



## NEWS ROUNDUP

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### [\[Opinion\] Philippines at the IMO: Setting the sails for a sustainable future](#)

By: Teodoro L. Locsin Jr.

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## **MANILA BULLETIN**

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## **PHILIPPINE INFORMATION AGENCY**

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Various stakeholders inked an agreement to enhance biodiversity conservation and climate change mitigation practices through the sustainable Caritas Bamboo Forest project, which gives the lowly bamboo the necessary lift.

### **Mindoro fishermen get motorized fiberglass fishing boats**

By: Gene Ace Sapit

The Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) recently turned over 20 units of fiberglass reinforced plastic boats to fisherfolk in the municipalities of Looc and Lubang in Occidental Mindoro.

### **PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY**

### **Legarda urges women sector to actively join in climate action**

Senate President Pro Tempore Loren Legarda on Wednesday urged women employees of the Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development (DHSUD) to actively participate in climate action and disaster risk management efforts.

### **Rural women in poor countries hit harder by climate shocks, says study**

Women farmers and female-headed households in low- and middle-income countries suffer larger losses due to climatic shocks, such as heat and flooding, than those by male-headed households, according to a new study Tuesday by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

### **THE PHILIPPINE STAR**

### **Addressing the water crisis**

By: Joe Zaldarriaga

The threat of El Niño looms on the horizon, threatening to worsen the already strained water resources of the Philippines. The need for proactive measures to address the impending crisis has never been more urgent. Thankfully, there are legislative efforts such as the House Bill 9663 that will hopefully, pave the way for the establishment of the Department of Water Resources (DWR).

**Information and Knowledge Management Division**

## **BUSINESS MIRROR**

### **[\[Opinion\] Philippines at the IMO: Setting the sails for a sustainable future](#)**

By: Teodoro L. Locsin Jr.

Let's start with the pandemic when the world shut down, all of it, and only the maritime industry, especially the merchant marine fleet and seafarers—mostly Filipinos—kept the global economy afloat. In response, we established a Green Lane for stranded seafarers to come ashore to accommodations free of charge. So far as we know none else followed.

We've been a member of the International Maritime Organization since 1964 and active in the IMO Council since 1997. At the last Council elections, we got the highest number of votes in all of our candidatures at the IMO. We had peanuts for a budget but real friends in the private sector like my long-time friend Doris Ho and my mom's cousin, Carlos Salinas. Above all, UNIO and all your Posts helped with the qpps. At every turn you were around to help. Thank you so much. You will be glad to know the London team put all the help to good use with a smart agenda: achievable concrete goals and commitments. Zero platitudes.

First. Climate change and keeping seafarers at the center of the IMO's work and top of its agenda.

At the 80th session of the Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC), we successfully advocated the inclusion of seafarer's protection in the Revised IMO Strategy on Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Shipping. There's been Scandinavian chatter of crewless ships. I said that won't happen anytime soon—if at all the leading expert Laleh Khalili told me at the book launch of her *SINEWS OF WAR AND TRADE*. Future achievements in automation, I said, are made possible by profits from the manual skill and labor of the seafarers yesterday, today, and tomorrow. Without them shipping won't transition to a green economy. Anything else is a pipe dream. The message was well received.

The MEPC Resolution endorsed the Revised IMO Strategy acknowledging the key role of seafarers and other maritime professionals in ensuring the safe and successful implementation of the Strategy. It includes provisions on a comprehensive approach to regulating safety aboard ships utilizing zero or near-zero GHG emission technologies. IMO was urged to evaluate its instruments, guidance, and training standards to facilitate an equitable transition, necessarily enabled by seafarers, that will leave none of them behind. Without serious reskilling and upskilling, our seafarers will be left behind or consigned to the worst sectors of the industry.

We told the Integrated Technical Cooperation Program of the IMO that we will donate \$30,000 to fund trainings relating to reduced Greenhouse Gas emissions. Our contribution will enhance our visibility in the IMO and the credibility to our vaunted commitment to the UN SDG goals on climate change and sustainable use of oceans.

Second, supporting capacity building initiatives for developing countries.

ITCP aims to assist governments lacking technical knowledge and resources to operate a shipping industry safely, efficiently, and responsively. Since 2003 the Philippines is home to the IMO Regional Presence for Technical Cooperation in East Asia; we have seconded staff to it. It's been pivotal in delivering projects. We must expand it to further raise our visibility and help in our future candidatures.

On our recommendation, the Philippines last year donated \$30,000 to fund trainings relating to maritime security and safety such as maritime casualty investigation, piracy prevention, and control of maritime pollution. We were thinking of the African states—with a sizable number of votes—aside from the benefits to us.

