



NEWS ROUNDUP

13 MARCH 2023 [08:00 am]

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CCC IN THE NEWS:

- PH hosts first WIM ExeCom meeting after historic UN climate 'loss and damage' deal

ABS CBN

[Climate-stressed Iraq says will plant 5 million trees](#)

By: Agence France Presse

BASRA, Iraq -- Iraq's prime minister on Sunday announced a campaign to combat the severe impacts of climate change on the water-scarce country, including by planting five million palms and trees.

AP NEWS

[Oregon eyes mandate for climate change lessons in schools](#)

By: Claire Rush

SALEM, Ore. (AP) — Oregon lawmakers are aiming to make the state the second in the nation to mandate climate change lessons for K-12 public school students, further fueling U.S. culture wars in education.

BUSINESS WORLD

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By: Sheldeen Joy Talavera

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By: Luisa Maria Jacinta C. Jocson

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GMA NEWS ONLINE

[DENR: Mindoro oil spill may affect over 2k hectares of coral reefs, mangroves](#)

By: Richa Noriega

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) on Friday said more than 2,000 hectares of coral reefs, mangroves, and seagrass can be potentially affected after a motor tanker carrying 800,000 liters of industrial fuel oil sank off Naujan, Oriental Mindoro.

MANILA STANDARD

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By: Julito G. Rada

Finance Secretary Benjamin Diokno said over the weekend the government's sound fiscal policies will ensure a healthy financial system.

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By: Maricel Cruz

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

[Bb. Pilipinas candidates discuss the environment in Fire Prevention Month](#)

By: Armin P. Adina

MANILA, Philippines—As the country observes Fire Prevention Month this March, Binibining Pilipinas candidates who were Miss Philippines Earth queens discussed the relationship between the environment and incidents of fire.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

[PH Army plants 126K fruit-bearing trees](#)

By: Priam Nepomuceno

MANILA – The Philippine Army (PA) showed its support for President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.'s campaign to plant 1 million fruit trees before the end of his term by planting 126,000 fruit-bearing trees in its various camps and bases nationwide.

[Scientists 'beacons of light' toward nat'l development - PBBM](#)

By: Filane Mikee Cervantes

MANILA – President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Friday urged the country's scientists and experts to continue broadening their fields of expertise as they are considered as "beacons of light" toward the country's development.

RAPPLER

[Green glossary: Breaking down the carbon jargon](#)

By: Cherry Salazar and Elyssa Lopez

Energy and environmental jargons about the climate crisis may appear overwhelming. Here are some commonly used terms and what they mean.

THE MANILA TIMES

[DoST: New GRS will improve disaster mitigation](#)

By: Red Mendoza

DUMANGAS, Iloilo: The Department of Science and Technology-Advanced Science and Technology Institute (DoST-ASTI) inaugurated on Friday its third ground receiving station (GRS) adjacent to the Iloilo Science and Technology University (ISAT-U) campus in P.D. Monfort, Dumangas, Iloilo.

[Marcos, Solidum cite science's role in society](#)

By: Jenica Faye Garcia

SCIENCE and Technology Secretary Renato Solidum Jr. over the weekend thanked President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. for recognizing the role of science in society.

[Villar wants Senate probe on oil spill](#)

By: Javier Joe Ismael

SEN. Cynthia Villar has filed Senate Resolution 537 directing the Senate Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Climate Change to conduct a probe into the oil spill from MT Princess Empress that sank off the coast of Naujan, Oriental Mindoro on February 28.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

[GOCCs urged to boost climate change program](#)

By: Louise Maureen Simeon

MANILA, Philippines — The Governance Commission for GOCCs (GCG) called on state-run firms to concretize their programs toward addressing climate change.

[Quezon City to host Philippines Earth Hour 2023 celebration](#)

By: Janvic Mateo

MANILA, Philippines — The Quezon City government will host the country's celebration of Earth Hour 2023 at the Quezon Memorial Circle on March 25.

ZAWYA

[UAE outlines key COP28 priorities in meeting with UN partners](#)

By: Tariq Al Fahaam & Hazem Hussein

NEW YORK - Dr. Sultan bin Ahmed Al Jaber, UAE Minister of Industry and Advanced Technology, Special Envoy for Climate Change, and COP28 UAE President-Designate, concluded his visit to the United States by meeting Secretary General António Guterres and holding close consultations with other key climate stakeholders at the United Nations.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

JOURNAL ONLINE

[PH hosts first WIM ExeCom meeting after historic UN climate 'loss and damage' deal](#)

In a historic first, the Philippines – through the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and in collaboration with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) – hosted the 18th Meeting of the Executive Committee (ExeCom) of the Warsaw International Mechanism (WIM) for Loss and Damage last February 28 in Makati City.

Information and Knowledge Management Division

ABS CBN

[Climate-stressed Iraq says will plant 5 million trees](#)

By: Agence France Presse

BASRA, Iraq -- Iraq's prime minister on Sunday announced a campaign to combat the severe impacts of climate change on the water-scarce country, including by planting five million palms and trees.

Oil-rich but war-battered Iraq suffers from extreme summer heat, frequent droughts, desertification and regular dust storms, problems that are all exacerbated by a heating planet.

Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani told a climate conference that more than seven million Iraqis had already been affected by climate change and hundreds of thousands displaced by drought.

He cited challenges including "high temperatures, scarcity of rain and an increase in dust storms" as well as shrinking green spaces, which all "threaten food, health, environmental and community security".

Sudani, who took office in late October, said his government was launching "a grand afforestation initiative, which includes planting five million trees and palm trees in all governorates of Iraq".

In the spring of last year, Iraq was swept by about a dozen major sand or dust storms which blanketed Baghdad and other areas, causing breathing difficulties for thousands and forcing the closure of airports and schools.

Sudani said the government was working on a wider "Iraqi vision for climate action", speaking at a conference in the southern city of Basra attended by foreign ambassadors and UN officials.

The plan would include promoting clean and renewable energy, new irrigation and water treatment projects and reduced gas flaring, he said, without announcing details on funding or timeframes.

Sudani said Iraq was "moving forward to conclude contracts for constructing renewable energy power plants to provide one-third of our electricity demand by 2030".

- Palm groves vs dust storms -

Sudani also cited "efforts to preserve Iraq's rights in the waters of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers", the two mighty waterways whose flows have been reduced, with Iraqi officials blaming dams upstream in Turkey and Iran.

"The unilateral water control in the upstream countries increases the vulnerability of countries challenged by the effects of climate change," the Iraqi premier told the Basra meeting.

As part of the wider plan, the government cited the creation of green belts around cities to act as windbreaks against dust storms, in a country where 39 percent of the territory is desert or affected by desertification.

