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By: Chit U. Juan

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By: Christa I. Dela Cruz

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PHILIPPINE INFORMATION AGENCY

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By: Bernard Ceasar Susbilla

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THE MANILA TIMES

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By: Marita Moaje

The Climate Change Commission (CCC) applauded the provincial government of Pangasinan for its comprehensive climate resilience strategies and integrated approach to environmental sustainability, disaster preparedness, and risk reduction.

Information and Knowledge Management Division

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[Opinion] Are you ready for 2030?

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I remember the Y2K phenomenon when right before the year became 2000, everyone was nervously waiting for the start of the millennium because people said computers could blow up, files may forever be lost, and anything we had saved in our laptops would disappear into thin air. Well, guess what? We are still here 25 years after that “fateful” prediction about what would happen at midnight when Dec. 31, 1999 would become Jan. 1, 2000. We waited with bated breath and then nothing happened. What did happen is that we learned to adapt to QR codes, e-mails, and chat groups. Depending on which country or area of the world you are in, you would need a messaging platform like Viber, WhatsApp, Messenger, Line, and WeChat.

How about the road to 2030? What can we expect five years from now? Will the Earth cook due to a warmer climate, will the seas combine and land shrink? We need to prepare for another way of life after 2030 because it looks like we are not going to solve the Climate Crisis in such a short time. So, just the way we feared the year 2000 or the millennium, here we go with 2030 and Climate Change. What must we do then?

For the next five years, we will have to adapt, change our ways, and think of a new world because, as we speak, it is already changing. Just like everyday life, we now must adjust to ordering from robots or using our phones to place an order from a restaurant. (Almost) everything we need is available online, making brick and mortar stores irrelevant. Everything we need to file with the government has to be done online, and payments are now mostly cashless for ease and security.

We, the Boomers, have seen the biggest changes over many decades, from rotary phones to mobile phones, from reel tape recorders to Spotify, from 8mm films to Netflix. And we will still be here to see what will happen in five years or 2030 — knock on wood. I am happy I was born the time I was because I saw the changes happening before my very eyes and how human nature just adapts without complaints. Like they say, those who don't adapt will die.

We now see five years as our end goal to reverse Climate Change, to fulfill the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs), which used to be the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) until the millennium came and nothing yet had changed. We see the next five years as our chance to see a better world — if we start to act now.

In the corporate world, we see many more changes, such as: work from home arrangements, talent acquisition challenges, and increasing wages due to inflation. How do we address these changes in the next five years? Many have seen 2030 as our date to beat and that will come sooner than later.

Maybe what will really change is the way the world will operate. We will not disappear in 2030, but we will see new institutions, new rules, and new laws. Already, we are seeing companies merging, instead of competing. We are seeing new forms of government or what seems to be a new way of dealing with global powerhouses. Can you live without the USA, or can you live without China? As global boundaries have disappeared e-commerce wise, we will soon find that all this jockeying for power will soon be a thing of the past. Everyone must learn to live with what used to be foreign and, as they say, be “glocal” — a term we started to use when the internet started to blur boundaries. Thinking global but remaining local.

Even in poor countries, like the Philippines and India, the internet and social media have allowed people to learn and to know about what happens everywhere and overseas. Transparency has happened without forcing it, only because social media has made everything public and transparent.

While everything has become transparent, it has also become very public and only the very few can afford to have privacy. Your digital footprint says it all. If you wish to know someone, just “Google” them and you will get instant information about them.

So, what must we do going towards 2030?

Let’s make sure our companies follow the path of honesty and integrity. If you are to survive, you must walk the talk, be a real person and a real honest company.

Let’s make sure our companies have a role in saving the planet by observing eco-friendly practices, even when no one is looking.

Let’s make sure our people are prepared to work from home, if need be, towards building better and closely-knit families.

Let’s change the tide of migration towards reintegration of our OFWs, to have them come back and serve the country.

Let’s keep our talents well-paid at home to serve our countrymen — our teachers, doctors, and nurses must not see immigration as their ticket to success.

Let’s grow our own food and work towards food security, down to the smallest social unit which is the family.

