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By: Ma. Reina Leanne Tolentino

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**Information and Knowledge Management Division**

## DAILY TRIBUNE

### [Climate-resilient infra via sat, AI](#)

By: Gabriela Baron

For two decades now, AnyWay has been providing climate-resilient solutions to the global transport infrastructure industry.

“With AnyWay, we’ve affected a lot of nations. There’s a lot of work that we’ve done in Africa. We’ve helped a lot of the developing nations there. In the region of the Asia Pacific, we’re focused very heavily in Papua New Guinea,” Herbert Marquez Betz III, Philippine Country Representative of AnyWay Solid Environmental Solutions, said in the Daily Tribune’s online program Straight Talk.

“So we’re looking to affect more nations, assist more nations, in the region, as well as in other regions. So that’s there’s quite a bit. We’ve done work in Colombia, we’ve done work in Ghana, all over Africa,” Betz added.

In the Philippines, meanwhile, Betz said AnyWay helped in creating infrastructures in the Philippines.

“I think we’ve helped with some Balikatan Exercise structures with the Philippine military and some military explorations,” he said.

“We’ve also helped with certain middle-class, mid-range, residential complexes in Iloilo. With the roadworks, or road networks within those residential communities and then we also helped NGOs in the Philippines, (non-government organizations),” he added.

Betz said AnyWay Solutions also implemented road works in Palo, Leyte for a relocation site of the “Yolanda” victims.

“We worked closely with helping them with the relocation of those ‘Yolanda’ victims,” he added.

Currently, Betz said they are meeting with the Climate Change Commission, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, and the National Irrigation Administration to showcase their expanded services outside of techniques stabilization works as it ventures into the artificial intelligence.

Tech to be ubiquitous

Betz said that artificial intelligence, or AI, is becoming more prevalent and cheaper in the market.

“[We use AI] to be able to crunch data in a way that is more efficient and much faster than human capability,” Betz said.

“AI right now is very prevalent around the markets and it’s becoming cheaper and when you match AI with satellite technology, it allows us to design, it allows us to identify optimal route alignment, water encatchment areas so that we can avoid, identify what areas situational problems are so that we can incorporate that to the design and that we can share that with the either agency or the proponent,” he added.

Betz said they assure that the technology that they use helps governments plan and provide preliminary specific to what is required to spend.

“If we look at satellite technology, say for 100 kilometers stretch of the road, if that were to be done conventionally, as opposed to the satellite, let’s just say conventionally would take more than a month to be able to collate and create that data,” he said.

“Whereas, if we use satellite technology, we could more or less in simplistic terms come up with a design within a week for a proponent,” he continued.

With AI, he noted, it can create a generalized cut and fill where it can be very specific.

“AI is using all of its ability to identify all optimal direction and the shortest direction and the shortest point from A to B,” he added.

## **GMA NEWS**

### **Easterlies continue to affect PH - PAGASA**

By: Jiselle Anne Casucian

State weather bureau PAGASA said that the easterlies continue to affect the Philippines. In its 24-hour weather forecast released on Wednesday afternoon, Northern Mindanao, Caraga, and Davao Region will experience cloudy skies with scattered rain showers and thunderstorms because of the easterlies.

Partly cloudy to cloudy skies with isolated rain showers or thunderstorms will prevail over Metro Manila and the rest of the country due to the combined effects of the easterlies and localized thunderstorms.

Meanwhile, moderate to strong winds with moderate to rough coastal waters will be felt over Extreme Northern Luzon, while the rest of the country will experience light to moderate winds with slight to moderate coastal waters.

The sun will rise over Metro Manila at 6:18 a.m. on Thursday.

## MANILA BULLETIN

### [QC to transform schoolyards into climate-resilient spaces](#)

By: Diann Ivy Calucin

The local government of Quezon City said it will transform schoolyards in three schools in the city into green, community spaces that are resilient to both heatwaves and flooding. QC announced on Tuesday, February 20, that the city government has joined the new "OASIS Schoolyards" program in the Philippines, launched by Resilient Cities Network and Temasek Foundation.

