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The Climate Change Commission (CCC) has emphasized the importance of science-based, data-driven preservation and conservation efforts in Lake Sebu, South Cotabato, as part of a key integrated, long-term strategy to build climate resilience in the community.

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Information and Knowledge Management Division

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Doubts over climate funding as donors squeeze aid

There are growing doubts about a pledge by rich nations to provide more climate finance to poorer nations, as foreign aid budgets are slashed and the United States (US) guts environmental spending.

Richer nations committed at the United Nations COP29 summit in November to boost spending on climate action in developing countries to \$300 billion a year by 2035, an amount decried as woefully inadequate.

Since then, President Donald Trump has frozen US contributions to the global pot and withdrawn from a funding deal to help developing nations transition to clean energy, among other climate initiatives.

The United Kingdom, meanwhile, has trimmed overseas aid to raise defense spending, following a slew of similar cuts by climate-friendly governments in Europe.

Diplomats and analysts say it remains unclear where the axe may fall, but there are fears that money earmarked for climate finance could be on the chopping block.

Laetitia Pettinotti, a climate economist from the think tank ODI Global, told Agence France-Presse that signs are not good and cuts could be expected.

“It’s really hard to see where the money is going to come from,” she said.

ECO BUSINESS

[Better call Saul: Can climate lawsuits slow global warming?](#)

Peruvian farmer Saúl Luciano Lliuya is set to appear in a German court next week in a case against German energy utility RWE which could set a precedent for mounting legal cases against governments and companies over their climate impact.

The nearly decade-long battle concerns whether the company's carbon dioxide emissions can be blamed for Andean glaciers melting above Lliuya's hometown and swelling a lake to dangerous levels.

Activists, scientists and Indigenous people are filing a growing number of lawsuits against governments and fossil fuel companies to try to slow global warming by holding them to account for climate-driven impacts like extreme weather.

Dubbed "climate lawfare", the total number of such cases has more than doubled since 2015 to more than 2,000 in 2024, according to Climate Change Laws of the World, a database of climate change legislation and policies around the globe.

What is climate change litigation and where is it happening?

Individuals or groups have increasingly taken governments or companies to court to spur climate action, such as phasing out fossil fuels and reducing harmful emissions.

Climate litigation can also refer to the growing number of legal disputes between investors and states that arise because international treaty provisions allow energy firms to sue governments when their carbon-cutting programmes affect profits.

Most cases - more than 1,700 - have been filed in the United States, according to a report by the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and New York's Columbia University, but the number of lawsuits is rising as well around the world including in Britain, Brazil and Germany.

A small but growing number of environmental and climate disputes have been brought before courts in Africa, with 10 cases in South Africa, three in Nigeria and two in Kenya in the past 15 years.

The majority of these cases are brought by NGOs and revolve around environmental impact assessments, often for the construction of coal-fired power plants, but also include cases addressing issues such as the right to clean air and water.

Which climate cases have marked legal milestones in the past year?

More than 2,000 Swiss women aged over 64 brought a case in 2023 accusing their government of violating their human rights by failing to do enough to combat climate change and putting them at risk of dying during heat waves.

The European Court of Human Rights in April 2024 upheld their complaint - a decision likely to set a legal precedent. In March, the Council of Europe, the court's oversight body, said the Swiss government had not yet proven it is meeting its climate obligations.

In May 2024, the international ocean court ruled that greenhouse gas emissions absorbed by the ocean are a form of marine pollution, subject to international controls.

In the first US youth-led climate case to reach trial, 16 plaintiffs, aged between two and 18, filed a lawsuit against the state of Montana over policies prohibiting state agencies from considering climate impacts when approving fossil fuel projects.

A judge ruled in the plaintiffs' favour in 2023, citing a provision in the state constitution requiring Montana to protect and improve the environment. The decision was upheld by Montana's top court in December 2024.

Can climate litigation drive change?

Court victories for campaigners are likely to spur more cases, and the legal precedents already set make it more likely that similar lawsuits will prevail.

In 2025, the defining legal case to watch will be the International Court of Justice and its advisory opinion on UN member states' obligations to combat climate change, expected later in the year.

Though not legally binding, it holds legal weight and moral authority and could influence future climate litigation and future government policy to uphold climate commitments.

