



NEWS ROUNDUP

03 MARCH 2025 [08:00 am]

- Climate finance eludes small farmers, fishers in Philippines
- China plays key role on climate change, may be looked to for additional leadership, COP30 president says
- When life depends on lowly mangroves
- 'Danger' level heat index in at least 3 areas forecast for Monday, March 3, 2025
- [Opinion] Saving frogs could help save people's lives
- PBBM makes headway in making Subic Bay Freeport a leader in "Green Tourism" destinations
- Strategic partnerships key to climate actions: Rizwana
- 'Adapt classrooms to climate change'

CCC IN THE NEWS:

- Recognizing women's leadership in climate action
- CCC: Strong ocean governance needed
- Legarda leads the PH push for ocean protection ahead of UN conference

BENAR NEWS

[Climate finance eludes small farmers, fishers in Philippines](#)

By: Camille Elemia

Fishermen harvest oysters and red grouper near a sprawling mangrove in Zamboanga Sibugay, a remote province in the southern Philippines.

BILYONARYO

[China plays key role on climate change, may be looked to for additional leadership, COP30 president says](#)

By: Liz Lee

China has a very important role to play in tackling climate change and others may look to the Asian country for additional leadership in the field, COP30 President-Designate Andre Aranha Correa do Lago said on Thursday.

BUSINESS MIRROR

[When life depends on lowly mangroves](#)

By: John Eiron R. Francisco

With sea levels expected to rise by 0.4 meters in the western Philippines by 2060, environmental scientists and academic leaders are pushing the immediate prioritization of blue carbon ecosystems, such as mangroves, to counter the impacts of climate change. This, while emphasizing the need for a policy roadmap that outlines conservation strategies, enterprise opportunities, financial support, communication initiatives, and community and biodiversity benefits.

GMA NEWS

[‘Danger’ level heat index in at least 3 areas forecast for Monday, March 3, 2025](#)

At least three areas in the country are forecast to experience heat indices in PAGASA's "danger" range, which can trigger automatic class cancellations in some areas.

MANILA STANDARD

[\[Opinion\] Saving frogs could help save people’s lives](#)

Research studies have shown that frogs, whose toxins are used for medicine, are threatened by climate change, the long-term shifts in temperatures and weather patterns.

PHILIPPINE INFORMATION AGENCY

[PBBM makes headway in making Subic Bay Freeport a leader in “Green Tourism” destinations](#)

By 2030, Subic Bay Freeport shall be known as the country’s leader in green tourism destinations. This is in line with President Ferdinand Marcos, Jr.’s directive to focus on “experiential tourism” and eco-tourism. With its eyes on the target, the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority (SBMA) has launched various initiatives as it races to transform the freeport into a carbon-neutral tourism destination until 2030 in compliance with the directive of the President.

THE BUSINESS STANDARD

[Strategic partnerships key to climate actions: Rizwana](#)

The discussions focused on strengthening climate cooperation, exploring carbon market opportunities, and advancing ecosystem restoration initiatives in Bangladesh.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

[‘Adapt classrooms to climate change’](#)

By: Rainier Allan Ronda

To make public school classrooms more conducive for learning, a Pinoy inventor urged the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) to update and innovate on school rooms and buildings design to make them adapted to climate change.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

DAILY TRIBUNE

[Recognizing women’s leadership in climate action](#)

By: Robert EA Borje

In the aftermath of typhoons, it is often the women who move swiftly, caring for children, coordinating relief efforts, and ensuring the safety of the most vulnerable members of their communities. When floodwaters rise, they take the lead in efforts to distribute food and mobilize resources. Women bear the weight of recovery, taking charge of rebuilding homes, livelihoods, and lives. Their resilience and leadership are at the heart of the story of climate action in the Philippines.

[CCC: Strong ocean governance needed](#)

The head of the Climate Change Commission (CCC) said the international community must come up with a firm and strong framework of governance for oceans in the Third United Nations Ocean Conference (UNOC3).

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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

By: Jan Escosio

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

BENAR NEWS

Climate finance eludes small farmers, fishers in Philippines

By: Camille Elemia

Fishermen harvest oysters and red grouper near a sprawling mangrove in Zamboanga Sibugay, a remote province in the southern Philippines.

Only a few decades ago, fish resources in and around the coastal town of Kabasalan were depleted due to the cutting down of mangroves, until a small group of fishermen took it upon themselves to rehabilitate the trees.

“We decided to just act on our own. We started planting mangrove trees. I was thinking that maybe when the government sees our efforts and how committed we are, they will eventually help us,” fisherman Roberto Ballon said when BenarNews visited the area in December.

Despite their crucial role in food production, small-scale Filipino farmers and fishermen struggle from a lack of aid and support, advocates say.

In the Philippines – one of the nations most vulnerable to climate change – smallholder fishermen and farmers spend mostly their own money to adapt but are largely excluded from global climate finance, according to advocates who are calling for systemic change.

“Small fisherfolk and farmers usually rely on their own efforts because they do not get sufficient support – either from the government or from climate funders,” said Esther Penunia, secretary-general of the Manila-based Asian Farmers’ Association (AFA), an alliance of national farmers’ unions from more than a dozen countries.

