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THE MANILA TIMES

[DENR launches project to protect ecosystems](#)

By: Giselle P. Jordan

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) on Wednesday launched the Philippines' National Blue Carbon Action Partnership (NBCAP), a global initiative led by the World Economic Forum's Ocean Action Agenda under the Blue Planet Fund.

[Opinion] PH is right to be cautious about maritime carbon tax

A key topic on the agenda of a meeting of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) held in London last week was the proposal to levy a carbon tax on maritime emissions. While there is some significant support for the idea, it is not surprising that there is a great deal of dissent, particularly among Asian countries, where half of the 10 biggest shipping companies in the world are headquartered. The Philippines, however, was singled out with mild criticism, along with India and Singapore, for not taking a stand on the issue one way or the other. Although the Philippines should take every opportunity to be at the forefront of positive climate change initiatives, this is one instance in which being cautiously noncommittal is probably wise.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

PHILIPPINE INFORMATION AGENCY

Legarda leads the Philippines' push for ocean protection ahead of UN conference

A decade after the historic Manila Call to Action on Climate Change, Senator Loren Legarda remains at the forefront of global climate action—this time, with an urgent call to protect the world's oceans.

Information and Knowledge Management Division

ABS CBN

[Vanuatu climate minister frets over US climate reversal](#)

Vanuatu's climate minister said Wednesday his low-lying Pacific nation is vexed by the potential impact of President Donald Trump's withdrawal from the Paris climate accord. The Pacific archipelago, home to around 320,000 people, has struggled with natural disasters and with creeping seas starting to eat away at its fertile coastal fringe.

Trump has called climate change a "scam", made no secret of his disdain for the United Nations and pulled Washington out of the landmark Paris Agreement for a second time.

Ralph Regenvanu, Vanuatu's climate change minister, told AFP his country was "not happy" with the US withdrawal from the international climate fight and its freeze on foreign aid.

"We're all worried about the possible consequences of the anti-climate change kind of bent of the new US government," Regenvanu said in an interview.

But he said he hoped Vanuatu's "long relationship" with the United States — including housing the largest military base in the South Pacific during World War II — would allow the two countries to "talk about these issues".

Vanuatu's national data shows the sea level around the archipelago rose 6 millimeters (0.23 inches) per year between 1990 and 2010 — faster than the global average.

Scientists say it is expected to rise further.

Adapting to and mitigating the impacts of climate change are costly, the minister said.

Pacific nations are hoping to tap alternative financial sources in the future such as taxes on fossil fuel production or for damaging the climate, he added.

"That is the place the international community has stopped at the edge of talking about. But we want to push that discussion."

Regenvanu said he also wanted to establish a blue and green bond market -- similar to what Fiji implemented in 2023 -- where money raised from investors is used to fund marine or environmental protection projects.

"We need to get the climate finance sorted out so that we can access that money that we need to build that resilient infrastructure."

GREENPEACE

[How could religious principles boost climate action?](#)

By: Camilo Sanchez

With an estimated 84% of the world's population identifying with a religious group, faith communities hold immense potential for mobilising action on climate change.

Islamic Finance stands out as a model that ensures financial structures promote fairness, shared prosperity, and climate justice.

By shifting investments away from fossil fuels and towards climate action, Islamic Finance can accelerate the transition to a greener, more equitable future.

Coinciding with the beginning of Ramadan, Joycelyn and Yewande bring this topic to the new episode of SystemShift, a Greenpeace podcast that explores how we can move from a world that serves the economy to an economy that works for people and the planet.

This episode features Tariq Al-Olaimy, Islamic Finance Advisor to Greenpeace MENA and Advisory Board Member for the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration.

Islamic Finance: faith-based, justice-driven

Islamic Finance operates on principles that align closely with sustainability and climate justice. It discourages harmful investments, promotes ethical, risk-sharing financial practices, and emphasizes social good over unchecked profit.

"It's to live up to our potential of creating flourishing conditions for all of life. This is what all of faith compels us and brings us forward to do", Tariq said.