"Quezon City is truly honored to be selected as the first city in Asia for the 'OASIS Schoolyards' program, supported by Temasek Foundation. We are committed to tackling climate change and provide a livable and quality community for all by strengthening the adaptive capacity of our communities and resilience of our natural ecosystems. Inclusive climate action is also integral in the plan development to ensure representation of various sectors including the youth. The 'OASIS Schoolyards' program resonates with the City Government's vision, and we express our enthusiasm in being part of this initiative," said QC Mayor Ma. Josefina G. Belmonte.

The city government will adopt and pilot the "OASIS" model in three public elementary schools in the city, namely Diosdado P. Macapagal Elementary School, Manuel L. Quezon Elementary School, and Placido Del Mundo Elementary School.

Located in different parts of QC, the schools were selected based on their comparative vulnerability to heatwaves and flooding, and the availability of open space within the surrounding neighborhood.

"I am thrilled to see our vision of creating resilient, sustainable communities taking root in Quezon City. The launch of the 'OASIS Schoolyards' program marks a significant step towards empowering cities to address the urgent challenges posed by climate change. We are committed to transforming schoolyards into vibrant urban oases, fostering community engagement and empowering children as catalysts for positive change," said Lauren Sorkin, executive director of the Resilient Cities Network.

Lim Hock Chuan, head of programs at Temasek Foundation, said innovating through a real-life climate adaptation solution in schoolyards is a powerful way to activate local communities and stakeholders to proactively be responsible for climate action.

OASIS Schoolyards aims to improve the quality of education for Filipino students while simultaneously addressing the challenges of climate change.

It was originally conceived and implemented in Paris, France as part of the Paris Resilience Strategy to address the urgent challenges of climate change in urban areas, with a focus on mitigating the disproportionate impact on vulnerable communities and improving the well-being of children.

Based on the principles of Openness, Adaptation, Sensitization, Innovation, and Social Ties or OASIS, it has become an exemplary model using innovative solutions to transform schoolyards into urban oases resilient to climate change.

The schoolyards will be co-designed by school communities, including students, parents, and teachers, as well as design professionals in consultation with stakeholders such as government, academia, and community organizations.

The spaces will also be used as an interactive learning tool for students as well as for local government officials to raise public awareness for climate resilience. **UN NEWS**

## [Climate-affected Madagascar adapts to new reality: A UN Resident Coordinator blog](#)

People living in Madagascar are learning to adapt to rapidly altering climatic conditions in what is said to be the fourth most climate change affected country worldwide; that's according to the UN Resident Coordinator, the most senior UN official in the Indian Ocean island nation.

As Issa Sanogo nears the end of his posting in the capital Antananarivo, he sat down with UN News to reflect on the progress the country and its citizens have made in responding to the climate crisis.

"Recently, I met a woman farmer in the small town of Betroka, in Anosy region one of the areas in southern Madagascar which has been facing a humanitarian emergency due to drought.

It's a challenging place in which to live at the best of times having suffered from years of underdevelopment and insecurity.

She had attended a farming school supported by the World Food Programme (WFP) and AMC, a local NGO, after which she told me how she is committed to trying new ways to grow the staple crop, cassava. She is using a compost basket which has had an incredible and immediate impact.

The increasingly dry and harsh conditions have meant that until recently each plant had only produced about four kilogrammes of the root crop. But now, with the changes she has made, her 100 or so plants are producing 20kg each, which is two tonnes, a surprising harvest on such arid land.

New opportunities

Her family has access to more nutritious food and she is able to sell what she has left over to pay for children's education and the family's health care needs.

This is just one example of how Malagasy people are adapting to the new reality of climate change, but there are many others.

In Behara and Ifotaka communities, to the south of Anosy region, like elsewhere access to water is a critical issue and a key programmatic entry point for what the UN is calling a Convergence Zones approach, which brings UN agencies together to leverage their expertise and improve outcomes.

The UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has introduced climate-smart practices to promote drought-resistant seeds such as sorghum and peanut and Californian drop-by-drop irrigation systems using solar pumps.

In Ifotaka the Rapid Rural Transformation project introduced by WFP provides the community with a solar-powered hub supplying electricity and digital access to the community school and other social structures.

In addition, it is providing entrepreneurial opportunities and creating employment for the youth, with support from the UN's International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD).

