



NEWS ROUNDUP

26 FEBRUARY 2024 [08:00 am]

- DENR IDs 18 provinces with 'high exposure' to climate change risks
- Climate-resilient transport pushed
- PH woos Czech investors in agri-fishery, food businesses
- [Opinion] Climate-related deaths are strongly declining
- QC is 1st Asian city for Temasek's OASIS Schoolyards Project
- Davao del Sur's town bears impact of climate change on tourism, welfare of residents
- DSWD, USAid team up for disaster response
- From reactive to proactive: Bill pushes early action to mitigate climate disasters
- Business group backs carbon emission trading

CCC IN THE NEWS:

- Worst-case dry spell warned
- Climate Body Issues El Niño Coping Measures
- CCC: Brace against the effects of El Niño
- CCC: Brace against effects of El Niño
- CCC issues El Niño defense measures

BUSINESS MIRROR

[DENR IDs 18 provinces with 'high exposure' to climate change risks](#)

By: Malou Talosig-Bartolome

Eighteen provinces including densely populated Cebu, Bulacan, Pampanga, Pangasinan and Iloilo were identified as highly exposed to climate change.

DAILY TRIBUNE

[Climate-resilient transport pushed](#)

By: Gabriela Baron

AnyWay Solid Environmental Solutions, a company specializing in climate-resilient infrastructure, has partnered with De La Salle University-Gokongwei College of Engineering to address the Philippines' vulnerability to climate change.

GMA

[PH woos Czech investors in agri-fishery, food businesses](#)

By: Andy Peñafuerte III and Jay-vee Marasigan Pangan

Philippine government officials and business representatives recently urged Czech investors to engage with and venture into various food and agricultural companies in the Philippines.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

[\[Opinion\] Climate-related deaths are strongly declining](#)

Watching the news, you get the sense that climate change is making the planet unlivable. We are bombarded with images of floods, droughts, storms, and wildfires. We see not only the deadly events nearby but far-flung disasters when the pictures are scary enough.

[QC is 1st Asian city for Temasek's OASIS Schoolyards Project](#)

Transformation programs under the OASIS Schoolyards Project will be piloted in three public elementary schools in Quezon City, the local government announced Friday.

PHILIPPINE INFORMATION AGENCY

[Davao del Sur's town bears impact of climate change on tourism, welfare of residents](#)

By: Joey Sem Dalumpines

The tourism industry in the town of Sta. Cruz is significantly impacted by climate change, according to its tourism officer, Julius Paner.

THE MANILA TIMES

[DSWD, USAid team up for disaster response](#)

By: Moises Cruz

The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) took on a proactive approach to improving the agency's disaster response capabilities in Mindanao by exploring possible partnerships with the United States Agency for International Development (USAid).

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

[From reactive to proactive: Bill pushes early action to mitigate climate disasters](#)

By: Gaea Katreena Cabico

A House lawmaker has filed a bill that seeks to institutionalize anticipatory actions for mitigating the impacts of hazards before they occur, a move welcomed by humanitarian organizations as a positive step toward addressing climate risks.

[Business group backs carbon emission trading](#)

By: Jasper Emmanuel Arcalas

The government should prioritize implementing a carbon emission trading system instead of imposing taxes on carbon as the latter could cause power prices to spike, according to the Makati Business Club.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

DAILY TRIBUNE

[Worst-case dry spell warned](#)

By: Chito Lozada

Filipinos must prepare for the worst in terms of the intensity of the El Niño episode after the extreme Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration or PAGASA forecast.

ONE NEWS PH

[Climate Body Issues El Niño Coping Measures](#)

By: Helen Flores and Romina Marie Cabrera

The country is expected to sizzle in the coming weeks, with the state weather bureau predicting temperatures to reach up to 36.5 degrees Celsius nationwide and as high as 40 degrees Celsius in Metro Manila and northern Luzon due to El Niño.

PHILIPPINE INFORMATION AGENCY

[CCC: Brace against the effects of El Niño](#)

The Climate Change Commission (CCC) urges the Filipino people to take proactive measures following the forecast of the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration's (PAGASA) of an increased El Niño activity.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

[CCC: Brace against effects of El Niño](#)

The Climate Change Commission (CCC) urged Filipinos to take proactive measures following the forecast of the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration's (PAGASA) of an increased El Niño activity.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

[CCC issues El Niño defense measures](#)

By: Helen Flores, Romina Cabrera

With the effects of the El Niño now being felt across the country, the Climate Change Commission (CCC) has offered some tips to help the public cope with water shortages, rising temperatures and extreme weather conditions.

Information and Knowledge Management Division

BUSINESS MIRROR

DENR IDs 18 provinces with 'high exposure' to climate change risks

By: Malou Talosig-Bartolome

Eighteen provinces including densely populated Cebu, Bulacan, Pampanga, Pangasinan and Iloilo were identified as highly exposed to climate change.

Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Maria Antonia "Toni" Yulo-Loyzaga bared the list of the most vulnerable provinces in the country during a forum on climate change organized by the Philippine Disaster Resilience Foundation (PDRF).

Yulo-Loygaza said based on the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) her department drew up last year, the 18 provinces with "high exposure" to climate change are:

- Albay
- Bulacan
- Cagayan
- Camarines Norte
- Camarines Sur
- Capiz
- Cebu
- Eastern Samar
- Iloilo
- Leyte
- Masbate
- Negros Occidental
- Pampanga
- Pangasinan
- Quezon
- Samar
- Sorsogon
- Zamboanga del Sur

"This is the ranking that actually refers to exposure to heat, to extreme rainfall, to flooding," Yulo-Loyzaga explained.

Based on the 2020 census, the population of these 18 provinces total at least 30.8 million.

Except for Catanduanes, all the provinces of the Bicol region—Albay, Camarines Norte, Camarines Sur, Masbate and Sorsogon are considered in the climate change high exposure list.

Metro Manila, the most densely populated region in the country, ranked in the medium-low to low exposure to climate change.

The DENR chief stressed that the “granularity” of this analysis needs to be appropriated to more localized level to allow the local government to make decisions.

These data form part of the department’s integrated approach in crafting new “evidence-informed plans on mitigation and adaptation.”

Aside from the NAP, the DENR and the Climate Change Commission also completed two other key documents, which were presented and became basis of the negotiations of the Philippine delegation to the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP28) in Dubai, UAE last December 2023. The two documents were: the National Greenhouse Gas Inventory and the National Determined Contribution Implementation Plan (NDCIP).

