



NEWS ROUNDUP

17 MARCH 2023 [08:00 am]

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By: Robin Millard

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By: Beatriz Marie D. Cruz

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CLIMATE CHAMPIONS

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By: Dennis Gutierrez

Columbia University, Fordham University, Boston College, and Harvard University were all part of Brian Poe-Llamanzares' international book tour. He went around the universities to promote his book "A sustainable future." Poe-Llamanzares donated his book to each of the schools in order to raise awareness about the Filipino fight for sustainability.

[\[Opinion\] Why Masungi matters](#)

By: Gideon Lasco

Masungi Georeserve, Rizal—Sunny days can be hot and humid in Rizal, especially this time of the year, but under the shadow of the limestone cliffs, it is cool and breezy. I could listen to the birdsong, punctuated by the distinctive calls of the tariktik (Luzon hornbill)—all day. If one looks at the karst landscape close enough, there are microsnails, traces of cloud rats, and endemic flowers—including a purple variant of the tayabak (jade vine).

RELIEF WEB

[Impact of climate change on livelihoods and food security in Armenia \(CLEAR-Consolidated Livelihood Exercise for Analyzing Resilience\)](#)

Climate change is a complex issue that poses a worldwide threat to human development and requires ambitious and bold collective actions. Numerous assessments¹ indicate that there will be significant change in Armenia's climate over the next century: temperatures will rise; precipitation, river flow and lake levels will fall; and heat waves, droughts, landslides, mudflows, and floods will become more common.

REUTERS

[Comment: We'll only beat climate change if we help small businesses cut emissions – and fast](#)

By: Jesper Brodin and Maria Mendiluce

Climate change is no longer a distant threat. It is a living reality affecting societies, businesses of all sizes and – foremost – people. Big businesses are serious about tackling climate change. Net zero, sustainability and ESG (environmental, social and governance issues) have become mainstream business strategy for multinationals, many of which are now figuring out how to deliver on their climate commitments.

THE MANILA TIMES

[Mayors see opportunities from circular economy](#)

By: Jenica Faye Garcia

Two mayors in the Visayas shared their efforts through using green and sustainable initiatives to uplift their region's economic activities.

[\[Opinion\] Nature must be nurtured](#)

By: Ma. Isabel Ongpin

Climate change is now a topic of learned discussion and amateur observation. This amateur is noting some changes in our seasonal events regarding Nature as we know it.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

[UN-backed climate fund OKs \\$39-M project for Filipino farmers](#)

By: Gaea Katreena Cabico

The Green Climate Fund (GCF) has approved a \$39.2-million (P2.15 billion) program to help the Philippines shift to a climate-resilient agricultural system and let farmers respond to the impacts of the climate crisis.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

[CCC, French embassy to boost dev't cooperation on climate action](#)

By: Azer Parrocha

The Climate Change Commission (CCC) and the Embassy of France to the Philippines and Micronesia have expressed commitment to strengthen partnership and development cooperation on climate action.

[CCC welcomes \\$26.3-M grant to make transform PH agri sector](#)

The “Adapting Philippine Agriculture to Climate Change (APA)” secured approval for a grant of USD26.3 million from the Green Climate Fund (GCF) to increase the resilience of rural agriculture men and women in climate vulnerable areas and transform the country’s agriculture sector towards climate resilience.

Information and Knowledge Management Division

ABS CBN

Green tech boom looms but poor nations risk being eclipsed: UN

By: Robin Millard

The green technology industry could be worth several trillion dollars by 2030 but developing countries will miss out on the boom unless they jump in now, the UN said Thursday.

From a roughly equal position three years ago, green technology exports from the most advanced countries are already racing ahead of developing nations, warned the United Nations' trade and development agency, UNCTAD.

And without intervention to close the gap, early adopters will build in lasting advantages, making it even harder for developing countries to catch up, UNCTAD said.

"We are at the beginning of a technological revolution based on green technologies," said the agency's chief Rebeca Grynspan.

"Missing this technological wave... would have long-lasting negative implications."

UNCTAD estimated that 17 key frontier technologies, which are at the leading edge of green innovation, could create a market worth more than \$9.5 trillion by 2030 -- up from \$1.5 trillion in 2020.

The technologies include artificial intelligence, electric vehicles, green hydrogen, biofuels, nanotechnology, 5G, gene editing, robotics, 3D printing, wind energy and blockchain.