Iraq was once dubbed "the country of 30 million palm trees", but decades of conflict and failing public policies have ravaged the national symbol as urbanisation has shrunk traditional green spaces.

Lush palm groves that once protected large cities such as Baghdad or Karbala have given way to concrete neighbourhoods.

Sudani pledged that Baghdad would soon organise a regional conference to strengthen cooperation and exchange expertise on combating climate change and other environmental pressures.

"I call on friendly countries and all United Nations organizations to support us in facing the effects of climate change," Sudani said.

Saudi Arabia, Iraq's wealthy neighbor, in 2021 announced a plan to plant 10 billion trees on its territory within a decade, as well as to plant 40 billion additional trees in collaboration with other countries.

AP NEWS

[Oregon eyes mandate for climate change lessons in schools](#)

By: Claire Rush

SALEM, Ore. (AP) — Oregon lawmakers are aiming to make the state the second in the nation to mandate climate change lessons for K-12 public school students, further fueling U.S. culture wars in education.

Dozens of Oregon high schoolers submitted support of the bill, saying they care about climate change deeply. Some teachers and parents say teaching climate change could help the next generation better confront it, but others want schools to focus on reading, writing and math after test scores plummeted post-pandemic.

Schools across the U.S. have found themselves at the center of a politically charged battle over curriculum and how matters such as gender, sex education and race should be taught — or whether they should be taught at all.

One of the bill's chief sponsors, Democratic Sen. James Manning, said even elementary students have told him climate change is important to them.

"We're talking about third and fourth graders having a vision to understand how this world is changing rapidly," he said at a Thursday state Capitol hearing in Salem.

Connecticut has the only U.S. state law requiring climate change instruction, and it's possibly the first time such a bill has been introduced in Oregon, according to legislative researchers. Lawmakers in California and New York are considering similar bills.

Manning's bill requires every Oregon school district to develop climate change curriculum within three years, addressing ecological, societal, cultural, political and mental health aspects of climate change.

It's unclear how Oregon would enforce the law. Manning told The Associated Press that he is going to scrap an unpopular proposal for financial penalties against districts that don't comply, but didn't say whether another plan was coming.

For now, the bill doesn't say how many hours of instruction are needed for the state's education department to approve a district's curriculum.

Most states have learning standards — largely set by state education boards — that include climate change, although their extent varies by state. Twenty states and Washington, D.C., have specifically adopted what are known as the Next Generation Science Standards, which call for middle schoolers to learn about climate science and high schoolers to receive lessons on how human activity affects the climate.

New Jersey's education standards are believed to be the most wide-ranging. For the first time this school year, climate change is not just part of science instruction, but all subjects, like art, English and even PE.

Several teens testified at the state Capitol in favor of the bill. No students have submitted opposition testimony.

“In 100 years are we going to have to teach our children what trees are because there aren't any left? It's a thought that horrifies me,” said high school sophomore Gabriel Burke. “My generation needs to learn about climate change from a young age for our survival.”

Some teachers testified in support of the bill. But others say they're already struggling to address pandemic learning losses. Adding climate change on top of reading, writing, math, science and social studies is “a heavy lift that will end up coming down on the backs of teachers,” said Kyler Pace, a grade school teacher in Sherwood, Oregon.

Recent surveys conducted by Columbia University's Teachers College and the Yale Program on Climate Communication suggest that a majority of Americans think that climate change and global warming should be taught in school. But climate change is still seen by some as a politically divisive issue, and Pace said that mandating its instruction could inject more tension into schools.

Nicole De Graff, a self-described parents' rights advocate and former GOP legislative candidate, testified that her children, ages 9, 15, and 16, are “done being overwhelmed with things that are fear-based, like COVID.”

In Pennington, New Jersey, wellness teacher Suzanne Horsley aims for age-appropriate lessons on what can be a daunting topic. In her K-2 physical education classes at Toll Gate Grammar School, she plays a game with pretend trees, using bean bags representing carbon to show students that fewer trees leads to higher levels of atmospheric carbon.

In Horsley's lesson plan for teens, students learn how climate change disproportionately impacts low-income communities. They look at air quality maps in areas with higher industrial activity or car traffic.

There is a push for students to feel as though they have some ability to influence their world, Horsley said. "Whether it's conserving water or finding ways to plant more trees or take care of the trees that already exist ... they want to feel empowered."

BUSINESS WORLD

Biofertilizer shift to benefit from expertise in state universities

By: Sheldeen Joy Talavera

A SHIFT to biofertilizer will allow users to tap an extensive array of know-how residing in state universities and research agencies, a government researcher said.

“I think we have a solid technological base on which we can build a biofertilizer program,” according to Roehlano M. Briones, senior research fellow from the Philippine Institute of Philippine Studies, speaking by phone to BusinessWorld.

The government has ordered greater use of biofertilizer as an import-replacement strategy, following the disruption in the fertilizer market in the wake of the Ukraine war.

“Definitely, there is a large scope for replacement in the medium to long term. That is why, if you want to realize that in the next five years, you have to start now,” Mr. Briones said.

Mr. Briones said that most of the chemical fertilizers used in the Philippines are imported.

Chemical fertilizers require synthesizing major nutrients, especially nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium, using intensive industrial processes.

He said urea — a white crystalline compound containing nitrogen — uses ammonium as raw material.

“You draw in nitrogen from the atmosphere using the Haber-Bosch Process. Very intensive in use of chemical reactions,” he said.

Biofertilizer, on the other hand, uses crop residue or animal manure enriched with microorganisms using biological processes.

Mr. Briones added that there is no current standard process for producing biofertilizer, because there are many varieties.

Manure-based fertilizer, he said, can be sourced from livestock farms and produced using a biodigester, in which the raw material will undergo anaerobic composition to become a slurry, which then can be used as a fertilizer.

“For overall soil health and long-term sustainability of your agricultural production, biofertilizer is more favorable. There is also an additional benefit, and it is very important (in addressing) climate change,” he said.

He noted that biofertilizer-treated soil can store more carbon, which can mitigate greenhouse gases.

Marlon B. Deblois, a senior agriculturist with the Fertilizer and Pesticide Authority, said the yield performance of biofertilizer varies widely, depending on the area treated or the season in which it is used.

“Biofertilizers give off different nutrients (depending on the) microorganism,” he told BusinessWorld by telephone.

Mr. Briones said biofertilizer must also be used in conjunction with other fertilizers, though supplementation with biofertilizer means that “At least you can replace a lot of chemical fertilizer.”

The Philippine Rice Research Institute, recommends using a combination of organic and inorganic fertilizer, which it calculates can save farmers P2,000-P4,000 per hectare, depending on the amounts used, timing, and type of fertilizer employed.