But testing legal arguments takes time and money, with some cases taking up to a decade to make it to trial. NGO-led human rights cases often have to rely on a combination of donations from philanthropic organisations and individuals as well as crowdfunding and lawyers working pro bono.

MINDANAO TIMES

Stand tall with global laureates: Honor the leaders for the UN Sasakawa Award 2025

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Nominations must be submitted by March 28, 2025. No nominations will be accepted beyond this date. Nominations are to be submitted online; hard copy applications are not accepted. Completed nomination form must be emailed to undrrcomms@un.org.

The award has honored many remarkable individuals and organizations over the years. Let's explore the notable contributions of some of the distinguished laureates:

Glenn Banaguas (UN Sasakawa Laureate 2022, Philippines): A world-renowned science diplomat and multi-awarded scientist known for his work in climate resilience, environmental sustainability, and disaster risk reduction. As the founder of the Environmental and Climate Change Research Institute (ECCRI), Banaguas has implemented initiatives such as the "Climate Smart Philippines: Science for Service" program, which equips communities with the scientific knowledge necessary to mitigate disaster risks. His work has not only elevated the discourse on climate change but also provided tangible solutions for vulnerable communities and conflict-affected regions.

Allan Lavell (UN Sasakawa Laureate 2015, Costa Rica): An expert in disaster risk management with a focus on Latin America and the Caribbean. Lavell has coordinated the FLACSO's Social Studies, Risks, and Disasters Program, developing multidisciplinary and participatory approaches to disaster risk reduction. His extensive research and advocacy have significantly influenced disaster management policies and practices across the region. Lavell's holistic approach has been pivotal in empowering communities to build resilience against natural hazards.

Yoshiaki Kawata (UN Sasakawa Laureate 2007, Japan): A distinguished professor and disaster reduction expert. As the Director of the Research Center for Safety Science at Kansai University and the Executive Director of the Disaster Reduction and Human Renovation Institute, Kawata has published over 400 technical papers and ten books on disaster risk reduction. His work has been pivotal in shaping disaster resilience

strategies in Japan and beyond. Kawata's contributions have helped to advance urban disaster management and emergency preparedness, making cities safer and more resilient.

The 2025 United Nations Sasakawa Award for Disaster Risk Reduction celebrates efforts to democratize access to scientific knowledge and technological solutions for community resilience. As we honor the contributions of past laureates, we invite nominations for individuals and organizations that embody the spirit of this theme. Together, we can build a safer and more resilient future for all.

PHILIPPINE INFORMATION AGENCY

[Dipolog adopts WWF's 'Cool and Solar Initiative' project](#)

By: Shamaecah O. Quinto

The World Wildlife Fund (WWF)-Philippines, in partnership with the local government, recently held a capacity building seminar on Accelerating Energy Efficiency and Efficient Cooling Solutions in the private sector at a local hotel, this city.

As part of the Cool and Solar Initiative (CSI) Project, the seminar encouraged the private sector to embrace clean energy practices by equipping them with the knowledge and tools necessary for a just transition toward clean energy, while emphasizing that businesses play a crucial role in reducing energy consumption and adopting efficient cooling technologies.

Notably, Dipolog City is one of only three cities in the Philippines—and the sole city in Mindanao—participating in this initiative.

Representatives from various business establishments including hotels, restaurants, private schools, hospitals, and other private entities gathered to enhance their understanding of energy efficiency and effective cooling strategies.

Discussions during the session addressed topics such as the science of climate change, the role of cities and businesses in climate resilience, renewable energy adoption, and best practices in energy conservation.

City Environment and Natural Resources Officer Attorney Gratian Paul Tidor, who attended the seminar, said “transitioning to renewable energy sources such as solar power can be daunting and challenging, especially budget-wise. But for those who can afford it, the long-term economic and environmental benefits far outweigh the initial challenges.”

Officials and participants alike expressed optimism that the insights and strategies shared during the seminar will drive significant improvements in energy efficiency, contributing to a more sustainable and resilient future for the community.

THE MANILA TIMES

'Global weirding' triggering bizarre weather patterns

A new study by WaterAid, an international nonprofit group focused on clean water, sanitation and hygiene, revealed that 17 of the world's largest cities are experiencing a bizarre climate switch that scientists have described as "global weirding."

Simply put, global weirding happens when areas that were "historically wet are becoming dry, and vice versa." Places that frequently experience droughts have become flood-prone. And those with typically high, flood-inducing rainfall are facing prolonged dry episodes.