UNICEF supports access to water by building solar-powered water pumps and water kiosks, providing potable water for daily use, and reducing incidence of diarrhoea and other waterborne diseases, and malnutrition.

### Climate vulnerability

Madagascar is the fourth most vulnerable country in the world to climate change. It is recurrently hit by droughts and cyclones that are increasing in frequency, duration and intensity due to climate change. These effects mainly impact the south and south-east of the country.

When I arrived in Madagascar in late 2020, the country was facing its most serious drought in 40 years. Widespread hunger - called kere - was pushing communities into near famine-like conditions.

During my recent field visits to the south, I noticed how arid the land is despite the beneficial effect of extra rain due to cyclones in 2023.

Households are very dependent on rain-fed agriculture, making them more vulnerable to these increasingly unstable weather conditions.

With drought, crops not only suffer from a lack of water but are also affected by the red sandstorms that destroy the plants and blow away the fertile topsoil. In these conditions, communities struggle to grow key staples and their food insecurity and malnutrition increase, with women often carrying most of the burden.

### Building resilience

However, I firmly believe that preventing future crises and accelerating recovery from the effects of repetitive climate shocks requires more than emergency assistance.

Building the resilience of individuals, communities, and institutions to the effects of droughts and cyclones, including through climate change adaptation, is the only sustainable solution.

A good and simple example is the cash-for-work programme implemented by the UN Development Programme (UNDP), through which community members obtained an income for planting sisal along the coast.

The sisal helps to lessen the wind's damaging impact on crops and retains soil moisture, stabilizing coastal sand dunes and providing protection for crops normally affected by the red sandstorms. As a result, communities are now able to grow cash crops in fields which were once lost to the sand.

## UN Collaboration

The UN is now working through a more integrated approach to bring more sustainable solutions to mitigate and prevent hunger and the poverty in the south.

Over the last three years, we have focused on building resilience to ease the worst effects of future droughts and reduce humanitarian needs in the long term.

As a result of these integrated interventions, we have started to see an improvement in the daily life of the local communities. The next step is to scale up this work across the south.

We aim to move collectively, beyond short-term supply-driven response efforts, to demand-driven results that can reduce people's risks, needs, and vulnerabilities

The Malagasy Government, along with the UN and technical and financial partners, have recognized the importance of refocusing on the people at the heart of the recurrent crises in these regions.

We aim to move collectively, beyond short-term supply-driven response efforts, to demand-driven results that can reduce people's risks, needs, and vulnerabilities.

## El Niño

However, the situation remains fragile and the current El Niño phenomenon creates significant risk of renewed deterioration of the situation.

To support 2.3 million people in need of assistance, we recently revised our Flash Appeal to consider its potential impact.

About \$39 million out of \$162 million that has been requested is for anticipatory actions.

Madagascar has been selected as one of the 30 countries in the UN Secretary-General's Early Warnings for All Initiative. The country's action plan for 2024–2027 was the first to be completed globally and was launched in Dubai during COP28 in December 2023.

This brought significant visibility to Madagascar's effort and helped sensitize partners to support our prevention work and the need for funding.

The plan aims to provide access to early warning systems to everyone in the country by 2027. This is an essential element for reducing humanitarian need and the cost of responses in the long term, and ultimately for progress towards the realization of the 2030 Agenda.

### Optimism

As I prepare to leave Madagascar, I remain optimistic that with the right support the most vulnerable communities will be able to realize their hopes for a better life for all people, one based on peace, security and prosperity.

## PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

### [DOE eyeing more renewable energy investments](#)

By: Adrian Parungao

The Department of Energy (DOE) said on Wednesday that it will conduct a business-to-business event on February 22 to match foreign investors with local enterprises for the country's push in renewable energy (RE).

Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla said the DOE will exploit international interest in the country's potential for RE, and that the event will help both local and foreign companies start RE initiatives in the country.

"There is a heightened enthusiasm from international investors for unlocking the country's RE potential, and we are linking them with financing institutions, development organizations, concerned government institutions, and engineering, procurements, and construction (EPC) companies for potential partnerships and access to financing," Lotilla said. "This activity will also guide potential RE investors and developers in doing business in the country as we realize our goal of achieving a 35 percent share of RE in the power generation mix by 2030 and 50 percent by 2040," he added.