Globally, the Philippines is ranked the riskiest country in the last two World Risk Index reports from a list of 193 countries. The risks are measured based on the exposure to natural hazards and its vulnerability or level of preparedness.

“What makes us the riskiest, however, is our low level of prevention and preparedness, making our vulnerability the highest,” Jaime Augusto Zobel de Ayala, chairman of the Ayala Corp. and co-chair of the PDRF, said during his welcoming remarks.

This and the supertyphoon Yolanda (international name Haiyan), Zobel de Ayala explained, were the reasons the PDRF shifted its strategy to add preparedness, prevention and resilience to its original mission of helping in the relief and recovery efforts of the government.

DAILY TRIBUNE

[Climate-resilient transport pushed](#)

By: Gabriela Baron

AnyWay Solid Environmental Solutions, a company specializing in climate-resilient infrastructure, has partnered with De La Salle University-Gokongwei College of Engineering to address the Philippines' vulnerability to climate change.

The partnership, formalized through a memorandum of understanding signed two weeks ago, aims to exchange knowledge and expertise, and facilitate faculty and research staff collaboration on climate-resilient transportation from both institutions.

The collaboration will leverage the combined expertise of the parties to explore and implement cutting-edge technologies in infrastructure development.

The Philippines was identified as one of the most vulnerable nations to climate change at the recent COP28 climate summit.

Recognizing the urgency of the problem, DLSU sought AnyWay Solutions' expertise in delivering climate-resilient transportation solutions for developing countries.

AnyWay Solutions also plans to expand partnerships with other universities, including the Technological University of the Philippines.

GMA

PH woos Czech investors in agri-fishery, food businesses

By: Andy Peñafuerte III and Jay-vee Marasigan Pangan

Philippine government officials and business representatives recently urged Czech investors to engage with and venture into various food and agricultural companies in the Philippines.

At a trade and investment forum at the Czech Chamber of Commerce in Prague on February 15, Department of Agriculture (DA) Undersecretary Jerome Oliveros asked potential investors to help Filipino farmers through business ventures.

“As you invest in our country, you would be able to achieve two things: the missions of helping in poverty alleviation [and] helping food security,” he said during the forum.

The Czech Republic is “the Philippines’ 39th trading partner, 28th export market, and 47th import supplier last year, with total bilateral trade amounting to USD 303.21 million,” Malacañang said in a report. Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) data shows agricultural export revenue in the second quarter of 2023 went down from \$2.13 billion to \$1.61 billion, 24.4% lower than in the second quarter of 2022.

“[Based on] feedback from the Czech business community, we are convinced that there is a big potential in the further development of Czech-Philippine business cooperation,” Jana Havrdova, vice president of the Chamber of Commerce of the Czech Republic, said.

Trade, investment opportunities

DA officials presented to Czech firms the Philippine government’s overarching medium- and long-term development plans, including its “thrust in food security”. Atty. Genevieve E. Velicaria-Guevarra, who oversees the DA’s agribusiness and marketing promotion service, shared that the country’s agricultural export priorities are coffee, banana chips, dried pineapple, young coconut, fresh mango, ube powder, durian preparation, calamansi juice, turmeric powder, moringa products and pili nut. On the other hand, the non-food commodities are activated carbon, refined carrageenan, copra, and abaca fiber products.

Meanwhile, Engr. Anne Glyn F. Lisbo, head of DA’s agribusiness investment promotion division, said Czech firms could consider investment opportunities supporting the infrastructure and modernization of the agriculture, fisheries, and food and beverage industries.

Lisbo invited Czech investors to work together to increase the Philippines' "agricultural productivity, lower the food cost, ensure food security, make farming and fisheries a bankable investment, [and] empower Philippine farmers and fisherfolk as reliable partners in agribusiness."

Lisbo noted that coconut and Philippine cacao are among the key commodities with high export demands with varying investment areas. As for multi-commodity investment opportunities, Czech firms can invest in irrigation, feed milling, cold storage, product processing, fisheries and agro-industrial development facilities, mechanization services, food safety technologies, advanced testing operations for agri-fishery laboratories and testing centers, and ICT-driven infrastructures.

Mitigating the effects of climate change

Although the Philippines has experienced cool weather recently, the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) advises the country to brace for reduced rainfall due to El Niño, which may intensify dry spells and drought.

Philippine Honorary Consul General in Brno Bretislav Skacel, who is also managing a hydro and energy business in the Czech Republic, said they are closely cooperating with research institutes and other European associations to find some technologies to help with climate recovery.

"We are ready to discuss this to find proper technologies and ways to help [with] this," Skacel said.

Velicaria-Guevarra from the DA said they are pushing for solar-powered irrigation systems that can be brought to the countryside and more remote areas.

"If you build an irrigation system, it entails a major infrastructure. That's why we're looking at more portable solutions to address this problem," Velicaria-Guevarra added.

Philippine-Czech exchange

At the trade forum, Peter Sedlacek, who owns a mango importing business in the Czech Republic and collaborates with a Filipino business partner, raised his concern regarding foreign ownership of companies in the Philippines. He was referring to the 60-40 equity rule on business ownership under the Philippine Foreign Investment Law, which means at least 60% of the business must be owned by a Filipino citizen.

“We want to have organic mangoes. In the Czech Republic, the weather is very different. Organic food is very [limited] here. I’m happy that we can maybe bring organic mangoes to the Czech Republic,” Sedlacek shared.

Nicanor Bautista, commercial counselor for the Philippine Trade and Investment Center at the Philippine Embassy in Berlin, Germany, clarified that “in general, foreigners are allowed to open up 100% foreign equity in the Philippines.”

Responding to Sedlacek, Bautista said, “Except for a few items, like defense equipment and advertising ... fruit processing trading ... is allowed under our law to be 100% owned and registered in the Philippines.”

“You cannot buy land, but you can lease. Outside of land ownership, you can have the foreign company registered 100% under your Czech company,” Bautista added.

Opening the economy to foreign investments is one of the thrusts in the push for Charter change. However, retired Supreme Court Senior Associate Justice Antonio Carpio said existing laws already allow 100% foreign ownership.

Meanwhile, Crisjel Kuklovsky, a Filipino who owns a grocery store in Prague, said she expects Filipino-owned businesses in the Czech Republic to grow with the expected influx of Filipino workers from this year.

“Hindi masyadong alam ng mga Czech kung ano ang mga products natin. The thing is we [put out] more money [on advertising] and focus on promoting our store and products. We [target] foreign customers. Now, we have more Czech customers than Filipinos.” Kuklovsky said.