They can be used to produce goods and services in a way that leaves a smaller carbon footprint.

The United States and China currently dominate these fields, with a combined 70 percent of patents.

As for readiness to adopt and exploit such technologies, UNCTAD's ranking chart is dominated by high-income countries, led by the United States, Sweden, Singapore, Switzerland and the Netherlands.

Of the BRICS nations, Russia is ranked 31st, China 35th, Brazil 40th, India 46th and South Africa 56th -- the highest on the African continent.

China's lower-than-expected position is due to patchy rural internet coverage and slow broadband speed.

However, several Asian countries are over-performing, with India 67 places higher than its GDP per capita ranking, the Philippines 54 spots higher and Vietnam 44 places higher, leaving them well-placed to seize the initiative.

Latin America, the Caribbean and sub-Saharan Africa are at highest risk of missing current windows of opportunity.

Despite a level start, a gap is already opening up in green tech exports, with developed countries pulling away from the rest with exponential growth.

Total green tech exports from developed countries jumped from around \$60 billion in 2018 to more than \$156 billion in 2021, while over the same period, exports from developing nations -- China included -- rose from \$57 billion to around \$75 billion.

In those three years, developing countries' share of global exports fell from over 48 percent to below 33 percent.

UNCTAD noted that smaller developing countries, which have done little to cause climate change, were often set to feel the brunt -- yet were left struggling to access the technology that could help them mitigate against it.

The agency's deputy leader Pedro Manuel Moreno said they were caught between promoting economic growth and protecting the environment.

"They need more investment, more tech transfer and more international coherence between global climate and trade agreements," Moreno told reporters.

He said trade rules should be changed to help developing countries protect nascent green industries through tariffs, subsidies and public procurement.

The trading system has to be streamlined with the landmark Paris Agreement on climate change, he said, so that green tech can be transferred effectively to developing nations.

Shamika Sirimanne, UNCTAD's technology and logistics director, said a "less stringent intellectual property regime at the global level is needed urgently" to help such countries benefit.

She called for a patents waiver to promote the transfer of climate change-related technology.

AP NEWS

[UN announces new advisers to bolster young voices on climate](#)

By: Isabella O'Malley

United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres named seven young climate leaders Thursday to be his Youth Advisory Group on Climate Change, underlining the role of youth advocates in climate action.

They include advocates, tribal land defenders, educators, and activists and will serve through the end of next year. They're the second-ever group of climate youth advisers, the first having been selected in 2020.

They were selected by Guterres from Poland, the Gambia, Saint Lucia, Philippines, Colombia/Paraguay, Ireland and the U.S. The team will advise the United Nations on climate action and policies.

At the announcement, Guterres urged young climate advocates around the world to continue raising their voices and said that the "unrelenting conviction" of young people is essential to keeping climate goals within reach, lowering fossil fuel emissions, and delivering climate justice.

Fatou Jeng, a climate educator and frontline activist from Gambia, now a U.N. advisor, said she's devastated that her generation will have to bear the burden of the "climate destruction done by the older generation."

"Youth constitute the majority of the population of the African continent and play a crucial role in addressing the impacts of climate change," said Jeng. "Young people should be at the center for justice and action."

In accepting her new advisory role, Ayisha Siddiqa, a Pakistan-American human rights and tribal land defender, said all communities can protect their environment.

"It's too big of a responsibility to try to save everything all at once," Siddiqa said. "We need people working towards protecting their little corners of the world ... My message is: You don't have to do it all, but give your little corner of the world, your all."

From the Fridays for Future movement spearheaded by Greta Thunberg to the recent viral #StopWillow protests on TikTok, young people are credited as playing a significant role in challenging global leaders to take action against the fossil fuel industry.

At a Youth Climate Summit in September 2019, Guterres said that his generation had failed at preserving both justice and the environment and said that youth are essential to holding older generations accountable to “make sure that we don’t betray the future of humankind.”

BUSINESS WORLD

Proper implementation of incentives needed to make EPR law effective — WWF

By: Beatriz Marie D. Cruz

GOVERNMENT authorities must ensure that tax and other incentives provided under a new law on plastic waste management are properly implemented to encourage companies operating in the Philippines to stand by their obligations in helping address the plastic problem, an official of a non-government organization told a House panel on Thursday.