Yes, 2030 is a mere 1,500 days or so away, but we can work towards building a better future with home-grown talents, less imports, and going back to basics. All these can be done even while our digital natives have made our systems more efficient, transparent, and public. One day at a time, one company at a time. We all need to change and adapt, or die.

It is going to be a new world. What will be destroyed is the old world filled with dishonesty and discord. And we will wake up to a new world order, sooner than later. We have to do our part now so we can face 2030 squarely in the face.

So, let's wrap our arms around technology and embrace it with a positive attitude. Whether in biotech or AI, technology will help us reach this milestone and deal with the new world by 2030.

ESQUIRE

[Trump Is Ignoring the Climate Crisis—Here's Why That Sucks for the Philippines](#)

By: Christa I. Dela Cruz

Every year, powerful typhoons, rising sea levels, and extreme heat threaten the Philippines, displacing communities and destroying livelihoods. While our country is no stranger to these disasters, there is nothing normal about these events exacerbated by the accelerating effects of the man-made climate crisis. It's not even a crisis anymore; it's a climate emergency.

And yet, on the other side of the Pacific, President Donald Trump consistently dismissed climate change as a hoax, rolled back environmental policies, and pulled the U.S. out of global climate agreements. In fact, he made a promise during his inaugural address last January 20 that America "will drill, baby, drill," referring, of course, to an all-out support to increase drilling for petroleum and gas.

For a country like the Philippines, this is more than just a poorly written episode of the reality show that is Trump's second administration—it's a matter of survival.

The Philippines' Vulnerability in the Global Climate Emergency

The World Economic Forum (WEF), in the Global Risks Perception Survey 2024-2025 released on January 15, 2025, said that extreme weather events are believed to be the second most likely to present as a material crisis on a global scale. Up to 14% of respondents said so, just after the state-based armed conflict, which earned a 23% share of the respondents. It also ranks second in the list of short-term global risks (two years) and first in terms of long-term global risks (10 years). In other words, more and more people finally agree that everyone's lives will be turned upside down by extreme weather events in the foreseeable future (as we all should).

The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) also confirmed that 2024 is the warmest year on record, and we have just surpassed the pre-industrial temperatures by about 1.55 degrees Celsius. If the number sounds familiar, that's because it's the magic number agreed upon by 196 parties in the Paris Agreement (2015). Its overarching goal is to hold "the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels" and pursue efforts "to limit the temperature increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels." Less than 10 years later, here we are, breaching the 1.5 degrees Celsius mark.

While extreme weather events affect all countries, Global South countries are expected to bear the brunt in the next 30 years, according to the WEF. And, yes, the Global South includes the Philippines as well as the regions of Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia (excluding Israel, Japan, and South Korea), and Oceania (excluding Australia and New Zealand). We mostly know these territories as "Third World Countries" or "Developing Countries," with many of them current or former subjects of

colonialism—the very reason they remain in a constant state of 'developing.' It's no secret, after all, that most of these colonized countries experienced exploitation of resources, like the conversion of arable lands to plantations and over-mining of metals for the benefit (and wealth) of the colonists. As a long-term effect, colonies are now dealing with the destruction of the natural environment, especially after hundreds of years of colonization.

In the Climate Risk Index published by GermanWatch, the Philippines is the 10th most affected country from 1993 to 2022 in terms of climate change's consequences, which manifested in the increased intensity and severity of extreme weather events. It "ranks high mainly because of its relative number of people affected, accompanied by relative fatalities and economic losses." Apart from exceptionally devastating typhoons, including Ketsana/Ondoy (2009), Bopha/Pablo (2012), Haiyan/Yolanda (2013), Mangkhut/Ompong (2018), and Goni/Rolly (2020), the Philippines was hit by multiple other tropical cyclones in every year between 1993 and 2022.

Even the El Niño phenomenon, which began in the country in July 2023 and persisted until June 2024, is worse than ever. The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council reported agricultural damage of over P9.496 billion, a declaration of a state of calamity in 432 cities and municipalities due to drought and water supply shortage, and effect on about 1.22 million families.

Trump's Climate Policies: Making a Bad Situation Worse

Meanwhile, as the Philippines continues to grapple with the dystopic realities of the colonialism of the past and capitalism of the present, the U.S. president seems to be forgetting that we're all living on one planet and that everything is interconnected.

