



## NEWS ROUNDUP

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## BUSINESS MIRROR

### [EU carbon tariff will have limited impact on climate change–ADB](#)

By: Andrea E. San Juan

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### [‘Green trade initiatives key to hitting climate targets’](#)

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## [UN: Climate change and food insecurity threaten global peace](#)

Climate change and food insecurity are intertwined challenges that have far-reaching implications for global peace and security. The consequences of climate change, such as rising temperatures, extreme weather events, and changing rainfall patterns, directly impact food production systems, leading to decreased agricultural yields, disrupted supply chains, and increased food prices. These effects are particularly devastating in vulnerable regions where communities heavily rely on agriculture for their livelihoods and sustenance.

### **MANILA BULLETIN**

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By: Joseph Pedrajas

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#### [\[Opinion\] Innovation: Key to sustainable development amid climate change](#)

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By: Wilnard Bacelonia

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## **SUNSTAR**

### **[DTI advances future-ready PH with UN-backed E-Mobility project](#)**

Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) Secretary Fred Pascual and United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) Philippine Representative Teddy Monroy signed the "Accelerating the Adoption and Scale-up Electric Mobility for Low-Carbon City Development in the Philippines" (E- Mobility) project, 23 February. This initiative aims to revolutionize Philippine transportation by promoting electric vehicles (EVs) and fostering a thriving local EV manufacturing industry.

### **[New study finds erratic weather fueled by climate change will worsen locust outbreaks](#)**

Extreme wind and rain may lead to bigger and worse desert locust outbreaks, with human-caused climate change likely to intensify the weather patterns and cause higher outbreak risks, a new study has found.

## **THE PHILIPPINE STAR**

### **[Philippine calls for stronger action on climate change](#)**

By: Catherine Talavera

Trade Secretary Alfredo Pascual has called for stronger sustainable trade and development initiatives to address climate change during the second ministerial meeting of the Coalition of Trade Ministers on Climate on the sidelines of the 13th World Trade Organization (WTO) ministerial conference (MC13) in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates (UAE).

**Information and Knowledge Management Division**

## **BUSINESS MIRROR**

### **EU carbon tariff will have limited impact on climate change–ADB**

By: Andrea E. San Juan

EU carbon tariff will have limited impact on climate change–ADB Initiatives aimed at curbing carbon emissions in trade in goods should be extended to other regions outside of the European Union, particularly Asia, according a study conducted by the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

“The fragmented nature of carbon pricing initiatives in terms of sectors and regions covered, including CBAM [carbon border adjustment mechanism], can only partially limit carbon leakage,” said ADB Chief Economist Albert Park.

“To significantly reduce carbon emissions globally, while also making sure climate efforts are more effective and sustainable, carbon pricing initiatives need to be extended to other regions outside the EU, especially Asia,” he added.

In a statement it issued on Monday, the multilateral development bank said EU import charges on “carbon-intensive” products are expected to have a limited impact on climate change and only a “modest negative effect” on economies in Asia and the Pacific.

Set to go into force in 2026, ADB noted that the CBAM of the EU will impose import charges on products, such as steel, cement, and electricity, based on the carbon dioxide emissions embedded in their production.

ADB noted that the charges are aimed at curbing “carbon leakage,” the result of polluters moving production from countries with “stringent” regulations or high carbon prices to those with less stringent regulations or lower prices.

According to the Asian Economic Integration Report (AEIR) 2024 which was released on Monday, CBAM is likely to reduce global carbon emissions by less than 0.2 percent relative to an emissions trading scheme with a carbon price of 100 euros (\$108) per metric ton and no carbon tariff, statistical modeling showed.

“At the same time, the charges may reduce global exports to the EU by around 0.4 percent and Asia’s exports to the EU by around 1.1 percent, while negatively affecting the output of some manufacturers within the EU,” the report read.

The report noted that Asian subregions with higher shares of carbon-intensive exports to Europe, particularly Central and West Asia, would be more negatively affected by CBAM and the EU's emissions trading system.