“These incentives would be useful enough [to] entice compliance,” Angela Consuelo “Gia” Ibay, who heads the Climate Change and Energy Programme of the World Wide Fund (WWF) for Nature Philippines, said during the House committee on sustainable development goals.

She also suggested an evaluation of “other perverse incentives in other laws that were created that might have an impact in the implementation of the circular economy.”

Republic Act No. 11898 or the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) Act of 2022 requires producers, manufacturers and other companies to move away from single-use plastics and establish their own waste recovery schemes in partnership with communities, local governments, and other stakeholders.

Under the law, registered enterprises may apply for tax incentives and tax and duty exemptions for costs relating to initiatives to recycle, reduce, or reuse.

The law also allows “expenses of enterprises [to be] considered as necessary expenses deductible from gross income subject to the substantiation requirements for necessary business expenses deductible from gross annual income,” under the National Internal Revenue Code of 1997.

Jose Uy III, senior vice-president and head of corporate affairs of Nestlé Philippines, said that lawmakers should pass more policies and approve funding for infrastructures that would encourage producers and manufacturers to repurpose plastic waste.

Bukidnon Rep. Jose Manuel F. Alba noted that the lower chamber last year approved on third and final reading House Bill No. 1272, which will require the government to procure supplies created from recycled products.

Mr. Uy said Nestlé is in talks with the International Finance Corp. (IFC) and the Alliance to End Plastic Waste on how it can “attract investments on plastic circularity technology and infrastructure for flexible plastics waste.”

BASF Philippines Business Manager Shiela Rose H. Tang said that eight million tons of global plastic waste end up in the oceans per annum, with only 18% recycled.

In the Philippines, only 30% of plastics are recycled, with unrecycled materials that go to waste or downcycled valued at around \$1 billion, according to the IFC said.

Various global studies have placed the Philippines as one of the biggest plastic generators and polluters.

CLIMATE CHAMPIONS

[COP28 Presidency launches bid to put climate vulnerable youth at the centre of climate talks](#)

The COP28 Presidency has launched an initiative to ensure young people's perspectives are at the heart of global policymaking on climate change.

The International Youth Climate Delegate Program (International YCDP), launched at the Road to COP28 event in Expo City, Dubai, will sponsor 100 young people to attend COP28 in November. Delegates from countries on the list of Least Developed Countries (LDCs), Small Island Developing States (SIDS), Indigenous Peoples and other minority groups around the world will be prioritised.

Dr Sultan Al Jaber, Minister of Industry and Advanced Technology and President-designate of COP28, on Wednesday unveiled the program, stating: "We may not know what the future holds — but we know who holds the future. It is you — our young people."

The program will be overseen by the COP28 Youth Climate Champion, HE Shamma Al Mazrui, in collaboration with YOUNGO, the Official Children and Youth Constituency of the UNFCCC.

The objectives of the program include:

Ensure that youth views and proposals are fully integrated into global climate policymaking and dialogues.

Build youth skills, capacity, knowledge, and networks, particularly in the most impacted countries, to engage in climate processes.

Provide a model for the COP process on youth inclusion.

Commenting on the Program, Shivi Dwivedi, Climate Champions' Youth Engagement & Partnerships Lead said: "The global youth climate movement has been instrumental in bringing the climate fight to the forefront of public attention and politics. They play a significant role in keeping pressure on decision-makers to be more ambitious in their climate plans. Ensuring that the opinions and voices of youth from all over the world (especially from the frontline) are heard, taken into consideration and reflected in the decisions, policies and dialogues in the lead-up and at COP28 is the only way forward.

“The Climate Champions Team is committed to elevating and aligning the efforts of youth as key non-state actors under the Paris Agreement and will continue ensuring pathways for meaningful and impactful youth engagement throughout our work.”

Jabri Ibrahim, Climate Champions’ Green Hydrogen & Youth Engagement Manager for Africa, added: “The 100 young people that will be embedded at COP28 is not only a powerful show of support and goodwill to the youth climate movement, it is also a strategic partnership that will help secure a more ambitious outcome and cover decision in Dubai.

“Young people from all over the world have been the catalysts for more ambitious climate action, and they will undoubtedly continue to do so at COP28. The HLC and CCT will continue to endeavour to support and empower the youth climate movement, as we have done so in the past.”

Participants must be between 18 and 35, demonstrate a commitment to climate issues and ideally have experience in the area.