(Czechs still don’t know what our products are. The thing is we put out more money on advertising and focus on promoting our store and products. We target foreign customers. Now, we have more Czech customers than Filipinos.)

There are about 7,000 Filipinos in the Czech Republic, and that number is expected to double next year as the Czech government raised the annual quota of employee applications from the Philippines from 5,000 to 10,300.

Philippine Ambassador to the Czech Republic Eduardo Martin R. Meñez said more Filipinos are coming to the Czech Republic to contribute to the Czech economy, adding that “some of them are also in the agricultural sector.”

“The interest between our two countries in trade and investment is increasing along with the other areas of bilateral relations. And so, I sincerely believe that there are many areas of complementarity between our two economies,” Meñez said.

Marcos state visit

President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. is slated to visit the Czech Republic in March, almost a year after Czech Prime Minister Petr Fiala's visit to Manila.

The first leg of the President's diplomatic tour in Europe starts with a working visit in Berlin, Germany to discuss economic and security issues, and regional developments.

“The level and frequency of high-level visits is really increasing. It was also mentioned that the Czech Minister of Agriculture will be visiting the Philippines soon after the president visits the Czech Republic. And, similarly, the joint economic council meeting is going to be held in Manila later this year,” Meñez said.

[\[Opinion\] Climate-related deaths are strongly declining](#)

Watching the news, you get the sense that climate change is making the planet unlivable. We are bombarded with images of floods, droughts, storms, and wildfires. We see not only the deadly events nearby but far-flung disasters when the pictures are scary enough.

Yet, the impression this barrage of catastrophe gives us is wildly misleading and makes it harder to get climate change policy right. Data show climate-related events like floods, droughts, storms, and wildfires aren't killing more people. Deaths have dropped precipitously. Over the past decade, climate-related disasters have killed 98 percent fewer people than a century ago.

This should not be surprising, because the trend has been obvious for many decades, although it rarely gets reported. A century ago, in the 1920s, the average death toll from weather disasters was 485,000 annually. Since then, almost every decade has seen fewer deaths, with 168,000 average dead per year in the 1960s and less than 9,000 dead per year in the most recent decade, 2014-2023.

The 98 percent drop in climate-related deaths is revealed by the most respected international disaster database, which is the gold standard in measuring these impacts. It's reliable because very deadly catastrophes have been documented fairly consistently over the century.

It is true, of course, that smaller events—often with far fewer or no fatalities—are much more likely to have been overlooked in the past, because there were fewer people and less advanced technology. That is why some media and climate campaigners increasingly point to a rise in reported events (rather than the declining death toll) as evidence that climate change is ravaging the planet.

But all of the increase has been in less-serious events, whereas more deadly events are few and declining. The “rise” is due to technology and the global interconnectedness that allows much better reporting of ever-small events, wherever they take place. This is clear because the increase is seen in all categories of disasters measured—not only weather disasters, but also geophysical disasters like volcanoes and earthquakes, and technological disasters like train derailings. Not even radical climate activists claim that climate change is causing more trains to derail, or more volcanoes to explode.

That is why fatalities provide a much more robust measure. These are falling dramatically because richer, resilient societies are much better at protecting citizens

than poorer, vulnerable ones. More resources and innovation mean more lives saved. Research shows this consistently across almost all catastrophes, including storms, cold waves, and floods.

One much-cited study shows that at the beginning of this century, an average of 3.4 million people experienced coastal flooding, with \$11 billion in annual damages. Around \$13 billion or 0.05 percent of global GDP was spent on coastal defenses. By the end of this century, there will be more people in harm's way, and climate change will mean sea levels rise up to a meter. If we do nothing and just keep coastal defenses as they are today, vast areas of the planet will be routinely inundated, flooding 187 million people and causing damage worth \$55 trillion annually, costing more than 5 percent of global GDP.

Richer societies will adapt before things get that bad—especially because the cost of adaptation is very low in comparison to the potential damage, at just 0.005 percent of GDP. This sensible adaptation means that despite higher sea levels, fewer people than ever will be flooded. By 2100, there will be just 15,000 people flooded every year. Even the combined cost of adaptation and climate damages will decrease to just 0.008 percent of GDP.

These facts help show why seeing the bigger picture matters. Linking every disaster to climate change—and wrongly suggesting that things are getting much worse—makes us ignore practical, cost-effective solutions while the media focus our attention on costly climate policies that help little.

Enormously ambitious climate policies costing hundreds of trillions of dollars would cut the number of flooded people by the end of the century from 15,000 to about 10,000 per year. While adaptation saves almost all of the 3.4 million people flooded today, climate policy can, at best, save just 0.005 million.

The calculation is even more stark for poor countries with few resources and little disaster resilience. Bangladesh (then East Pakistan) suffered the largest recorded global death toll of 300,000 from a hurricane in 1970. Since then, it has developed and improved warning systems and shelters. Over the past decade, hurricane deaths have averaged just 160, almost 2,000 times lower. To help countries achieve fewer disaster deaths, we should promote prosperity, adaptation, and resilience.

Of course, weather disasters are just one aspect of climate change, which is a real global challenge that we should fix smartly. But when we are inundated with “weather porn” and miss the fact that deaths have dropped precipitously, we end up focusing on the least effective policies first.

Bjorn Lomborg is president of the Copenhagen Consensus and visiting fellow at Stanford University's Hoover Institution. His new book is "Best Things First," which The Economist named one of the best books of 2023.

[QC is 1st Asian city for Temasek's OASIS Schoolyards Project](#)

Transformation programs under the OASIS Schoolyards Project will be piloted in three public elementary schools in Quezon City, the local government announced Friday.

The Diosdado P. Macapagal Elementary School, Manuel L. Quezon Elementary School, and Placido Del Mundo Elementary School were chosen based on their comparative vulnerability to heatwaves and flooding, and the availability of open space within the school and surrounding neighborhood, it explained.

OASIS Schoolyards was originally conceived and implemented by the city of Paris 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.

Quezon City, a champion of climate action and resilience, has joined the new OASIS Schoolyards Project jointly launched by Resilient Cities Network and Temasek Foundation in the Philippines to improve educational quality for Filipino students while simultaneously addressing the challenges of climate change.

School communities, including students, parents and teachers, as well as design professionals, will co-design schoolyards in consultation with stakeholders such as government, academia, and community organizations. The schoolyards will also be used as interactive learning tool for students as well as for local government officials to raise public awareness for climate resilience.

"The 'OASIS Schoolyards' program resonates with the City Government's vision, and we express our enthusiasm in being part of this initiative," said Mayor Joy Belmonte. "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" she added.