Given the expected distributional impacts, especially on developing economies in Asia, the report said there is a need for "proper" incentive mechanisms to encourage widespread adoption of carbon pricing.

As carbon emissions from Asia are growing faster than in other regions, the report recommended measures to decarbonize international trade and global value chains.

"Among the recommendations are implementing targeted policies that encourage trade in climate-friendly products and services; supporting environmental regulations and standards; facilitating the transfer of green technologies; and supporting governments and international institutions in promoting green infrastructure and investments," ADB said.

The report also called for global cooperation to develop "universally accepted" accounting frameworks that can "effectively" track emissions planted in products and services.

## 'Green trade initiatives key to hitting climate targets'

By: Andrea E. San Juan

The Philippines called for stronger sustainable trade and development initiatives to address climate change at the 13th World Trade Organization (WTO) Ministerial Conference (MC13).

During the second ministerial meeting with the Coalition of Trade Ministers on Climate,

Trade Secretary Alfredo E. Pascual told the group, "We believe that the work of the Coalition complements the existing work at the WTO on trade and sustainable development."

Pascual welcomed talks on transfer of goods and technologies that support climate adaptation and mitigation before MC13, the top decision-making body of the WTO.

"In line with this, we must also ensure a fair and just transition towards achieving our climate goals so that no one will be left behind," he said in a statement.

"As one of the most climate-vulnerable countries in the world, the Philippines applauds the coalition's commitment to support developing and least developed countries, and small vulnerable economies in their trade and climate strategies," he added.

The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) noted that the Philippines is a founding member of the Trade Ministers on Climate, which was established in 2023.

During the Second Ministerial meeting of the Coalition of Trade Ministers on Climate which happened on the sidelines of the MC13, the ministers presented a "menu of voluntary actions" to pursue commitments in support of the global response to climate crisis.

One of the actions outlined in the said document highlighted the need to "support developing countries, particularly the most vulnerable, including least developed countries, small island developing states, and landlocked developing countries."

The ministers noted this can be done through "trade-related technical assistance, capacity building and Aid for Trade to engage in international settings and foster joint activities that support their efforts and recognize their needs, including those of small, vulnerable economies, to develop trade and climate strategies and policies, that support climate adaptation and a fair and just transitions toward climate-resilient development."

They also said there is need to "continue to break silos by fostering joint and inclusive Ministerial-level dialogue between trade, climate and finance Ministers."

The ministers said governments must engage in good regulatory practices and international standards setting to help decarbonization efforts, including on the methods to measure embodied carbon content in internationally traded goods.

The coalition also said there is a need to explore how trade can further help climate action by identifying “synergies” between the work of various multilateral, plurilateral, regional and bilateral trade initiatives that work on facilitating dissemination, accessibility and uptake of goods, services and technologies that support climate mitigation and adaptation.

During the said meeting, the coalition welcomed new members—Morocco, Fiji and Papua New Guinea.

The co-leads of the coalition are Ecuador, European Union, Kenya and New Zealand, according to its website.

The group also called on all members of the WTO to accept the Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies, underscoring the “critical role” of sustainable practices in trade.

“Accordingly, on the eve of MC13, we underline the importance of making the WTO more responsive to global environmental challenges. We call for ambitious, concrete and forward-looking commitments in the WTO Ministerial Declaration on how trade, trade policy and the WTO can support the global response to the climate crisis, bearing in mind sustainable development,” it said.

## UN: Climate change and food insecurity threaten global peace

Climate change and food insecurity are intertwined challenges that have far-reaching implications for global peace and security. The consequences of climate change, such as rising temperatures, extreme weather events, and changing rainfall patterns, directly impact food production systems, leading to decreased agricultural yields, disrupted supply chains, and increased food prices. These effects are particularly devastating in vulnerable regions where communities heavily rely on agriculture for their livelihoods and sustenance.

From the Associated Press: United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres recently warned that climate chaos and food crises are increasing threats to global peace, telling a high-level UN meeting that climate disasters imperil food production and “empty bellies fuel unrest.”