“If they are lucky, they get a bit of help from the government, mostly one-time financial aid that is not sustainable,” Penunia said.

Climate finance refers to financing initiatives from private and public sectors for actions to address climate change. Countries with more resources and which contribute more greenhouse gas emissions are primarily called upon to fund climate finance initiatives.

According to the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), smallholder farmers produce a third of the world’s food, yet receive little funding.

A 2023 report by the independent nonprofit Climate Policy Initiative showed that, from 2019 to 2020, global climate finance to small farmers was strikingly low – at only \$5.53 billion. The amount was just 0.8% of total climate finance and 19% of climate funds given to the entire agrifood system, including industrial-scale agriculture.

Money for most climate-funding projects is channeled through governments, Penunia said. Smallholder farmers and their organizations in Asia, which have little to no capability and technical expertise to meet the funders' demands, rarely get their project proposals approved.

Penunia said it was difficult for small-scale farmers to tap into climate finance because of lengthy and expensive processes in getting proposals approved. Sometimes, a proposal can take up to two years, require thousands of documents, and cost over U.S. \$500,000.

"Small farmer groups like us could not afford this," Penunia said. They would sometimes partner with bigger organizations, which would ask for management fees.

Ballon, a 2021 Ramon Magsaysay Awardee for his contributions to environmental conservation and community development, agreed.

"It is so difficult to get funding," Ballon, a community leader who is also running for a Senate seat in the Philippine mid-term elections in May, told BenarNews.

"We are all at the losing end."

Struggles for smallholder farmers

Jon Sarmiento, an organic farmer in Oriental Mindoro in the central-western Philippines, shared the same sentiment.

A community organizer and climate activist, Sarmiento maintains a 44,000-square-meter (52,623.5-square-yard) self-sustainable farm.

Sarmiento, who had long stopped growing the same crop every year, implemented an integrated diversified farming system, starting in 2010.

His farm is strategically made up of separate components designed to complement one another. He grows rice, and raises fish and ducks in the same paddies. Vine vegetables are planted on trellises above fish ponds.

The farm also has a nutrient recycling system that includes natural pest management and livestock manure as fertilizers that enhances soil health.

The trees planted on the farm's borders serve as effective barriers against wind and erosion.

BenarNews visited Sarmiento on a stormy weekend in January.

His farm stood out among nearby hectares of inundated rice fields. The extreme rainfall caught many people off guard, including Sarmiento and his farmer neighbors. But because Sarmiento had a diverse farm, he was able to quickly adjust.

“I thought my farm would be devastated. But it turned out, only the windbreakers were destroyed. Our chickens, pigs, [and] fish were all alive. The other components of the farm were still functioning. We were able to rebuild in just 21 days,” Sarmiento told BenarNews.

But his neighbors, who only plant rice, could only do so much due to lack of funding and knowledge. To transition to a diversified organic system, farmers must shell out around \$850 to \$4,300, experts said.

“Fund farmers now. We cannot just keep on waiting like this while climate crises worsen,” Sarmiento said.

The Manila-based Asian Development Bank (ADB), which administers climate finance across Asia, said it supported the Philippine government’s efforts to help the farmers amid climate change.

These include “climate-related information and services provided to the farming community,” such as farm weather outlooks and climate-related agricultural advisories, said Omer Zafar, principal natural resources and agriculture specialist at the ADB.

Sarmiento pushed for better government measures to help farmers insure their crops from the effects of climate change.

“[A] majority of farmers have no access to climate financing. Some financing options have high interest rates. Who can we go to now?” he said.

“Climate finance should be accessible to farmers, who bring food to the table.”

BILYONARYO

[China plays key role on climate change, may be looked to for additional leadership, COP30 president says](#)

By: Liz Lee

China has a very important role to play in tackling climate change and others may look to the Asian country for additional leadership in the field, COP30 President-Designate Andre Aranha Correa do Lago said on Thursday.

Asked about China's potential role as the United States steps back from climate change efforts, Correa do Lago said China has been playing a big part in providing solutions for a significant number of years.

"We have to work harder with China because China has been able to give some fantastic answers to the fight against climate change," he told reporters in an online news briefing held by the Oxford Climate Journalism Network.

Since taking office last month, President Donald Trump has withdrawn the U.S. from the Paris climate agreement, clawed back American global climate finance and severed international climate partnerships.

Trump has also pulled the U.S. out of key U.N. climate change assessments, Reuters reported last week.

Correa do Lago, who is due to lead the COP30 annual global climate summit in Brazil in November, also praised China's solar panel push. The world's largest solar panel producer has ratcheted up production capacity after years of subsidies, keeping global prices low.

"They are doing their own thing, and their own thing is benefiting the rest of the world. Reducing the prices of solar panels is one of the most fantastic policies to expand renewable energy in developing countries," he said.

BUSINESS MIRROR

When life depends on lowly mangroves

By: John Eiron R. Francisco

With sea levels expected to rise by 0.4 meters in the western Philippines by 2060, environmental scientists and academic leaders are pushing the immediate prioritization of blue carbon ecosystems, such as mangroves, to counter the impacts of climate change. This, while emphasizing the need for a policy roadmap that outlines conservation strategies, enterprise opportunities, financial support, communication initiatives, and community and biodiversity benefits.