Temasek Foundation programs head Lim Hock Chuan believed that by adaptation solution innovations may inspire local communities and stakeholders to proactively participate in efforts to address climate change.

He said this project is an experiential learning platform which the youth can relate to in a school environment.

“We expect this pilot program for the three ‘OASIS Schoolyards’ schools will show definitive results in improving livability of the urban environment around schools; and where important lessons will be incorporated into the school curriculum,” Chuan said.

“Temasek Foundation hopes that our contribution will catalyze other local philanthropic organizations, including local governments and community stakeholders to embark on similar projects across Metro Manila,” he also said.

Meanwhile, Lauren Sorkin, executive director of Resilient Cities Network, said “[t]he launch of the OASIS Schoolyards Project marks a significant step towards empowering cities to address the urgent challenges posed by climate change.”

Under the program, “[w]e will transform schoolyards into vibrant urban oases, fostering community engagement and empower children as catalysts for positive change,” she noted.

“I am thrilled to see our vision of creating resilient, sustainable communities taking root in Quezon City,” Sorkin said.

“Our collaboration with Temasek Foundation exemplifies our commitment to creating climate-resilient cities, starting with this innovative initiative in Quezon City,” she continued.

PHILIPPINE INFORMATION AGENCY

[Davao del Sur's town bears impact of climate change on tourism, welfare of residents](#)

By: Joey Sem Dalumpines

The tourism industry in the town of Sta. Cruz is significantly impacted by climate change, according to its tourism officer, Julius Paner.

He said that while Sta. Cruz has been preparing for the expected long dry spell, continuous rainfall has been the unexpected outcome.

Paner highlighted that the tourism industry continues to flourish in Sta. Cruz due to its fair weather, noting that “El Niño mitigation programs have been prepared in advance to prevent wildfires in the event of no rain for a month. Failure to do so would result in the closure of Mt. Apo to climbers, causing an impact on the tourism industry.”

He noted that despite the COVID-19 pandemic, a considerable increase in tourist arrivals (11 percent) occurred in 2023 when the region experienced an increase in tourist arrivals, with Mt. Apo hosting 5,000 climbers, Mt. Loay hosting 3,720 climbers, Mt. Denor hosting 4,118 climbers, Bamboo Peak hosting 3,369 climbers, and Marine Waterfalls averaging 2,000 visitors.

He said that the shear line weather experienced in mid-January resulted in the displacement of 24 families residing in Barangay Astorga in Sta. Cruz, Davao del Sur.

In contrast, the Disaster Response, Monitoring, and Information Center of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) XI said heavy rains caused by the shear line affected 44,888 families in the provinces of Davao del Norte, Davao de Oro, Davao Oriental, Davao Occidental, and Davao City.

“Fortunately, only 24 families were evacuated in Sta. Cruz, and the local government provided their needs, such as food,” Paner said.

He said that Barangays Inawayan and Astorga were significantly affected by the shear line, and forceful evacuation was carried out in Barangay Astorga to ensure the safety of families in adherence to disaster preparedness and mitigation.

Paner said the government's long-term plan is to pull out residents from landslide-prone areas; however, big landslides have never occurred in Sta. Cruz.

He said the community-based monitoring system is employed to inform the local government of any impending danger, such as floods or landslides.

“In case of any danger, classes at all levels are immediately suspended to

The highest peak in the Philippines, Mt. Apo as seen from Tibolo Tribal Village in Sta. Cruz, Davao del Sur. (Photo courtesy of Ruelito Pine of Globe Telecom)
prevent problems affecting children in schools,” he said, adding that the response units are activated and monitored by the local government.

He pointed out that the local government unit of Sta. Cruz is investing in a comprehensive warning system over the next three months.

Paner said the warning system will have homing devices attached to flood- and landslide-prone areas to convey the real-time scenario of any impending danger.

“Cameras will be installed on the shoreline of Sta. Cruz and monitoring equipment will be directly attached to the monitoring system of the local government unit,” he said.

THE MANILA TIMES

[DSWD, USAid team up for disaster response](#)

By: Moises Cruz

The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) took on a proactive approach to improving the agency's disaster response capabilities in Mindanao by exploring possible partnerships with the United States Agency for International Development (USAid).

DSWD Secretary Rexlon "Rex" Gatchalian addressed possible partnerships with USAID Deputy Assistant Administrator (DAA) for Asia Sara Borodin and USAid Mission Director Ryan Washburn during their joint visit to the National Resource Operations Center (NROC) in Pasay City on Thursday.

Gatchalian said that part of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.'s directive is for the national government to be proactive in disaster response, given that some local government units (LGUs) continue to face challenges in responding quickly to the needs of their constituents during calamities.

"The paradigm now, which the President said, is that he wants a sustained effort from the national government during times of disasters," Gatchalian said.

As a result, the DSWD, according to Secretary Gatchalian, has established "close to 700 warehouses, which we call last-mile warehouses," and is looking at additional disaster response infrastructure.

Explaining that the Department's budget is primarily allocated to grants to its clients, Gatchalian emphasized the significance of the USAid officials' warehouse visit as an opportunity to investigate potential funding sources for establishing facilities that will increase the Department's disaster response capacity.

"We get in trouble when we want to build a facility; let's say in Mindanao, we have to do the lobbying, which I am doing right now. Now that we have land, we have to do the lobbying," Gatchalian said.

"It is always in terms of how much you can give people, not what you can build. That's our restriction in terms of budget," he added.

Gatchalian stated that it is past time to create a large storage facility in the Southern Philippines since "Mindanao has become a hotbed for climate change."

The warehouse tour at the NROC was facilitated by the World Food Programme-Philippines (WFP) and is part of USAid DAA Borodin's country visit to the Philippines, which aims to understand the Philippine government's disaster response capacity and recognize the impactful partnerships formed through grants to the WFP.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

[From reactive to proactive: Bill pushes early action to mitigate climate disasters](#)

By:Gaea Katreena Cabico

A House lawmaker has filed a bill that seeks to institutionalize anticipatory actions for mitigating the impacts of hazards before they occur, a move welcomed by humanitarian organizations as a positive step toward addressing climate risks.

Under House Bill 9935 filed by Rep. Jose Manuel Alba (Bukidnon), declaring a “state of imminent disaster” allows using national and local resources for proactive measures before a disaster.

“This mechanism will enable the government to anticipate and respond effectively to impending disasters, thereby minimizing their adverse impacts on vulnerable communities and enhancing the country’s resilience to disasters,” the bill’s explanatory note read.