Guterres emphasized that climate disasters are jeopardizing food production worldwide, leading to empty bellies and fueling unrest. The devastating relationship between hunger and conflict is evident in numerous regions around the world. In war-torn areas like Gaza, Syria, and Myanmar, millions of people suffer from chronic hunger, exacerbating the instability and misery caused by ongoing conflicts. The consequences of climate change and conflict are intertwined, creating a vicious cycle that perpetuates human suffering.

Simon Stiell, the United Nations climate chief, cited the urgent need for immediate and sustained action to mitigate climate change and build resilience. With one in 10 people already experiencing chronic hunger, the situation will only worsen if climate change continues unabated. Greenhouse gas emissions must be reduced, and measures to adapt to a changing climate must be implemented promptly.

The United Nations Security Council, as the world’s most powerful body responsible for international peace and security, has a crucial role to play in addressing these pressing issues. Regular updates on climate security risks should be requested, acknowledging that the problem will not simply disappear. The council must recognize the intricate connection between climate change, conflict, and food security and take meaningful steps to address them collectively.

Beth Bechdol, deputy director of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, said there’s clear evidence that climate change increases the risks and drivers of conflict and instability. Disputes over land and water resources are intensified by changing climatic conditions, leading to tensions between herders and farmers, as seen in West and Central Africa. The impact of climate change extends beyond livestock to crop production, fishing, and forestry, all of which are essential for food security.

It is crucial for the international community to prioritize agriculture as a key solution to the growing threats posed by climate change, conflict, and their impact on food security. Sustainable agricultural practices, investment in resilient farming systems, and the empowerment of small-scale farmers are vital steps in building a more food-secure and climate-resilient world.

The impact of climate change and food insecurity on international peace and security cannot be ignored. These issues are intricately linked to the rule of law, democracy, and governance, as highlighted by President Mohamed Irfaan Ali of Guyana. The international community must recognize that addressing climate change and food crises is not only a matter of environmental concern but also a fundamental necessity for achieving global peace and stability.

The warnings issued by the United Nations leadership regarding climate change, conflict, and food insecurity demand immediate attention and action. The scarcity of food resources and the resulting hunger and malnutrition can destabilize societies and fuel conflicts. The international community, particularly the UN Security Council, must prioritize these interconnected challenges and work together to mitigate climate change, address food crises, and build a more peaceful and sustainable future for the eight billion people on the planet.

## MANILA BULLETIN

### [Marcos meets with former UN chief to discuss green growth strategy](#)

By: Joseph Pedrajas

President Marcos on Monday, Feb. 26, met with former United Nations General Secretary Ban Ki-moon to express his support for the Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI), which the latter currently heads.

In his meeting with Ban, Marcos stressed the importance of funding GGGI, so it could expand its projects in the country to help in adaptation and mitigation of Philippine agencies against climate change.

Malacañang also said Marcos pushed for better cooperation for the institute.

GGGI works with partners in the public and private sector in developing countries around the world to put green growth at the heart of economic planning, according to its website.

It also supports emerging and developing countries seeking to develop rigorous green growth economic development strategies.

Other agenda included in Marcos and Ban's meeting was the implementation of the Nationally Determined Contribution and National Adaptation Plan of the Philippines, Malacañang said.

Meanwhile, Foreign Affairs Secretary Enrique Manalo, Environment Secretary Maria Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga and Executive Secretary Lucas Bersamin also joined in the discussion.

In a post on X, Manalo said he was delighted to reconnect with Ban, whom he described as a "very good friend of the Philippines."

## [Opinion] Innovation: Key to sustainable development amid climate change

Community participation is key to the attainment of sustainable development — a goal that seems attainable, yet remains an elusive proposition in the fact of continuing challenges. Sustainable development refers simply to how we can satisfy the current demands and preserve the capacity of future generations to do the same.

For example, the country's continuing efforts to attain rice and food sufficiency is threatened by the El Niño phenomenon. According to the Feb. 17, 2024, report of the National Disaster Risk Reduction Management Council (NDRRMC): "By the end of February, 24 provinces in Luzon and one province in Visayas are potential for meteorological drought conditions; 17 provinces for dry spell, while 10 provinces will be potential for dry conditions."