The DOE said that as of January 2024, it has awarded 1,267 projects with RE Service Contracts and, in summary, has a total of around 129,000 megawatts in various fields.

"To meet our energy transition goal, we are utilizing this platform where participants can identify potential business partners, investors, expertise, technologies or business strengths," Lotilla continued.

In addition, the DOE targets that by 2030, the country will use 35 percent RE in power generation and 50 percent RE by 2040 in its 2023-2050 Philippine Energy Plan.

"Our main objective for this event is to assist investors, listen and understand the challenges in implementing RE projects, and facilitate addressing their concerns," Lotilla added.

## THE MANILA TIMES

### [APAC climate change losses top \\$41B in 2024](#)

By: Niña Myka Pauline Arceo

Climate change cost the Asia-Pacific region more than \$41 billion in losses to the environment, economic growth and human development last year.

This — according to the latest report released by the Asian Development Bank (ADB), United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, and United Nations Development Program — has reduced the ability of the region to meet its Sustainable Development Goals.

"The Asia and Pacific region has made steady progress in increasing food security, reducing the prevalence of malnutrition and making improvements in health and well-being," Woochong Um, ADB managing director general, said.

"However, further gains are being hampered by multiple crises, including the increasing effects of climate change, the lingering impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis," he added.

Last year, some 146 natural hazards were reported, which were mostly floods and storms. These affected 47 million people in the region with economic losses recording more than \$41 billion.

The Manila-based lender said that between 2000 and 2023, about 41 percent of the region were hit by flood disasters, killing 88,816 people and affecting 1.6 billion.

During the period, the economic losses in the region stood at \$452 billion. Moreover, losses from rapid onset climate hazards, such as floods and cyclones, are especially severe in the Pacific.

Between 2015 and 2020, ADB reported that small island developing states in the subregion suffered the highest relative economic losses, with an average loss of nearly 9.0 percent of gross domestic product.

It noted that more frequent and severe climate-related hazards will result in reduced agricultural and labor productivity, loss of livelihoods and human displacement.

"These strain socioeconomic and environmental systems, and hinder efforts to promote food security and alleviate poverty, especially for poorer countries and vulnerable communities," ADB said.

It added that climate change is already severely impacting global food systems, expecting it to worsen unless mitigation and adaptation actions are stepped up significantly.

In terms of coping capacity and climate-related shock exposure, ADB revealed that developed countries are less exposed than least developed and developing countries. Countries with high exposure, it emphasized, have a greater need to adapt since they have a lower coping mechanism due to a lack of financing, infrastructure and institutional capacity.

"Current global and regional policies do not adequately support the integration of climate priorities with efforts to address poverty and hunger," ADB said.

"There is an urgent need to develop stronger social protection systems for vulnerable people to help tackle the underlying causes of poverty and food insecurity, and to strengthen their adaptive capacity to the impacts of climate change," it added.

### Atienza to govt agencies: Use geohazard maps

By: Ma. Reina Leanne Tolentino

Former lawmaker and former Environment secretary Jose "Lito" Atienza Jr. urged concerned government agencies to use the geohazard maps developed by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

He said the geohazard maps are a "life-saving tool that every government agency and local government unit should have and utilize."

Atienza expressed deep sorrow for the lives lost in the Davao de Oro landslide.

"[Tragedies] like this could have been prevented if concerned government agencies had been properly implementing the geohazard maps that the DENR has developed and distributed to identify the landslide and flood-prone areas across the country," he said.

"When we were Environment secretary in 2007, we pushed for the preparation and speedy completion of these geohazard maps, precisely to ensure that these identified danger areas would be off-limits to residents and the general public," he added.

Atienza said he instructed the Mines and Geosciences Bureau to immediately identify areas prone to landslides and other natural events.

"We know that even after our term, this vital program was completed and eventually distributed to local government units and other government agencies for land use planning, relocation, disaster mitigation and relief operations. All they have to do is follow these geohazard maps, which we know could temper the impact of natural calamities and save countless lives," he said.

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