On his first day in office, Trump signed an executive order directing the U.S. to again withdraw from the landmark Paris climate agreement, citing that the Western country's "successful track record of advancing both economic and environmental objectives should be a model for other countries." This means withdrawing from an agreement that pushes them to limit greenhouse gas emissions.

In case you skipped your environmental science classes in grade school, remember that greenhouse gas emissions are the release of gases that trap heat in the Earth's atmosphere. It's named after the greenhouse in gardens and farms, where the structure is designed to regulate temperature and humidity to protect the plants under its roof. Now, imagine a huge greenhouse structure enveloping Earth, including humidity and high temperatures close to the ground.

With this, rising temperatures cause the rapid melting of glaciers near our poles. While these glaciers are meters away from the Philippines, we should not forget that melting of ice causes sea levels to rise; and, considering that 71% of the Earth's surface is covered in water, that also means a rise in water levels. The Philippines' Climate Change Commission reported that the sea level has risen by 5.7- 7.0 millimeters per year over certain parts of the country from 1993 to 2015, which is approximately double

the highest global average rate of 2.8-3.6 millimeters per year. At present, several habited islands in the archipelago are now permanently submerged in water, such as the Batasan, Inanuran, and Bilangbilangan Islands off the coast of Tubigon, Bohol.

Trump, via the National Emergencies Act, also ordered the government to use private land and resources for the production of oil and gas. Exploring and drilling for oil poses a threat to land and marine environments. And, once again, the impact on one species can ripple across an entire ecosystem, which—in turn—can start a domino effect on other ecosystems.

Another rather specific thing: It seems that the U.S. president loves plastic straws so much that he issued an executive order on February 10 to end the procurement and forced use of paper straws. Plastic straws are among the top 10 contributors to plastic marine debris across the globe. They kill seabirds, fish, manatees, dolphins, and other marine animals when lodged in their noses, throats, and stomachs. How many times have we seen videos and photos of sea turtles with straws stuck in their nostrils? Bear in mind that sea turtles are keystone species, meaning they are an important part of an ecosystem, and their dwindling number can easily disrupt the natural order of things. Some species of sea turtles regulate the amount of jellyfish in the ocean through feeding, while others help maintain reefs, which serve as home to marine creatures. Sea turtles also graze on seagrass, which also benefits other marine species.

With this in mind, former President Joe Biden's administration committed to gradually phasing out federal purchases of single-use plastics by 2027 and from all federal operations by 2035.

But it is 2025, and Trump has taken over.

Unfortunately, much like the domino effect of every disruption in the planet's environmental stability, other nations' actions (or inactions) create a ripple effect on other countries across oceans. If powerful nations continue to prioritize short-term interests over global survival, it's not just vulnerable countries like ours that will suffer—it's the entire planet.

PHILIPPINE INFORMATION AGENCY

[Sipaway Island's visitor management, conservation protocols draw int'l attention](#)

By: Bernard Ceasar Subilla

Best known for its pristine beaches, rich protected marine biodiversity, and effective visitor management, Sipaway Island in San Carlos City, Negros Occidental is a haven for those seeking a break from over-rated tourist destinations, while also helping locals earn a living.

But more than welcoming guests from across the globe and steering development for their community, Sipaway residents are committed to preserving and protecting their traditions and the island's natural beauty.

For its effective visitor management and conservation protocols, Sipaway Island has captivated the attention of not only local but international partners in advancing its cause for sustainable tourism.

Recently, the UK Ambassador to the Philippines and Palau, Her Excellency Laure Beaufils, and UNDP-Philippines Resident Representative, Dr. Selva Ramachandran, experienced firsthand the charm of Sipaway, the warmth of its people, and the community-led biodiversity conservation efforts on the Island.

The foreign officials' visit on February 10 intended to showcase the island's ecological significance and the local community's grassroots eco-tourism efforts led by the Sipaway Eco-tourism Workers Association (SETWA), a potential UNDP-funded project beneficiary.

Anchored on their cultural values and deep regard for the environment, SETWA is dedicated to promoting sustainable eco-tourism development in their island community, setting an example for the rest of the country and the world.

