added.

[NCIP, Conservation International promote biodiversity conservation](#)

By: Jonathan L. Mayuga

The National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) and the environmental group Conservation International Philippines recently formalized a partnership aimed at advancing environmental conservation and management in the Philippines.

A memorandum of understanding (MOU) was signed recently between the two parties in Quezon City.

NCIP Executive Director Mervyn H. Espadero and NCIP Chairperson Jennifer Sibug-Las, with Conservation International Philippines Country Executive Director Wilson John Barbon and Policy Senior Manager John Coin Yokingco signed the MOU.

As the Philippines faces increasing pressures from climate change and biodiversity loss, this partnership between NCIP and Conservation International Philippines is particularly significant in the current context, Conservation International Philippines said in a statement.

Globally, indigenous peoples are acknowledged as stewards of nearly 40 percent of the world's intact landscapes, and their traditional knowledge and practices are key to protecting these territories.

This fact holds in the Philippines, where the intersection between biodiverse areas and ancestral domains is apparent: 26 percent of the country's remaining forests are in protected areas, many of which are in indigenous peoples' territories.

The partnership emphasizes the importance of integrating traditional Indigenous knowledge with modern conservation techniques, creating a more holistic approach to sustainable land and resource management.

"The importance of this [Memorandum of Understanding] cannot be overstated. It is a vital step towards the empowerment of our Indigenous communities and the preservation of the natural world they protect. As we move forward, let this become a partnership that should start as a beacon of hope—a testament to what we can achieve when we work together with respect, understanding, and solidarity. May this partnership bring lasting change as a priority and a brighter future for the Indigenous peoples of the Philippines and the biodiversity they safeguard," Sibug-Las said.

Barbon for his part, said: "By combining our conservation expertise with NCIP's commitment to protect the rights of Indigenous peoples, we can truly transform ancestral domains into places where traditional knowledge and science are used to achieve a balanced ecology and genuine community development."

Both organizations aim to empower Indigenous communities by working together, enabling them to play a central role in managing their ancestral lands while contributing

to national and global efforts in sustainable development, climate action, and biodiversity conservation.

ECO BUSINESS

[Climate action demands global fraternity](#)

By: Mia Mottley

The existential threat of the climate crisis casts a long shadow over our planet. Its effects are not equally distributed: vulnerable countries, particularly small island developing states (SIDS) like mine, are on the front lines. We must contend with rising sea levels, more frequent and intense extreme weather events, and the destruction of our livelihoods. To address these challenges and strengthen the resilience of our people and systems, many leaders, including me, have had to reshape policies and reconceive the relationship between government and the governed.

While sea-level rise could directly affect 250 million people by the end of this century, it is already a lived reality for tens of millions in low-lying coastal countries and SIDS. Elsewhere, people are plagued by prolonged droughts and fires. These forces are putting our territories, economies, and very existence at risk, and countering them requires not only urgent action, but also a fundamental shift in our global consciousness – a recognition of our shared humanity and intertwined fate. Simply put, this crisis demands global solidarity.

As a 2025 honouree of the Zayed Award for Human Fraternity, I believe that recognising our responsibility to care for one another is an essential element of the climate response and as important as scientific, technological, financial, and diplomatic measures. Just as a family supports its most vulnerable members, so, too, must the global community rally around those countries bearing the brunt of a crisis they did little to create.

As it stands, the global financial architecture is ill-equipped to address the climate crisis. It was designed for a different era that did not contemplate the interconnectedness of our economies and ecosystems or the dangers of global warming. The Bretton Woods institutions, for example, were established more than 80 years ago to help European economies recover from World War II.

But the unprecedented scale and urgency of the climate crisis requires a new approach to unlock the financing that developing countries need for mitigation and adaptation. The system must be reformed to make sustainable development, climate resilience, and equitable access to finance its top priorities. This is not charity; it is an investment in our collective future. When some people are left to die, all of humanity – present and future – will eventually suffer.