At a recent press conference for the launch of the Philippines' National Blue Carbon Action Partnership (NBCAP), Dr. Severino Salmo II, a restoration ecologist and associate professor at the UP Diliman Institute of Biology, emphasized the importance of conserving and restoring mangroves to ensure a steady supply of ecosystem services, including food, tourism, livelihood, and income.

"The good thing about blue carbon is that it directly contributes to climate change adaptation and mitigation," Salmo said, explaining that effective mangrove management leads to better blue carbon outcomes. Conversely, he warned that neglecting conservation efforts would result in reduced carbon storage, contributing to greenhouse gas emissions.

Salmo expressed optimism about the NBCAP, describing it as a strategic platform to showcase the Philippine government and communities' contributions to global climate change adaptation.

He emphasized that prioritizing conservation should be linked to biodiversity hotspots, citing areas like Surigao, Siargao, Palawan, and Tawi-Tawi. However, he also noted that regions like Palawan and Isabela, though understudied, could hold significant carbon stock potential.

Dr. Dixon T. Gevaña, a professor and UP scientist from the Department of Social Forestry and Forest Governance, echoed the urgency of safeguarding coastal ecosystems. He emphasized the need to "move smart" to become "future-proof," warning that delays in conservation would make restoration more challenging.

"We need to start preparing now while we still have mangroves to protect us," Gevaña said.

Gevaña pointed out that the race against environmental degradation is not limited to the Philippines, as other countries are also grappling with the challenge. He observed that many nations prioritize seawalls and other infrastructure over natural barriers like mangroves, which remain a more sustainable option.

“That’s the problem. We are in a race—nature and green solutions versus degradation,” he said, advocating a shift in coastal protection strategies.

He also highlighted the need to rehabilitate abandoned fishponds, which, under existing laws, should be reverted to mangroves. However, he acknowledged the complexities of implementing this due to overlapping government priorities.

“We’re talking about at least three or more departments with stakes in these coastal areas,” he explained. “Through the NBCAP, pushing for this prioritization remains a major challenge.”

“Above all, there should be non-negotiable areas dedicated to conservation as a green belt,” he emphasized.

Led by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and supported by the Zoological Society of London (ZSL) as the secretariat, the NBCAP is part of the World Economic Forum’s Ocean Action Agenda, backed by the Blue Planet Fund. The initiative aims to strengthen coastal communities’ resilience by protecting and restoring blue carbon ecosystems, including mangroves and seagrasses.

“These ecosystems are essential not only for climate resilience and biodiversity but also for the livelihoods of countless communities that depend on their health and sustainability,” said Jonas Leones, DENR Undersecretary for Policy, Planning, and International Affairs, during his opening remarks.

Leones recalled that last year, the DENR established strategic partnerships that advanced the blue carbon conservation roadmap. Notably, it collaborated with the Philippine Space Agency to create a comprehensive geo-database for environmental and natural resources. This collaboration, he said, led to the development of a nationwide mangrove extent map for 2020, which continues to be updated through citizen science-based ground validation.

“Later this year, we plan to expand this initiative by mapping the extent of our country’s seagrass and coral reef ecosystems,” Leones added.

'Living document'

MEANWHILE, Edwina D. Garchitorena, country director of the ZSL, said the roadmap under the NBCAP must be completed before June this year.

"While it does not have to be perfect, it should serve as a foundation that can be refined over time," she said, noting that the roadmap is designed as a "living document" that evolves as it is implemented.

She also highlighted the importance of aligning the roadmap with international climate commitments, particularly the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) targets for 2030.

This involves setting specific goals, such as the extent of mangrove conservation and restoration, estimating carbon sequestration, and determining greenhouse gas reduction targets. Although specific figures for greenhouse gas reductions are not yet determined, she expressed optimism that these would be integrated soon.

Regarding localization, she explained that the roadmap will serve as a general framework adaptable to different regions. Given that environmental challenges vary by area, the approach will involve prioritizing local needs and opportunities. This is why stakeholders, including local government representatives, are involved—to tailor the roadmap based on specific regional conditions, Garchitorena said.

'More cooperation than competition'

ASKED by the BusinessMirror about the Philippines' current standing in blue carbon conservation and restoration compared to other Southeast Asian nations, experts said the country is consistent with its initiatives but struggles with sustainability.

The Philippines made significant progress until around 2015 or 2016, but Indonesia has since surpassed it. Despite this, the country still maintains a head start in terms of documented efforts. One key factor that sets Indonesia apart is its participation in the carbon trading platform, which is reliant on accurate carbon stock assessments.

Dr. Salmo explained that the country faces challenges in this area due to its archipelagic geography, making comprehensive evaluations difficult. Despite these challenges, he recognized that Indonesia also faces complex cultural and societal factors but has managed to advance more rapidly.

“In terms of efforts, we were leading in Southeast Asia at one point, but now we’re lagging behind Indonesia,” Dr. Salmo admitted. Malaysia and Thailand might soon overtake the Philippines, he said, and advocated action to keep pace with Indonesia.

From a science perspective, Dr. Gevaña emphasized that the Philippines started documenting carbon stocks as early as 2004, even before the term “blue carbon” was coined in 2009. He pointed out that the country is not lagging in research and community-based studies on blue carbon governance. However, the challenge lies in translating these studies into actionable blue carbon projects.