Humanitarian organizations within the Start Network welcomed the filing of the bill, calling it a “first-of-its-kind” initiative with the potential to save more lives and livelihoods as the country faces intensified risks due to the climate crisis.

“With early deployment of funds, we can lessen the response time and we can ensure that the measures we execute—from early action to early response—respond to the most immediate needs of communities,” Arvin Caro, country crisis financing advisor of Start Network, told Philstar.com.

He added that providing cash grants before a cyclone hits can enable families to buy necessary supplies like medicine, such as those for preventing diarrhea, and help local governments ensure that evacuation centers meet the needs of women, elderly and children.

‘Expeditious emergency assistance’

Under the bill, the national government and local government units (LGUs) can declare a “state of imminent disaster” over a cluster of barangays, municipalities, cities, provinces and regions, upon the recommendations of disaster risk reduction and management offices if the projected affected population requires “expeditious emergency assistance” to prepare for a disaster.

A “state of imminent disaster” can also be declared if there is a projected damage to critical infrastructure and facilities that are necessary for emergency response or if there

is an expected disruption of lifeline systems such as food supply chain, electricity, potable water system, and communication system.

In cases where there is a change in hazard forecast, the government will adopt a "no regrets" approach, acknowledging that the proposed or undertaken anticipatory actions will still benefit, rather than negatively impact, the targeted population.

Unused funds from local government units (LGUs) will accrue to the special trust fund, while unused funds from national government agencies will revert to the National Treasury upon the lifting of the state of imminent disaster declaration.

The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) and the Local Social Welfare and Development Offices will be responsible for storing food and non-food items.

Any person or corporation who commits dereliction of duty, leading to loss of life, critical damage to facilities, misuse of funds, or prevents the entry and distribution of relief goods in areas declared under a "state of imminent disaster," will be fined up to P500,000, imprisoned for up to 12 years, or both.

From reactive to proactive

Start Network's Caro emphasized that under the current system, funds are primarily used for disaster response after communities experience the impacts of a disaster.

"In some cases, the wait-and-see approach is delaying actions. There is a glaring gap in that approach because even quick response funds take time to be released to be used for communities' needs," Caro said.

"It is high time that we prioritize proactive measures over reactive steps—not only to safeguard the well-being of Filipinos but to enhance the country's overall resilience by ensuring that our disaster management plans are executed according to community needs, and not just the available budget," he added.

The United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) piloted an anticipatory approach in Bicol region, Eastern Visayas, CARAGA, and the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao to strengthen the resilience of farming and fishing communities and help ensure food security in times of emergencies.

In July 2023, the START Network launched a risk-based financing program that uses advanced modeling and science-based trigger systems to provide pre-disaster funds to at-risk communities.

The pilot activation in Cagayan, which occurred three days before the landfall of Typhoon Egay (Doksuri), reached over 1,300 families.

“[Communities] know what to do ahead of disasters—to protect their livelihoods, secure their houses, and ensure their families’ well-being—they just need funds to execute it,” Caro said.

Business group backs carbon emission trading

By: Jasper Emmanuel Arcalas

The government should prioritize implementing a carbon emission trading system instead of imposing taxes on carbon as the latter could cause power prices to spike, according to the Makati Business Club.

MBC chairman Edgar Chua said the group believes that setting up a carbon emission trading system is better than imposing a carbon tax since businesses are more incentivized to actually address reduction in their carbon footprint.

Chua warned that domestic electricity costs would increase – with the consumers shouldering the burden – if a carbon tax is implemented since the bulk of the country’s power comes from carbon and hydrocarbons.

“It will be passed on to us as consumers (in the form) of electricity. And already, our country is one of the most expensive when it comes to power for a number of reasons,” he told reporters on the sidelines of the State of Climate Change forum in Makati recently.

“Build an enabling environment instead of one where you penalize users of hydrocarbon (and carbon),” he added.

Chua emphasized that establishing the carbon emission trading system would be the “best” incentive that the government could provide to encourage businesses to cut down on their carbon footprint.

“If you let the market (dictate the price) that alone is a huge thing already,” he said.

The MBC is hopeful that the government would be implementing the carbon emission trading system “as soon as possible” like within the year, Chua said.

Chua said the MBC is engaging with foreign entities and the academe in discussing the most suitable model for the Philippines in undertaking a carbon emission trading system.

Last month, Finance Secretary Ralph Recto called for the study of carbon pricing instruments and the need to identify an optimal mix including the imposition of carbon tax and implementation of an emission trading system.

Recto said these efforts would incentivize both industries and individuals to actively reduce their carbon footprint, while allowing the government to mobilize financial resources to boost fiscal space.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

DAILY TRIBUNE

[Worst-case dry spell warned](#)

By: Chito Lozada

Filipinos must prepare for the worst in terms of the intensity of the El Niño episode after the extreme Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration or PAGASA forecast.

The Climate Change Commission, or CCC, is now urging the public to take proactive measures, mainly through water conservation.

PAGASA has warned of an intense El Niño activity starting this month, while most global climate models foresee the phenomenon to persist until May.

The weather bureau announced the possibility of an increase in the number of provinces affected by the El Niño phenomenon. From 41 areas that experienced adverse effects in January, the number is projected to reach 51 by the end of this month.

According to PAGASA, according to state meteorologists, Metro Manila and 23 other provinces may experience drought by the end of the month. These provinces are Abra, Apayao, Aurora, Bataan, Benguet, Cagayan, Cavite, Ifugao, Ilocos Norte, Ilocos Sur, Isabela, Kalinga, La Union, Mountain Province, Negros Occidental, Nueva Ecija, Nueva Vizcaya, Occidental Mindoro, Palawan, Pangasinan, Quirino, Rizal and Zambales.

CCC has outlined steps to minimize the impact of the weather phenomena.

It advised insulating homes. It said proper insulation is crucial to keep homes cool without using energy-consuming air conditioning.

Roofs, walls, and windows should be checked to ensure they are insulated against heat.

Employ natural cooling methods that are both sustainable and culturally significant.

Place plants strategically in the home to reduce heat absorption, provide shade, and improve air quality.

People should stay hydrated as a precaution against extreme heat. "Drink plenty of water, and prepare homemade electrolyte solutions using salt, citrus fruits, and other

easily accessible ingredients to replenish essential minerals and electrolytes that are lost from perspiration,” CCC indicated.

CCC also advised the harvesting of rainwater. Rain barrels, gutters, and filters can collect and store rainwater effectively.