According to Danilo H. Ramos, who chairs the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP), a bag of urea currently costs at least P2,000.

“I heard from our scientists that it is indeed possible as long as there is political will and a program from the government, not rely on foreign inputs,” he told BusinessWorld.

He said farmers have been sustaining losses even before the fertilizer crisis. He cited a 2019 KMP case study in Nueva Ecija estimating the cost of production at P69,000 per hectare, when a bag of urea cost only P800.

He also said any impact from using biofertilizer could be offset by the ongoing government push in favor of hybrid rice seeds.

According to Mr. Ramos, hybrid varieties are expensive and cannot be used for the succeeding cropping season. They are also fertilizer and pesticide-intensive, which keeps farmers in debt.

Finance dep't studying feasibility of carbon tax

By: Luisa Maria Jacinta C. Jocson

THE FINANCE department is still looking into the feasibility of implementing a carbon tax in the country. "We're still studying the feasibility (of the tax). Unlikely that it will become a bill within the year," Finance Undersecretary Maria Cielo D. Magno said in a text message.

The Finance department earlier said it is considering a carbon tax to encourage businesses that emit carbon dioxide to shift to sustainable practices. The country currently does not have any explicit form of carbon pricing.

A carbon pricing scheme in the Philippines could raise up to \$7 billion in revenues by 2030, according to an earlier study by the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Albay Rep. and House Ways and Means Committee Chair Jose Maria Clemente S. Salceda said that the legislature is waiting for the government's carbon pricing proposal.

"We will take up any carbon tax proposal that comes from the Department of Finance (DoF). So far, there is not yet an official administration version. So, we will wait for that, and our timeline will depend on that," he said in a Viber message.

The DoF previously said that the carbon tax is one of its priority measures. Revenues raised from carbon taxes are typically used to fund programs that mitigate greenhouse gases and boost sustainability.

A tax on carbon emissions was included in the fiscal consolidation plan proposed by then-Finance Secretary Carlos G. Dominguez III last year. It was part of package 3, which was to be implemented in 2025.

Mr. Salceda said the Philippines "disproportionately suffers" from the impact of carbon emissions, especially from other countries.

"If anything, more advanced countries and major polluters should pay a carbon tax and compensate countries like us for the damage," he said.

However, Mr. Salceda said the government should prioritize renewable energy instead of a carbon tax.

“We emit around 1.32 tons of carbon per capita versus 4.4 tons per capita worldwide, so I would say an energy transition to renewables is more urgent for the Philippines than a direct carbon tax,” he said.

“The closest we have to carbon taxes is fuel excise taxes and to some degree, automobile excise taxes and the road users’ tax. I support updating the MVRUT (motor vehicle road user’s tax) and fixing our automobile tax system,” he added.

More than half or 52.4% of greenhouse gas emissions in the Philippines are subjected to a positive Net Effective Carbon Rate in 2021, unchanged since 2018, according to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. In 2021, fuel excise taxes covered 52.4% of emissions.

Analysts said a carbon tax would not just raise revenues but also promote environmental sustainability.

“Carbon taxes are a vital tool to address carbon emissions and also raise revenue that should be plowed back to environmental and climate investments,” Antonio Gabriel M. La Viña, a lawyer, educator and environmental expert, said in a text message.

Ateneo de Manila University Economics Professor Leonardo A. Lanzona said in an e-mail that carbon taxes would also address the problem of climate change and promote green jobs.

Mr. La Viña said the carbon tax should be designed “not to be regressive” and should not be passed to consumers.

“It must be based on the polluters pay principle and consistent with principles of climate justice and a just transition,” he added.

Mr. Lanzona said the government should also ensure revenues will be used to make the shift to sustainable practices easier.

“All of these benefits will not be achieved unless the government uses the tax revenues to create an environment that will make it easier for firms and industries to shift to more environmentally friendly alternatives,” he said.

Mr. Lanzona cited training and education programs for workers to develop skills in green industries, incentivizing energy efficiency industries such as electric vehicle

manufacturing, and increasing public investments in renewable energy sectors like solar and wind power.

“Unless the necessary logistics and policies are in place, the tax can be a source of inflation as the tax can be transferred to the consumers in the form of higher commodity prices,” he added.

The Philippines has committed to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 75% by 2030.

GMA NEWS ONLINE

DENR: Mindoro oil spill may affect over 2k hectares of coral reefs, mangroves

By: Richa Noriega

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) on Friday said more than 2,000 hectares of coral reefs, mangroves, and seagrass can be potentially affected after a motor tanker carrying 800,000 liters of industrial fuel oil sank off Naujan, Oriental Mindoro.

Based on the initial findings, the DENR said approximately 591 hectares of coral reefs, 1,626 hectares of mangroves and 362 hectares of seagrass or seaweeds can be potentially affected.

The DENR said there are 21 locally managed marine protected areas located in Oriental Mindoro.

Also at risk is the Verde Island Passage—the globally recognized center of the center of marine shorefish biodiversity—according to DENR's potential impact map based on the last known location of MT Princess Empress.

So far, the most affected area is the town of Pola, which already declared a state of calamity as the seawater and shoreline there have turned black while various species of fish have reportedly died.

Meanwhile, the University of the Philippines- Diliman College of Science Marine Science Institute (UPD-CS MSI) released a statement saying the oil spill may eventually affect 24,000 hectares of coral reef—one and a half times the area of Quezon City.

"The oil has reportedly reached the shores of the coastal towns of Naujan, Pola, and Pinamalayan. With the direction of the wind and the waves, the oil might reach the southern tip of Mindoro in a matter of days," said UPD-CS MSI in a statement released Friday.

"At risk is over 24,000 hectares of coral reef area in Mindoro alone—from Bulalacao, Oriental Mindoro, all the way to San Jose, Occidental Mindoro."

Along with the UPD-CS MSI, other representatives from different agencies and institutions such as UP-Visayas (UPV), Mindanao State University-Iligan Institute of Technology (MSU-IIT), the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR),

and the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) has been deployed onsite to assess and assist the situation on the ground.

MT Princess Empress was carrying 800,000 liters of industrial fuel oil when it sank due to strong waves on February 28.

Oriental Mindoro Governor Humerlito Dolor on Friday said he suspended fishing in areas affected due to possible water toxification.

The DENR has recommended deploying health workers to monitor and address possible health impacts on the community in coordination with the Department of Health.

It also suggested creating a cash-for-work program for the coastal cleanup, as a short-term intervention to provide temporary employment.

The Philippine Coast Guard (PCG), meanwhile, has placed an oil spill bloom to contain the spill and deployed divers and marine experts to help in the containment effort.

Authorities are still investigating the cause of the sinking.