Third. Protection of seafarers and situation in the Red Sea.

With the high number of Filipino seafarers in the global fleet, we have been co-sponsoring and supporting initiatives to protect seafarers from bullying in the maritime workplace and their abandonment in vessels abandoned by the owners. And there is piracy in the Red Sea.

Since November 19, 2023, the IMO Secretariat has recorded 27 acts of piracy against international shipping transiting the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden. This included the Bahamas flagged vessel MV Galaxy Leader taken by Houthi forces. The vessel—registered in the UK with a Japanese operator—had onboard 17 Filipino seafarers, two Bulgarian captains, three Ukrainians, two Mexicans and one Romanian. The Houthis say the ship is owned by an Israeli business interest; adding only recently that they did it in response to Gaza.

Earlier in January, the new IMO Secretary-General briefed the UN Security Council on the situation in the Red Sea. The UNSC later adopted Security Council Resolution 2722 (2024). The Secretary-General also met with the signatory states of the Djibouti Code of Conduct, which is instrumental in addressing piracy in the Western Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Aden.

Last February 21, the IMO Secretary-General asked to meet me regarding the MV Galaxy Leader case. He mentioned the release of a Filipino seafarer onboard the seized oil tanker MV ST Nikolas. He asked about further efforts to release other

crewmembers. He noted an escalation of maritime tension in the Red Sea and suggested the Philippines and his office share information that may be useful for the release of other crewmembers. He confided there is difficulty keeping contact with the UN Resident Coordinator in Yemen; but he is ready to help in any way possible. I said we are seeking help at the bilateral level; we have been in good standing with the regional powers involved or affected.

#### Fourth. Safety of navigation.

Our geographical location places the Philippine archipelago astride some of the world's major maritime trade and passage routes. The designation of Archipelagic Sea Lanes ensures safety of navigation and regulation of maritime traffic. They are key to our territorial integrity.

In my term as SFA, the DFA already initiated the designation of ASLs at the IMO with the submission of a paper proposal by Angela Ponce. Last February 19, I was invited by the Senate Committee on Philippine Admiralty and Maritime Zones to the public hearing on proposed bills on Archipelagic Sea Lanes. Anne and I discussed the IMO procedure for submission and adoption of ASLs. I stressed that early crafting and minute compliance with requirements are imperative. Rejection leaves a bad taste. London PE will judge its completeness before submission; we have an open channel with Senator Tolentino. The Senate Committee concluded discussions and created a technical working group to reconcile the bills including the House version.

#### Fifth. Gender equality in the maritime sector.

IMO is already addressing the current gender imbalance in the maritime sector to achieve SDG Goal 5. On Thursday, IMO will be celebrating International Women's Day with the theme "Invest in women and accelerate progress". Next week I will ask Ambassador Lagdameo and his NYPM team to mull elevating the issue at the UN's Commission on Status of Women (CSW). It was an insistent London PE advocacy in Lagdameo's time.

The role of women in ocean governance reflects a critical intersection between the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the SDGs, particularly in enhancing women's participation in decision-making in relation to Sustainable Development Goal 14: Life Below Water on the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans, seas, and marine resources. The Secretary of Environment, Tony Loyzaga, a leading expert in the field, will be in the UN next week.

Ironically, contributions of women in ocean governance remain largely unrecognized; their participation at the decision-making level is lower than men. And yet Rachel

Carson trail-blazed this concern since the 1950s with her influential classic *The Sea Around Us*; Elisabeth Mann Borgese—dubbed “the mother of oceans” followed her. With Arvid Pardo, she wrote a proposed constitution and sparked the first international conference on the law of the sea held in Malta under the title of *Pacem in Maribus*; “pakem” if you took Latin formally.

Lastly, Elinor Ostrom got the 2009 Nobel Prize in Economics for lifetime work on the ocean commons, discrediting the tendentious claim that private property avoids “the tragedy of the commons.” The unintended culmination has been UNCLOS and, ironically, the enhanced commercial exploitation rather than political protection of vast stretches of sea. This has worked out largely for the benefit of France with 11.7 million square kilometres, US with 11.4, Australia 8.5, Russia 7.5, UK 6.8, Indonesia 6.2, Canada 5.6, Japan 4.5, New Zealand 4.1 and Brazil 3.8 million. And that’s it. Surprised our victory at the Hague got only much belated support from them; they finally realized that the rich fish where they want; the poor are barely able in their country’s own seas. Thank you and good day.

