



NEWS ROUNDUP

29 FEBRUARY 2024 [08:00 am]

- Senate honors Ban Ki-moon
- Marcos: Boosting PH-Australia ties crucial amid global volatility
- EU poised to OK major plan to meet climate goals, better protect nature
- Proposed 2024 climate change budget slashed
- Climate change, global warming pose serious challenges to tourism
- IFC investing \$500 million to address Philippines development challenges

CCC IN THE NEWS:

- DENR, PDRF hold climate forum; Call for stronger partnership between public-private sectors in addressing climate issues
- Managing the impact of El Niño

DAILY TRIBUNE

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GMA

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the Philippine Disaster Resilience Foundation (PDRF), in partnership with Ayala Corporation, Metro Pacific Investments Corporation, Aboitiz, First Philippine Holdings, and in cooperation with Makati Business Club (MBC) and Management Association of the Philippines (MAP), recently organized The State of Climate Change forum in Makati to facilitate collaboration between the public and private sectors in addressing climate-related issues.

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Information and Knowledge Management Division

DAILY TRIBUNE

Senate honors Ban Ki-moon

By: Lade Jean Kabagani

The Senate on Tuesday unanimously adopted a resolution honoring the global contributions of visiting South Korean diplomat, Ban Ki-moon, who served as the 8th Secretary General of the United Nations General Assembly.

Senate Resolution 929, introduced by Senate President Pro-tempore Loren Legarda, expressed the “profound sense of the Senate” in honoring Ban and commending his “outstanding global contributions” beneficial to the UN accomplishments.

Ban headed the UNGA from 1 January 2007 to 31 December 2016, with one of his first major initiatives being the 2007 Climate Change Summit, which put environmental issues on the global agenda.

“The Philippine Senate, with deep respect and administration, acknowledges the exceptional contributions of Mr. Ban Ki-moon in shaping the global landscape,” the resolution read.

Ban and his wife arrived in the Philippines last Monday. He was welcomed by Armed Forces of the Philippines chief of staff Gen. Romeo Brawner Jr. at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport.

In receiving the former UNGA chief, President Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr. expressed support for the Global Green Growth Institute, an intergovernmental organization based in Seoul, South Korea.

The GGGI, currently headed by Ban, is a body dedicated to promoting green growth that “integrates economic progress with environmental sustainability.”

In his address at the Senate, Ban reminded Filipinos that the target to achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals or SDGs and the Paris Climate Change Agreement (2030 and 2050, respectively) “is getting closer.”

“This is why there has never been a more vital time in history to come together in cooperation, partnership, and solidarity to redouble our efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and implement the Paris Climate Change Agreement,” Ban said.

He is the first visiting foreign dignitary to speak before the Senate.

Ban reiterated South Korea's recognition of the Filipino troops who were sent to help in the Korean War in the 1950s.

"When it comes to the UN's primary role to maintain peace and security, the Korean people embrace a special gratitude for the noble sacrifice and great efforts that the Philippines troops, under the banner of the UN, endured to save freedom and democracy in the ROK [Republic of Korea] during the Korea War," he said.

Ban's visit serves as a prelude to the 75th anniversary celebration of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Philippines and Korea on 3 March.

"I sincerely hope that our bilateral relations will continue to be deepened and expanded for the mutual benefit of our two peoples," Ban said.

GMA

Marcos: Boosting PH-Australia ties crucial amid global volatility

By: Anna Felicia Bajo

President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. on Thursday emphasized that it is crucial to envision the depth of the Philippines' strategic partnership with Australia amid this period of global volatility.

In his address before the Australian Parliament, Marcos said the Philippines and Australia's interests have been intertwined as "the security of Australia is bound with the security of the Philippines."

"Geopolitical polarities and strategic competition threatened our hard-won peace even as we remain beset by unresolved inequities and inequalities within and amongst nations, powerful and transformative technologies can destabilize our political and social order, climate change threatens our very existence. These tectonic shifts are acutely felt in the Indo-Pacific," Marcos said.