Meanwhile, Garchitorena explained that the country was one of the first to implement the NBCAP. Currently, Indonesia and Vietnam are at a similar stage in terms of partnership development and roadmaps for blue carbon initiatives. She emphasized the importance of collaboration with neighboring countries, particularly Indonesia and Vietnam, given their similar programs.

She also noted that blue carbon conservation in Southeast Asia is more about cooperation than competition. Asean nations, including the Philippines, are exploring the possibility of creating a regional mangrove or blue carbon roadmap. She acknowledged that while Indonesia is currently leading, other countries are navigating their own policy challenges.

“It’s more of a cooperative effort,” she explained, adding that the ultimate goal is for Asean countries to collaborate on shared environmental resources, such as interconnected habitats and fish stocks.

“That’s the dream,” she said.

Mangrove economics

DR. Yasmin Primavera-Tirol, dean of the College of Fisheries and Marine Science at Aklan State University, emphasized the need for unified action among government agencies to advance blue carbon conservation and management in the country.

She stressed the importance of clearly defining objectives, such as whether the priority is fish production or long-term sustainability. Dr. Tirol pointed out that aquaculture ponds planted with 20 percent to 80 percent mangroves have lower risks compared to those without, especially in the face of more frequent and intense typhoons brought about by climate change.

“You can project your sustainability and ROI for a longer number of years,” she said, highlighting the protective benefits of mangroves.

Dr. Tirol underscored the need to persuade stakeholders by presenting pilot studies or business models that demonstrate the economic value of blue carbon initiatives.

She suggested exploring alternative income sources such as carbon credits, biodiversity credits, or bonds through local government units.

“The key is to have the economics of it,” she said, emphasizing that economic incentives could encourage stakeholders to invest in blue carbon conservation and management.

Asked about the cost per hectare to plant, restore, or maintain mangroves, seagrasses, and salt marshes in the Philippines, Dr. Salmo explained that expenses vary depending on the restoration approach used.

He noted that natural restoration, which involves leaving an abandoned area to recover on its own, is the least expensive option as it is essentially cost-free. However, this method can take around 20 to 25 years for the ecosystem to fully recover.

In contrast, more challenging sites—such as those with damaged soil or lacking natural sources of seedlings—require more intensive and costly measures. This may involve engineering solutions like removing barriers and reconnecting hydrological systems, which expedite recovery but come with higher costs.

Dr. Salmo cited historical data: in 1995, restoration costs were approximately at P10,000 per hectare. However, expenses have significantly increased since then. He estimated current costs to range from P50,000 to over P100,000 per hectare, depending on the site and method used.

Garchitorena also highlighted the hybrid approach—a combination of planting and green infrastructure. She shared an example from ZSL’s site in Ajuy, Iloilo, where the community collaborated with engineers to build a temporary seawall that promoted soil accumulation before planting mangroves.

“This approach not only restored the ecosystem but also provided a sheltered area for local boats,” she said.

She added that restoration is not a one-time investment. It also involves community capacity building, continuous monitoring, and maintenance to ensure the long-term survival of the restored ecosystems.

Innovative financing for blue carbon conservation

DURING the panel discussion, Dr. Reuben Clements, Sustainable Finance Specialist at ZSL, outlined several innovative approaches that could help fund conservation efforts.

One potential strategy involves generating carbon credits by converting abandoned fish ponds back into mangrove areas. According to feasibility analyses, this approach shows promise as a viable revenue stream.

Dr. Clements also discussed the possibility of creating Mangrove Credits or Certificates, which involves calculating the cost of protecting a specific area over a period of time and dividing that by the number of years. This could generate a fixed amount in US dollars per hectare for up to 30 years.

Another approach is payment for performance mechanisms, where funding is allocated based on the achievement of specific conservation outcomes. This model involves long-term financial support from private companies to safeguard ecosystems.

Lastly, he highlighted the potential of developing an Outcome Bond for mangroves, inspired by ZSL's Rhino Bond used in South Africa. This financial model involves investors funding restoration projects with the promise of returns based on measurable conservation outcomes. He noted that this model could also integrate carbon credits to create additional revenue streams.

Dr. Clements expressed hope that a similar Mangrove Impact Bond could be introduced in the Philippines to support long-term mangrove restoration and conservation initiatives.

Mangroves shield and sustain

THE importance of prioritizing blue carbon ecosystems, particularly mangroves, is underscored by the success of community-led conservation efforts in Aklan.

Tirol shared the case of the Bakhawan Eco-Park in Kalibo, where local residents began planting mangroves in the late 1980s to protect their homes from typhoons, strong winds, and storm surges. Over the years, the initiative evolved into a protected

ecotourism site which provides both livelihood opportunities and food security through the harvesting of shellfish, crabs, and fish farming.

With the implementation of the Blue Carbon Project, she said the mangrove coverage in the area has expanded nearly tenfold, demonstrating the effectiveness of long-term conservation efforts. The project also allowed researchers to analyze how hydrological patterns and sediment flow impact not just Kalibo's coastline but also neighboring municipalities. Tirol noted that some of these effects are not always beneficial, highlighting the need for adaptive and collaborative management to address interconnected coastal challenges.