## **BUSINESS WORLD**

### **[Uncapping the Philippines' renewable energy potential](#)**

By: Bjorn Biel M. Beltran

Renewable energy is quickly becoming integral to the future of economic development, not only because of concerns about mitigating the effects on climate change, but also as a sustainable and efficient means to meet the ever-increasing energy needs of a developing world.

In fact, the International Energy Agency (IEA) found that countries all over the world added as much as 50% more renewable capacity in 2023 than in 2022, predicting that the pace will accelerate over the next five years until it has hit a peak.

“The world’s capacity to generate renewable electricity is expanding faster than at any time in the last three decades, giving it a real chance of achieving the goal of tripling global capacity by 2030 that governments set at the COP28 climate change conference,” the IEA says in a new report.

According to Renewables 2023, the IEA’s annual market report on the sector, the amount of renewable energy capacity added to energy systems around the world have pushed it to almost 510 gigawatts (GW), with solar PV accounting for three-quarters of additions worldwide.

China saw the most increase, commissioning as much solar PV in 2023 as the entire globe did in 2022. At the same time, it also added 66% more wind power to its grid. All-time highs were also reached by the expansions of renewable energy capacity in Brazil, the US, and Europe.

The IEA noted, however, that a lack of financing for emerging and developing economies is a key issue that will hinder renewables’ growth if left unaddressed.

“The new IEA report shows that under current policies and market conditions, global renewable capacity is already on course to increase by two-and-a-half times by 2030. It’s not enough yet to reach the COP28 goal of tripling renewables, but we’re moving closer — and governments have the tools needed to close the gap,” said IEA Executive Director Fatih Birol.

“Onshore wind and solar PV are cheaper today than new fossil fuel plants almost everywhere and cheaper than existing fossil fuel plants in most countries. There are still

some big hurdles to overcome, including the difficult global macroeconomic environment,” Mr. Birol added.

He also emphasized the most pressing challenge for the international community at large was “rapidly scaling up financing and deployment of renewables in most emerging and developing economies, many of which are being left behind in the new energy economy.”

“Success in meeting the tripling goal will hinge on this,” he said.

Fortunately for the Philippines, the renewable energy (RE) sector has been picking up steam. The country recently placed fourth place in the Climatescope report issued by BloombergNEF, which analyzes clean energy progress and investment attractiveness across 110 developing economies.

The report pointed to the Philippines’ green energy auctions, feed-in tariffs, net-metering programs, tax breaks, and aggressive RE targets as the factors that pushed the country to break into the top five for the first time. The Department of Energy (DoE) wants to see a rise in the percentage of renewable energy to 35% by 2030 and 50% by 2040.

Endowed with a diverse array of natural resources and a burgeoning commitment to sustainable development, the Philippines is slowly gaining worldwide attention with its renewable energy potential. Key sectors such as geothermal, solar, wind, hydropower, biomass, and emerging technologies like marine renewables are ripe for investment from both local and foreign firms.

In 2023, the country also saw renewable energy commercial projects with awarded service contracts rising by 26%, led by solar technology, according to data released by the DoE. RE projects for the year totaled 1,220 with a potential capacity of 134,813.79 megawatts (MW), higher than the 965 recorded in 2022 with a capacity of 80,396.61 MW.

Of the total, there are 434 solar projects in the country with a 28,913.78-MW potential capacity. This was followed by 428 hydropower projects with 18,902.96 MW and 252 wind power projects with 85,692.964 MW.

In addition, there are also 58 biomass projects with 206.88 MW; 39 geothermal projects with 1,063.20 MW; and nine ocean energy projects with 34 MW.

Moreover, the Maharlika Investment Corp. (MIC), which governs the Maharlika Investment Fund (MIF), the sovereign wealth fund instituted by the Marcos Jr. administration, identified the RE sector to likely be the first target sector to receive investment.

“I can only talk about sectors because we’ve got non-disclosure agreements with those who we’re speaking with. So, we’re aiming for... energy sector would be the first, I think. Then you’ve got infrastructure and agriculture,” MIC President and Chief Executive Officer Rafael Consing, Jr. was quoted as saying, adding that energy security is one of the MIC’s sectors of focus.

In particular, the MIC is focusing on the RE sector as a means to find new sources of electricity to diversify supply and create price stability, grid modernization, and distribution.

“In my opinion, in terms of the amount we will commit for the year, I think a big portion of it really will be coming from energy,” he said. “Well, the reasons are quite obvious, right? I mean, you and I, we pay for very high electricity costs, right? And it takes a bit of time to build up that electricity.”