Recycling water from washing machines and showers, using a bucket instead of a hose when washing vehicles, and fixing plumbing leaks promptly.

Find alternative water sources. Find out if there are alternative water sources in your area, such as community wells or springs. Work collectively to ensure they remain sustainable while maintaining cleanliness.

In cooperation with other national government agencies, the CCC has developed policies and strategies that will prepare the nation for climate change impacts and disasters. These include:

The National Climate Change Action Plan outlines strategies for resilience to climate change impacts, including El Niño. It calls for improved water resource management, early warning systems, and climate-smart agriculture practices.

The Local Climate Change Action Plans. Developed by local governments, the LCCAPs provide site-specific adaptation measures tailored to local risks and vulnerabilities. Integrating El Niño preparedness into LCCAPs ensures targeted and effective action.

ONE NEWS PH

Climate Body Issues El Niño Coping Measures

By: Helen Flores and Romina Marie Cabrera

The country is expected to sizzle in the coming weeks, with the state weather bureau predicting temperatures to reach up to 36.5 degrees Celsius nationwide and as high as 40 degrees Celsius in Metro Manila and northern Luzon due to El Niño.

With the effects of the El Niño now being felt across the country, the Climate Change Commission (CCC) has offered some tips to help the public cope with water shortages, rising temperatures and extreme weather conditions.

“Preparing for and coping with El Niño requires community collaboration. The CCC encourages individuals to form neighborhood watch groups to monitor and address El Niño-related challenges together,” CCC vice chairman and executive director Robert Borje said in a statement.

“Collaborative efforts can help identify solutions for common concerns and develop a stronger sense of resilience within your community,” he said.

With soaring temperatures, Filipinos are advised to consider adding insulation to their homes to minimize or prevent heat from entering.

“Placing plants strategically in the home can also reduce heat absorption, provide shade and improve air quality,” it said.

“Proper insulation is crucial to keep your home cool without depending on energy-consuming air conditioning. Check roofs, walls and windows to ensure they are insulated,” the CCC, chaired by President Marcos, said.

To avoid heat exhaustion or heat stroke, the CCC urged people to drink plenty of water.

He said Filipinos can prepare homemade electrolyte solutions using salt, citrus fruits and other easily accessible ingredients to replenish essential minerals and electrolytes lost from perspiration.

To prevent water problems during the dry and hot months, the public is encouraged to collect and store rainwater by installing a rainwater harvesting system.

“This can provide water for non-potable uses such as cleaning, flushing the toilet and watering the plants. Rain barrels, gutters and filters can collect and store rainwater effectively,” the CCC said.

The public should also make sure to seal the container of collected rainwater to prevent it from becoming a breeding ground for mosquitoes, it added.

The CCC likewise recommended water-saving techniques, including reusing gray water from washing machines and showers, using a bucket instead of a hose when washing vehicles and fixing plumbing leaks promptly.

Households may also use alternative water sources in their areas, such as community wells or springs, it said.

To prevent fires and wildfires, the climate body urged the public to avoid grilling or cooking outdoors on windy days.

Furthermore, the CCC also urged households to keep fire extinguishers readily available and to create a fire safety plan, including apprising family members of evacuation routes and meeting points.

As El Niño could also bring extreme weather events including strong winds and sudden heavy downpour, the CCC instructed the public to reinforce homes by securing roofs, equipping windows with protective shutters and making sure that doors are sturdy.

It also advised individuals and households to create natural barriers by planting trees around their property that could also provide shade and contribute to sustainability.

The country is expected to sizzle in the coming weeks, with the state weather bureau predicting temperatures to reach up to 36.5 degrees Celsius nationwide and as high as 40 degrees Celsius in Metro Manila and northern Luzon due to El Niño.

Presidential Communications Assistant Secretary Joey Villarama, spokesman for Task Force El Nino, earlier said most of the provinces experiencing drought are in Luzon.

Villarama also warned at least 10 more provinces could be affected by El Niño by the end of February.

Losses

The dry spell brought by El Niño has resulted in an estimated P357.4 million in damage and production losses, according to the latest estimates by the Department of Agriculture.

In its latest El Niño bulletin, DA said 7,688 farmers have been affected in Ilocos Region, MIMAROPA, Western Visayas and Zamboanga Peninsula.

Potential production losses due to the impact of the dry spell on the affected 6,523 hectares will reach 11,480 metric tons for palay, 2,897 MT for corn and 225 MT for high value crops.

The DA said the current affected rice area of 5,011 hectares is 0.52 percent of the total target area planted, while affected corn area covered 1,263 hectares or 0.11 percent of the total target area.

Production loss for rice was pegged at 11,480 MT or around 0.12 percent of the target dry cropping season output for the year.

Corn production loss was at 2,897 MT or 0.06 percent of target production for the 2024 dry cropping season.

The DA said it is getting ready to distribute vegetable seeds in Western Visayas and Ilocos Regions as well as planting materials for high-value crops in the Zamboanga Peninsula to help farmers recover.

The DA is also collaborating with relevant agencies like the Philippine Atmospheric Geophysical Astronomical Services Administration and the Philippine Air Force for cloud-seeding operations.

It is also promoting the use of drought-resistant crops and pest-control efforts and is continuously adopting alternate wetting-and-drying methods to reduce water consumption in rice fields.

The DA also vowed to endorse affected farmers to the Department of Social Welfare and Development and the Department of Labor and Employment to help them avail of other forms of assistance.

PHILIPPINE INFORMATION AGENCY

CCC: Brace against the effects of El Niño

The Climate Change Commission (CCC) urges the Filipino people to take proactive measures following the forecast of the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration's (PAGASA) of an increased El Niño activity.

PAGASA announced the possibility of an increase in the number of provinces to be affected by the El Niño phenomenon. From 41 provinces that experienced adverse effects in January, the number is projected to reach 51 by the end of this month.

According to PAGASA, Metro Manila and 23 other provinces may experience drought by the end of the month, according to state meteorologists. These provinces are Abra, Apayao, Aurora, Bataan, Benguet, Cagayan, Cavite, Ifugao, Ilocos Norte, Ilocos Sur, Isabela, Kalinga, La Union, Mountain Province, Negros Occidental, Nueva Ecija, Nueva Vizcaya, Occidental Mindoro, Palawan, Pangasinan, Quirino, Rizal and Zambales.

El Niño refers to a periodic weather event characterized by a warming of the ocean surface or above-average sea surface temperatures in the eastern equatorial Pacific. It is associated with droughts, heat waves, heavy rainfall and other extreme weather events. While its effects are global, El Niño hits Asian countries the hardest.