The Bridgetown Initiative, which many vulnerable countries have championed, calls for multilateral development banks to expand their lending capacity and to ensure that their risk-assessment frameworks reflect the realities of climate vulnerability. It also advocates increased concessional finance, recognizing that grants and low-interest loans are essential for countries struggling to cope with the climate emergency. And the

initiative proposes innovative mechanisms like debt-for-nature and debt-for-climate swaps, offering a path to debt relief while generating the financial resources vulnerable countries need to take ownership of their climate transitions and build more resilient economies and societies.

But finance alone is not enough. A paradigm shift is needed in how we understand development, moving from the narrow pursuit of gross domestic product growth to a more holistic approach that values social justice, environmental sustainability, and human well-being. This requires a fundamental rethink of our economic models. Infinite growth on a finite planet is simply not possible. We must embrace a circular economy that improves resource efficiency, minimises waste, and promotes sustainable consumption.

Such a shift ultimately hinges on global fraternity. We must recognise that, in an interconnected world, our actions have consequences for others, and that protecting our planet is a shared responsibility. That means equitably distributing the burden of climate change, so that those who have contributed the least to the problem do not suffer its worst effects.

Leading a small island country like Barbados has taught me valuable lessons about the power of community and resilience, as well as the importance of long-term vision. We have learned the hard way how to adapt to changing climate conditions and innovate in the face of adversity. And we have come to realise the value of empowering communities to take ownership of adaptation efforts, and of nature-based solutions in building resilience. These lessons, born of necessity, are not unique to Barbados; they can guide all countries, regardless of size or wealth, toward a more sustainable future.

I have often said that the world looks to SIDS for leadership on the climate crisis not because we are rich or powerful, but because we have no choice but to lead. The unavoidable truth is that we can no longer stand alone: everyone must join the fight to safeguard the planet for generations to come.

More than an environmental issue, the climate crisis is a global challenge that demands a collective response. We cannot afford to be divided by national borders, political ideologies, or economic interests. This is a profound test of our shared humanity, and we will need global solidarity – ordinary people taking action every day – to pass it.

GMA NEWS

[Filipino artist Cian Dayrit to show three works in upcoming UK art exhibit on climate](#)

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Filipino artist Cian Dayrit is among the artists featured in the "A World of Water," an exhibition at the Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts in the UK, which highlights the spiritual and material significance of water.

Opening March 15, "A World of Water" launches the ambitious season named Can the Seas Survive Us?, exploring the sea's power to shape, connect and disrupt human history.

Curated by Filipino curator John Kenneth Paranada, "A World of Water" brings together contemporary and historical artworks, ancient maps, and atlases — documents that respond to the growing climate crisis.

Dayrit, who is a CCP 13 Artists Awardee, will have three of his works on display. 'Dam Nation' (2023), a painting sans his signature text examines the colonial legacy of large-scale infrastructure projects like hydroelectric dams that have displaced indigenous communities.

'State of Plantocracy' (2023) explores how monoculture plantations continue to exploit both labor and environment.

And finally, 'Extractione Mineralium' (2019) confronts the violent history of mining in the Philippines.

In a statement, Dayrit said, "The climate crisis is a continuation of colonial violence. It targets the same communities that were displaced and exploited in the past. My work maps this ongoing struggle and honors the resistance of Indigenous groups fight to protect nature, the sacred seas and lands."

The Filipino curator said the selected three works of Dayrit "construct a compelling narrative on land, sea, and resource extraction."

"They challenge how we perceive land, power, and resistance," Paranada adds.

"His practice critically examines land dispossession, indigenous struggles, and the ways infrastructure — such as large-scale mining, dam, and irrigation projects - is shaped by colonial histories and capital expansion," Paranada said.

"Through his maps and cartographic interventions, Cian exposes how mapping has often served as a tool of power — to claim, control, and exploit land and resources, reinforcing systems of oppression and displacement," he adds.