Faced with such prognosis, what can families, households and affected communities do to stave off the adverse consequences of El Niño and climate change?

Households must use energy-efficient appliances and practice energy conservation, while observing responsible consumption habits including buying local products, reducing food waste, and opting for sustainable alternatives. Promoting community gardens, reducing reliance on imported goods could boost local agriculture significantly. Waste management projects may also be pursued actively, including recycling, composting, and reducing single-use plastics.

By combining and consolidating individual, family, and household initiatives, community and corporate organizations can magnify the beneficial impact.

Technology intermediation also offers multiple regenerative solutions.

Let's beam the spotlight on one of Manila Bulletin's Newsmaker of the Year awardees. SariSuki, established by Brian Cu, Philippe Lorenzo, Bam Mejia, and Angelo Loo in 2021, is a virtual grocery store that purchases directly from farmers, enabling sustainable opportunities for community sellers. It partnered with AIR21 in 2023 to bring fresh produce from farmers in the province to community sellers in the metropolitan areas. Notice how this social enterprise connected rural-based farmers to sellers and consumers to thousands of households way beyond their physical reach — simply by tapping into the power of digital tools and networks.

Another Manila Bulletin Newsmaker of the Year awardee is the local government of Tagbilaran City headed by Mayor Jane Yap. Together with the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, the city launched the Paleng-QR Ph program in January 2023. The program aims to build a nationwide digital payments ecosystem by promoting cashless QR payments in public markets and local transportation. The program's rollout was widely accepted by merchants and transport groups in the city's Dao Public Market. Bohol-

based producers, traders and merchants are linked directly with customers from all over the archipelago — through a digital ecosystem that is trustworthy, reliable, efficient and energy-saving.

Truly, challenging times bring about the emergence of creative ideas, products and services that in turn, enlighten and encourage people to tap into the vast reservoir of talent and innovation — just waiting to be tapped and harnessed for the greater well-being of the community and the country.

## PCO

### [PBBM welcomes international assistance agreement to help PH on climate change adaptation](#)

President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. welcomed on Monday the assistance of the Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI) to help the country in climate resilience and promote green growth strategy through the Host Country Agreement (HCA).

President Marcos relayed this to Former United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon, President of the Assembly & Chair of the Council of GGGI, during the latter's courtesy call in Malacañang.

Ban told President Marcos of his organization's support to the efforts of the Marcos administration to address climate change.

In December last year, the President approved the HCA signed by the Philippine government with the GGGI that will establish its office in the Philippines. The Agreement needs to be ratified by the Senate.

Marcos expressed his appreciation for the assistance being offered by GGGI, hoping for the Senate to ratify the HCA soon.

"We welcome any assistance or any advice on the subject (climate change). I'm certain that after you meet with the Senate President and you will speak with the senators, the ratification of the agreement will follow very quickly," President Marcos said.

"I think it is something we are all, all of us in government or out of government have really put a great deal of emphasis on simply because it has been... it has affected us greatly. I hope that we can come with some strategies that will help us," the President stated.

The President said the world can no longer avoid the bad effects of the changing weather pattern, particularly with the continuous warming of the Earth's atmosphere.

The President lauded the Asia Development Bank's (ADB) mitigation strategy, which he said plays an important role in the Philippine's climate mitigation and adaption efforts. He stressed the significance of anticipating future needs in the face of this new situation.

The former UN leader had taken notice of the fact that the Philippines is one of the most vulnerable countries in terms of natural disasters caused by climate change.

Ban said the GGGI looks forward to working with the Marcos administration for the country to adapt to changing climate situation. He added that they are ready to work with the Philippines' foreign, environment, and economy ministers.

Aside from meeting the senators, Ban is scheduled to give a speech on climate change and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

With headquarters in Seoul, South Korea, the GGGI was established as an international intergovernmental treaty-based organization in 2012 at the Rio+20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, dedicated to supporting and promoting strong, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth in developing countries and emerging economies.