This presents a unique opportunity: instead of perpetuating the same extractive and exploitative economic model that led us to this crisis, Islamic Finance offers an alternative built on cooperation, regeneration, and respect for the limits of Earth.

"Nature is about respecting planetary boundaries. It's about limits in a way that it's optimised for the flourishing of all of life. And our economy doesn't quite work that way", he adds.

The global Islamic Finance industry manages approximately US \$4 trillion in assets, and this figure is projected to grow to US \$6.7 trillion by 2027. Imagine the impact if even 5%

of these assets were directed towards renewable energy and energy efficiency—it could unlock around US \$4 billion for climate finance by 2030.

It's clear that there's money for climate action and social justice, it's just in the wrong place – as it was also exposed in a previous episode of the SystemShift podcast.

Blended finance: Unlocking climate investments

To scale up impact, a combination of public and private funding with Islamic financial tools such as Sukuk (Islamic bonds) is essential. This blended finance approach encourages risk-sharing, making it easier for diverse stakeholders to invest in climate resilience projects.

These investments can fund crucial sectors like sustainable agriculture, eco-friendly infrastructure, and renewable energy, particularly in marginalised communities and regions where climate change is hitting the hardest.

But we need to go beyond traditional climate finance solutions. Too many so-called green investments still operate within the same extractive mindset that has fueled the climate crisis in the first place.

“A lot of these so-called solutions for climate action still operate within the same extractive mechanistic worldview that has created this crisis”, Tariq added.

Faith, Finance, and Climate Justice

For centuries, faith traditions have taught humanity how to live in harmony with nature, recognising it as more than just a resource for endless consumption.

“I come from a tradition that says you must read nature as if it is scripture. That the real classroom and lesson is nature”, Tariq shared. This wisdom is crucial now more than ever, as we face the urgent need to redesign our economy to support life instead of exploiting it.

The urgency of the climate crisis demands action at all levels—from policymakers and investors to faith institutions, communities and individuals. Islamic Finance must lead, not follow, in driving this change.

By fully embracing climate justice and social equity, it has the potential to transform financial systems and create a sustainable future for all. As Tariq concluded: “What we need now is systems change and a systems shift”.

PCO

[PBBM lauds continuous ADB support to the Philippines](#)

President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. praised the ongoing support of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) for the Philippines which has significantly contributed to the country's economic development.

During newly-elected ADB President Masato Kanda's courtesy call in Malacañang, President Marcos recalled the long-standing support of the ADB to the Philippines, which began during his father's administration, Ferdinand E. Marcos Sr.

On December 19, 1966, the ADB was inaugurated in Manila, and there were only 31 members at that time, serving a predominantly agricultural region. Takeshi Watanabe was the first President of the ADB. Currently, it has 69 members, 49 of which are from Asia.

The President described the ADB as "the most important partner" of the Philippines, saying, "The partnership between the ADB and the Philippines has been tremendous."

The following projects funded by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) are part of the current administration's initiatives: the Bataan-Cavite Interlink Bridge Project, the Davao Public Transport Modernization Project, the Climate Change Action Program, the Build Universal Health Care Program, the Health System Enhancement to Address and Limit COVID-19 (HEAL) Project, the Competitive and Inclusive Agriculture Development Program, and the Walang Gutom 2027: Food Stamp Program.

"I mean the development that we have achieved that being assisted by the ADB, which is the most important partner that we have had in the Philippines," President Marcos told the newly elected ADB President.

Kanda assumed the ADB presidency on February 24, 2025, to complete the remaining term of immediate past President Masatsugu Asakawa, whose term expires on November 23, 2026.

"And yet, we find that in the last years, recent years, that has even increased. And so, I think, it is very encouraging, very promising," the President said.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

[France launches ocean conservation campaign in PH](#)

By: Joyce Ann L. Rocamora

France has initiated a major ocean conservation campaign in the Philippines ahead of the 3rd United Nations Ocean Conference (UNOC3) in Nice this June.

The new call to action called the "100 Days for the Ocean," aims to mobilize stakeholders in creating a massive climate-themed artwork using 1,600 solar-powered lamps made from recycled bottles and solar recharging systems.