Selecting which of Dayrit's works to include in "A World of Water" was informed by the climate crisis, Paranada tells GMA News Online on email. "While I initially selected works that aligned with the exhibition's themes, discussions with Cian led us to consider the sustainability of transport."

"To minimize the exhibition's carbon footprint, we prioritized works already in Europe, ensuring our selection upheld both curatorial intent and ecological responsibility," Paranada added.

Paranada emphasizes how "water is everything" for the Philippines. "It shapes our national identity as an archipelago, but it's also the greatest threat to our survival. Rising seas is a reality for many communities in low-lying coastal areas, and this exhibition offers a chance to explore those stories through art, design, material culture and history," he adds.

He had wanted to include other Filipino artists like Martha Atienza, whose acclaimed video installation, *Our Islands 11°16'58.4" N 123°45'07.0" E* (2017), showcase the vulnerabilities that climate change brings to many in the Philippines and across the Global South.

But "budget constraints, timing, and logical factors ultimately limited the scope of participation," he said.

"A World of Water" brings together 70 esteemed artists of different disciplines, across generations, from around the world including Danish-Icelandic artist Olafur Eliasson, whose 2018 work reflecting on climate uncertainty, *Shore Compass*, will be put on display in "A World of Water" as well as American artist Josh Kline whose unsettling video installation 'Adaptation' envisioning New York City submerged by rising seas will be made shown as well.

"A World of Water" will look into the maritime histories of the North Sea and will include global perspectives from the Philippines and Pacific nations. "The oldest work on view dates back 485 years - 1540, and reflects humanity's long history of mapping, navigating and attempting to control the ocean," Paranda said.

He says the exhibit is curated "on the scale of an art biennale" and marries "centuries of oceanic knowledge, artistic and scientific innovation and urgent climate discourse."

"Water connects us all. This exhibition is an invitation to think about our shared responsibility to protect it and to listen to the stories it holds — stories of resilience, loss and hope," Paranada said.

"A World of Water" will run at Sainsbury Centre until August 15. Plans to put it on tour after its UK run are slowly coming together, with Canada's Royal Ontario Museum already showing interest.

Paranda is the Filipino curator for art and climate change at the Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts, the first museum in the UK to designate a curator for art and climate.

He says curating "A World of Water" is "one of the most significant projects I have undertaken."

MANILA BULLETIN

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Trump's high-stakes climate casino

By: Noel B. Lazaro and Reeno E. Febrero

United States President Donald Trump's decision to withdraw from the Paris Agreement marks an eerily familiar gamble. It evokes the high-stakes risks that characterized the collapse of his Atlantic City casino empire where, amid a wave of overconfidence, mismanagement, and crippling debt, his once grand resorts like the Trump Taj Mahal became symbols of failure. The chips have long since fallen, and the house is empty, yet Trump's latest bet—a reckless wager on the planet itself—carries an even higher price.

The Paris Agreement, signed in 2015 by nearly every nation, is a cornerstone of climate policy, aiming to restrict global warming to well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. It establishes an emission reduction mechanism, with countries submitting their nationally determined contributions.

Speaking to a throng of supporters, Trump once again dismissed the Paris Agreement as a “rip-off” that harmed American economic interests. He argued that the US should not bear the burden of climate action while major polluters, like China and India, evade similar regulations. On the surface, his rhetoric seems to espouse a neo-nationalist stance, but beneath this populist outrage lies a strategic calculus: a calculated maneuver to protect US fossil fuel interests and extract trade concessions from the global community. His approach prioritizes the production of oil, coal, and natural gas as a path toward “energy independence,” even if it risks global cooperation on climate action.

As the world's biggest greenhouse gas emitter, the US made key commitments under Obama: \$3 billion for the Green Climate Fund and a pledge to raise \$100 billion annually for climate finance by 2020. But Trump rejects these promises, withholding climate finance from developing nations like the Philippines despite a \$19.5 million allocation through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) last year.