"It has become crucial for us now to envision the shape, the breadth, and the depth of our strategic partnership and how it must move forward as we weather the storms of global volatility," he added.

Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said it was a very great pleasure to welcome the Philippine President as this was the next step in the growing partnership between the two nations.

Albanese said Australia and the Philippines shared a vision for having a peaceful, secure, stable, and prosperous Indo-Pacific region.

He said he recalled Marcos' statement during his Manila visit that "prosperity and progress depend on peace."

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

[EU poised to OK major plan to meet climate goals, better protect nature](#)

The European Union is on the brink of approving a major plan to fight climate change and better protect nature in the 27-nation bloc after protests from farmers and opposition from the biggest party in parliament led it to be diluted.

The plan is a key part of the EU's European Green Deal that seeks to establish the world's most ambitious climate and biodiversity targets and make the bloc the global point of reference on all climate issues.

The Nature Restoration plan has had a rough ride through the EU's complicated approval process, and a watered-down version will proceed to a final vote by the EU member states, where it is expected to survive.

"Today's vote to get the Nature Restoration Law over the finish line offers fresh hope for Europe's ability to combat the worst effects of climate change and biodiversity loss for decades to come," said Noor Yafai of the global environmental group The Nature Conservancy.

Under the plan, member states would have to meet restoration targets for specific habitats and species, with the aim of covering at least 20% of the region's land and sea areas by 2030. But quarrels over exemptions and flexibility clauses allowing member states to skirt the rules plagued negotiations.

The bill was adopted earlier by a 329-275 vote with 24 abstentions after the center-right Christian Democratic European People's Party of Commission President Ursula von der Leyen decided to vote against it.

"Today is an important day for Europe as we move from protecting and conserving nature to restoring it," said Socialist S&D legislator César Luena, who led the bill through parliament. "The new law will also help us to fulfill many of our international environmental commitments."

The plan has lost some of its progressive edge during negotiations since last summer because of fierce opposition from the EPP, which along with other conservatives and the far right has insisted the plans would undermine food security, fuel inflation and hurt farmers.

“It has not been shut down, so it’s still flying. It is imperfect. It is incomplete. It lacks ambition. But at least we have a foundation on which to build in the next term,” said Philippe Lambert, co-president of the Greens group.

The EPP has been a vocal backer of the farming community, which has been against any additional rules that would make their profession more complicated, bureaucratic and expensive. Farmers have been protesting throughout the bloc for weeks.

“We are implementing additional bureaucratic rules for our farmers in a time where food production and food prices are having a direct impact,” EPP leader Manfred Weber said.

Despite the droughts, floods and heat waves that have swept through many areas in Europe, Weber called for a pause on such environmental action in order to protect economic competitiveness.

Proposed 2024 climate change budget slashed

By: Jean Mangaluz

A total of P86 billion was trimmed from the proposed 2024 budget for climate change, with a portion reallocated to unprogrammed funds, the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) said on Wednesday.

President Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr. on Tuesday declared that the government has allotted P457.41 billion pesos for climate change in the 2024 General Appropriations Act (GAA), which is the final budget that Congress deliberated and passed.

The DBM, however, proposed around P543 billion for climate change in the National Expenditure Program (NEP) 2024. This is a P86 billion slash during Congressional hearings.

INQUIRER.net learned that a portion of the P86 billion became unprogrammed funds.

“This is to confirm that the amount of P543.4 billion was allocated for climate change projects, programs and activities under the NEP, while P457.41 billion was allocated for the same under the [Fiscal Year] 2024 GAA,” the DBM told INQUIRER.net in a message.

“Our concerned budget bureau explained that a portion of the P543.4 billion were reclassified to unprogrammed appropriation under the FY 2024 GAA,” the DBM added.

This is a mere P4 billion increase from the 2023 climate change budget, which was P453.11 billion.

INQUIRER.net has reached out to both chambers of Congress for a comment.

The 2024 GAA has a sizable P449.5-billion unprogrammed funds, which raised concerns from a number of lawmakers.

In January, Albay First District Representative Edcel Lagman questioned the legality of the unprogrammed funds, as they were inserted by Congress and exceeded the budget that the Executive asked for.