WaterAid estimates that 90 percent of all climate disasters are caused by either too much or too little water. The trend is that more cities are experiencing extremely wet weather, and only close to half is experiencing severely dry conditions.

Cities experiencing global weirding (also known as "climate whiplash") are home to 250 million people, the study found.

It also said that all European cities have become drier, with London, Paris and Berlin all facing the risk of more frequent and severe droughts.

Three years ago, Auroop Ganguly, director of the Sustainability and Data Sciences Laboratory at Northeastern University, warned about global weirding. "The impacts can be far-reaching across multiple sectors such as ecosystems and coastal processes, aspects of the water-energy-food nexus, infrastructures and urban lifelines," Ganguly said.

The unpredictability of global weirding also makes it dangerous, "both because impacted systems may break when the worst cases do occur and also because if the effects are less one year than another, people may be lured into complacency."

The global effects of climate change such as temperature and sea level rise can be and have been fairly accurately predicted. It is the changes in particular localities that are difficult to forecast.

One climate expert said the swarm of bushfires that raged across Los Angeles last January could be described as global weirding because they took place in winter. The

same can be said about the floods that roared through Spanish towns last October, killing 232 people.

"We are experiencing more weird events," the expert said.

Another source of concern that the WaterAid study highlighted is that it illustrates "just how differently and dramatically climate change is expressed around the globe." There is no one-size-fits-all, according to one of the study's lead authors.

What the Philippines should find particularly alarming is that the study found that nine of the cities impacted by global weirding are in Asia.

The region had the most dramatic changes in climate over the last four decades, WaterAid said.

One of the Asian cities is Jakarta, which experienced back-to-back floods and droughts. Also on the list of "whiplash cities" are Shanghai in China and Thailand's capital Bangkok.

WaterAid said the danger of global weirding was that the swing from one extreme climate to the other didn't give the cities enough time to plan out the proper response for the crisis it might trigger.

There are indications that the Philippines may already be feeling the onset of global weirding. The country's schools used to suspend classes only when floods spawned by heavy rainfall occur. Last year, the heat index hit "danger" levels, forcing schools to call off classes. Another spate of heat waves this month alone has prompted class suspensions. A cycle seems to be developing.

Droughts and severe dry conditions triggered by an El Niño episode at the start of 2024 affected 900,000 families across the country, and resulted in billions of pesos in crop losses and damage.

But toward the close of the year, practically the same stricken areas experienced devastating floods unleashed by a string of intense storms.

The emerging aberrant weather conditions call for more flexible climate policies to cope with the drastic shift. This early, the Philippines must prepare itself to deal with the impact of global weirding.

Planning a response for global weirding can only succeed if the government takes a firm stand to reduce the country's dependence on fossil fuels.

People must also be made to understand that climate change and chaotic weather patterns are inextricably connected. The longer we burn fossil fuels, the worse the effects of climate change will get.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

DAILY TRIBUNE

[CCC, LGU collab to save Lake Sebu from climate threat](#)

The Climate Change Commission (CCC) has underscored the need for science-based, data-driven initiatives to protect Lake Sebu in South Cotabato from ecological threats and climate change impacts. During a recent stakeholder meeting organized by the local government under Mayor Remie Mann Unggol, officials and experts discussed the municipality's potential for economic growth, environmental sustainability, and cultural preservation.

Lake Sebu, designated as a protected area spanning 102,350 hectares, includes three major lakes: Lake Sebu, Lake Seloton, and Lake Lahit. While these bodies of water are vital for the region's economy, tourism industry, and ecological stability, Vice Mayor Liezel Tupas-Isuga raised concerns about fish kills, deforestation, siltation, overcrowded fish cages, poor waste management, and broader vulnerabilities linked to climate change.

Attended by representatives from the academe, local government units, and ecologists, the meeting aimed to develop a comprehensive conservation strategy for Lake Sebu. Talks centered on ecotourism, carrying capacity, and the need for resilience-based rehabilitation of both coastal and riparian habitats. Secretary Robert E.A. Borje, CCC Vice Chairperson and Executive Director, emphasized that an integrated, science-driven approach must guide the region's long-term climate resilience plan.

"Climate resilience can be seen as both an object and instrument of policy, and this approach can help further bolster community efforts to preserve and conserve Lake Sebu," Borje stated.