Applications opened on Wednesday and close on April 7. Anyone interested can apply on www.cop28.com/en/youth-program

CLIMATE HOME NEWS

[Loss and damage committee ready to start talks following Asian nominations](#)

By: Chloé Farand

Countries in Asia have overcome regional tensions to appoint members to the UN committee due to work out details of a fund for climate victims.

The move comes a little over a week before the committee on loss and damage is due to hold its first meeting in Luxor, Egypt, on 27-29 March. It means every position on the committee has now been filled.

In a breakthrough deal at the Cop27 climate talks, countries agreed to set up a fund dedicated to support vulnerable countries address climate-related losses and damages. But how the fund will operate, who will pay, who will benefit and how it will be governed remain to be worked out.

To do so, countries agreed to appoint a 24-member committee to make recommendations ahead of the next round of UN climate talks in the UAE.

Regional tensions

The make-up of the committee carefully reflects geographies and groupings of countries based on wealth. It includes 10 members from developed countries and 14 from developing nations.

The Asia-Pacific group was the last to nominate its members. The group has three seats, including one for a representative of the UAE Cop28 presidency. Sources told Climate Home News that competition between Asian countries caused the delay.

“It’s a fractious region,” a committee member from a different grouping told Climate Home. “Everyone hates each other. They have almost each had a war with the other and border skirmishes.”

Compromise

To resolve the issue, the group appointed representatives from six countries to share attendance to three planned meetings this year. India, the Philippines and Saudi Arabia will share one seat, while China, South Korea and Pakistan will share the other.

The Asia-Pacific group is not the only one which has had to compromise. Countries from Latin America and the Caribbean and wealthy nations are also sharing seats to allow more governments to join the discussions.

Mohamed Nasr, Egypt's lead climate negotiator and a committee members, said: "This issue is of extreme importance to everybody, so everybody wants to be sitting at the table."

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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By: Dennis Gutierrez

Columbia University, Fordham University, Boston College, and Harvard University were all part of Brian Poe-Llamanzares' international book tour. He went around the universities to promote his book "A sustainable future." Poe-Llamanzares donated his book to each of the schools in order to raise awareness about the Filipino fight for sustainability.

"We need to raise awareness about our country. There's so little literature written about us even if we're one of the most climate vulnerable countries in the world. They should know how we're adapting to and preparing for climate change so they know how to help us as well," he said.

Poe-Llamanzares kicked off his book tour with a talk at Columbia University where he completed his Master's in Climate and Society back in 2018. Attendees of his round table discussion included faculty from the Climate School of Columbia University, Students from the Climate and Society Program, and members of the Philippine Delegation to the 67th session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women.

DICT's Under Secretary Anna Mae Lamentillo who was part of the UN delegation in New York, pointed out the urgency of the topics discussed during the book tour,

"Sustainable Development paves way for a genuine, dynamic and grounded discourse on climate change. It provides much needed diversity, context in an issue that should have been tackled five decades ago."

Brian traveled from New York to Boston to donate his book to the Harvard Kennedy School of Government Library as well as the executive education program department.

He also passed Senator Grace Poe's Alma Mater Boston College and met with faculty and the Board of the Philippine Society of Boston College. Poe-Llamanzares donated books to Boston College and the Philippine Society which his mother co-founded.

Bryan Fleming, Director for Global Engagement, at Boston College pointed out the importance of Poe-Llamanzares' book saying,

“There is no question about the importance of sustainability for our future. With *A Sustainable Future*, Dr. Brian Poe Llamanzares has written a compelling and accessible book outlining some of the most significant environmental issues facing our planet—and the Philippines—today. What’s particularly important about Llamanzares’ book is that he offers us real, actionable steps to guide us toward more sustainable practices.”

As a member of the youth and Co-President of the Philippine Society of Boston College Julia Pangan explained the importance of this manuscript and more works similar to “*A Sustainable Future*” to help address the climate change issues of the country.

“As climate change begins to place its heaviest burdens on island nations, the need for more Filipino authorship in the environmental field grows ever greater. Comprehensive, analytical, and optimistic, *A Sustainable Future* leaps into this literature gap and offers the reader not only a broad view of the challenges the country faces but also a concrete blueprint for a truly sustainable future that can and must be achieved.”

Before ending his book tour, Brian unveiled his book at the University of Pennsylvania Club of New York. His book is now proudly displayed along side the club’s leading authors. It is the first book authored by a Filipino donated to the prestigious Franklin Room Library.