She emphasized that addressing these issues requires a broader, integrated approach, pointing to the establishment of Aklan's Rivers and Coast Integrated Management Council. This initiative aims to unite municipalities in tackling problems like coastal erosion and flooding, which may appear isolated but are actually interrelated when viewed on a larger scale.

For Tirol, conserving blue carbon ecosystems is not just about carbon credits or economic sustainability—it is about ensuring daily survival.

She emphasized that while weather forecasts can now predict typhoons up to two weeks in advance, people on the ground continue with their daily routines, often uncertain about their level of preparedness.

Tirol stressed the urgency of institutionalizing disaster preparedness into local governance, as most local government budgets focus on response rather than prevention.

“More than anything, we need strong communication and collaboration among communities, stakeholders, government agencies, and academic institutions to ensure science-based and community-led conservation and management of blue carbon ecosystems,” she said.

Adding to this perspective, Garchitorena emphasized the role of traditional knowledge in coastal management, noting that it is often local wisdom that prompts communities to seek conservation assistance. She acknowledged a case shared by Tirol, where community members understood that planting mangroves would protect their homes and improve food security. However, Garchitorena stressed the need for better documentation of these community insights, as much of the evidence supporting improved food security and fisheries from mangrove conservation remains anecdotal.

She illustrated how community knowledge could enhance scientific methods by sharing an example from ZSL. When the organization introduced a scientific germination process for Pagatpat, a mangrove species, the initial success rate was low. Collaborating with local communities, they discovered a way to shorten the germination period and increase success rates.

“This is where we need to engage with communities and exchange knowledge both ways. They can definitely improve on what science identifies,” Garchitorea explained.

Dr. Gevaña supported this approach, noting that while traditional knowledge forms the foundation of many conservation practices, the increasing complexity of environmental challenges requires scientific innovation.

“We’re not erasing traditional methods; we’re enhancing them to address more complicated problems,” he explained. Gevaña emphasized that the shift toward science-based approaches is crucial as environmental challenges have evolved due to climate change and human activities.

“Many of the successful approaches were actually traditional, but we need to innovate without fully erasing those very good narratives,” Gevaña concluded, underscoring the importance of integrating traditional wisdom with modern science to effectively manage and conserve blue carbon ecosystems.

GMA NEWS

'Danger' level heat index in at least 3 areas forecast for Monday, March 3, 2025

At least three areas in the country are forecast to experience heat indices in PAGASA's "danger" range, which can trigger automatic class cancellations in some areas.

According to the state weather bureau's heat index forecast, the heat index expected to be computed at the following synoptic stations will be within the "danger" range of 42 to 51 degrees Celsius on Monday:

- Science Garden Quezon City - 46°C
- Clark Airport, Pampanga - 46°C
- CLSU Muñoz, Nueva Ecija - 45°C

The heat index is the measure of the temperature that a person feels in contrast to the actual air temperature. Computed by factoring in the humidity as well as the air temperature, the heat index measures "human discomfort" and is the "apparent temperature" felt by the human body.

PAGASA's heat index classification defines heat index temperatures ranging from 42°C to 51°C as being in the "danger" level, where "heat cramps and heat exhaustion are likely; heat stroke is probable with continued exposure."

Caloocan City has announced that classes in public schools from kindergarten to high school will shift to online or asynchronous classes on Monday due to the heat index. The cancellation of classes in private schools will be at the discretion of school authorities.

MANILA STANDARD

[Opinion] Saving frogs could help save people's lives

Research studies have shown that frogs, whose toxins are used for medicine, are threatened by climate change, the long-term shifts in temperatures and weather patterns.

There are 112 native frog species in the Philippines, 88 percent found only in the country, many of them in limited areas, like the Gigantes limestone frog found only in the rocky forests and caves of Gigantes islands in Iloilo.

The shifts in temperature can be natural, due to changes in the sun's activity or large volcanic eruptions, although human activities have been observed as the main driver of climate change, primarily due to the burning of fossil fuels like coal, oil and gas.

But climate change is greatly impacting the frog population in the Philippines, with studies showing a large percentage of Philippine frog species are considered vulnerable to shifts in weather due to factors like altered temperature and precipitation patterns, which can disrupt their habitats and life cycles.

Research indicates that many species are classified as highly vulnerable or moderately vulnerable to climate change impacts.

Burning fossil fuels generates greenhouse gas emissions that act like a blanket wrapped around the Earth, trapping the sun's heat and raising temperatures.

The main greenhouse gases causing climate change include carbon dioxide and methane, which come from using gasoline for driving a car or coal for heating a building, for example.

Clearing land and cutting down forests can also release carbon dioxide. Agriculture, oil and gas operations are major sources of methane emissions.

Energy, industry, transport, buildings, agriculture and land use are among the main sectors causing greenhouse gases.

These have affected frogs, which are often chosen to be dissected since their bodies provide a good overview of the organ systems of a complex living thing, according to experts.

The organs present in a frog, and the way they are laid out in the body, are, according to batrachiologists and medical practitioners, similar enough to humans to provide an insight for students how their bodies work.

As drought is often accompanied by intense heat, frogs and salamanders on land may find themselves overheating and drying out, resulting in their death, with experts suggesting unusual weather patterns can signal to amphibians to breed earlier than normal, leaving their eggs vulnerable to lethal freezes.