The project highlights innovation by utilizing affordable, durable, and sustainable materials to produce natural lighting.

"The climate crisis compels us to act — we must significantly, rapidly and sustainably reduce global greenhouse gas emissions," said French Ambassador to the Philippines Marie Fontanel during the launch at her residence in Makati City.

"In the UN Ocean Conference, we must again offer— France and the Philippines— to raise our voices to champion the message of action, solidarity and long-term commitment," she added.

France remains committed to its shared goal with the Philippines in the fight against climate change, she further said.

Through the initiative, France also aims to raise awareness about the preservation of marine ecosystems among the public.

To create the mobilization across these 100 days leading to the UNOC3, partners from civil society, non-government organizations, universities, the private sector, and French agencies will be invited once a month to collectively build the lanterns.

The launch of the 100 days for the Ocean, a partnership between the French Embassy in Manila and the Filipino NGO Liter of Light, coincides with the 10th anniversary of the Manila Call to Action on Climate Change.

[Legarda calls for cultural preservation as national dev't strategy](#)

By: Wilnard Bacelonia

Senator Loren Legarda on Wednesday underscored cultural preservation as a strategic driver of national development.

In her keynote address during the Cultural Thoughts and Trajectories at Manila House, held in partnership with the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA) for the National Arts Month celebration, Legarda urged for the recognition of heritage not just as a legacy of the past but as a foundation for future innovation, resilience, and economic growth.

“We cannot predict the world two thousand years from now, but the knowledge, traditions, and stories we preserve today will shape generations to come. Culture is not ornamental - it is a force that sustains livelihoods, fuels industries, and strengthens national identity,” she said.

Legarda framed preservation as a form of soft power, positioning the Philippines as a leader in sustainable development through indigenous knowledge and artistic excellence.

She cited the Cordillera Rice Terraces as an example of ancestral ingenuity offering solutions to modern challenges like climate change and food security.

“The world now looks back to these ancient marvels - not just to admire, but to learn,” she said.

As chair of the Senate Committee on Culture and the Arts, Legarda has championed key policies, including the National Cultural Heritage Act (Republic Act No. 10066) and the Cultural Mapping Law (Republic Act No. 11961), which mandates a comprehensive inventory of Filipino heritage.

Her efforts extend to international platforms, from leading the Philippines' return to the Venice Biennale to securing its role as guest of honour at the 2025 Frankfurter Buchmesse.

Beyond legislation, Legarda's initiatives have translated heritage preservation into tangible economic opportunities, from community-driven programs and sustainable crafts to cultural diplomacy through the Sentro Rizal global network and Philippine Studies programs in universities worldwide.

“Heritage is an asset. The hands that keep it alive - our artisans, cultural workers, and scholars - must be equipped with the necessary support to sustain their craft as a viable profession. Anything less is a betrayal of the legacy we seek to protect,” she said.

Legarda, who also serves as United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) Global Champion for Resilience, highlighted the intersection of culture and climate action, advocating for indigenous wisdom in shaping policies on forest conservation, coastal protection, and disaster risk reduction.

THE GUARDIAN

[EU reveals plans to hit climate goals by helping dirty industries clean up](#)

The EU executive has insisted it will stay the course on its climate goals, while setting out plans to help Europe's most polluting industries reach the green transition and watering down environmental reporting demands on companies.

Publishing its "clean industrial deal" on Wednesday, the European Commission said it had a plan to help polluting industries, such as steel and cement, make the switch to the net zero emissions future, as well as boosting clean tech companies, such as firms making electric vehicle charging points.

The commission also published a plan aiming to bring down energy bills for businesses and consumers, as well as controversial proposals to relax environmental reporting requirements on small and medium-sized businesses.

In 2019, before the pandemic, when there appeared to be a broad global consensus around the need for climate action, the EU launched the green deal, a landmark set of laws aiming to transform energy use and set the course to net zero emissions by 2050. But criticism of the rules has grown, against a backdrop of soaring energy prices after Russia's invasion of Ukraine and intensifying competition from heavily subsidised Chinese companies.