On the consumer side, the majority of Filipinos are open to welcoming RE into their lives, as most see the need to increase the Philippines’ sources of energy, according to the results of a survey conducted by Pulse Asia Research, Inc. released November last year.

The survey, which was done between Sept. 10 and 14 with 1,200 participating adults nationwide, found that 85% of Filipinos think that using more RE sources is “truly important.” This is likewise the prevalent opinion across all socioeconomic classes.

According to the results, the vast majority of Filipinos have felt the consequences of climate change within the previous three years.

Ronald Holmes, president of Pulse Asia, stated that the data clearly shows that Filipinos are part of the global movement toward renewable energy sources.

“This is a sentiment in terms of favoring renewable energy sources, a sentiment that is shared by many Filipinos,” Mr. Holmes had said.

## CNN

### [The planet just shattered heat records for the ninth month in a row](#)

By: Laura Paddison

Last month was the planet's hottest February on record, marking the ninth month in a row that global records tumbled, according to new data from Copernicus, the European Union's climate monitoring service.

February was 1.77 degrees Celsius warmer than the average February in pre-industrial times, Copernicus found, and it capped off the hottest 12-month period in recorded history, at 1.56 degrees above pre-industrial levels.

It's yet another grim climate change milestone, as the long-term impacts of human-caused global warming are given a boost by El Niño, a natural climate fluctuation.

"February joins the long streak of records of the last few months. As remarkable as this might appear, it is not really surprising as the continuous warming of the climate system inevitably leads to new temperature extremes," Carlo Buontempo, director of Copernicus, said in a statement.

Even in the context of back-to-back months of unprecedented temperatures, February has been extreme.

Global temperatures in the first half of the month in particular were "exceptionally high," according to the analysis. Four consecutive days, from February 8 to 11, were 2 degrees warmer than those same days pre-industrial times.

Restricting global heating to well below 2 degrees was a centerpiece of the Paris Agreement that almost every country signed up to in 2015. While scientists are much more concerned with longer-term warming, these temporary breaches are a clear and alarming sign of accelerating heating.

Global ocean temperatures were also off the charts last month, hitting 21.06 degrees — the highest average for any month on record, according to the Copernicus data, beating the previous record of 20.98 degrees set in August 2023.

Experts have expressed shock at just how hot the oceans have been, especially the North Atlantic, which has set a new daily temperature record every day since March 5 last year, according to Brian McNoldy, a senior research associate at the University of Miami Rosenstiel School.

“At times, the records have been broken by margins that are virtually statistically impossible,” McNoldy told CNN.

Record ocean heat has significant global impacts. Not only is it dangerous for marine life but it also fuels extreme weather, including scorching heat waves, intense rainfall and ferocious hurricanes.

The Copernicus data “tells a familiar story of warming temperatures and shifting patterns of weather,” said Hannah Cloke, a climate scientist and professor at the University of Reading in the UK. It is entirely consistent with what scientists have predicted would happen “as greenhouse gases continue to build up in our thin, life-giving atmosphere,” she told CNN.

It provides yet more evidence that the world needs to reduce emissions drastically and immediately, Cloke said.

If this evidence is ignored, Cloke added, “our children’s generation, and all those that follow, will be justified in pointing

## MANILA BULLETIN

### [Pinays in power](#)

By: Goddess Hope Libiran

Throughout history, women have shown exceptional resilience and fortitude, trumping societal limitations to take on leadership roles and serve as sources of inspiration for all. A study by the Ohio State University in 2020 reveals that people perceive female leaders to excel in both communicating with others and demonstrating consideration. Women tend to employ a higher degree of transformational leadership. Biology, meanwhile tells us that the female brain seems to afford women intuition, empathy, collaboration, self-control, and a balanced level of concern or conscientiousness, traits that, as it happens, contribute to outstanding leadership. In short, women were built to lead... And so, we lead!

Today, more Maria Claras are being installed in higher posts in Philippine governance. These Filipinas are not mere symbols of gender equality but real catalysts for progress, advocating for a more inclusive society.

As a public servant, I am happy to be part of a government where women are breaking barriers and playing substantial roles in shaping policies and driving positive change. Take the Department of Budget and Management (DBM), for instance, where majority of senior officials are abled and resourceful women, all under the banner of a budget secretary who can be considered, depending on the generation, as either the Madonna or the Taylor Swift of Philippine economics.

This Women's Month, we take the time to applaud the dedication and excellence of our female leaders whose achievements resonate beyond the corridors of power. Here is a short list of women leaders who, for me, are vigorously changing Philippine politics.