MANILA STANDARD

Diokno: Financial system remains sound and healthy

By: Julito G. Rada

Finance Secretary Benjamin Diokno said over the weekend the government's sound fiscal policies will ensure a healthy financial system.

"Rest assured the Department of Finance stands ready to support the FMAP in safeguarding the health of our financial system through sound, responsive, and progressive fiscal policies," Diokno said during the Fund Managers Association of the Philippines' 16th annual convention at the Crimson Resort and Spa Boracay on March 11.

FMAP is an organization composed of local equity and fixed-income fund managers that guide the investing public through professional fund management that adheres to ethical standards and global practices.

Diokno said that amid the persisting global economic challenges, "a financially inclusive and vibrant economy is better equipped to absorb shocks and remains resilient in economic crises."

He said the Philippine economic team had prepared three forward-looking plans that map out the trajectory for the next five years.

The Marcos administration's 8-Point Socioeconomic Agenda lays out strategic interventions to address immediate concerns such as taming inflation, reducing economic scarring brought about by the pandemic and generating job opportunities.

He said over the medium term, the agenda is to create more, better quality and green jobs through higher investments in infrastructure, human capital development and digitalization.

These huge financing needs will be supported by the Philippines' first Medium-Term Fiscal Framework which introduces reforms to enhance the fairness and efficiency of the tax system, improve tax administration mainly through digitalization and promote fiscal sustainability.

The MTFF will help the government exercise prudence in public spending in order for the country to sustain infrastructure spending by at least 5 percent to 6 percent of gross domestic product annually.

Diokno said through these strategies, the government aims to bring down the debt-to-GDP ratio to less than 60 percent by 2025 and further down to 51 percent by 2028 while reducing the budget deficit to 3.0 percent of GDP by 2028.

“Right now, we’re ahead of this metric. Our debt-to-GDP ratio by the end of 2022 was 60.9 percent— lower than the government’s target of 61.8 percent,” he said.

The government’s budget deficit also narrowed down to 7.3 percent of GDP from 8.6 percent in 2021, and is below the target of 7.6 percent set in the MTFF.

The Philippine Development Plan 2023-2028 will work in synergy with the two frameworks as it integrates tried and tested strategies in the formulation and identification of policies, programs, and legislative priorities for the next few years.

Measures that will re-energize the capital markets, boost investor confidence and enhance financial inclusion will be implemented under the plan.

Diokno also cited the Real Estate Investment Trust which was a landmark legislation that proved to be a powerful tool for boosting property development in the country and opening reliable investment opportunities to Filipinos.

The DOF is also pushing for the Capital Market Development Act to deepen the domestic capital markets by building a sustainable corporate pension system.

Diokno said the participation of large investors such as pension funds would help expand and diversify the investor base and mobilize a long-term supply of capital that could support countless investment opportunities.

“Our efforts are gaining ground. But we will not be complacent. Financial markets are inherently risky, and risks are not directly visible. As such, I call on the FMAP to remain vigilant and proactive in strengthening the resilience of our markets through effective and efficient fund management,” Diokno said.

House passes bill for evacuation centers in every town and city

By: Maricel Cruz

The leadership of the House of Representatives has expressed confidence that the Senate will prioritize the passage of a bill that seeks to establish evacuation centers in every city and municipality in the country to serve as immediate and temporary accommodation for people who have been displaced by disasters, calamities, or other emergency events such as typhoons, floods, and storm surges.

The lower chamber led by Speaker Martin Romualdez approved on third and final reading House Bill (HB) 7354 with an overwhelming 307 votes.

Aside from Romualdez, other principal authors of the measure were Tingog party-list Reps. Yedda Marie Romualdez and Jude Acidre.

The bill's authors said the enactment of the measure would be of great help to people who have been displaced by disasters, calamities, or other emergency events.

Aside from those mentioned above, the evacuation centers may also be used by victims of fire, and the outbreak of illnesses and diseases that present imminent danger to life and property, according to

Section 2 of the bill. The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRMC) and local executives of provinces, cities, and municipalities are tasked to identify areas to be given the highest priority in the establishment of new evacuation centers.

"It shall be the policy of the State to uphold the constitutional right of the people for the protection of their life and property and the promotion of the general welfare.

Towards this end, the State shall establish and maintain a safe, fully-equipped, and fully-operational evacuation center, responsive to environmental or climatic events, in recognition of the vulnerability of the

Philippines to climate change, and hazards such as the occurrence of severe floods, typhoons, and other natural or human-induced disasters, illnesses, diseases and other factors that affect the environment," HB 7354 noted.

“It shall be the continuing policy of the State to ensure the structural capacity of evacuation centers and to provide the necessary and appropriate support facilities,” it added.

The bill also provides that existing structures that can meet the minimum requirements or can be upgraded to effectively serve as evacuation centers may be designated as such according to the needs of the LGU concerned.

An LGU included in the priority list is also allowed to improve schools or existing structures used as evacuation centers by making these compliant with the minimum requirements such as location and structural capacity. Under the bill, the LGU is also in charge of the operation, supervision, and management of evacuation centers.

HB 7354 provides that the initial amount necessary for the construction and maintenance of multi-purpose gyms will be charged against the budget provided for this purpose under the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH).

On the other hand, the construction and maintenance of additional facilities for schools already used as evacuation centers shall be charged against the appropriations for the Department of Education. Thereafter, such amounts necessary for the continued implementation will be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

According to market research provider Statista, the Philippines, which sits within the Pacific Ring of Fire, is prone to earthquakes and volcanic eruptions, as well as flooding due to heavy rains, stressing the need for evacuation centers throughout the country.

In 2021, damages caused by natural disasters amounted to over 60 billion Philippine pesos, mainly due to storms that occurred during the year, it added.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Bb. Pilipinas candidates discuss the environment in Fire Prevention Month

By: Armin P. Adina

MANILA, Philippines—As the country observes Fire Prevention Month this March, Binibining Pilipinas candidates who were Miss Philippines Earth queens discussed the relationship between the environment and incidents of fire.

“The Philippines is a tropical country, so we have an even greater challenge in trying to mitigate fires, or trying to prevent fires, especially with the rising temperatures of our atmosphere,” Sofia Lopez Galve from the province of Rizal told the Inquirer during the candidates’ visit to the Art in Island multi-media museum in Quezon City on Feb. 28.

“It’s very important that we prevent fires in our households because these fires, especially wildfires in the forests, these are killing marine habitats, marine biodiversity, because of the silts and the fumes that are coming from these wildfires,” continued Galve, who was crowned Miss Philippines Ecotourism in a virtual competition in 2021.