Recognizing SETWA's initiatives and the San Carlos City Government's pro-environment governance, the UK diplomat and ENDP executive's visit centered on exploring the successes and further potential of the city government's Biodiversity and Landscape Approach in Nature Conservation or Balance program.

The program, in which Sipaway Island is a part of, follows the Negros Island Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NIBSAP) 2018-2028, which is intended to help address climate change and promote biodiversity conservation.

Particularly for areas such as Sipaway Island that has immense potential in terms of ecotourism, conservationists and officials point out that Balance is vital in mainstreaming biodiversity initiatives in local government projects.

With the support of the UK government, the UNDP-Biodiversity Finance Initiative (BIOFIN), the Philippine Biodiversity Conservation Foundation, Inc. (PhilBio), and other stakeholders, advancing conservation efforts on Sipaway Island and other areas included in the Biodiversity and Landscape Approach in Nature Conservation or Balance program are within reach for the people of San Carlos City.

Mayor Renato Gustilo, in a social media post, said the foreign officials' recognition and expression of support to the BALANCE program is a testament to San Carlos City's unwavering commitment to sustainability and environmental protection.

"Being chosen for this initiative inspires us to continue protecting our natural resources while empowering our people. I look forward to the opportunities this collaboration will bring for a greener, more sustainable San Carlos City," Gustilo said in his post.

With the historic visit of Ambassador Beaufile and Dr. Ramachandran, San Carlos City and Negros Occidental mark a significant milestone in their efforts to take an active role in addressing climate change and biodiversity loss – two critical global concerns in need of international cooperation.

But not only international organizations and governments should bear this task and responsibility, ordinary citizens too must acknowledge threats to the environment, join hands, and contribute – big or small – for its protection and conservation.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

Easterlies to bring rains over parts of PH

By: Ma. Cristina Arayata

The easterlies will continue to cause rains in some areas, while most parts of the country will experience fair weather, the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) said Wednesday.

Davao Oriental, Davao del Sur, Sarangani, Basilan, Sulu, and Tawi-Tawi will experience scattered rains and thunderstorms.

Moderate to heavy rains in those areas could result in flash floods or landslides, the weather bureau reported.

"The rest of the country will experience fair weather, and isolated rain showers," PAGASA forecaster Rhea Torres said.

She added that no tropical cyclone or low pressure area is expected to enter the Philippine Area of Responsibility.

Meanwhile, the eastern sections of the Visayas and Mindanao will continue to experience moderate to strong winds and moderate to rough coastal waters.

Elsewhere, winds will be light to moderate with slight to moderate seas, PAGASA said.

SUNSTAR

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By: John Leo C. Algo

LET'S take all the other issues surrounding the proposed 2025 national budget aside for a moment and look into the fact that the intended climate budget for this year is at P1.02 trillion. This is more than twice as much as what was suggested in the General Appropriations Act (GAA) last year.

On one hand, this is a sign that the current administration is prioritizing climate action in its agenda. It is a response to the country being battered by droughts and storms, the likes of which have never been seen before. It is also an indicator of how the government sees this year as critical for updating its plans and policies, including on setting new commitments to reducing climate pollution and enabling just transition.

On the other hand, is it really a good sign?

More of the same?

In the proposed 2025 GAA, the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) will have 78 percent of the climate budget, by far the biggest share among all agencies. Its funding of nearly P800 billion would be more than double its budget from the previous year.

The department will be involved in implementing the three actions with the highest individual funding allocations: flood control and drainage systems (P306 billion); building new climate-resilient roads, ports, and airports (P246 billion); and retrofitting existing roads, bridges, and other infrastructure to become more climate-proof (P174 billion).

The agency with the next biggest share is the Department of Transportation (DOTr), with 12 percent of the proposed climate budget. Most of this is directed to ongoing projects for improving mass transport, such as the North-South Commuter Railway Project, Metro Manila Subway Project, Cebu Bus Rapid Transit Project, and Davao Public Transport Modernization Project.

All of these projects would help address urban traffic, which contributes to climate pollution. They are all funded through loans from international partners such as the Asian Development Bank and Japan International Coordination Agency.