Poe-Llamanzares went on to say that he hopes more people will look to the Philippines and find ways to support the country’s efforts to build a more sustainable future for itself. He says he’ll be working on a curriculum and book tour for back home in the Philippines.

The book “*a sustainable future*” is available in all NCR national bookstores, Lazada, and Shopee.

The book may now also be found at the Butler Library in Columbia University, Quinn Library in Fordham University, O’Neil Library at Boston College, the Franklin Room Library at the University of Pennsylvania Club of New York, and The Harvard Kennedy School Library.

[Opinion] Why Masungi matters

By: Gideon Lasco

Masungi Georeserve, Rizal—Sunny days can be hot and humid in Rizal, especially this time of the year, but under the shadow of the limestone cliffs, it is cool and breezy. I could listen to the birdsong, punctuated by the distinctive calls of the tariktik (Luzon hornbill)—all day. If one looks at the karst landscape close enough, there are microsnaills, traces of cloud rats, and endemic flowers—including a purple variant of the tayabak (jade vine).

Up in the park's peaks and view decks—some 600 meters above sea level—one can admire the Sierra Madre mountains, and on the opposite side, glean the smog-blurred line of Metro Manila's skyscrapers.

This sanctuary, just an hour away from Quezon City, some 45 kilometers along the Marikina-Infanta Highway, is probably one of the best and fastest ways to encounter nature for Metro Manila's locals and visitors alike. And yet, its six-year-old existence as a government-owned, private-foundation-operated geopark is under threat from all fronts—including, seemingly, the government itself.

Most recently, it was at the center of a controversy with the Bureau of Corrections (BuCor) reportedly planning to build its headquarters on the site, asserting its ownership of the property. Such a proposal was quickly opposed by the Upper Marikina Watershed Coalition and other groups, citing the “risk of destabilizing the terrain” and the threat to various species.

In the hearings that ensued after the furor, senators like Nancy Binay and Risa Hontiveros expressed grave concerns over the plan, stressing the need to protect the site—and thankfully, at least for now, it seems that BuCor has relented, with its acting director general, Gregorio Catapang Jr., saying that their proposal “will be held in abeyance pending further studies to be undertaken, taking into consideration the impact on the environment with the construction of BuCor facilities in the area.”

Even before the BuCor plan, however, Masungi Georeserve's existence has been legally, politically, and physically precarious. Just last year, more than 30 armed men, who refused to disclose their identities, were reported to have encamped on the roadside within the georeserve; two years prior, 500 hectares of the site was fenced off by a quarrying company: An act that was ultimately deemed illegal (in a welcome development, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources or DENR has since canceled quarrying permits in the entire site).

The Masungi Georeserve Foundation is holding on to a 2017 memorandum of agreement (MOA) with DENR, represented by then Secretary Gina Lopez, but this agreement has been contested by various parties including the local government of Tanay and the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples Region IV-A who claims to speak on behalf of the Dumagat-Remontados (Masungi counters that they have in fact reached out and won the support of the indigenous communities). The DENR and its regional offices seem to have also vacillated between affirming the MOA and questioning its implementation—even as various other actors within the protected area—including illegal private resorts—are able to quietly operate.

Regardless of the complex legal landscape, regardless of what reforms could be done in the park's operational and organizational structure, I hope that the spirit of the law will prevail in the mind of DENR Secretary Ma. Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga and the President and convince them that Masungi must be preserved and protected—not quarried, destroyed to give way to a government facility, or handed over to those who seek to exploit its natural wealth.

After all, Masungi is preserving what's left of a critical area that has already been massively deforested and degraded, protecting fauna and flora and water reserves, and upholding the government's own mandate in the process.

It is also promoting ecotourism, contributing to an industry that has dramatically grown in the province over the past decade, employing many people and moving them away from unsustainable livelihoods. These include my guide Jun-Jun, who says that he, a native of Tanay, was once an “illegal logger” but has since been an “environmental advocate.”

Finally, as Masungi conservator Ann Dumaliang tells me, Masungi is presenting an alternate model for conservation—one that has been met with success in various parts of the world—at a time when many of our country's natural sites are suffering from neglect and mismanagement.

Ultimately, the choice in Masungi is not between private stewardship or government control. Rather, the choice is between people who see the karst formation as priceless heritage that must be protected at all costs and those who see them as—in the words of a local official who testified in the Senate hearing—high-quality limestone that is good for cement production.