Since the Philippines' membership in 2012, GGGI has been providing the country technical assistance and capacity building programs, amounting to more than US\$13 million, to help the country attain its sustainable development goals, particularly in promoting climate resilience and green growth development strategy.

GGGI also provided interventions towards building green finance portfolios for the Philippines and unlocking access to international climate finance.

GGGI's notable projects and local actions in the country include the Provincial Agriculture Center (PAC) and four agri-MSME production facilities in Oriental Mindoro for incubation, facility rentals, and aggregator services linking local farmers to market and green job creation, off-grid solar home systems deployment in disaster vulnerable low-income communities in the Surigao Islands, and upscaling the Bataan Electric Public Transport Program, among others.

GGGI's current projects and activities in the Philippines amount to US\$130.3 million.

## PHILIPPINE INFORMATION AGENCY

### Transforming schools into green havens

By: Jumalynne Doctolero

Imagine students having a vibrant, green open space buzzing with life just outside their classroom window. Then, imagine that same open space becoming an interactive learning tool for them during schooldays, or becoming an open community park during weekends.

This oasis will not only foster children's learning and play, but also serve as a shield against the harsh realities of climate change – high heat index days and floods – that threaten Filipino communities. This vision is no longer a dream, but a burgeoning reality thanks to the groundbreaking OASIS Schoolyards program taking root in Quezon City.

The Quezon City government has partnered with the Resilient Cities Network and Temasek Foundation to transform schoolyards into green, open community spaces resilient to high heat index and flooding.

The Resilient Cities Network, together with Temasek Foundation will convert schoolyards in the city into a vibrant urban landscape for the students and other stakeholders to benefit from.

The local government expressed its pride in the city being selected as the first in Asia for the 'OASIS Schoolyards' program, supported by the Temasek Foundation. It also emphasized the city's commitment to addressing climate change and improving the livability and quality of life for all residents by enhancing community resilience and natural ecosystems' adaptive capacity.

As the first city in Asia to embrace this innovative initiative, the Quezon City government marks a pivotal step in empowering communities to combat climate change. Through the OASIS approach, three public elementary schools – Diosdado P. Macapagal, Manuel L. Quezon, and Placido Del Mundo – will be transformed into havens of resilience and sustainability.

These havens won't be built in isolation, however, as the heart of OASIS lies in co-creation. Students, parents, teachers, and design professionals will join hands, weaving their hopes and needs into the fabric of the transformed spaces. This collaborative spirit ensures the project resonates deeply with the community, fostering a sense of ownership and responsibility.

But what makes these spaces oases of resilience? Imagine lush greenery providing shade from scorching heat, while simultaneously absorbing rainwater to mitigate floods. Picture permeable pavements channeling excess water back into the earth, replenishing precious groundwater reserves. These are just a few examples of the innovative solutions OASIS will integrate, creating a microcosm of climate resilience within the urban landscape.

“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,” said Quezon City Mayor Joy Belmonte in a statement.

“I am thrilled to see our vision of creating resilient, sustainable communities taking root in Quezon City. We are committed to transforming schoolyards into vibrant urban oases, fostering community engagement and empowering children as catalysts for positive change,” said Director Sorkin.

The benefits extend far beyond mere infrastructure. OASIS envisions these schoolyards as interactive learning tools. Students will witness firsthand the power of sustainable practices, fostering environmental awareness and empowering them to become agents of change. Local government officials, too, will gain valuable insights from these living laboratories, informing broader climate adaptation strategies.

Furthermore, OASIS isn't just about climate resilience; it's about community vibrancy. These transformed schoolyards will become hubs of activity, offering safe spaces for recreation, community gatherings, and even food production. Imagine children playing under the shade of trees, families enjoying picnics amidst greenery, and community gardens providing fresh produce – all within the familiar embrace of their schoolyard.

The OASIS Schoolyards program is more than just a project; it's a beacon of hope, demonstrating that even amidst the challenges of climate change, communities can come together to build a more resilient and sustainable future. By nurturing green spaces, fostering collaboration, and empowering young minds, OASIS paves the way for a future where Filipino communities thrive, not just survive, in the face of climate change. Let Quezon City's pioneering spirit inspire others to follow suit, transforming schoolyards across the Philippines into oases of resilience and community vibrancy, one green haven at a time.