Now the clean industrial deal reaffirms the EU goal of cutting emissions by 90% by 2040, and unveils 40 different measures to speed up the green transition, including faster permits for windfarms and other infrastructure, and changing public procurement rules to favour clean tech made in Europe.

"We think that the clean industrial deal is Europe's business plan to tackle the climate crisis," said Teresa Ribera, the European Commission executive vice-president in charge of the green transition. Ribera, the most senior socialist in a centre-right-leaning commission, rejected criticism that the EU was reversing course. "We are not deregulating," she said. "On the contrary: we are coming to the implementing phase."

The commission said it would create a new industrial decarbonisation bank with €100bn (£83bn) in new and repurposed public funds, which it said could indirectly leverage €400bn from the private sector.

It outlined a bigger role for the European Investment Bank, including in the provision of guarantees to grid component manufacturers, allowing them to increase production. Experts say hundreds of billions in global investment is needed to build vast networks of electricity grids to hit climate goals.

Ribera, who also leads on competition policy, promised changes to the EU's state aid rules by June to accelerate renewable energy and industrial decarbonisation.

But the Climate Action Network Europe said there was "no concrete plan to mobilise genuine additional finance" and "little to turn ambition into action".

The new European Commission, which took office in December with a red-tape-cutting agenda, simultaneously published details on relaxing environmental reporting and due diligence rules for small companies, a far-reaching rethink of laws only agreed in 2023 and 2024.

The commissioners presenting the proposals argued they were not weakening Europe's green transition, but encouraging businesses to join in the transition and adjusting to a new geopolitical reality.

"Europe knows how to reform itself," said Stéphane Séjourné, the commissioner in charge of industrial strategy. "We don't have a chainsaw," he added, referring to the power tool that the Argentine president, Javier Milei, recently gave Elon Musk as a symbol of slashing red tape. "But we have competent people leading the charge."

The commission suggested a two-year freeze of its corporate sustainability reporting directive, which entered into force in 2023, while it pursues detailed consultations on exempting small businesses. Similarly, officials said the corporate sustainability due diligence directive, which requires companies with more than 1,000 employees to assess the environmental and human rights impacts of their products, would be delayed by one year, while the commission tries to lighten the load on smaller companies. While SMEs are already exempt from the directive's requirements, many say they will be caught in burdensome rules because they supply larger companies.

While business groups broadly welcomed the plans, the European Sustainable Investment Forum said the move created "legal uncertainty" and harmed those who had already prepared reports or taken steps to comply.

Anna Cavazzini, a German Green MEP who chairs the European parliament's internal market committee, said the due diligence directive was being turned into an empty shell and "environmental crimes and human rights violations won't be prevented".

Christian Ehler, the energy and industry spokesperson for the centre-right EPP group, said further simplification of environmental legislation "must not be a taboo" and "we have to consider whether some [other] environmental legislation from the past mandate is adequate".

The red-tape-cutting agenda has also been extended to the EU's carbon-border adjustment mechanism, which requires companies importing steel, iron, aluminium and other polluting products into the bloc to pay a carbon tariff, levelling out price differences with EU producers.

The commission said it would exempt the smallest importers from the levy, a measure it said would affect 90% of importers, about 190,000 companies, while still covering 99% of emissions.

The clean industrial deal was published alongside an "affordable energy action plan" that aims to save €260bn a year by 2040. Environment campaigners welcomed initiatives to reduce bills and hasten electrification, but expressed alarm at a proposal to fund the building of liquefied natural gas export facilities abroad.

The Greenpeace EU climate campaigner Lorelei Limousin said the proposal neglected other measures that could bring fossil fuel imports down rapidly, such as cutting energy waste. "This commission is vague on cutting energy waste while, to appease Trump, wants to invest in polluting gas infrastructure overseas that will keep Europe hooked on this expensive and dangerous fuel for decades."

The director general of BusinessEurope, Markus Beyrer, said he was encouraged that the commission had listened to industry, but called for swifter action, saying it was unlikely the measures would be enough to lower short-term energy costs.

THE MANILA TIMES

[DENR launches project to protect ecosystems](#)

By: Giselle P. Jordan

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) on Wednesday launched the Philippines' National Blue Carbon Action Partnership (NBCAP), a global initiative led by the World Economic Forum's Ocean Action Agenda under the Blue Planet Fund.