First Lady Liza Araneta Marcos | The Kingmaker

The literal mother of the Philippines right now, the First Lady Liza Araneta Marcos is a kingmaker, quite similar to her mother-in-law former FL Imelda Marcos. FL Liza served as the main strategist in President BBM's presidential campaign, organizing everything behind the scenes. She has also raised well three sons, namely Cong. Sandro, Simon, and Vinny.

FL Liza's assumption of her role marked the first instance the Philippines has had a First Lady since Loi Ejercito, the wife of former President Joseph Estrada. And it's not often a country gets a working First Lady whose presence is felt. Although she shuns the public spotlight, FL Liza's brilliance shines through.

The First Lady has championed programs in support of arts and crafts, as well as culture. She initiated programs centered on cultural enhancement, preservation, industry, and tourism, and inaugurated programs benefitting various artists, stressing her dedication to fostering and sustaining the arts. She also places a high priority on the rehabilitation of the Pasig River, aspiring to metamorphose it into a captivating attraction akin to the Thames and Seine.

FL Liza led the revitalization of Malacañang Palace, upgrading and modernizing its interiors with authentic Filipino designs. Note that the last major renovation took place in 1979 during the term of former FL Imelda Marcos. She also initiated the renovations of Bahay Ugnayan, Teus Mansion, and the Goldenberg Mansion, which now function as museums highlighting the rich culture and history shaped by Philippine Presidents. Because of FL Liza, the neglected parts of our Filipino heritage have been revived.

Vice President Sara Duterte | The Steel Magnolia

Vice President and Department of Education Secretary Sara Zimmerman Duterte-Carpio is a “steel magnolia,” a woman who embodies both conventional femininity and extraordinary strength.

Fondly addressed as “Inday,” the Visayan term of endearment for “beloved,” the Vice President is adored by so many Filipinos.

VP Inday Sara ticks all the boxes of what I think is the ideal woman leader. She is charming, intelligent, strong, brave, fierce, principled, and arguably, the most beautiful vice president in the world, at least as of writing. She looks gorgeous in photos, but even more breathtaking in real life.

In her role as Education Secretary, the public bears witness to VP Sara’s motherly demeanor at events whenever she reads books with children, visits classrooms, and generally interacts with young students. Her tough-talking leadership approach, meanwhile, becomes apparent when she advocates for the welfare of the underprivileged and engages with progressive groups.

In her steadfast focus on the needs and wellbeing of the Filipinos, she not only leads but stands as a champion of the people. The majestic eagle of the south, the pride of Mindanao, is a national power to reckon with.

Senator Loren Legarda | The Lioness

Senate President Pro Tempore Loren Legarda has, and will always be, an idol in Philippine politics. In the den of fierce lawmakers, she dominates the space with her strong presence and commanding voice. She is a figure of elegance, might, and intensity.

Senator Loren is a prominent environmental advocate, driving climate change awareness and legislation. She authored the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act, Clean Air Act, and Climate Change Act. Globally recognized for her dedication, she holds titles like Global Leader for Tomorrow and UNEP Laureate. She actively contributes to global initiatives, serving as a UNDRR Global Champion for Resilience and holding ambassadorial roles in climate change and disaster risk reduction.

Senator Loren's name will resound in the annals of Philippine governance through time for her transformative contributions to environmental advocacy and legislative initiatives that have left an enduring imprint on the nation's trajectory.

#### Sec. Mina Pangandaman | The Darling of the Philippine Cabinet

Number one in my book is the first Muslim budget secretary and the only woman in the current Philippine economic team, Amenah "Mina" F. Pangandaman. She chairs the Development Budget Coordination Committee, and cochairs the Intergovernmental Relations Body.

I greatly admire Sec. Mina and how committed she is in serving the Filipinos. She began as a research assistant in the Senate and, through blood, sweat, and tears, as well as an unwavering dedication to excellence and honest work, ascended to leadership positions in the executive branch.

She has this unexplainable charm that gets people to like her. Her enigma, pleasing personality, and physical attractiveness led her fellow public servants to give her the affectionate title "The Darling of the Philippine Cabinet."

Her passion, heart, and perseverance earned Sec. Mina the position she holds today. Working closely with her at the DBM, I have learned a great deal. One guiding principle of hers that I truly resonate with is "We rise by lifting others." This echoes in my mind 24/7.

Sec. Mina lives by this profound truth on the interconnected nature of fulfillment and success. She actively contributes to the growth, wellbeing, and success of those around her, creating a positive and collaborative environment. When we extend a helping hand,

offer support, or motivate others to reach new heights, we not only foster a sense of trust, unity, and goodwill but create a ripple effect that elevates us all.