Gianna Llanes from Palayan City said that when she was crowned Miss Philippines Water in an online contest in 2020, she advocated natural disaster risk education. “At that time, I was living in Mandaluyong City, which is known as one of the cities where homes are destroyed because of fires. And that was the main reason why I chose [it] as my advocacy,” she explained.

“Things like these happen, they’re natural phenomena. But the damage that it causes is because of human action. That’s why it’s really important to keep each other aware on how we can really save our environment through small ways in our homes, and generate that conversation with friends and family on the little actions that we can do to decrease the damage,” Llanes continued.

For 2016 Miss Philippines Air Kiaragiel Gregorio from Cabanatuan, incidents of fire give more reason to take a more holistic approach in campaigning for the environment. “Disasters such as wildfires are occurring because of climate change, it all boils down to climate change. It is because of human action,” she said.

“I think here in the Philippines, we can do more action not just in trying to prevent the damage of climate change, but also on how we can protect ourselves from incidents such as wildfires or fires in general, by creating a better awareness on how we can address and what we can do in times of emergency,” Gregorio continued.

The three “Earth warriors” are competing in a field of 40 aspirants for this year’s Bb. Pilipinas pageant. The coronation show will be staged at the Smart Araneta Coliseum at the Araneta City in Quezon City, tentatively scheduled for May. The organization has not disclosed yet how many crowns will be awarded in this year’s competition.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

[PH Army plants 126K fruit-bearing trees](#)

By: Priam Nepomuceno

MANILA – The Philippine Army (PA) showed its support for President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.'s campaign to plant 1 million fruit trees before the end of his term by planting 126,000 fruit-bearing trees in its various camps and bases nationwide.

This came as the PA and the Department of Agriculture (DA) on Thursday signed a "memorandum of a partnership agreement" that commenced the "Raising of One Million Fruit-Bearing Trees" project.

Army Chief of Staff Maj. Gen. Potenciano Camba and DA Senior Undersecretary Domingo Panganiban signed the pact, Army spokesperson Col. Xerxes Trinidad said in a statement Thursday night.

"The PA and the DA team up to plant 1 million trees up to the end of President Ferdinand 'Bongbong' Marcos Jr.'s term during a nationwide simultaneous tree-planting activity spearheaded by Army and DA officials at the Security and Escort Battalion's Kamayan Area, Installation Management Command, Fort Bonifacio, Metro Manila on March 9, 2023," Trinidad said.

He also said major units of the PA participated in the activity through the collective planting of fruit-bearing trees in various Army camps and reservations nationwide.

"The said activity supports Presidential Marcos' environmental protection and food security programs in consonance with the PA's climate change adaptation by catalyzing private-public partnerships through the whole-of-nation approach," he added.

This activity is part of the events held in celebration of the PA's 126th founding anniversary, which falls on March 22, with the theme Army@126: Strong, United, and Reliable.

As this developed, PA uniformed and civilian personnel participated in the 1st Quarter Nationwide Simultaneous Earthquake Drill (NSED) at the Army headquarters in Fort Bonifacio, Metro Manila on Thursday.

Soldiers and civilian human resource from the Army headquarters' offices and post units executed the "Duck, Cover, and Hold" procedure at their respective workstations at the blast of the siren, which signaled the start of the drill at about 2 p.m.

Participants then converged at the flagpole area for the accounting of personnel.

"The PA's participation in the quarterly nationwide earthquake drill is part of the organization's thrust to ensure disaster preparedness and resilience among its personnel," Trinidad said.

The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council issued Memorandum 006, s. 2023 on the "Resumption of the Conduct of Traditional In-Person Earthquake Drill" to help the public prepare for a possible catastrophic earthquake or the "Big One" that may hit the country.

Scientists 'beacons of light' toward nat'l development - PBBM

By: Filane Mikee Cervantes

MANILA – President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Friday urged the country's scientists and experts to continue broadening their fields of expertise as they are considered as "beacons of light" toward the country's development.

During the 2023 Annual Scientific Conference and 90th General Membership Assembly of the National Research Council of the Philippines (NRCP) in Pasay City, Marcos said that by integrating science and good governance, the nation can build a much-improved future for the next generation of Filipinos.

"I cannot think of a better, a more qualified group of individuals who will help clear the shadows of doubt and become beacons of light, than our women and men in the fields of science," the President said.

He told attendees that using science and technology, as well as evidence-based solutions could lead to more meaningful action and policies to achieve national development.

"Imagine what we can accomplish together once we light our path with the foundations of science: sustainable agricultural technology that will help our farmers; cities that will run on green energy; safe and affordable medicines for diseases that were once thought incurable, amongst many others successes that we have seen from the scientific field," Marcos added.

He said scientists and experts could help alter the negative perception of "volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous" (VUCA) global environment by changing the traditional ways of seeing and building the world.

"Indeed, this year's theme speaks well of your community's stand to challenge the uncertainties ahead with innovation, with research, and evidence-based solutions," Marcos said, referring to the summit's focus on achieving a "Visionary, Understandable, Clear, Agile, Digital, and Diverse" (VUCAD2) future.

The President congratulated the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) and the NRCP for successfully organizing the 2023 Annual Scientific Conference.

President Marcos also commended the country's outstanding scientists, researchers, and experts from various fields for their invaluable contributions that form part of the solid foundations of Philippine society.

RAPPLER

[Green glossary: Breaking down the carbon jargon](#)

By: Cherry Salazar and Elyssa Lopez

Energy and environmental jargons about the climate crisis may appear overwhelming. Here are some commonly used terms and what they mean.

Carbon reduction (also decarbonization)

The process of reducing the amount of greenhouse gas emissions that an entity, a company, or a state produces. This may be done by switching to more climate-friendly and cleaner solutions, such as using renewable energy sources. As of 2020, at least 21% of the power generated in the Philippines came from renewable power plants. The government aims to increase that number to 35% by 2030.

Climate change (also called global warming, climate crisis, and climate emergency)

This refers to long-term changes in weather patterns and temperatures. According to the United Nations, human activities have been the main driver of climate change since the 1800s, primarily due to the burning of fossil fuels.

Distributed Energy Resources (DER)

These are smaller power sources – including solar photovoltaic panels and energy storage systems – that could be aggregated to provide the power necessary to meet regular consumer demand.

Downstream

This refers to the distribution and sale of oil and natural gas to end users or consumers for power and non-power applications, such as petroleum products. Sectors consuming energy include transport, households, industries, and agriculture, among others.

Emission

In the context of the climate crisis, this refers to the discharge of greenhouse gas (GHG), atmospheric gasses that trap heat and contribute to global warming. Carbon dioxide

(CO₂) is the most common greenhouse gas. Total emission is referred to as carbon footprint.