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Ban assured his organization's support to the efforts of the Marcos administration to address climate change.

In December last year, the President approved the HCA signed by the Philippine government with the GGGI that will establish its office in the Philippines.

The agreement still needs to be ratified by the Senate.

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## Senate passes Maritime Zones Act for economic, environmental security

By: Wilnard Bacelonia

Senate Bill No. 2492 or the Philippine Maritime Zones Act was unanimously approved in the plenary on Monday to serve as a cornerstone of the country's maritime policy, protect sovereignty, promote sustainable development, and secure future prosperity.

The bill, principally authored and sponsored by Senator Francis Tolentino, aims to declare the rights and entitlements of the Philippines over its maritime zones, including the underwater features for the enjoyment and cultivation by Filipinos in compliance with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

"The moment marks a significant milestone, not only for our legislative body, but for our nation as a whole," Tolentino said in his privilege speech.

During interpellation, Tolentino assured that the measure shall bolster the country's claim in territorial disputes and will not abandon the other claims of the country, including Sabah.

The clear delineation of the maritime boundaries of the Philippines would help relevant government institutions in harnessing ocean resources and maritime spaces that are crucial in developing the country's blue economy potential, according to Tolentino.

He reiterated that it is timely and necessary for the Philippines to have its own Maritime Zones Act because it "is not merely a legal obligation, but a paramount necessity for the country's national, economic, and environmental security."

The Senate decided to create the Special Committee on Philippine Maritime and Admiralty Zones and appointed Tolentino as chair after the House of Representatives unanimously approved in May House Bill No. 7819, declaring the maritime zones under the jurisdiction of the Philippines.

## SUNSTAR

### [DTI advances future-ready PH with UN-backed E-Mobility project](#)

Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) Secretary Fred Pascual and United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) Philippine Representative Teddy Monroy signed the "Accelerating the Adoption and Scale-up Electric Mobility for Low-Carbon City Development in the Philippines" (E- Mobility) project, 23 February. This initiative aims to revolutionize Philippine transportation by promoting electric vehicles (EVs) and fostering a thriving local EV manufacturing industry.

By promoting EVs, E-Mobility ASAP seeks to combat climate change and position the Philippines as a regional leader in clean energy and sustainable transportation manufacturing. It aligns with global efforts towards sustainable mobility, funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and led by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

The project focuses on four (4) key areas: electric public utility vehicles (ePUV), electric two-wheelers (e2W), batteries, and electronics and software. With these priorities, the E-Mobility ASAP is set to cut the cost gap between electric and traditional vehicles, develop viable business models, demonstrate innovative charging infrastructure, and scale up investments through partnerships and capacity building.

To ensure E-Mobility ASAP's success, UNIDO also enlisted a consortium with extensive experience in sustainable mobility, comprising Clean Air Asia, De La Salle University (DLSU), the Electric Vehicle Association of the Philippines (EVAP), and Urban Electric Mobility Initiative (UEMI).

"As the project's government executing agency, we at the DTI will be responsible for leveraging this important project and harmonizing efforts focused on e-mobility industry development," said Secretary Pascual as he reaffirmed the DTI's commitment to advance a sustainable and resilient future.

Additionally, the DTI chief pledged continued support for policies that attract investments in electric vehicles and related infrastructure. He also hailed the E-Mobility ASAP project as a collaborative effort with the Department of Energy (DOE) and Department of Transportation (DOTr), driving the Philippines closer to its decarbonization goals outlined in the PEDP 2023-2028.

During the ceremonial signing, DTI Undersecretary Rafaelita Aldaba stressed that beyond reducing carbon emissions, the Philippines is eyeing to attract more significant

investments in the EV manufacturing sector and create more high-quality jobs for Filipinos.

Sharing the same vision, UNIDO Country Representative Teddy Monroy also advocated for a sustained partnership with DTI to foster a just, low-carbon economy and sustainable livelihoods.