But it is reassuring that governments and other organizations are taking steps to protect frogs from climate change, which include providing habitat management and conservation planning.

The imminent success deserves our hand.

PHILIPPINE INFORMATION AGENCY

[PBBM makes headway in making Subic Bay Freeport a leader in “Green Tourism” destinations](#)

By 2030, Subic Bay Freeport shall be known as the country’s leader in green tourism destinations. This is in line with President Ferdinand Marcos, Jr.’s directive to focus on “experiential tourism” and eco-tourism. With its eyes on the target, the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority (SBMA) has launched various initiatives as it races to transform the freeport into a carbon-neutral tourism destination until 2030 in compliance with the directive of the President.

Under the Philippine Development Plan 2023-2028, Pres. Marcos urged all government agencies to “position the Philippines as a prime destination of foreign investments against climate change or environmental, social, and governance investments”

“Food, culture, heritage, and the arts; education; halal and Islamic traditions; dive sites, cruises, farms, eco-tourism, even sports, now have become potent subjects and products of a nation’s tourism,” President Marcos said.

The President also explained that the tourism challenge has already evolved and now requires a “multi-faceted strategy” starting with a carbon-neutral tourism destination, and the expansion of the one town, one product (OTOP) concept.

“It must not inhibit, but rather inspire. We must not rest content to have just one. Rather, we must seek the optimal number of high-quality products and services, which at the same time showcase the country’s distinctive history, traditions, and talents,” adding that his administration would prioritize tourism, and hone its potential to generate more jobs for Filipinos.

Challenge Accepted

In response to the president’s challenge, SBMA OIC for the Office of the Senior Deputy Administrator for Regulatory and Ecology Center manager Amethya dela Llana said the SBMA has launched the “Race to Carbon Neutrality.” She said several projects and programs with the aim of achieving a carbon-neutral status within the zone will soon be in place as Subic Bay Freeport pushes to become the first carbon-neutral economic zone in the country.

Carbon neutrality is the absence of additional carbon emissions in any activity. It means that the amount of carbon dioxide released into the atmosphere is balanced by the amount removed. This is also known as net zero carbon emissions or net zero carbon. This can be done by driving less, shopping responsibly, and using energy-efficient practices.

“As a significant energy consumer, the SBMA aims to pioneer this initiative, making carbon neutrality a way of life. The ultimate vision is to extend these policies nationally, positioning the Subic Bay Freeport zone as a testbed for implementing widespread carbon reduction strategies,” Dela Llana said in a meeting with some 270 tourism and environmental stakeholders.

The Race to Carbon Neutrality aims to reduce carbon emissions in Subic Freeport by 30 percent by 2030 and eventually to net zero by 2040. In effect, it will boost its competitiveness through resource efficiency, improve its brand image by positioning itself in the global market, and attract more green foreign direct investments.

“Let’s make this a way of life,” Dela Llana said, adding that the bigger challenge for the agency is its being an economic zone where locators are large consumers of electricity and other forms of energy that contribute high concentrations of carbon footprint, or greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. The Freeport Zone has some 1,900 businesses with a workforce of more than 162 thousand as of November 2024.

“This challenge also makes the economic zone a good place to pioneer and pilot many GHG emission reduction efforts because geographically, we are blessed with the abundance of carbon stocks,” Dela Llana cited.

She further explained that the SBFZ has 60 hectares of mangrove areas with the potential to sequester 2,016 metric tons of carbon emissions annually and a watershed forest reserve of 10,000 hectares, which neutralizes 400,000 metric tons of potential carbon emissions. This will bring the SBMA at the forefront of introducing carbon-neutral development strategies into the economic, industrial, and trade policies.

“The SBMA will protect, restore, and expand Subic’s natural ecosystem so it can do what it does best—capturing carbon emissions,” the Ecology center chief added.

12-Pronged Program

As the SBMA pushes for a Carbon Neutral Freeport by 2040, the following initiatives will be undertaken: (1) adaption of a carbon neutral framework; (2) emissions reduction

planning; (3) prioritization of energy efficiency; (4) utilization of electric vehicles within the SBFZ for carbon reduction targets; (5) utilization of emerging technologies; (6) leveraging on renewable (energy); (7) adoption of smart waste management; (8) stakeholder engagement; (9) mangrove rehabilitation and restoration program; (10) forest conservation program; (11) bamboo forest development for increased oxygen production, higher carbon absorption, and tourist attraction; and (12) source financing.

Meanwhile, SBMA Chairman and Administrator Eduardo Jose L. Aliño shared that the agency plans to establish a roadmap for net zero-carbon facilities within the SBFZ. It will also develop a set of supporting incentives and programs that will enable Subic businesses to achieve net-zero targets and use emerging technologies leveraging on renewable energy.

A pioneering project under this program was revealed early this year by the SBMA chief during the “Build Better More” Infrastructure Forum in July at the New Clark City in Capas, Tarlac. Presented was the SBMA’s P250-million Carbon Neutral Port project, which Aliño said will make Subic the first Philippine port with shore power connection for ships. The shore power system, which will provide electrical power to an idling ship so it can shut down its engines, will cut air pollution from ships at berth by 95 percent. Phase 1 of the project will be undertaken at Subic’s New Container Terminal in 2025, while Phase 2 will cover both the Naval Supply Depot and Ship Repair Facility from 2026 to 2027.