RELIEF WEB

[Impact of climate change on livelihoods and food security in Armenia \(CLEAR-Consolidated Livelihood Exercise for Analyzing Resilience\)](#)

Climate change is a complex issue that poses a worldwide threat to human development and requires ambitious and bold collective actions. Numerous assessments¹ indicate that there will be significant change in Armenia's climate over the next century: temperatures will rise; precipitation, river flow and lake levels will fall; and heat waves, droughts, landslides, mudflows, and floods will become more common.

These climatic changes will, in turn, impact the economy and specifically the agricultural sector in Armenia affecting business revenues, jobs, household income and food security. The economic impact of climate change will also include food shortages and increased food prices². Immediate actions on adaptation measures are necessary in order to reduce the negative effects of the climate change on Armenian families, their livelihoods³, and the economy, in general.

Complementing the existing evidence on climate change adaptation in Armenia, WFP proposed to carry out a Consolidated Livelihood Exercise for Analyzing Resilience (CLEAR). The CLEAR study assesses the ability of households to cope with the climate risks as well as the impact of predicted climate change on livelihoods and food security.

The objectives of the CLEAR analysis are:

- to contribute to designing targeted resilience and/or climate change adaptation activities by WFP, the Government, and other stakeholders.
- informing existing livelihood programmes of climate risks by shedding light on how current and future climate risks are affecting vulnerable people.
- providing a climate lens to livelihood and food security monitoring and early warning systems.
- serving as an emergency preparedness tool and a policy advisory and advocacy tool for the Government.
- providing recommendations on how to best strengthen household resilience towards climate risks when needed.

REUTERS

[Comment: We'll only beat climate change if we help small businesses cut emissions – and fast](#)

By: Jesper Brodin and Maria Mendiluce

Climate change is no longer a distant threat. It is a living reality affecting societies, businesses of all sizes and – foremost – people. Big businesses are serious about tackling climate change. Net zero, sustainability and ESG (environmental, social and governance issues) have become mainstream business strategy for multinationals, many of which are now figuring out how to deliver on their climate commitments.

However, leaders of small- and medium-sized businesses (SMEs), who care just as deeply about the climate, often cannot prioritise climate action due to more pressing issues, like rising energy costs and inflation.

Given that SMEs make up 90% of business globally, employ 70% of the world's workforce and contribute over 50% of global GDP, their role in achieving the world's climate goals is key. Small businesses are a vital part of our economies and societies: the local shops we depend on, our favourite neighbourhood cafes and the trusted garages where we get our cars fixed. But as extreme weather continues to batter communities worldwide, small businesses like these are particularly vulnerable since they tend to rely heavily upon fewer suppliers, local employees and require a functioning local community.

Up to 90% of large companies' emissions sit in their value chains, much of which is made up of SMEs. Each step of a product's journey – from sourcing raw materials right through to the retailers who sell them – carries a carbon footprint. These are known as Scope 3 emissions, and are notoriously difficult to both measure and cut. Helping SMEs in their value chains to start cutting their emissions is a sure-fire way for a large company to ensure its Scope 3 emissions go down.

If big businesses and governments don't support SMEs to cut emissions – and quickly – we will ultimately miss the target of halving global emissions by 2030 and fail to avoid the most catastrophic impacts of the climate crisis. It remains in our hands to have a positive impact, and together we need to support SMEs to take climate action. Doing so will help large companies and nation states meet their emission-reduction goals, build more resilient and sustainable local communities and future-proof companies of all sizes for the green industrial revolution already underway.

Big businesses can use their size and scale to drive SME climate action. Ingka Group, IKEA's largest retailer, is working with its business network and recently partnered with SME Climate Hub, to share knowledge, products and support to help its business to business (B2B) customers decarbonise. Companies such as Walmart have created comprehensive supplier mobilisation programmes, which help SMEs reduce emissions across energy, waste, packaging, nature, transportation and product use.

Encouragingly, a recent survey by the SME Climate Hub revealed that 41% of small business leaders are already working to cut their emissions because it's good for the planet and for their business. Companies from the SME Climate Hub community have told us how climate change has impacted them first-hand.

But SMEs can't do it alone. The survey also found that SMEs are struggling with insufficient finance and knowledge to cut emissions as fast they would like to.