The US withdrawal from the Paris Agreement signals a shift in approach without severing ties entirely. Through an executive order, Putting America First in International Environmental Agreements, Trump halted any “financial commitment” and withdrew from associated agreements under the 1992 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

However, Trump did not exit from the UNFCCC itself, leaving the US a voice in global environmental policy, and keeping its seat at the table for events like the Conference of the Parties in Brazil this November—unburdened by emissions targets or financial obligations.

The US remains a signatory to other global initiatives, such as the 1972 Stockholm Declaration on sustainable development, the 1987 Montreal Protocol on ozone depletion, and the 1992 Rio Declaration recognizing the “polluter pays” principle. But the defunding of international agencies like USAID, which traditionally champions environmental efforts, suggests that any remaining US influence will be diminished.

The risks are steep. A US retreat could create a power vacuum, with nations committed to climate action turning to China or the European Union for leadership. The EU aims for a 55 percent emissions reduction by 2030 and climate neutrality by 2050, while China invests \$800 billion in renewable energy infrastructure.

Domestically, there are also signs of backlash. While subnational efforts by some US states, cities, and businesses pursue Paris Agreement goals independently, Trump’s preference for issues like plastic straws undermines the country’s ability to tap into the green economy.

To make matters worse, the ongoing trade war threatens to inflate prices, disrupt supply chains, and stifle growth. Amid wildfires, severe weather, and rising sea levels, Trump’s pivot diverges sharply from scientific consensus. The World Meteorological Organization recently confirmed 2024 as the hottest year on record, breaching the critical 1.5 degrees Celsius threshold. A study by renowned climatologist James Hansen and colleagues predicts that temperatures will stay above 1.5 degrees Celsius, possibly hitting 2 degrees Celsius by 2045. And yet, nations—some of them oil-rich petro-states—are embracing sustainability: the United Kingdom has closed its last coal plant, Norway incentivizes clean transport, and Saudi Arabia aims for 50 percent renewable electricity by 2030.

For all his bluster, Trump is playing a losing hand. As Nobel laureate William Nordhaus outlines in “The Climate Casino: Risk, Uncertainty, and Economics for a Warming World,” the stakes could not be higher. “We are rolling the climatic dice,” Nordhaus writes. “Unless forceful measures are taken, the outcome will produce surprises, and some of them are likely perilous.”

Noel B. Lazaro is general counsel, while Reeno E. Febrero is senior legal officer at Global Ferronickel Holdings, Inc. Their group received the In-House Team of the Year (Construction and Real Estate) at the Asian Legal Business (ALB)-Philippine Law Awards 2024, and In-House Legal Team of the Year 2024 Best Practice Management Award (Corporate Social Responsibility) for Asia and the Middle East from the In-House Community (IHC).

THE GUARDIAN

[Melting glaciers caused almost 2cm of sea level rise this century, study reveals](#)

Melting glaciers have caused almost 2cm of sea level rise this century alone, a decades-long study has revealed.

The research shows the world's glaciers collectively lost 6.542tn tonnes of ice between 2000 and 2023, causing an 18mm (0.7in) rise in global sea levels.

The world's glaciers lost an average of 273bn tonnes of ice every year – the equivalent of 30 years of water consumption by the entire global population.

The assessment, led by scientists from the University of Edinburgh and the University of Zurich, found that so far this century, glaciers have lost approximately 5% of their total volume. Regional losses were highly variable; the Antarctic and subantarctic islands lost 2% of their volume but central Europe's glaciers lost 39%.

"These numbers are staggering. They serve as a reminder that things are changing fast in some regions," said Prof Noel Gourmelen, the co-lead author of the study and personal chair of Earth observation at the University of Edinburgh's school of geosciences.