Land Bank president Lynette Ortiz | The Rising Phoenix

The 11th president and CEO of Land Bank of the Philippines, Lynette V. Ortiz has more than three decades of expertise in banking and finance.

The first time I met her, I was immediately wowed. She exudes an imposing presence. She is prim and proper, well-dressed, and has this disarming smile. Everything about her is impeccable.

As a backgrounder, Lynette has occupied diverse senior positions in foreign and local financial institutions. Her extensive career has seen her excel in crucial areas like risk management, treasury, corporate finance, and capital markets. Before assuming her current position, Lynette made history as the first Filipino CEO of Standard Chartered Bank Philippines, where she was pivotal in devising strategies for the expansion of the local franchise across various client segments while ensuring sustainable financial performance.

Just like Secretary Mina, Lynette is also an advocate of digitalization. She has proven her proficiency and leadership, contributing significantly to the success and stability of the organizations she has been a part of.

## PHILIPPINE INFORMATION AGENCY

### [DENR urges public to adopt sustainable tourism practices](#)

By: Roi Anthoni Lomotan

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) urged the public to adopt sustainable tourism practices to protect the natural tourist spots from the ill-effects of climate change.

This was emphasized by DENR provincial environment and natural resources officer Viernov Grefalde in a recent climate forum, where he also warned that the province's tourism sector will suffer if there will be continued degradation of the environment.

"Tourism, being heavily reliant on national resources and the environment, is intricately linked to climate patterns," Grefalde said.

He explained that climate change could alter the natural landscape and ecosystems in the province.

Changes in the temperature and precipitation patterns could also affect local vegetation and wildlife, which could diminish the bio-diversity here.

Negros Oriental is home to Apo Island, a world-renowned tourist destination and a famous diving spot for dive enthusiasts.

Other natural attractions that can be found here include the Casaroro Falls in Valencia, Balisasayao Twin Lakes in Sibulan, Mt. Kanlaon Natural Park in Canlaon City, Manjuyod Sand Bar in Manjuyod, and dolphin watching in Bais City.

Top economic driver

Due to the abundance of natural tourist spots, tourism has been a top economic driver in the province.

The Negros Oriental Provincial Tourism Board reported that in 2023, there were 242,982 tourist arrivals in the province.

Grefalde said it is important to preserve the environment and maintain the beauty of the province's natural resources to ensure the livelihood of people and other sectors involved in tourism.

"We must prioritize sustainable practices in tourism industry, engage in rain forestation programs and initiatives, educate tourists about the importance of sustainable travel, and encourage them to make environment-conscious choice," he added.

DENR provincial information officer Jeanette Orcullo said part of the environment-conscious choices that travelers can do is to avoid single-use plastics and bring reusable water containers, utensils, and eco-bags.

She added that travelers can also reduce their carbon footprints by walking to their destination instead of riding motorcabs as much as possible as this will help lessen air pollution in the area.

Other sustainable travel practices include staying in eco-friendly establishments, patronizing locally-made products and cuisine, and respecting local cultures.

#### Threats to local

The climate forum was organized by the Rotary District 3860 here to intensify the campaign on environmental preservation.

In the forum, climate expert Engr. Ludwig Federigan said the destruction of coral reefs due to ocean acidification and rising sea temperature are threats to the local coastal tourism.

“These climate-related events will threaten not only the famous Apo Island, which is known for diving, but will include more than 200 species of fish found in the waters near Dumaguete, approximately 200 coral species, more than 100 micro invertebrate species, and seven sea grass species in four marine reserves in adjacent fish areas within the province,” Federigan said.

Federigan is the founding executive director of Young Environment Forum and director of Climate Tracker Asia Inc.

He stressed the importance of working together to avert and mitigate the negative impact of climate change in the province’s tourism sector.

“For one to maintain the pristine atmosphere in local beaches, these beaches require preservation and protection and would require collaboration with regulatory bodies - the local government units and other sectors of the society,” Federigan added.

## Lowly bamboo gets 'lift' from stakeholders

By: Pia Lorraine Francisco

Various stakeholders inked an agreement to enhance biodiversity conservation and climate change mitigation practices through the sustainable Caritas Bamboo Forest project, which gives the lowly bamboo the necessary lift.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the Capiz provincial government, the Caritas Philippines, the Gerry Roxas Foundation, and the other religious stakeholders signed the MOA which assigned the Capiz Archdiocesan Social Action Center (CASAC) or Caritas Capiz in the upland barangay of Agnaga in Cuartero town to address the pressing challenges brought by climate change and environmental crises affecting vulnerable communities.