The Philippines, in particular, is currently experiencing extreme drought, one of the slow-onset effects of climate change, along with other climate impact-drivers: rising sea levels, increasing precipitation, and intensifying wind patterns and tropical cyclones.

Drought is characterized by a decrease of 21 to 60 percent in rain occurrences for five consecutive months, or below normal rainfall conditions for three consecutive months. These conditions adversely affect climate-sensitive sectors, including agriculture, energy, water, health and public safety, leading to food, energy and water insecurity.

"The recurrence of the El Niño phenomenon calls for the implementation of both short and long-term solutions to ensure food, water and energy security, safeguard livelihoods, and improve the country's disaster and climate resilience," said President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. in signing the Executive Order No. 53 on the reactivation and reconstitution of Task Force El Niño.

The CCC, in cooperation with other national government agencies, has developed policies and strategies that will prepare the nation for climate change impacts and disasters. These include:

The National Climate Change Action Plan (NCCAP), which outlines strategies for building resilience to climate change impacts, including El Niño. It calls for improved water resource management, early warning systems, and climate-smart agriculture practices.

The Local Climate Change Action Plans (LCCAPs). Developed by local governments, the LCCAPs provide site-specific adaptation measures tailored to local risks and vulnerabilities. Integrating El Niño preparedness into LCCAPs ensures targeted and effective action.

The National Climate Risk Management Framework (NCRMF) outlines a systematic approach to managing climate risks, including those associated with El Niño. Implementing its recommendations strengthens preparedness and response capacity.

Recently, the CCC spearheaded the development of the country's first National Adaptation Plan (NAP), aimed at building sector- and community-level resilience to climate change impacts. NAP identifies priority eight (8) sectors needing interventions, as affected by climate change:

- Agriculture, fisheries and food security; water resources; health; ecosystems and biodiversity; cultural heritage, population displacement, and migration

“Implementing the strategies and recommendations outlined in these policies and frameworks strengthens our adaptive capacity to face climate risks such as El Niño, ultimately leading to more climate-resilient communities,” said CCC Vice Chairperson and Executive Director Robert E.A. Borje.

PAGASA has warned of a strong El Niño activity this month, while most global climate models foresee the phenomenon to persist from March to May. In light of this forecast, the CCC encourages everyone to take the necessary steps to minimize the negative impacts of El Niño in their homes and communities.

What to do before and during El Niño

These El Niño preparedness tips encompass preparing for the rising temperature, water shortages, fire prevention and safety, and typhoons and other extreme weather events.

Withstanding Rising Temperatures

Insulate the home. Proper insulation is crucial to keep your home cool without depending on energy-consuming air conditioning. Check roofs, walls and windows to

ensure they are insulated, and consider adding insulation to prevent heat from entering the home.

Employ natural cooling methods. Take advantage of natural cooling methods that are both sustainable and culturally significant. Place plants strategically in the home to reduce heat absorption, provide shade and improve air quality.

Stay hydrated. Extreme heat requires extra attention to staying hydrated. Drink plenty of water, and prepare homemade electrolyte solutions using salt, citrus fruits and other easily accessible ingredients to replenish essential minerals and electrolytes that you lose when you perspire.

Addressing Water Shortages

Harvest rainwater. Collect and store rainwater by installing a rainwater harvesting system. This can provide water for non-potable uses such as cleaning, flushing the toilet and watering the plants. Rain barrels, gutters and filters can collect and store rainwater effectively. Make sure to seal the container of collected rainwater to prevent it from becoming a breeding ground for mosquitoes.

Adopt water-saving techniques. These include reusing gray water from washing machines and showers, using a bucket instead of a hose when washing vehicles, and fixing plumbing leaks promptly.

Find alternative water sources. Find out if there are alternative water sources in your area, such as community wells or springs. Work collectively to ensure they remain sustainable while maintaining cleanliness.

Preventing Fires

Fireproof your property. Choose fire-resistant landscaping techniques and plants to avoid the risk of wildfires. Avoid flammable materials such as lightweight wood or highly combustible plants. Instead, choose native plants that thrive in the local climate and soil conditions to also reduce the risk of them becoming invasive.

Practice safe cooking techniques. Avoid grilling or cooking outdoors on windy days and don't leave cooking unattended. Check smoke detectors to ensure they are functioning properly, and keep fire extinguishers readily available.

Prepare for emergencies. Create a fire safety plan and apprise all family members of evacuation routes and meeting points. Make sure you have grab-and-go-bags that

contain flashlights, batteries, first aid supplies, lightweight blankets, solar chargers and other essentials.

Bracing for Typhoons

Reinforce your home. Protect your home from strong winds and rain and other extreme weather conditions by securing roofs, reinforcing windows with protective shutters, and making sure that doors are sturdy.

Create natural barriers. Plant trees around your property to provide shade and contribute to sustainability. Trees also can help protect you against strong winds during typhoons. Work with your community to organize tree-planting activities for a stronger, collective impact.

Craft emergency kits. Prepare a comprehensive emergency kit that contains essentials that are often overlooked, such as solar chargers and waterproof document protectors, to help you stay connected and informed during and after emergencies. Also pack non-perishable food, water, medication and raincoats.

Preparing for and coping with El Niño requires community collaboration. The Climate Change Commission encourages individuals to form neighborhood watch groups to monitor and address El Niño-related challenges together.

“Collaborative efforts can help identify solutions for common concerns and develop a stronger sense of resilience within your community,” Borje said.

For more information about the CCC’s climate mainstreaming activities, visit the website of the CCC at <https://climate.gov.ph> and <https://facebook.com/cccpnl>. (CCC)

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

CCC: Brace against effects of El Niño

The Climate Change Commission (CCC) urged Filipinos to take proactive measures following the forecast of the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration's (PAGASA) of an increased El Niño activity.

PAGASA has warned of a strong El Niño activity this month, while most global climate models foresee the phenomenon to persist from March to May.

In light of this forecast, the CCC encouraged taking the necessary steps to minimize the negative impacts of El Niño in their homes and communities.

The CCC, in cooperation with other national government agencies, has developed policies and strategies that will prepare the nation for climate change impacts and disasters. These include:

--The National Climate Change Action Plan (NCCAP), which outlines strategies for building resilience to climate change impacts, including El Niño. It calls for improved water resource management, early warning systems, and climate-smart agriculture practices.

--The Local Climate Change Action Plans (LCCAPs). Developed by local governments, the LCCAPs provide context-specific adaptation measures tailored to local vulnerabilities. Integrating El Niño preparedness into LCCAPs ensures targeted and effective action.