SMEs can't afford sustainability teams, and while free resources are available, such as through the SME Climate Hub, small businesses are constrained by factors beyond their control. For example, two of the most effective ways to reduce emissions are switching to renewable energy and increasing energy efficiency of buildings. Both should be easy, since the technology is available. However, there's not yet enough renewable energy to meet the demand from industry, and energy-efficiency retrofits remain expensive.

National governments, who consistently talk about the importance of their domestic small business community, can support SMEs to cut their emissions. If governments redirected environmentally harmful subsidies to the clean energy transition – for example by implementing business-friendly policies and investments to streamline permitting processes for renewables, roll out grid infrastructure, and incentivise reduced energy use and energy efficiency – it would help SMEs enormously to cut their emissions.

Such policies must be implemented with the needs of people at their heart to ensure the transition away from fossil fuels is just and inclusive. This will help governments achieve their own climate targets and build the resilience of SMEs and the communities in which they operate.

The moral imperative for supporting SMEs is clear, and from a pure business perspective, climate action is better for business. If big business supports SMEs it will help maintain stable low-carbon and efficient supply chains and customer bases that will, in turn, create more prosperous markets, economies and societies.

Working together with SMEs, we can limit global temperature rise to within 1.5C. If governments and big business prioritise the right policies and support for small businesses to reach net zero, it will go a long way to building a more sustainable, resilient, and prosperous future for local communities around the world.

THE MANILA TIMES

[Mayors see opportunities from circular economy](#)

By: Jenica Faye Garcia

Two mayors in the Visayas shared their efforts through using green and sustainable initiatives to uplift their region's economic activities.

In an organized event of the Makati Business Club on March 16 titled "Circular Economy: Best Practices and Opportunities for Public-Private Initiatives," Dauin, Negros Oriental Mayor Galicano Truita and Iloilo City Mayor Jerry Triñas showcased that through a circular economy, they were able to expound businesses and boost their economy.

Truita considered it to be "very easy kung mayroon kang mga plano (if you have plans)."

His municipality's effort to comply in a green and sustainable economy of the national government will be a tool to effectively boost their economy.

Truita said "in every barangay (village), we have particular garbage for plastics alone." He added that "every Sunday, we prohibit the use of plastics and prohibit selling of plastics as well."

For Triñas, policies cannot be made possible if not for the collective efforts of Iloilo City. "We segregate our plastics. We are sending it to a cement factory. Some we are sending to brick makers," he noted.

The Iloilo City mayor further noted that "through that, slowly nating na-a-address 'yung zero-waste program (through that, we are able to slowly address the zero-waste program)."

Last month, experts scaled up the circular economy as a strategic waste management to make the country an investment hot spot.

According to Alexander Cabrera, the vice president of Management Association of the Philippines, "as foreign investments are concerned, waste management is an investment hot spot."

He added that "investors, when targeting a Philippine company, also consider their ESG (environmental, social and governance) practices of that local company," in which it will make them decide to pull back or do business.

[Opinion] Nature must be nurtured

By: Ma. Isabel Ongpin

Climate change is now a topic of learned discussion and amateur observation. This amateur is noting some changes in our seasonal events regarding Nature as we know it.

For example, is it my imagination that the narra trees now only beginning to bloom are flowering late? If my memory is correct, we see narra tree flowers briefly in the month of February going into March. This is the third week of March and they seem to be just starting.

Our cold season, which begins in December and ends around the beginning of March, seems to be very extended this time. Baguio temperatures keep going down, Manila temperatures are pleasantly cool and we are in the fourth week of Lent, the traditional Cuaresma heat time. Except that it is not yet hot.

The amihan (northeast wind) has been on time, but seems unusually strong, with fishing boats, foreign ships and the oil carrier done in by the waves it has engendered. An oil carrier capsized in the middle of the archipelago, which is distant enough from gusts from the Pacific Ocean.

That the oil carrier met waves that upended it means the winds were unusually strong in the center of our archipelago. Something is changing.

Meanwhile, the migratory birds, very visible egrets among them, seeking warmer temperatures away from the Asian mainland during winter months are still here almost to the end of March. They usually go back sometime before that. It seems something tells them to delay their return for reasons of inclement weather.

Farther afield the California floods coming twice this winter plus snowfalls in the usually sunny state are causing consternation and comment.

It really is time that we not just observe what is going on but do something about it. Building on slopes and hills is risky construction.