Furthermore, Clean Air Asia's Atty. Glynda Bathan-Baterina underscored DTI and UNIDO's strong commitment to sustainable transportation, envisioning enhanced health, reduced emissions, and increased job opportunities within the burgeoning local EV manufacturing sector.

The e-Mobility ASAP Project will span until June 2027 and targets policy enhancement demonstration actions in selected cities. The pilot projects will focus on deploying e-mobility infrastructure, mostly targeting locations with large transport flows.

## [New study finds erratic weather fueled by climate change will worsen locust outbreaks](#)

Extreme wind and rain may lead to bigger and worse desert locust outbreaks, with human-caused climate change likely to intensify the weather patterns and cause higher outbreak risks, a new study has found.

The desert locust — a short-horned species found in some dry areas of northern and eastern Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia — is a migratory insect that travels in swarms of millions over long distances and damages crops, causing famine and food insecurity. A square kilometer swarm comprises 80 million locusts that can in one day consume food crops enough to feed 35,000 people. The U.N.'s Food and Agriculture Organization describes it as "the most destructive migratory pest in the world."

It can be recalled that neighboring areas in the Soccsksargen Region were infested by locusts in the last months of 2020, affecting a few hectares of agricultural farms and plantations.

In a PNA news report, General Santos City tracked locust swarms from neighboring towns, specifically from portions of Tboli town in South Cotabato and Maasim, Sarangani province.

Merlinda Donasco, head of the General Santos City Agriculture Office (CAO), said during that time that chemical spraying activities were ongoing in these two areas to prevent the pests from multiplying further and infesting local farms.

"Locusts can travel from 100 to 200 kilometers so we really have to watch out for them," she said.

However, a study published in *Science Advances* on Wednesday said these outbreaks will be "increasingly hard to prevent and control" in a warming climate.

Xiaogang He, author of the study and an assistant professor at the National University of Singapore, said more frequent and severe extreme weather events due to climate change could add unpredictability to locust outbreaks.

But he hoped that the study could help countries understand and address "the impacts of climate variability on locust dynamics, particularly in the context of its repercussions on agricultural productivity and food security" and urged better regional and continental cooperation among countries and control organizations to respond quickly and build early warning systems.

To assess the risk of locust outbreaks in Africa and the Middle East and the connection to climate change, scientists analyzed incidents of desert locust outbreaks from 1985 to 2020 using the Food and Agriculture Organization's Locust Hub data tool. They created and used a data-driven framework to examine the insects' patterns to find out what may cause outbreaks to happen across long distances.

They found that 10 countries, including Kenya, Morocco, Niger, Yemen, and Pakistan, experienced the majority of locust outbreaks among 48 affected nations.

The worst outbreak of desert locusts in 25 years struck East Africa in 2019 and 2020, when the insects ravaged hundreds of thousands of acres of farmland and damaged crops, trees and other vegetation, impacting food security and livelihoods.

Elfatih Abdel-Rahman, a scientist at the International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology who wasn't part of the study, said widespread desert locust outbreaks due to climate change will substantially threaten livelihoods in the affected regions due to reduced food production and increase in food prices.

The researchers also found a strong link between the magnitude of desert locust outbreaks and weather and land conditions like air temperature, precipitation, soil moisture, and wind. Desert locusts are more likely to infest arid areas that receive sudden extreme rainfall, and the number of the insects in an outbreak is strongly impacted by weather conditions.

El Nino, a recurring and natural climate phenomenon that affects weather worldwide, was also strongly tied to bigger and worse desert locust outbreaks.

University of Delaware entomology professor Douglas Tallamy, who wasn't part of the research, said erratic weather and rainfall trigger spurts in vegetation and therefore fuels enormous population growth in locusts.

"As such variability increases, it is logical to predict that locust outbreaks will increase as well," said Tallamy.

The study is "yet another example of what should be a very strong wake-up call that societies across the globe need to come together to reduce climate change and its impacts but also to implement strategies in response to global events such as increasing threats of desert locusts," said Paula Shrewsbury, an entomology professor at the University of Maryland. Shrewsbury was not involved in the study.