Emissions may either be direct or vented, or indirect or fugitive. Direct or vented emissions are intentionally generated for operational or safety requirements of an activity or facility, while indirect or fugitive emissions are unintended leakages in the operations of a facility or entity.

The GHG Protocol, a global framework created by the World Resources Institute that measures GHG emissions of private and public entities, also defines indirect emissions as “consequences of activities from a reporting entity, but occur at sources owned or controlled by another entity.”

Energy mix

This refers to the range of primary energy sources for various purposes in a geographic area. In 2020, coal remained a major contributor to the Philippines’ energy mix, accounting for 56%. Meanwhile, renewable energy took a 34.2% share, oil provided 29.2%, and natural gas supplied 5.8%.

Environmental Compliance Certificate (ECC)

This is a document issued by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Environmental Management Bureau (DENR-EMB) to a project proponent that allows a proposed activity or undertaking to proceed upon a positive review of the environmental impact statement (EIS). ECC applications can be accessed online through the DENR website.

According to the DENR, the ECC certifies that “based on the representations of the proponent, the proposed project or undertaking will not cause significant negative environmental impact.” The ECC includes specific measures and conditions to mitigate the impacts of a project during construction, operation, and abandonment.

Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)

This is a document submitted by a project proponent to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources – Environmental Management Bureau (DENR-EMB) that specifies impacts on the environment and mitigation measures of proposed activities or projects.

Floating storage and regasification unit (FSRU)

The FSRU is a floating or offshore vessel that allows for the transport, storage, and regasification of liquefied natural gas (LNG).

Fossil fuels

These are non-renewable energy sources formed naturally from the remains of plants and animals. They are extracted then burned as fuel, which releases carbon dioxide to the atmosphere. Coal, oil, and natural gas are fossil fuels. In 2020, the Philippines sourced 55% of its power from coal-fired power plants, while natural gas-fired power plants contributed 21%, and oil-based power plants brought in 4%.

Green Energy Auction Program (GEAP)

A mechanism from the Renewable Energy Law that allows the auction of a specified amount of power to be purchased at a certain ceiling price set by the Energy Regulatory Commission. The mechanism allows DUs to follow through on their RPS requirements.

Green Energy Option Program (GEOP)

A mechanism from the Renewable Energy Law that allows commercial and industrial customers with an average monthly peak demand of 100 kilowatts (kW) to contract their power requirements directly with renewable energy suppliers.

Greenhouse gas (GHG)

This refers to atmospheric gas that traps heat and contributes to global warming. Carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane (CH₄), and nitrous oxide (N₂O) are some of the more common greenhouse gasses.

Liquefied natural gas (LNG)

Natural gas that is cooled down to about -160 degrees Celsius, changing it to liquid form that is easier to store and transport. To be utilized, LNG is converted back into its gaseous form through reheating, in a process called regasification.

Methane (CH₄)

This is the main component of liquefied natural gas (LNG) and is considered a greenhouse gas. It has more heat-trapping potential than carbon dioxide but has a relatively shorter lifetime, according to the Environmental Defense Fund and the World Meteorological Organization.

Midstream

This refers to the transportation and processing of oil and natural gas.

Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) (also referred to as climate target or climate promise)

As defined by the United Nations, the NDC is “a climate action plan to cut emissions and adapt to climate impacts.” States that are party to the 2015 Paris Agreement are required to establish an NDC and update it every five years.

The Philippines in 2021 committed to a 75% GHG emissions reduction and avoidance by 2030.

Paris Agreement

The Paris Agreement is an international treaty adopted in 2015 that aims to avert climate catastrophe. A total of 196 parties, including the Philippines, have submitted plans outlining commitments to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

Philippine Energy Plan (PEP)

This is the Philippine government’s comprehensive blueprint for energy security and resilience.

Power generation mix

This refers to the combination of the energy sources used to generate electricity in a given geographic region. In the Luzon grid, at least 14% of power comes from renewable energy (RE) sources. The Visayas grid enjoys 48%, while the Mindanao grid sources at least 30% of its power from RE.

Renewable Energy (RE)

Natural resources that do not diminish over time. Renewable energy sources include solar, hydro, wind, and geothermal. RE sources generate 21% of the Philippines' power supply.

Renewable Portfolio Standards (RPS)

A mechanism from the Renewable Energy Law mandating distribution utility companies to acquire, on a yearly basis, at least 2.5% of their power to be tapped from renewable energy resources.

Sustainable

In the context of climate change, what is considered sustainable are practices that help lessen or avert climate catastrophe. This could mean changing long-accepted practices that may help slow down the warming of the planet.

System Impact Study (SIS)

A study conducted by the National Grid Corporation of the Philippines (NGCP) to determine the adequacy and capability of the grid to accommodate a new power plant connection.

Transmission grid

This is the interconnected electrical network responsible for the transport of energy from power-generating sources to distribution utilities and into consumer homes and industrial businesses. In the Philippines, the National Grid Corporation of the Philippines, a private entity, is responsible for the operations of the country's power grid.

Upstream

This refers to the exploration and extraction of oil and natural gas.

Watt-hours

Watt-hours are a measurement of the total amount of electricity used during a certain period. One kilowatt (kW) is equivalent to 1,000 watts. One kilowatt-hour is one-hour of use of electricity at 1,000 watts.

In the Philippines, the average monthly electricity consumption of one household is 200 kWh, according to Meralco estimates. Megawatt (MW) is typically used to measure the consumption of a certain area or the output of a power plant. One MW is equivalent to one million watts. A coal plant for example usually has an output of 600 MW. The Luzon Grid has a system peak demand of 13,125 MW.

Wholesale Electricity Spot Market (WESM)

The WESM is a venue for trading electricity in the Philippines, created by the Electric Power Industry Reform Act of 2001. Electricity distributors usually tap power resources from the WESM when power supply agreements cannot accommodate demand from electricity consumers.

THE MANILA TIMES

[DoST: New GRS will improve disaster mitigation](#)

By: Red Mendoza

DUMANGAS, Iloilo: The Department of Science and Technology-Advanced Science and Technology Institute (DoST-ASTI) inaugurated on Friday its third ground receiving station (GRS) adjacent to the Iloilo Science and Technology University (ISAT-U) campus in P.D. Monfort, Dumangas, Iloilo.

A GRS improves weather forecasting, which is an important aspect of disaster mitigation.

The Iloilo GRS has a 3.5-meter movable dish that is capable of tracking satellites in real time. Its collated information is processed by the Knowledge Center for Weather, Atmospheric, Astronomical and Geophysical Observation center near the earth station.

The facility is capable of receiving data and imagery from relevant satellites, including the Philippine-developed microsatellite Diwata-2, as well as future satellites that will be developed by Filipino engineers.