“This year’s GAA, which took effect on [Jan. 1, 2024], suffers a constitutional infirmity insofar as the bicameral conference committee inserted P449.5 billion in excess of the

unprogrammed appropriations of P281.9 billion recommended by the President in the national budget or the NEP (national expenditure program),” Lagman said in a prior statement.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

Climate change, global warming pose serious challenges to tourism

Climate change and global warming are posing significant challenges to world-renowned tourism destinations, threatening their ecosystems and infrastructure.

Due to the impacts of climate change on the tourism sector, various challenges are emerging for globally renowned tourism regions.

According to the World Travel and Tourism Council's 2022 data, the tourism sector, valued at USD7.7 trillion, contributes 7.6 percent to the global economy.

While still recovering from the Covid-19 (coronavirus disease 2019) pandemic, the industry now faces additional challenges due to the adverse effects of climate change. The sector's value before Covid-19 was USD10 trillion, comprising about 10.4 percent of the global economy.

A report by Cambridge University research highlights the negative impact of rising sea levels, extreme weather events, and ocean acidification on the infrastructure supporting maritime tourism.

Coral reef damage, rising temperatures and wildfires further threaten tourist destinations.

A 2023 study by the World Economic Forum (WEF) emphasizes the negative impact of extreme heat on tourists. Examples like wildfires in Greece, heat waves in Italy, and flight cancellations in the US illustrate this point.

Changing tourist behavior

The aviation sector, crucial for tourism, also faced challenges due to extreme heat. Some US aviation companies had to reduce passenger loads and luggage or postpone flights during 46-degree Celsius weather.

Tourist behavior is also changing due to temperature rise. Research by the European Commission suggests that if global warming continues, tourist activities in Europe might shift from the south to the north.

This could lead to a decrease in the number of tourists for southern destinations and an increase for those in the north.

Specific tourist destinations in danger

The Maldives, one of the most threatened tourist destinations due to climate change, faces the potential submergence of a large portion of its landmass due to rising sea levels.

The Maldives, reliant on tourism and vulnerable to rising sea levels, faces potential submergence of 77 percent of its land by 2100, according to the country's Tourism Ministry.

Similarly, the Caribbean, heavily dependent on tourism, is witnessing coral reef bleaching and rising sea levels.

In Europe, the Alps struggle with inadequate snowfall, affecting winter tourism. Venice faces climate-related challenges, including rising sea levels and extreme weather events, threatening its historical sites.

In South Asia, popular coastal regions are grappling with environmental degradation caused by over-tourism and pollution. Thailand, Malaysia and the Philippines have implemented measures to preserve their coastal ecosystems.

Africa is also at risk of significant biodiversity loss, impacting safari tourism.

According to World Bank data, the continent could lose 50 percent of its bird and mammal species and 20 percent to 30 percent of life in lakes by 2100.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

[IFC investing \\$500 million to address Philippines development challenges](#)

By: Louella Desiderio

The private sector arm of the World Bank Group is aiming to invest up to \$500 million in the current fiscal year in the Philippines to support efforts to address climate change, financial inclusion and infrastructure development.

“In this current fiscal year, which ends on June 30th, our objective is to be able to invest somewhere between \$400 million and \$500 million in the Philippines,” Allen Forlemu, regional industry director of the financial institutions group for Asia and Pacific at the International Finance Corp. (IFC) told The STAR.

In terms of priority areas for investments, he said the IFC has a strong focus on efforts to address climate change.

For the IFC, he said climate change “is by far the most important challenge that the Philippines faces.”

According to the World Risk Index, the Philippines is most at risk to climate change globally.

Left unaddressed, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources said earlier, about P1.4 trillion or eight percent of the country’s gross domestic product in 2020 would be at risk due to climate change.

While climate change is seen as the biggest challenge for the Philippines, Forlemu said it also presents an opportunity for the country.

An earlier study conducted by the IFC estimated the climate-smart investment potential in selected sectors in the Philippines at about \$115 billion from 2016 to 2030.