Other projects in the pipeline for Subic’s carbon-neutral program involve decarbonizing buildings and transportation, adopting low-carbon infrastructure designs, energy efficiency and conservation, use of renewable energy sources, and solid waste and waste water management.

Subic Freeport is one of the country’s most-visited tourism sites and Central Luzon’s biggest tourism draw. It was also the fifth among the most visited places in the country. In 2021, despite lockdowns due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it had a total of 7,374,332 visitors and 737,486 tourists. In 2022, it had over nine million tourist arrivals, which grew to over ten million in 2023. Same-day tourist arrivals were pegged at 10,147,461 in 2023 and just up to November 2024, 9,430,694.

Hotel occupancy rate hit 52.3 percent in 2022, which went up to 59.56 percent in 2023. It is expected to hit almost double when 2024 numbers are tallied.

SBMA Board Director Raul Marcelo also shared that Central Luzon's tourism sectors are actively embracing sustainable practices, from eco-friendly accommodations to community.

THE BUSINESS STANDARD

Strategic partnerships key to climate actions: Rizwana

The discussions focused on strengthening climate cooperation, exploring carbon market opportunities, and advancing ecosystem restoration initiatives in Bangladesh.

Environment Adviser Syeda Rizwana Hasan has emphasised the need for strategic partnerships to ensure that climate investments deliver tangible benefits to local communities and ecosystems.

She made the remarks during a meeting with a delegation led by Erik Solheim, former Norwegian Minister of Environment and Climate Change, and Kavin Kumar Kandasamy, CEO of ProClime, at Pani Bhaban today (2 March).

During the meeting, she reiterated the government's commitment to sustainable environmental management and the importance of international collaboration.

The discussions focused on strengthening climate cooperation, exploring carbon market opportunities, and advancing ecosystem restoration initiatives in Bangladesh.

Key topics included reforestation, invasive species management, and biodiversity restoration. The delegation expressed interest in supporting Bangladesh's afforestation, agroforestry, and conservation efforts.

They also proposed sustainable forest management models and eco-restoration programs to enhance environmental resilience.

Highlighting the need for a structured approach to engaging international partners in climate initiatives, the delegation stressed the potential for investments in carbon credit projects and renewable energy solutions.

They underscored the importance of a robust national framework for implementing Article 6 of the Paris Agreement and offered technical support to enhance Bangladesh's carbon registry system.

Both parties agreed on the urgency of accelerating climate action through public-private collaboration, capacity building, and innovative financing mechanisms.

Rizwana Hasan assured that discussions with relevant government departments would be facilitated to explore further cooperation opportunities.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

'Adapt classrooms to climate change'

By: Rainier Allan Ronda

To make public school classrooms more conducive for learning, a Pinoy inventor urged the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) to update and innovate on school rooms and buildings design to make them adapted to climate change.

Edgardo Vazquez, an internationally recognized prefabricated construction technology inventor, said it is high time for the government to adopt the latest technologies in construction and engineering to improve on public school classrooms at no added cost to the Department of Education (DepEd).

Vazquez, who was conferred two gold medals by the World Intellectual Property Organization in 1995, said an innovation to the classroom building would allow the DPWH to easily hit its classroom and schoolbuilding targets.

He cited the Vazbuilt insulated school classroom – a one-classroom school building design – that would allow the DPWH to build a classroom with a cooling system in one month.

“These innovation aims to enhance efficiency, sustainability and affordability in the construction industry,” Vasquez said.

According to Vasquez, the new school building design uses “deep pile micropile” for its foundation, light gauge steel frame and polywall lightweight concrete panels for its cooling system.

In a letter to Secretaries Manuel Bonoan of DPWH and Sonny Angara of DepEd, Vasquez said the design is adapted to climate change and would allow a faster construction time at no extra cost to the government.

He added that the design is compliant with government standards

CCC IN THE NEWS:

DAILY TRIBUNE

[Recognizing women's leadership in climate action](#)

By: Robert EA Borje

In the aftermath of typhoons, it is often the women who move swiftly, caring for children, coordinating relief efforts, and ensuring the safety of the most vulnerable members of their communities. When floodwaters rise, they take the lead in efforts to distribute food and mobilize resources. Women bear the weight of recovery, taking charge of rebuilding homes, livelihoods, and lives. Their resilience and leadership are at the heart of the story of climate action in the Philippines.

As we celebrate National Women's Month this March with the theme, "Babae sa Lahat ng Sektor, Aangat ang Bukas sa Bagong Pilipinas," we honor the immense contributions of women and recognize the critical role they play in addressing the growing threat of climate change. In the context of an ever-warming planet, where natural hazards become more frequent and severe, women are at the frontlines — both as the most affected and as powerful agents of change.

Around 80 percent of those displaced by climate change globally are women, who are often hit the hardest by the impacts of extreme weather events. Women and children are 14 times more likely to die during disasters. Limited access to resources, decision-making power and early warning systems, as well as their primary caregiving responsibilities, exacerbate their vulnerability.