The NBCAP gathers stakeholders and experts from various sectors to address issues that affect the conservation and restoration of blue carbon ecosystems.

Blue carbon ecosystems are coastal areas, such as mangroves, that absorb and store carbon from the environment, helping counter global warming and climate change. They also provide a habitat for marine species, and serve as feeding grounds for birds. It likewise helps filter pollutants in the water and reduce the impact of natural hazards like storm surges.

The project will coordinate efforts in support of developments in science, policy, and funding for blue carbon ecosystem restoration and conservation worldwide.

NBCAP PH OIC and communications and engagement specialist Germaine De Ruña said blue carbon ecosystems benefit people, nature, and climate. She urged stakeholders to take high-impact action to help protect and preserve its functions.

The Philippines joined the World Economic Forum's Blue Carbon Action Partnership at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Conference of Parties (COP) in Dubai in 2023, through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

The Zoology Society of London (ZSL) Philippines, one of the primary organizations on mangrove rehabilitation, serves as the secretariat for Philippine office of NBCAP.

With DENR's leadership, De Ruña said the NBCAP PH will support the creation and restoration of blue carbon ecosystems. She added that the project will ask partners to develop "locally and regionally defined nature-based solutions," as well as engage in financing programs to deal with climate change more effectively.

NBCAP PH laid down three goals: 1) the establishment of the Philippines NBCAP Leadership Steering Group and Task Force; 2) the development of a science-backed

Blue Carbon Action Roadmap together with stakeholders, identifying policy, collaboration, and investment need; and 3) implementation of the roadmap with the support of the the global BCAP secretariat and global experts and partners.

Its main principles include safeguarding nature, empowering people, operating locally and contextually, employing the best information, interventions, and carbon accounting practices, and mobilizing high-integrity capital.

For the first quarter of this year, it will conduct meetings with its leadership steering committee and technical working groups. In March, it will work on the drafts for the roadmap and legal instrument, to be completed before June.

[Opinion] PH is right to be cautious about maritime carbon tax

A key topic on the agenda of a meeting of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) held in London last week was the proposal to levy a carbon tax on maritime emissions. While there is some significant support for the idea, it is not surprising that there is a great deal of dissent, particularly among Asian countries, where half of the 10 biggest shipping companies in the world are headquartered. The Philippines, however, was singled out with mild criticism, along with India and Singapore, for not taking a stand on the issue one way or the other. Although the Philippines should take every opportunity to be at the forefront of positive climate change initiatives, this is one instance in which being cautiously noncommittal is probably wise.

Shipping is a significant contributor of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and is considered a difficult sector to "make greener," due to the engineering challenges involved. Substantial progress has been made, such as mandates from the IMO for the use of lower-sulfur fuel implemented in the past few years, and developments of alternative fuels such as liquified natural gas (LNG). A few major shipping companies have set net-zero goals, but in every case these are for mid-century or beyond, with the general sentiment in the industry seeming to be that it will need more time to implement substantial emissions reductions.

Speeding up that process seems to be the main reason for imposing a carbon tax, which could range from \$60 to \$100 per metric ton of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e). The additional tax will obviously drive up shipping rates, but those shippers who are able to reduce their emissions and avoid the tax will be able to offer lower rates. Thus, in order to stay competitive, other companies will be forced to invest in lower-emission solutions more quickly.

Not everyone agrees. While about 45 countries did agree in principle to a carbon levy, including Japan, South Korea, the United Kingdom, the Pacific Island nations, and the largest flag countries, major holdouts included export-oriented countries such as China, Indonesia and Brazil. These countries argued that, while they are not against decarbonization efforts, the proposed carbon tax would be unreasonably costly if implemented too quickly, would hurt the export sectors of developing countries, and would adversely affect food security.

The Philippines, along with India and Singapore, gained attention by neither endorsing nor rejecting the proposal. India and Singapore are home to the world's largest ports, while the Philippines is the world's biggest supplier of maritime manpower; as such, these countries are seen as being "on the back end" of emissions-reduction concerns,

as one analyst put it, as none of them are home to the big shipping companies. The characterization was an implied criticism that they were being somewhat cynical by not taking a clear position.