The Department of Agriculture (DA) saw the third-biggest rise in its funding, behind DPWH and DOTr. Most of its P54-billion allocation, however, remains on concreting and construction of farm-to-market roads as in previous years.

The high allocations to DPWH, DOTr, and DA should indicate a prioritization of flood control, traffic management through improving mass transport, and food security this

year. However, how these issues have been addressed in recent years have not been as effective as the higher department allocations would imply.

Worsening cases of flooding across the nation and allegations of corruption led to the Senate's increased scrutiny of proposed projects during recent GAA deliberations. Until said transport projects are finished, millions of Filipinos will be forced to waste hours every day stuck in traffic. Connecting farms to markets, while obviously significant, is only a part of the many problems that plague the agricultural sector, one of the poorest in the Philippines.

Meanwhile, the Department of Education and Department of the Interior and Local Government saw the biggest decreases in their climate budgets from 2024 by 88 percent and 37 percent, respectively. This calls into question how longstanding issues, such as integration of climate change into school curriculum and empowering locally-led solutions, can be sustained or improved on.

Is it aligned?

Last year, programs focusing on water sufficiency received more than 81 percent of the climate budget. This is largely due to the government's preparations in response to the impending threat of El Niño.

However, a closer look indicates that other aspects of governance that could have further reduced the impacts of El Niño-induced droughts last year, such as strengthening regulations and improving water supply and demand management, did not receive as much funding as it should have. Most of this instead went to flood control projects, as previously mentioned.

Programs aligned with water sufficiency would only receive 31 percent of the 2025 climate budget. The biggest share would go to actions under sustainable energy at 38 percent; however, much of this funding will be directed to building new climate-resilient roads, ports, and airports instead of renewable energy (RE) and energy efficiency projects.

Adaptation remains the Philippines' anchor strategy against the climate crisis, which explains why 87 percent of its proposed budget is dedicated for adaptation. Its current financing strategy for mitigation, including RE development, relies on generating investments from the private sector and developed countries, who are mostly responsible for the climate crisis.

This strategy of “conditional” mitigation has been a staple strategy of our country as part of our calls for climate justice at the global negotiations.

However, the numbers from the proposed GAA itself clearly indicates that the Philippines is capable of being more “unconditional,” or implementing more effective

adaptation and mitigation solutions through public finance. The doubling of the climate budget from last year signals this capacity.

What it comes down to is the details. First, the allocations need to be directed towards priority programs, especially those included in the country's global pledges for climate action. For example, its commitment on climate change mitigation known as the NDC, which is supposed to be updated this year, composed less than 10 percent of the 2023 climate budget.

Second, its climate policies and plans need to be coherent with one another. It is difficult for top officials to claim a "whole-of-government" approach against the climate crisis when the distribution among the agencies is this lopsided. The highest allocation for DPWH and lowered prioritization on education are not just seen within the climate budget, but also in the entire GAA.

Third, climate governance is only as strong as good governance itself. No matter how much money is available, it is ultimately meaningless if not used properly. We have become too familiar with the costs of the inconsistency, incompetence, and indifference of national and local government units to the needs of the people they are mandated to serve.

But first, we need to see what even happens with the currently-proposed GAA and if it is truly aligned with the Constitution and the needs of the Filipino nation.

THE MANILA TIMES

[Town seeks end to fossil fuel pollution](#)

By: Roselle R. Aquino

The municipality of Pola marked the second anniversary of the massive oil spill that devastated its coastal waters by reaffirming its commitment to environmental protection and sustainable energy.

The commemoration, led by Mayor Jennifer Mindanao-Cruz, brought together government officials, environmental advocates and local residents to reflect on the disaster's impact and push for a future free from fossil fuel pollution.

The tragic spill occurred on Feb. 28, 2023, when the MT Princess Empress sank off the coast of Naujan, releasing 900,000 liters of industrial oil into the waters of Oriental Mindoro.

The oil spill caused severe environmental damage, forcing thousands of fisherfolk out of work and prompting widespread calls for accountability and preventive measures.

During the event, the mayor and former interior secretary Benhur Abalos unveiled a commemorative marker, symbolizing the community's resilience and determination to recover.