He added that the CCC will provide technical assistance and capacity-building support to local government units to enhance their climate adaptation plans and capabilities to access climate funding.

Highlighting the role of public engagement, cultural advocate Lenly Gula urged integrating climate action into social media platforms.

"We need to mobilize and maximize social media for call-to-action campaigns, particularly in promoting care for our ecosystems. Creating one- to two-minute reel

content backed by scientific knowledge and clear calls to action can help raise awareness and inspire action for Lake Sebu,” she said.

The CCC remains committed to collaborating with various stakeholders to mainstream climate resilience and conservation measures in Lake Sebu and other communities nationwide.

Efforts up to preserve Lake Sebu

The Climate Change Commission (CCC) has emphasized the importance of science-based, data-driven preservation and conservation efforts in Lake Sebu, South Cotabato, as part of a key integrated, long-term strategy to build climate resilience in the community.

Lake Sebu, a designated protected area covering 102,350 hectares, is home to three major lakes: Lake Sebu, Lake Seloton and Lake Lahit. These bodies of water are vital for the local economy, tourism industry and ecological stability of the region.

During a recent stakeholder meeting organized by the Local Government of Lake Sebu under Mayor Remie Mann Unggol, the municipality's potential for growth and development, natural beauty and cultural richness were discussed while the urgent ecological concerns and impacts of climate change were highlighted.

Despite its economic potential, Vice Mayor Liezel Tupas-Isuga said Lake Sebu faces critical ecological threats such as fish kills, deforestation, siltation, overcrowded fish cages, poor waste management and climate-related vulnerabilities. These challenges underscore the need for immediate and long-term efforts to significantly lower climate risks.

The event gathered key partners, including representatives from the academe, the local government units and ecologists to develop a comprehensive conservation and protection plan with a climate change lens.

While discussions focused on ecotourism and the carrying capacity of tourism destinations, climate-proofing Lake Sebu against ecological threats, and resilience-based rehabilitation of its coastal and riparian habitats became an area of overarching focus.

Secretary Robert E.A. Borje, CCC vice chairperson and executive director, acknowledged the concerns of Lake Sebu officials and reiterated the importance of data-based, science-driven approach as part of a key integrated, long-term strategy to build climate resilience.

"Climate resilience can be seen as both an object and instrument of policy, and this approach can help further bolster community efforts to preserve and conserve Lake Sebu," Borje stated.

PROVINCE OF PANGASINAN

CCC commends Pangasinan for commitment to disaster risk preparedness

The Climate Change Commission (CCC) has commended the province for its comprehensive climate resilience strategies and integrated approach to environmental sustainability as well as disaster preparedness and risk reduction.

Amazed with the commitment of the provincial government and the 44 municipalities, CCC executive director Robert A. E. Borje said that “Pangasinan’s commitment to disaster risk preparedness is commendable, as reflected in its 100 percent Local Climate Change Action Plan (LCCAP) submission.”

“When we talk about hazards, exposure, vulnerability and capacity, we must see them not just as challenges but as part of a strategic game plan, an investment in community resilience,” he said.

The CCC earlier visited the province where all 44 municipalities submitted their LCCAP, which was a manifestation that the province seriously takes into consideration all matters concerning environmental protection and risk management. Borje and his staff were later toured around Pangasinan including the mangrove park in Alaminos City.

There, Provincial Disaster and Risk Reduction Management Office (PDRRMO) head Ret. Col. Rhodyn Luchinvar Oro presented the province’s key initiatives including Project PARAAN which is a risk assessment survey that evaluates community vulnerability to natural hazards.

The Green Canopy program, a legacy project of Gov. Ramon Guico III was also presented.

Panel discussion was conducted in which topics include the province’s upcoming plan to establish the Estanza Native Tree Nursery and Project Kasilyas.

Known as a strategist and extensive planner, Gov. Guico has vowed to heighten the province’s environment and climate change mitigating programs.

With the support of local leaders along with other national line agencies, Gov. Guico expressed optimism that Pangasinan will eventually become disaster prepared.

“No stone is left unturned in our disaster risk reduction management. Like many other provinces in the Philippines, Pangasinan is often hit by harsh realities of typhoons,

floods and earthquakes. The Provincial Administration has taken significant efforts to make sure that we are prepared to protect our people from natural and even man-made disasters," Gov. Guico earlier said.

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