But vulnerability is only part of the story. Across the country, women in grassroots communities have shown incredible leadership in the face of climate-related challenges.

In San Vicente, Palawan, Nida Collado has led efforts in sustainable forest management through the Macatumbalen Community-Based Forest and Coastal Management Association. Under her leadership, 1,850 hectares of local forests have been replanted and managed, creating sustainable livelihoods through agroforestry and the harvesting of forest products such as honey and rattan.

Similarly, Mila V. Bogñalbal of Tiwi, Albay has strengthened food security through resilient food systems and sustainable livelihoods. She has been instrumental in implementing the Adaptation and Mitigation Initiative in Agriculture Program of the

Department of Agriculture in her village to increase productivity of farmers and fisherfolk while fostering climate-resilient enterprises.

In the housing sector, Maria Vicenta S. Jalandoni employs innovative science- and technology-based climate solutions for social housing. Her efforts in promoting Cement-Bamboo Frame Technology have resulted in the construction of over 1,500 houses in 15 communities across the Philippines.

At the national level, Senator Loren Legarda — a staunch advocate for climate action — has played a pivotal role in crafting climate policies. She championed the Climate Change Act and the People’s Survival Fund Act, which provides the financial backbone for local climate adaptation initiatives.

These women, along with many others, represent the strength of female leadership in climate action and prove that gender does not limit one’s ability to contribute to sustainable development. They show how women empowerment can lead to solutions that benefit the communities.

To ensure that women continue to lead in this fight, gender considerations must be mainstreamed into climate policies and actions. The Philippines has developed roadmaps to integrate inclusive governance in climate adaptation and mitigation.

The National Adaptation Plan, which outlines the country’s strategies for adapting to climate change, incorporates gender-responsive approaches across sectors including agriculture, water, health, and infrastructure. These sectors are particularly important for women, as they are more likely to be affected by climate impacts on food security, water scarcity, and healthcare.

On the mitigation side, the recently developed Nationally Determined Contribution Gender Action Plan 2024 to 2030 focuses on integrating gender and social inclusion into climate mitigation efforts. This plan covers sectors such as agriculture, waste management, industry processes, transport and energy. It aims to ensure that climate actions in these areas are equitable, inclusive, and sensitive to the needs and perspectives of women and marginalized groups.

Through these frameworks, we ensure that climate finance and funding facilities are accessible, and inclusive for women. This also involves recognizing and investing in women’s leadership, ingenuity and resilience, which are indispensable in addressing the climate crisis.

By incorporating gender perspectives into our policies and programs, we can build a more inclusive and equitable society, where women have a chance to thrive in a future shaped by sustainable development and climate resilience.

However, beyond these frameworks, specific actions must be taken to truly strengthen gender equality and ensure women's full participation in climate action.

First, we need to invest in providing them with access to climate-resilient technologies, training, and resources. Expanding support for cooperatives and networks that empower women participation can help scale these efforts.

Second, women's participation in local disaster risk reduction committees should be mandated, not just encouraged. Capacity-building programs must be strengthened to enable women to lead disaster response efforts, create gender-sensitive evacuation centers, and ensure that women's health needs are addressed in post-disaster recovery. Local government units must integrate gender considerations into their Local Climate Change Action Plans to ensure that women are at the core of decision-making processes.

Lastly, access to climate finance remains a barrier for many women-led organizations. Supporting private sector investments in women-led climate projects, particularly those that focus on sustainable energy and agriculture, can further strengthen these efforts. The People's Survival Fund can allocate resources specifically to support women-led adaptation projects in rural and coastal communities.

Women are indispensable in addressing the climate crisis. Their vision, perspectives, knowledge, and strength are crucial in guiding us toward a more resilient and sustainable world.

Let us not only recognize the contributions of women but also support their leadership in climate action. A better tomorrow is possible when women are at the forefront of the fight against climate change, leading us toward a future where both people and the planet can thrive.

CCC: Strong ocean governance needed

The head of the Climate Change Commission (CCC) said the international community must come up with a firm and strong framework of governance for oceans in the Third United Nations Ocean Conference (UNOC3).

CCC Vice Chairperson and Executive Director Secretary Robert E.A. Borje made the statement during the celebration of the 10th anniversary of the Manila Call to Action on Climate Change and launching of the 100-day mobilization for the UNOC3 held at the residence of France's ambassador to the Philippines, Marie Fontanel, in Makati City on 26 February.

Borje said the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea opined that greenhouse gas emissions are considered a form of marine pollution.

"We hope that advisory opinion informs the process in Nice," he said.

The CCC chief said that 10 years after the Manila declaration, "there's still a lot of work to do."

"We need to ramp up our, not just bilateral cooperation, but international cooperation on protecting and managing the world's oceans," Borje said.

"So, we don't just really call on our partner countries' governments to continue ramping up, not just support, but particularly for developing countries, so that we can really come up with a firm and strong framework of governance for our oceans," he said.

UNOC3 will be held in Nice, France on 9 to 13 June.

The CCC will be participating the the different event's meetings to provide a climate perspective to the oceans governance issues.

"I understand that there are several meetings scheduled by the Department of Foreign Affairs in the lead-up to the meetings. And we will be there to support that," he said.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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

By: Jan Escosio

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 chairperson 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.

=END=