Mindanao-Cruz and Abalos, who is running for senator in the 2025 polls, also affixed their thumb prints on the marker to symbolize their continuing fight against environmental pollution.

In her speech, Mindanao-Cruz cited the unity of Pola's residents in overcoming the disaster.

"With the unity of our people, our town will rise again," she said.

Underscoring the town's continued fight for justice and environmental protection.

Environmental advocates, including the Center for Energy, Ecology and Development (CEED), highlighted the oil spill as a wake-up call to end reliance on fossil fuels.

They praised Pola's initiative to explore renewable energy alternatives, such as a newly inaugurated solar-powered water pump project in Barangay Batuhan.

"The 2023 oil spill is a tragic reminder of how harmful fossil fuel dependence is, especially in ecologically vulnerable areas like Mindoro," said Avril De Torres, CEED's deputy executive director.

"This project shows how communities can transition to renewable energy for a sustainable and pollution-free future."

As part of its commitment, Pola officially declared itself a fossil-free renewable energy municipality, aiming to prioritize clean energy projects and prevent future disasters by restricting the transport of hazardous fuels in its waters.

The commemoration served not only as a moment of remembrance but also as a call to action — demanding accountability, stronger environmental safeguards, and a decisive shift toward clean and sustainable energy sources.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

[CCC hails Pangasinan's climate action, disaster preparedness programs](#)

By: Marita Moaje

The Climate Change Commission (CCC) applauded the provincial government of Pangasinan for its comprehensive climate resilience strategies and integrated approach to environmental sustainability, disaster preparedness, and risk reduction.

In a news release on Tuesday, the CCC said Pangasinan's 100 percent compliance with the Local Climate Change Action Plan (LCCAP) enables all 48 of its local government units (LGUs) to implement localized climate initiatives tailored to address their specific needs.

The People's Survival Fund (PSF), meanwhile, was introduced as a key financial mechanism to support these projects.

"Pangasinan's commitment to disaster risk preparedness is commendable, as reflected in its 100 percent LCCAP submission. When we talk about hazards, exposure, vulnerability, and capacity, we must see them not just as challenges but as part of a strategic game plan—an investment in community resilience. This is exactly what we witness here in Pangasinan," CCC Vice Chairperson and Executive Director Robert E.A. Borje said.

Through a series of engagements with provincial government officials and local communities, the CCC recognized the province's commitment to climate change adaptation and mitigation (CCAM) which highlights innovative programs designed to protect communities and natural ecosystems.

Leading these efforts are Project PARAAN, (pioneering safety, assessing vulnerabilities, risk management, addressing hazards, achieving resilience, and navigating challenges) to increase preparedness specifically for a tsunami, and the Green Canopy Project, which aims to plant one million trees.

Meanwhile, the province is also advancing ecological conservation through the planned Eztanza Native Tree Nursery and Project Kasilyas, further strengthening its climate resilience framework.

The Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction Management Office (PDRRMO) also showcased its 24/7 Operations Center with its robust early warning systems that aim to address vulnerabilities to fluvial and pluvial flooding with data-driven decision-making.

The center integrates risk information from the Department of Science and Technology-Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical, and Astronomical Services Administration (DOST-

PAGASA), the Office of Civil Defense (OCD), and the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) to enhance disaster response.

The CCC also explored the Bued Mangrove Propagation and Information Center in Alaminos, which is home to diverse mangrove species such as Rhizophora, Avicennia, and Sonneratia.

Local eco-guides detailed the critical role of mangroves in carbon sequestration and coastal protection.

Meanwhile, Alaminos City's ridge-to-reef conservation strategy, which links forestry management, watershed protection, and coastal rehabilitation, was recognized as a model for environmental sustainability.

The CCC reaffirmed its commitment to working with LGUs like Pangasinan while emphasizing that localized, science-based climate solutions are key to protecting communities from the escalating impacts of climate change.

"The challenge for us Filipinos is to dream bigger, aim higher, and aspire for a better future. But beyond excellence, we must commit to the quiet, unseen work—the daily acts of diligence and integrity—that, over time, will build a stronger, more resilient nation," Borje said.

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