Investments made by IFC to support climate action in the past years include the subscription to the maiden blue bond issuance of the country’s largest bank, BDO Unibank Inc. in 2022 to help increase access to finance for projects to preserve clean water resources, as well as in the green bond issued by Ayala-led Bank of the Philippine Islands in 2023 with proceeds to finance renewable energy, energy efficiency, green buildings, electric vehicles and climate-smart agriculture projects.

On financial inclusion, Forlemu said the IFC has a strong emphasis on the inclusion of women, as well as digital financial services, and the digital economy.

He said the IFC is providing advisory services to banks and non-bank financial institutions and working with the regulator to scale up support for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises in the Philippines.

The IFC is also working with policymakers in the Philippines to address barriers to digital financial inclusion.

“We’re very supportive of lots of reforms that have been undertaken over the past few years, including the launching of a national digital ID. These are the kinds of improvements that will really make the ecosystem a lot stronger,” Forlemu said.

He said the IFC is also focused on supporting manufacturing, agribusiness and the services sectors in the Philippines.

In the coming years, he said IFC’s investment commitment to the Philippines is expected to increase.

“We expect to be able to grow that commitment over the years as we tackle these global challenges that are affecting the country as well,” he said.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

JOURNAL ONLINE

[DENR, PDRF hold climate forum; Call for stronger partnership between public-private sectors in addressing climate issues](#)

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the Philippine Disaster Resilience Foundation (PDRF), in partnership with Ayala Corporation, Metro Pacific Investments Corporation, Aboitiz, First Philippine Holdings, and in cooperation with Makati Business Club (MBC) and Management Association of the Philippines (MAP), recently organized The State of Climate Change forum in Makati to facilitate collaboration between the public and private sectors in addressing climate-related issues.

The forum gathered around 200 delegates from government entities, private sector stakeholders, and non-government organizations. It facilitated a dialogue on the current state of climate change in the Philippines and challenges, sharing of best practices and solutions, and exploration of potential collaborative initiatives across sectors. Among the delegates included Ambassadors of New Zealand, Australia, Norway, Singapore, Sweden, and Israel, Ayala Chairman and PDRF Co-Chair Jaime Augusto Zobel de Ayala, MBC and MAP members, PDRF private sector partners, members of the UN Humanitarian Country Team, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, and Climate Change Commission (CCC).

In her keynote speech, DENR Secretary Maria Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga shared that they have completed the National Adaptation Plan, the National Greenhouse Gas Inventory, and the National Determined Contribution Implementation Plan as part of an “integrated approach towards crafting new evidence-informed plans on mitigation and adaptation.” These documents supported the National Economic Development Authority’s Philippine Development Plan 2023-2028 framework to accelerate climate action and strengthen resilience. She also mentioned that DENR is launching a National Natural Resource Development Transparency Initiative for Climate Resilient Development.

Sec. Yulo-Loyzaga also shared that DENR has taken actions to address issues regarding clean air and water, waste management, renewable energy, biodiversity, and minerals development.

“At the DENR we posit that there is a need to meld these in with others that support our mandate to maintain a balanced ecology for all Filipinos – namely laws on clean air and

water, the Expanded National Integrated Protected Area Systems Act, the Extended Producers Responsibility law, the Renewable Energy Act and even our Philippine Mining laws. Our principal role of environmental stewardship and sustainable resource use is in engineering resilience through prevention,” Sec. Yulo-Loyzaga said.

Lastly, Sec. Yulo-Loyzaga urged the private sector and other stakeholders to work with the government. “Mitigation, adaptation, and disaster risk reduction are critical elements in our race to resilience. These tasks must be informed by science and they are for the whole-of-society and not just the whole-of-government.”

In his opening remarks, Zobel de Ayala reminded everyone that the Philippines is the riskiest country according to the World Risk Index and that low levels of prevention and preparedness make our “vulnerability the highest.” “This is the primary reason we reorganized our mission and strategy at the Philippine Disaster Resilience Foundation. While we were established mainly as a relief and recovery-oriented foundation in 2009 after Typhoon Ondoy, we shifted our strategy to add preparedness, prevention, and resilience after Super Typhoon Yolanda,” he added.