"The Iloilo ground station will provide DoST with the platform for research and development for the use of space data that would complement ground-based lightning measurements [which] will directly impact and substantially aid in our disaster risk reduction and management efforts, especially when faced with extreme weather events," Science and Technology Secretary Renato Solidum said in a recorded message.

Undersecretary for Research and Development Leah Buendia said that the station's capability to process large amounts of data close to real time will be extremely useful in monitoring weather patterns and other atmospheric phenomena.

"It is the bridge that connects us to the vast expanse of space and enables us to gather valuable information that has the potential to benefit our communities in countless ways," she said.

The project was implemented in partnership with Hokkaido University under the Understanding Lightning and Thunderstorms for Extreme Weather Monitoring and Information Sharing or ULAT program.

Other agencies that supported the endeavor include the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Space Administration, Philippine Council for Industry, Energy and Emerging Technology Research and Development, DoST Western Visayas and the Philippine Space Agency.

The program was funded by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the Japan Science and Technology Agency under an Official Development Assistance grant.

Takema Sakamoto, chief representative of JICA in the Philippines, said that the ground receiving station and the ULAT project is a clear demonstration of what Japan and the Philippines can do together to improve disaster risk reduction.

"Already, climate change has threatened the lives and safety of many people. Our cooperation with DoST-ASTI is indeed critical in the fight against climate change," Sakamoto said.

Dumangas Mayor Braeden John Biron said the establishment of the ground receiving station in his town would help spur economic development through space technology as well as possible foreign direct investment and even tourism.

ISAT-U President Dr. Raul Muyong said the GRS would be a useful learning tool for students when they offer the Bachelor of Science in Meteorology course in school year 2023-2024.

"This can be used as our laboratory facility for the BS Meteorology program and, at the same time, it will be used as a research component. We also expect that all other students can come here and see for themselves the facilities," Muyong said.

The other two Philippine ground receiving stations are located in the premises of the ASTI head office in Quezon City and in Davao City.

Marcos, Solidum cite science's role in society

By: Jenica Faye Garcia

SCIENCE and Technology Secretary Renato Solidum Jr. over the weekend thanked President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. for recognizing the role of science in society.

Speaking at the National Research Council of the Philippines' annual conference in Pasay City on Friday, Marcos said that science, along with good governance, had helped make society what it is now.

"It was science who provided the answers and it will continue to be science as we are continuing down the path of high technology ... and that is why we look to you, our eminent researchers, our eminent institutions, for the different solutions that we are going to need to have to face this new world that the pandemic has left us," Marcos said.

Research, Solidum said, has always been critical in the development of every country.

"To sustain our efforts in accelerating research and development in the Philippines, we need to concentrate on establishing and strengthening extensive networks of individuals who can help address the demand for knowledge, skills, and innovations," he said.

Investing in new technologies and equipment will help R&D assist the government in making quick and effective decisions, Solidum said.

"We emphasize that disasters can be averted by anticipating future scenarios and understanding the associated risks. Therefore, we contribute to the development of a society that is agile and ready to face the uncertainties of the future."

The Department of Science and Technology last month highlighted the need for programs and projects that will help mitigate the impact of climate change and strengthen the country's resilience amid natural disasters.

Villar wants Senate probe on oil spill

By: Javier Joe Ismael

SEN. Cynthia Villar has filed Senate Resolution 537 directing the Senate Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Climate Change to conduct a probe into the oil spill from MT Princess Empress that sank off the coast of Naujan, Oriental Mindoro on February 28.

"The oil spill has likewise affected the tourist destinations in Oriental Mindoro such as the Bihiya Beach, 3 Cottage, Long Beach K. I, Aguada Beach Resort, Oloroso Beach Resort, Munting Buhangin Tagumpay Beach Resort and Buhay na Tubig White Beach Resort in Oriental Mindoro, and even threatens to affect Boracay, the country's premiere tourist destination," said Villar, chairman of the Senate Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Climate Change.

"Apart from the environmental damage to the marine ecosystem, biodiversity, fisheries and tourism, the livelihood and health of the people in the area are already adversely affected by the said oil spill," she added.

Villar said that despite the initial assessment of the incident by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the Philippine Coast Guard and the Office of Civil Defense, no concrete action to contain the oil spill has been initiated.

The senator cited reports by University of the Philippines-Marine Science Institute experts, saying the oil spill can possibly affect over 36,000 hectares of coral reefs, mangroves and seagrass across Oriental Mindoro, Occidental Mindoro, Palawan and Antique.

A Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office monitoring report said that nine out of the 13 towns in Oriental Mindoro were already affected by the oil spill, posing threat to the livelihood and health of 10,362 families or 48,885 individuals.

MT Princess Empress was cruising from Limay, Bataan to Iloilo, carrying around 800,000 liters of industrial fuel when it encountered rough sea conditions resulting in engine trouble and the eventual sinking of the vessel.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

[GOCCs urged to boost climate change program](#)

By: Louise Maureen Simeon

MANILA, Philippines — The Governance Commission for GOCCs (GCG) called on state-run firms to concretize their programs toward addressing climate change.

During the Annual National Climate Change Expenditure Tagging (CCET) orientation, the GCG said the Philippines could transform and benefit as several projects will enhance the capacity and resilience of communities and ecosystems to natural hazards and climate change.

GCG commissioner Gideon Mortel said allotting a budget to projects geared toward climate-oriented objectives will yield positive repercussions for the country.

“Through the CCET, we become hopeful in seeing a country that can withstand torrents of typhoons, survive unexpected energy and water shortages, and overcome price inflation of food supply,” Mortel said.

The CCET has supported several projects under the government aimed at climate change resilience including water sufficiency, sustainable energy and food security, flood management, and national greening.

On the other hand, the Department of Budget and Management emphasized the importance of identifying environment-related programs and projects in the national budget.

Budget chief Amenah Pangandaman noted that climate change would continue to pose significant risks to economic development if it would not be addressed.

“Mainstreaming climate considerations in public financial management is crucial in climate change adaptation and mitigation,” she said.

The government has allocated P464.5 billion to address climate change for this year, representing 8.8 percent of the record P5.268 trillion budget.

Among the priorities include water sufficiency, sustainable energy, food security, ecosystem and environmental stability, climate smart industries and services, human security, and knowledge and capacity development.

Also included are disaster resilience, quick response, and flood management.

Quezon City to host Philippines Earth Hour 2023 celebration

By: Janvic Mateo

MANILA, Philippines — The Quezon City government will host the country's celebration of Earth Hour 2023 at the Quezon Memorial Circle on March 25.

In partnership with the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) –Philippines, the city will join over 7,000 cities from 193 countries that will commemorate what is considered one of the world's largest grassroots environmental movements.