The study found that especially vulnerable locations like Morocco and Kenya remain high-risk but locust habitats had expanded since 1985 and projects that they will

continue growing by at least 5% by the end of the 21st century, predictably to west India and west central Asia.

It gives the example of the Rub' al Khali, or Empty Quarter, a desert in the southern Arabian Peninsula, as a place that was historically uncommon for desert locust outbreaks but then became a hotspot. The desert experienced locust outbreaks in 2019 after uncontrolled breeding following cyclones, which filled the desert with freshwater lakes.

Major locust outbreaks can have huge financial impacts. It cost more than \$450 million to respond to a locust outbreak that happened in West Africa from 2003 to 2005, according to the World Bank. The outbreak had caused an estimated \$2.5 billion in crop damage, it said.

Countries affected by desert locust outbreaks are already grappling with climate-driven extremes like droughts, floods and heat waves, and the potential escalation of locust risks in these regions could exacerbate existing challenges, said research author Xiaogang.

“Failure to address these risks could further strain food production systems and escalate the severity of global food insecurity,” he said.

## THE PHILIPPINE STAR

### [Philippine calls for stronger action on climate change](#)

By: Catherine Talavera

Trade Secretary Alfredo Pascual has called for stronger sustainable trade and development initiatives to address climate change during the second ministerial meeting of the Coalition of Trade Ministers on Climate on the sidelines of the 13th World Trade Organization (WTO) ministerial conference (MC13) in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates (UAE).

“We believe that the work of the coalition complements the existing work at the WTO on trade and sustainable development. Thus, we welcome discussions and thematic sessions on the transfer of goods and technologies that support climate adaptation and mitigation,” Pascual said.

“In line with this, we must also ensure a fair and just transition toward achieving our climate goals so that no one will be left behind.”

Pascual also expressed the Philippine’s support for the endorsement of the Coalition’s Framework of Voluntary Actions, which sends a clear message for the WTO to pursue ambitious commitments in support of the global response to the climate crisis.

The trade chief emphasized that the joint dialogues on trade, climate and sustainable development will pave the way for the creation of innovative solutions supporting climate adaptation and mitigation.

During the meeting, the ministers also acknowledged the nexus between trade and climate and emphasized the need to utilize all available trade policy tools to address the effects of climate change.

The Second Ministerial Meeting gathered its members to discuss their respective countries’ collective efforts, achievements, and priorities to address climate change.

The Philippines is a founding member of the Trade Ministers on Climate, which was established in 2023.

Apart from the meeting with the coalition, Pascual also met with Spanish Minister of Economy, Trade and Business Carlos Cuerpo Caballero on the sidelines of MC13 to discuss the trade and investment relations between the Philippines and Spain.

During the meeting, Pascual highlighted the significant role of Spain as the Philippines' major trade and investment partner in the European Union (EU).

"We are optimistic that our deepened collaboration in trade and investment with Minister Cuerpo will create a more open, transparent, and inclusive global trade environment for both the Philippines and Spain," Pascual said.

Pascual emphasized that the two nations' bilateral trade has shown consistent growth over the last 10 years, recording a total of \$1.2 billion in 2022.

He also expressed the Philippines' desire to increase its exports to Spain, particularly electronic equipment, fish products (tuna), fruits (bananas and pineapples), crude coconut oil and static converters.

Pascual invited Spanish businesses to explore growth and investment opportunities in the Philippines, highlighting the Philippine government's ongoing economic reforms and sustained efforts to enhance the country's investment climate.

He encouraged investments in areas such as public-private partnership projects, information technology and business process management (IT-BPM), startups, renewable energy, green metals, manufacturing, agro-logistics and food.

Moreover, Pascual highlighted that the Philippine government continues to seek Spain's support for the country's reapplication to the EU's Generalized Scheme of Preferences Plus (GSP+) — a special incentive arrangement for sustainable development and good governance in the form of zero duties — as well as for the resumption of the PH-European Free Trade Agreement (FTA) negotiations.

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