One of the forum’s highlights was the high-level panel discussion with Sec. Yulo-Loyzaga, CCC Secretary Robert Borje, PwC Philippines Chairman Emeritus Alex Cabrera, MAP President Jose Rene Almendras, and MBC Chairman Edgar Chua. Moderated by PDRF Chief Resilience Officer Guillermo Luz, the discussion emphasized increased stakeholder collaboration and coordination to scale up climate efforts and achieve a more significant impact. Panelists also shared insights in promoting climate-friendly policies and regulations conducive to private sector investment in climate resilience and sustainability. Recognizing the urgency of the climate crisis, they called on other private sector entities to prioritize climate action and sustainable practices.

The delegates also signed a Commitment Wall to solidify their commitment and involvement in climate action.

PDRF President Butch Meily said that the forum is the perfect venue to start taking action. “We stand at a critical point where reversing the impact of climate change may be beyond our grasp. This forum is an opportunity for us to unite as a community and make a difference, not just for ourselves but for future generations to come.”

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

[Managing the impact of El Niño](#)

By: Joe Zaldarriaga

As the El Niño phenomenon persists in the Philippines, the need to take more proactive measures is further highlighted to help the country weather its impact, especially with the looming dry season.

The Department of Agriculture in its most recent report said the damage of El Niño on the country's crops has reached P357.4 million with over 8,000 farmers in various regions affected. Rice – our staple grain—took the worst hit followed by corn and other high-value crops, according to the government.

In light of this, the Climate Change Commission of the Philippines has urged Filipinos to take proactive measures to help mitigate the impact of El Niño. State weather bureau PAGASA had said that its impact could soon be felt in more provinces which means that the damage to the agriculture sector is expected to worsen in the coming months.

The heightened vulnerability of the agricultural sector has made it imperative for us to recognize the need to collaborate on efficiently adopting a multi-faceted approach to improve our country's resilience in the face of this challenge.

Dry spells and reduced rainfall are major threats not only to the livelihoods of our farmers but they also endanger food security. It also puts pressure on the government's campaign to promote the growth of the agricultural sector.

While the government has long implemented large-scale measures to prepare for and address the effect of El Niño, the cooperation of ordinary Filipinos will play a big role in mitigating its impact.

A vital yet simple way for addressing El Niño is by practicing energy efficiency to mitigate power demand—which historically increases during the dry season. Simple measures such as unplugging appliances when not in use, ironing clothes in large batches and using LED lights and inverter appliances can already help promote resilience to extreme weather patterns and yield savings for Filipino consumers as well.

As responsible citizens, we must do our part in preserving our resources through mindful consumption.

The private sector on the other hand can do so much more in terms of energy efficiency— an area where our collective action can result in significant contributions to addressing extreme weather phenomenon.

For example, companies as an immediate action can harness solar energy to help power their operations—a greener option that results in a multitude of benefits. On the long-term, businesses can heavily integrate sustainability in their business operations to reduce energy costs and enhance their own resilience to climate risks.

On the part of the government, active support to sectors – such as agriculture – that are heavily affected by climate-related risks are much needed. For example, water management interventions will greatly benefit farmers whose crops are at high risk of damage due to El Niño.

By investing in energy-efficient technologies today, we collectively improve our country’s resiliency to future climate-related challenges. Beyond its immediate impact, embracing energy efficiency as a way of life empowers our communities to adopt sustainability for a cleaner and greener future which benefits all of us.

The realization of this vision however requires concerted actions from all levels of society. It is no secret that the Philippines is among the most vulnerable to the impact of climate change and therefore it is incumbent upon us to continuously enhance our disaster preparedness and resiliency measures.

Beyond the environmental impact, embracing energy efficiency aligns with our government’s goals of sustainable economic growth for job creation and improved opportunities for Filipinos.

As we confront the challenge posed by El Niño, let us continue to advocate for energy efficiency, and active collaboration between the public and private sector to weather this obstacle. With proactive measures, our communities can become more resilient and sustainable to face future climate-related risks.

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