Caritas Capiz Director Rev. Fr. Mark Granflor emphasized that the project not only aims to combat environmental challenges but also seeks to empower the local communities.

Caritas Capiz has tapped and trained 25 families as the project's community partners.

Punong Barangay Ruel Denosta said that aside from the bamboo forest project, CASAC is also helping community partners' children through the conduct of various review sessions which helped improve the children's school performance.

"It is a huge help for us because not everyone in our community has a stable job and income," Denosta shared.

To date, according to Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Officer Vicente Sardina, DENR under its National Greening Program has already planted 9,000 hectares in the province to develop the local bamboo industry.

"We also conducted the inventory of the existing natural bamboo plantation in the private area of the province with a total area of 700 hectares," Sardina noted.

DENR will also give technical assistance to the farmers by teaching them how to grow and nurture the bamboo seedlings.

Sardina stressed that the project will be a big boost to the development of the bamboo industry in the province because of the Caritas and funding support by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) through the Gerry Roxas Foundation.

Caritas Philippines said that the initiative will serve as a guiding light for environmental stewardship as well as community resilience and will set an example for other regions facing similar challenges.

## **Mindoro fishermen get motorized fiberglass fishing boats**

By: Gene Ace Sapit

The Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) recently turned over 20 units of fiberglass reinforced plastic boats to fisherfolk in the municipalities of Looc and Lubang in Occidental Mindoro.

Under the Pagbabago Livelihood Development Program, this intends to improve fisheries productivity and empower stakeholders towards food security, global competitiveness, and climate change adaptation.

In a statement, BFAR Mimaropa said the program aims to uplift the economic status of fisherfolk through the provision of disaster-resilient fishing boats, ensuring the resiliency and safety of fishermen at sea while empowering them and their families to become responsible resource users.

In coordination with the Office of Congressman Leody F. Tarriela, BFAR spearheaded the turnover of the boats which are fitted with 16-horsepower marine engines.

Following the turnover ceremony, BFAR personnel also conducted an inspection of the possible forward station in the municipality of Looc, under the Fisheries and Coastal Resilient Resource Planning and Management (FISHCRMM) component of the Philippine Fisheries Coastal Resiliency (FishCore) project.

## PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

### [Legarda urges women sector to actively join in climate action](#)

Senate President Pro Tempore Loren Legarda on Wednesday urged women employees of the Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development (DHSUD) to actively participate in climate action and disaster risk management efforts.

In her keynote speech during the DHSUD's Women's month celebration, Legarda said being proactive in women's rights will make the real change on top of discussing it.

"This celebration serves more than just a tribute to women; it is a moment to highlight the often-overlooked contributions of women, particularly on unpaid care work, and the qualities of nurturing and home management inherent in all individuals, irrespective of gender," she said.

Legarda said women have been disproportionately affected by environmental hazards, and are equally important in disaster preparedness, response, and recovery efforts.

With the empowerment of women in active participation in climate action and disaster risk reduction initiatives, the country could build more resilient and sustainable communities down the line

She noted that it is also important to integrate gender considerations into our resilience and adaptation efforts, especially in the face of climate change and natural disasters, adding the challenges of modern society have made the mental load of home management more and more challenging.

"We should also recognize that unpaid care work, predominantly shouldered by women, plays a crucial role in sustaining families and communities," she said,

Legarda was the principal author of Republic Act No. 11201 that established the DHSUD, which has become a robust workplace for women, with 436 out of 798 regular female employees.

It has adhered to Gender and Development policy, which fosters women empowerment in housing and urban development as she also challenged the department employees to create a more equitable society where the advancement of women translates to progress for everyone.

"This self-awareness that begins at home can then translate into the representation of women in urban design, planning-related decision-making, and professional and leadership roles, and by integrating gender perspectives into these processes, cities can develop comprehensive strategies addressing safety, food and water security, and waste reduction," she said.

## [Rural women in poor countries hit harder by climate shocks, says study](#)

Women farmers and female-headed households in low- and middle-income countries suffer larger losses due to climatic shocks, such as heat and flooding, than those by male-headed households, according to a new study Tuesday by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

The Unjust Climate noted that female-headed rural households, on average, have lost 8 percent more of their income during heat waves and 3 percent more during floods, compared to male-headed households.

The gender gap translates into a per capita reduction of USD83 due to heat stress and USD35 due to floods – reaching an annual total of USD37 billion and USD16 billion, respectively, it said.

The report used data from 24 low- and middle-income countries across five regions and spans 70 years of daily climate data, matched with the incomes of more than 100,000 households.

Climate change is also increasing the number of hours women are required to work and since women already have a higher burden of care in almost all countries, it exacerbates the situation.