“Local government units like Quezon City play a big part in raising awareness about the threats of climate change among our constituents. That's why every environmental program and initiative we have established and are currently planning are inclusive and responsive to the circumstances of our people,” Mayor Joy Belmonte said in a statement yesterday.

“The city's participation in Earth Hour signifies our strong commitment to push for climate justice as we head towards advancing inclusive, ambitious, and evidence-based climate action to provide a livable and quality community for all,” she added.

At 8:30 p.m. on March 25, the city government will switch off the lights of the pylon at the Quezon Memorial Circle and other city government-run buildings for an hour.

The local government encouraged citizens and business owners to also switch off non-essential lights during the activity.

“We are celebrating Earth Hour again in-person to show our stronger commitment and solidarity as a people who want a better future for our country. We want to make this the Biggest Hour for Earth because we are fighting the biggest concerns of the planet: climate change and biodiversity loss,” said WWF-Philippines executive director Katherine Custodio.

ZAWYA

[UAE outlines key COP28 priorities in meeting with UN partners](#)

By: Tariq Al Fahaam & Hazem Hussein

NEW YORK - Dr. Sultan bin Ahmed Al Jaber, UAE Minister of Industry and Advanced Technology, Special Envoy for Climate Change, and COP28 UAE President-Designate, concluded his visit to the United States by meeting Secretary General António Guterres and holding close consultations with other key climate stakeholders at the United Nations.

During his meeting with the Secretary-General, Dr. Al Jaber underscored the UAE's commitment to deepening cooperation with the UN on climate action ahead of the 28th Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP28), which will take place in Dubai from 30th November to 12th December 2023. From his side, the Secretary-General expressed his deep appreciation for the cooperation of the UAE's COP Presidency and accepted the President-Designate's invitation to attend COP28 in the UAE.

Dr. Al Jaber also outlined the UAE's key COP28 priorities across mitigation, adaptation, loss and damage, climate finance, and process innovation.

In this regard, the two sides discussed the urgent need to close the financing gap and to keep alive the goal of limiting global warming to 1.5°C.

Ambassador Lana Nusseibeh, Permanent Representative of the UAE to the UN, attended the meeting and underscored that the agendas and outcomes of the work of the UN General Assembly and COP28 should be mutually reinforcing and aligned.

Dr. Al Jaber also met Csaba Kőrösi, President of the UN General Assembly. The COP28 President-Designate highlighted the UAE's intention to work closely with Member States to deliver a COP28 for all – one that is inclusive of diverse stakeholders, accountable for commitments, and actionable on solutions.

Underscoring this commitment, Dr. Al Jaber briefed the Permanent Representatives of the European Union Member States on progress towards COP28 and potential areas of cooperation.

In a meeting with Catherine Russell, Executive Director of UNICEF, Dr. Al Jaber noted the importance of addressing the needs and priorities of children and young people at COP28.

In addition, Dr. Al Jaber met with Achim Steiner, Administrator of the UN Development Programme, to discuss how COP28 UAE will prioritise fragile and vulnerable communities affected most by the impacts of climate change.

Dr. Al Jaber also met with Sima Bahous, Executive Director of UN Women and discussed how COP28 will put gender equality at the heart of climate action and the entire COP process.

The meeting was also attended by Noura Al Kaabi, UAE Minister of State, and Lana Nusseibeh, Ambassador and UAE Permanent Representative to the United Nations.

On the sidelines of the 67th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW67), Dr. Al Jaber delivered keynote remarks at a high-level meeting to affirm the centrality of gender equality in ensuring a just energy transition and enhancing the effectiveness of climate finance.

The event was organised in partnership with the UAE Mission to the UN, UN Women, and the Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security. In his remarks, the COP28 President-Designate called on parties to identify ambitious gender deliverables for COP28 UAE.

“We want COP28 to be a COP of action, a COP of impact, a COP for all, and a COP of transformational progress. There is no way to achieve any of this vision without a fully inclusive approach that empowers all stakeholders to fully participate in the process and puts gender equality front and centre,” said Dr. Al Jaber. “Women’s leadership and full, equal, and meaningful participation is essential to our collective success.”

CCC IN THE NEWS:

JOURNAL ONLINE

[PH hosts first WIM ExeCom meeting after historic UN climate 'loss and damage' deal](#)

In a historic first, the Philippines – through the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and in collaboration with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) – hosted the 18th Meeting of the Executive Committee (ExeCom) of the Warsaw International Mechanism (WIM) for Loss and Damage last February 28 in Makati City.

Since its establishment during the 19th Conference of Parties (COP) to UNFCCC in Warsaw, Poland in November 2013, the WIM ExeCom presented a new five-year rolling work plan, while its technical expert group and task force provided updates that will assist developing countries in averting, minimizing, and addressing loss and damage.

It was the ExeCom's first ever meeting outside of Bonn, Germany, and its first assembly since the breakthrough decision relating to funding arrangements to loss and damage associated with the effects of climate change was adopted at COP27 in November 2022.

"This meeting is an opportunity, but it is most importantly a responsibility," DENR Secretary Antonia Loyzaga, who also serves as the designated representative of President Ferdinand Marcos, Jr. to the Climate Change Commission, said in her opening remarks.

"This is also a responsibility to fully take into account the urgent needs of those with the least resources and those who are most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change," Loyzaga added.

Representatives from the WIM ExeCom co-chairs Philippines and Denmark; WIM committee members from Bangladesh, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Pakistan, Tunisia, Canada, Denmark, Germany, France, Russian Federation, Sweden, Ukraine, United Kingdom, and the United States of America, among others; scientific organizations, civil society, and development partners gathered to discuss decisions on funding and establish the Santiago Network, which aims to connect developing countries with providers of technical assistance, knowledge and resources.

Loyzaga said the Philippines, which is one of the countries most vulnerable to climate change impacts, strongly supports these initiatives to produce an action-oriented and results-focused rolling work plan for the planet.

“Hosting this ExeCom meeting affirms the Philippines’ strong commitment and leadership to advance global action on loss and damage based on available science,” Loyzaga said.

According to the DENR Secretary, the Philippine position is consistent with the Glasgow Climate Pact, where the country pushed for the urgent operationalization of the Santiago Network that is demand-driven, concrete, measurable, and aligned with the sustainable development priorities of climate vulnerable communities.

At the same time, Loyzaga urged WIM members and stakeholders to focus on evidence-informed and demand-driven preventive actions that would avoid the increasing costs of climate events in terms of lives lost, illnesses, and damage to properties and ecosystems.

Loyzaga was confident that the meeting would “provide and establish clear direction on actions to address issues of loss and damage, and move us forward towards our vision through a spirit of global solidarity and with a renewed commitment to action.”

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