From our point of view, caution is prudent at this stage, because there are many unanswered questions about the proposed carbon tax. As an import-dependent country, the Philippines would feel the impact of the carbon tax in the form of higher prices for goods. We believe that the Philippines should aggressively support climate change mitigation efforts, and that we should bear our fair share of the costs. However, not enough is known about what is being proposed at the moment to make a sound judgment about whether the costs in this case will indeed be fair.

There is another troubling aspect to the discussions of the proposed carbon tax as well. Although not every IMO member country or industry stakeholder agrees, a strong lobby in favor of the use of biofuels derived from palm or soy oil as a substitute for fossil fuels, and therefore an exemption from a corresponding amount of the proposed carbon levy has developed as the talks have progressed. This is something that the Philippines, and for that matter, all environment-conscious stakeholders should firmly reject, as numerous studies have shown that the life-cycle emissions of palm and soy oil are up to three times as high as fossil fuels such as LNG, or even refined diesel fuel, when deforestation and land degradation are taken into account. Again, if we are to bear some cost for a maritime decarbonization effort, it should be fair, and should at least be for efforts that are effective.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

PHILIPPINE INFORMATION AGENCY

[Legarda leads the Philippines' push for ocean protection ahead of UN conference](#)

A decade after the historic Manila Call to Action on Climate Change, Senator Loren Legarda remains at the forefront of global climate action—this time, with an urgent call to protect the world's oceans.

As the Philippines prepares for the 2025 UN Ocean Conference in Nice, France, Legarda is pushing for stronger commitments on marine biodiversity conservation, blue carbon ecosystems, and climate-resilient ocean governance.

“With just 100 days before the UN Ocean Conference, we must move beyond pledges and into action,” Legarda declared. “We cannot politely request change—we must demand it. Demand that governments, industries, and institutions take bold, irreversible steps to protect our oceans. Demand that we turn rhetoric into results.”

Legarda, alongside French Ambassador H.E. Marie Fontanel, led the launch of “100 Days for the Ocean,” a mobilization campaign under the Blue Nations Initiative, which unites the Philippines and France in amplifying global ocean advocacy.

The four-term senator has been at the forefront of key legislative and diplomatic efforts to protect marine ecosystems. She has championed the Philippines' participation in the High Ambition Coalition (HAC) for Nature and People and the Global Ocean Alliance, committing to protect at least 30% of the world's land and ocean by 2030.

Recognizing the need for concrete action, Legarda funded activities leading up to the UN Ocean Conference in collaboration with the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) and the Climate Change Commission (CCC). She also underscored the importance of passing the Blue Economy Bill, which she principally authored and sponsored, now in its final stages of legislative deliberation.

Despite progress over the past decade, Legarda expressed frustration at the slow pace of global action.

“Last year, for the first time, the Earth's temperature breached the 1.5°C threshold—crossing the very line we fought to avoid,” she warned. “For us in the Philippines, this is not an abstract statistic. Every fraction of a degree warmer brings more devastating

typhoons, rising sea levels swallowing our coastlines, and extreme weather events upending lives and livelihoods. We are no longer talking about projections. We are living the consequences of inaction.”

Legarda emphasized that the fight for ocean protection is a fight for survival, not just for the Philippines but for all nations.

“A decade ago, we called for climate action, climate solidarity, and climate justice. Today, we raise a demand. For our oceans. For our climate. For future generations who will either suffer from our inaction or thrive because of our courage.”

Legarda first championed global climate action when she co-led the Manila Call to Action on Climate Change alongside French actress and climate advocate Marion Cotillard, a declaration endorsed by then-Presidents Benigno Aquino III and François Hollande. As Chair of the Senate Subcommittee on the Paris Agreement, she championed the Philippines’ ratification of the treaty, which entered into force on Earth Day, April 22, 2017.

As the UN Ocean Conference nears, Legarda is making it clear: the time for waiting has long passed. Now is the time to act.

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