On top of all of this, there are also persistent discriminatory social norms that women and girls face in agri-food systems, which may constrain how much they can work outside the home or how far they can travel for work.

The FAO estimated that closing labor and productivity gaps between women and men could significantly affect GDP, increasing it by 1 percent globally and reducing food insecurity for 45 million people.

The report found that projects and policies focusing on empowerment can significantly improve resilience to climatic and other shocks. It was estimated that empowering projects could lead to an additional 235 million families having higher resilience to climate shocks.

Addressing the gaps and promoting empowerment are crucial to helping families and women become more resilient to climate change.

The UN agency then urged specific strategies to address the particular vulnerabilities of rural households headed by women.

## THE PHILIPPINE STAR

### Addressing the water crisis

By: Joe Zaldarriaga

The threat of El Niño looms on the horizon, threatening to worsen the already strained water resources of the Philippines. The need for proactive measures to address the impending crisis has never been more urgent. Thankfully, there are legislative efforts such as the House Bill 9663 that will hopefully, pave the way for the establishment of the Department of Water Resources (DWR).

However, addressing the water crisis demands concrete actions and a collaborative approach involving both the public and private sectors. Implementation of comprehensive policies and concrete actions will mitigate the impact of water scarcity and ensure the uninterrupted flow of clean water to every Filipino household.

Several members of Congress, notably the authors of HB 9663, have effectively raised awareness about the urgent need for the government to address the recurring water crisis in the country. Among them is Albay 2nd District Rep. Joey Salceda, who plays a significant role in driving the bill forward. Salceda emphasized the necessity of establishing a water-focused agency to address the longstanding issue of treating water resources as a peripheral concern for the government.

In a published statement, Salceda highlighted the importance of the proposed department, stating, “It’s not just another new agency. The recurring water crisis calls for creating a department that will complete the circle regarding water management and enshrine the doctrine and policy that the state owns water. Its management is a state duty.”

This commitment to the creation of the DWR reflects recognition of the pressing need for a centralized authority to manage and safeguard our water supply effectively. With millions of Filipino families still lacking access to clean water, the potential consequences of water scarcity are dire, even more so with the threat of El Niño.

The DWR will serve as the primary authority for identifying, mapping, and managing all water resources in the country, excluding fisheries and aquaculture. It will also coordinate with public water organizations and stakeholders to develop and implement water resource management policies, including those related to sanitation, flood risk, and drought risk.

The proposed legislation also includes the establishment of the Water Regulatory Commission, an independent regulatory body with authority over all water service providers, both public and private. Additionally, the bill aims to restructure the National Water Resources Board into the National Water Resource Allocation Board, which will be responsible for approving the use of water resources, including dam construction.

This legislative action though must be complemented by a concerted effort to implement long-term solutions and embrace innovative approaches to water management.

I recently had a productive discussion with House Senior Deputy Speaker Aurelio “Dong” Gonzales on this matter and after quickly exchanging stories from our Pampanga roots, he shared some ideas that I believe can be instrumental in the advocacy.

Congressman Gonzales presented a compelling proposal for the construction of rainwater storage facilities. This innovative solution exemplifies the kind of forward-thinking approaches needed to address the water crisis effectively. By harnessing the power of nature and leveraging technology, these facilities have the potential to provide a sustainable source of non-potable water for domestic use while mitigating the impact of flooding and supporting agricultural irrigation.

Gonzales’ proposal aligns with the objectives of the DWR, as it complements efforts to enhance water resource management and resilience.

Likewise, the government must leverage the expertise and resources of the private sector to advance the cause of sustainable water management. By incentivizing private sector investment in innovative technologies, we can foster a culture of resilience in the face of environmental challenges.

President Marcos has emphasized the importance of collaboration between public and private entities to expedite vital water projects nationwide.

Speaking at an event in Davao, President Marcos reportedly said, “What this demonstrates is a proven approach in battling water scarcity, which is no longer a seasonal challenge but a perpetual threat that comes with climate change. It is for this reason that I continually stress the urgency of improving water security, and directed agencies concerned to expedite the completion of all water projects across the country.”

In line with this directive, President Marcos has instructed the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) and the Department of Environment and Natural

Resources (DENR) to explore opportunities for public-private partnerships in rehabilitating and enhancing the nation's water supply systems.

Legislative measures alone cannot fully address the complexity of the water crisis. Therefore, it is essential to implement long-term solutions alongside innovative approaches to water management. The private sector plays a crucial role in this endeavor, contributing to water conservation efforts and investing in sustainable practices to safeguard our water resources for future generations.

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