--The National Framework Strategy on Climate Change (NFSCC), which guides the country's long-term response to climate change. It underscores the importance of mainstreaming climate considerations into all development plans, including disaster risk reduction and management.

--The National Climate Risk Management Framework (NCRMF), which outlines a systematic approach to managing climate risks, including those associated with El Niño. Implementing its recommendations strengthens preparedness and response capacity.

"Implementing the strategies and recommendations outlined in these policies and frameworks strengthens our adaptive capacity to face climate risks such as El Niño, ultimately leading to more climate-resilient communities," CCC vice chairperson and executive director Robert E.A. Borje said in a news release on Friday.

The PAGASA has announced the possibility of an increase in the number of provinces to be affected by the El Niño phenomenon from 41 provinces in January to 51 by the end of February.

It said Metro Manila and 23 other provinces may experience drought by the end of the month.

These provinces are Abra, Apayao, Aurora, Bataan, Benguet, Cagayan, Cavite, Ifugao, Ilocos Norte, Ilocos Sur, Isabela, Kalinga, La Union, Mountain Province, Negros Occidental, Nueva Ecija, Nueva Vizcaya, Occidental Mindoro, Palawan, Pangasinan, Quirino, Rizal and Zambales.

El Niño refers to a periodic weather event characterized by a warming of the ocean surface or above-average sea surface temperatures in the eastern equatorial Pacific. It is associated with droughts, heat waves, heavy rainfall and other extreme weather events.

On Jan. 19, President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. signed Executive Order No. 53 to streamline, reactivate, and reconstitute the old El Niño task forces under EO No. 16 (s. 2001) and Memorandum Order No. 38 (s. 2019).

The President instructed the task force to develop a comprehensive disaster preparedness and rehabilitation plan for El Niño and La Niña to provide “systematic, holistic, and results-driven interventions” to help the public cope and minimize their devastating effects.

“The recurrence of the El Niño phenomenon calls for the implementation of both short and long-term solutions to ensure food, water and energy security, safeguard livelihoods, and improve the country’s disaster and climate resilience,” Marcos said in signing the EO.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

CCC issues El Niño defense measures

By: Helen Flores, Romina Cabrera

With the effects of the El Niño now being felt across the country, the Climate Change Commission (CCC) has offered some tips to help the public cope with water shortages, rising temperatures and extreme weather conditions.

“Preparing for and coping with El Niño requires community collaboration. The CCC encourages individuals to form neighborhood watch groups to monitor and address El Niño-related challenges together,” CCC vice chairman and executive director Robert Borje said in a statement.

“Collaborative efforts can help identify solutions for common concerns and develop a stronger sense of resilience within your community,” he said.

With soaring temperatures, Filipinos are advised to consider adding insulation to their homes to minimize or prevent heat from entering.

“Placing plants strategically in the home can also reduce heat absorption, provide shade and improve air quality,” it said.

“Proper insulation is crucial to keep your home cool without depending on energy-consuming air conditioning. Check roofs, walls and windows to ensure they are insulated,” CCC, chaired by President Marcos, said.

To avoid heat exhaustion or heat stroke, the CCC urged people to drink plenty of water.

He said Filipinos can prepare homemade electrolyte solutions using salt, citrus fruits and other easily accessible ingredients to replenish essential minerals and electrolytes lost from perspiration.

To prevent water problems during the dry and hot months, the public is encouraged to collect and store rainwater by installing a rainwater harvesting system.

“This can provide water for non-potable uses such as cleaning, flushing the toilet and watering the plants. Rain barrels, gutters and filters can collect and store rainwater effectively,” the CCC said.

The public should also make sure to seal the container of collected rainwater to prevent it from becoming a breeding ground for mosquitoes, it added.

The CCC likewise recommended water-saving techniques, including reusing gray water from washing machines and showers, using a bucket instead of a hose when washing vehicles and fixing plumbing leaks promptly.

Households may also use alternative water sources in their areas, such as community wells or springs, it said.

To prevent fires and wildfires, the climate body urged the public to avoid grilling or cooking outdoors on windy days.

Furthermore, the CCC also urged households to keep fire extinguishers readily available and to create a fire safety plan, including apprising family members of evacuation routes and meeting points.

As El Niño could also bring extreme weather events including strong winds and sudden heavy downpour, the CCC instructed the public to reinforce homes by securing roofs, equipping windows with protective shutters and making sure that doors are sturdy.

It also advised individuals and households to create natural barriers by planting trees around their property that could also provide shade and contribute to sustainability.

The country is expected to sizzle in the coming weeks, with the state weather bureau predicting temperatures to reach up to 36.5 degrees Celsius nationwide and as high as 40 degrees Celsius in Metro Manila and northern Luzon due to El Niño.

Presidential Communications Assistant Secretary Joey Villarama, spokesman for Task Force El Nino, earlier said most of the provinces experiencing drought are in Luzon.

Villarama also warned at least 10 more provinces could be affected by El Niño by the end of February.

Losses

The dry spell brought by El Niño has resulted in an estimated P357.4 million in damage and production losses, according to the latest estimates by the Department of Agriculture.

In its latest El Niño bulletin, DA said 7,688 farmers have been affected in Ilocos Region, MIMAROPA, Western Visayas and Zamboanga Peninsula.

Potential production losses due to the impact of the dry spell on the affected 6,523 hectares will reach 11,480 metric tons for palay, 2,897 MT for corn and 225 MT for high value crops.

The DA said the current affected rice area of 5,011 hectares is 0.52 percent of the total target area planted, while affected corn area covered 1,263 hectares or 0.11 percent of the total target area.

Production loss for rice was pegged at 11,480 MT or around 0.12 percent of the target dry cropping season output for the year.

Corn production loss was at 2,897 MT or 0.06 percent of target production for the 2024 dry cropping season.

The DA said it is getting ready to distribute vegetable seeds in Western Visayas and Ilocos Regions as well as planting materials for high-value crops in the Zamboanga Peninsula to help farmers recover.

The DA is also collaborating with relevant agencies like the Philippine Atmospheric Geophysical Astronomical Services Administration and the Philippine Air Force for cloud-seeding operations.

It is also promoting the use of drought-resistant crops and pest-control efforts and is continuously adopting alternate wetting-and-drying methods to reduce water consumption in rice fields.

The DA also vowed to endorse affected farmers to the Department of Social Welfare and Development and the Department of Labor and Employment to help them avail of other forms of assistance.

=END=