A stark contrast in the amount of ice lost each decade was also discovered, with 36% more ice having melted between 2012 and 2023 compared with the previous decade.

"This is really important as it confirms the pace of glacier melting is accelerating over time," said Prof Andrew Shepherd, head of the department of geography and environmental science at Northumbria University. "Even small amounts of sea level rise matter because it leads to more frequent coastal flooding. Every centimetre of sea level rise exposes another 2 million people to annual flooding somewhere on our planet."

Glacier loss also leads to a depletion in regional freshwater supplies for remote communities and those who already face water scarcity.

"Around 2 billion people depend on meltwater from glaciers and so their retreat is a big problem for society," said Shepherd. "It's not just that we are losing them from our landscape, they are an important part of our daily lives."

"Glaciers are also important for power generation," said Gourmelen. "For instance, 70% of electricity in Iceland comes from hydropower. They rely on the water melt from glaciers to function. You have this in the Andes as well as parts of Europe, such as Switzerland."

Published in the journal Nature, the latest research is part of the Glacier Mass Balance Intercomparison Exercise – known as Glambie. It combines and analyses data available from field measurements as well as optical, radar and laser satellite missions.

After ocean warming, melting glaciers are the second largest contributor to global sea level rises.

“This research is concerning because it predicts further glacier loss,” said Martin Siegert, professor of geosciences at the University of Exeter. “Two centimetres might not sound a lot, but this is the contribution from small glaciers – not the whole of the ice on the planet or that from Greenland and Antarctica.”

“Glaciers have a real impact,” says Gourmelen. “They are a biometer for climate change, so the findings are a measure of the impact climate change has had over the past 20 years.

“As we take action to try to mitigate this, following glacier activity will be a way of measuring our effectiveness in dealing with a changing climate.”

CCC IN THE NEWS:

DAILY TRIBUNE

[New Zealand and Phi strengthen ties at Waitangi Day celebration in Manila](#)

On 4 February 2025, diplomats, government leaders, and business executives gathered in Makati City for the New Zealand Partners' Night, marking the country's Waitangi Day celebrations with a focus on deepening ties with the Philippines. Hosted by the New Zealand Embassy at the Official Residence, the event showcased growing bilateral cooperation, highlighted by recent high-level visits and cultural exchanges.

In her remarks, Ambassador McIntosh reflected on a significant year of bilateral cooperation. She highlighted the historic visits of New Zealand Prime Minister Christopher Luxon and Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Winston Peters. "We are now moving towards a Comprehensive Partnership, an ambitious step towards a stronger and more dynamic future together," she stated.

The evening also featured remarks from Department of National Defense (DND) Secretary Gilbert Teodoro and Climate Change Commission (CCC) Vice Chairman and Executive Director Secretary Robert E.A. Borje, who both underscored the importance of strengthening New Zealand-Philippines collaboration.

Several distinguished guests were present at the reception: Senator Mark Villar, Philippine Red Cross Chairman, Makati City Mayor Mar-Len Abigail Binay, former Senator Richard Gordon, Former Associate Justice Antonio Carpio and the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps and Apostolic Nuncio Archbishop Charles John Brown III. Other notable guests were Department of Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla, Department of Migrant Workers Secretary Hans Leo Cacdac, Department of Information and Communications Technology Secretary Ivan John Uy, Anti-Red Tape Authority Secretary Ernesto Perez, and Department of Foreign Affairs Undersecretary Jesus Domingo. Many other high-ranking officials from Philippine government agencies were in attendance.

Adding to the night's festivities, Ambassador McIntosh and the New Zealand Embassy team performed traditional waiata [songs] in Te Reo Māori, Tūtira mai ngā iwi and Pōkarekare Ana, followed by a lively rendition of the Filipino classic "Bongga ka Day!", symbolising the growing cultural ties between the two nations. The event concluded with a raffle organised by New Zealand Trade and Enterprise featuring quality New Zealand produce, including mānuka honey.

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