Deforesting areas for human settlements due to urban sprawl must not continue. Fossil fuel use must be controlled further for its effect on air pollution which brings on illness. In other words, changing Nature's constructs unreservedly brings dire consequences.

Trees should be regarded as precious treasures from Nature that keep the temperature down and our air cleaner from the oxygen that they provide. Yet there is wanton cutting down of trees everywhere here. There are the forest poachers and/or illegal loggers which we expect the government to clamp down on a little harder and more effectively. The confiscation of logs is not a sign of winning the battle to protect trees. It just means trees were already cut down. Trees alive and well, safe and healthy, would be a better sign. It indicates effective protection of the forests by a well-trained, well-equipped and numbers-heavy group of forest rangers that control the well-being of forests. Mining companies should be watched more closely by forest rangers for their indiscriminate removal of forest cover, sometimes beyond their mining franchise.

Kaingin planting must be monitored so it does not encroach on forests, create landslide-prone areas and erosion. And all those who have cut down trees even legally must submit to rigorous replanting and caring of them.

Tree cutting and abuse do not take place only in the forests or outlying rural areas. Right in the cities there is wanton tree-cutting for mistaken reasons of doing away with leaves that fall or clearing sidewalks or just being bothered by their presence. This week alone I saw a man with a pickaxe cutting down a mature palm tree on a sidewalk which is public property. Probably it was in his path for some reason or other and killing it was his solution. Another example is a tree shrub which was in its own designated place in the corner of a building not bothering anyone, whose branches were lopped off and it has so far not recovered. It seems it is dead as it shows no more leaves, just mutilated branches.

Meanwhile our urban temperatures in the dry season are soaring, people's health is affected and the city is slowly turning into a desert of concrete and asphalt.

In the matter of trees, local governments should make a census of them in their locality, particularly in public places, protect them and encourage people to do the same through an information campaign. Trees in public places must be their wards and no one should be allowed to cut, mutilate, or stress them out.

The proliferation and inordinate use of manmade materials that are unsustainable has to be looked into. Plastic is overwhelming our oceans and our country is one of the worst plastic polluters. While I hear of local governments and big store chains banning the use of these materials, there is no information and alternative suggestions for the sidewalk and market entrepreneurs that use these polluting materials extensively. I heard that Thailand has suggested and maybe mandated the use of banana leaves to wrap food bought on the street. Surely, banana leaves can be found and put to use here

for our food vendors who do not use biodegradable wrappers. Local governments should lead the way here, even find a source of banana leaves or any other biodegradable material that is available and affordable for current plastic users.

Another disrupter of Nature are the high-rise buildings that flout height restrictions in residential areas by locating there. They actually block sunlight for their neighbors which in other countries has been ruled by the courts to be a felony for which they have been fined and asked to allow the sunshine to return. Here they are allowed to ruin their neighbors' gardens and peace by allowing them to be built in inappropriate areas. When will we learn that sunshine is vital to health for both man and plants? And that if one is deprived of it by another it is effectively a theft?

Meanwhile, I am paying close attention to my garden to nurture the trees better, keep the grass growing healthily. Birds are daily visitors and we must make them welcome by allowing some chicos, mangoes, guavas to be left on the fruit trees for them. Equally, we should leave some underbrush or unmanicured spots for birds to nest in. I keep seeing kingfishers coming out of these areas regularly which makes me think they are dwelling there or have nests there. But I will not pry, just let them be.

I am happy to say that the saraca tree (asoka indica, one of its many scientific names, introduced to the Philippines from India or Malaysia) that someone had given me has produced clumps of orange blooms now at the expected time for its blooming. It was a small shrub given by a friend and planting it where it gets the sunrise from the east and regular watering has made it grow and produce lovely blooms. It did so because it was nurtured. Nature must be nurtured more than ever at this stage of our pollution levels.

Wishing all a happy, healthy and comfortable coming summer season.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

[UN-backed climate fund OKs \\$39-M project for Filipino farmers](#)

By: Gaea Katreena Cabico

The Green Climate Fund (GCF) has approved a \$39.2-million (P2.15 billion) program to help the Philippines shift to a climate-resilient agricultural system and let farmers respond to the impacts of the climate crisis.

The Philippines is one of the countries most at risk from the impacts of climate change such as strong cyclones and droughts, with poor and rural communities bearing the brunt of the disasters.

To boost the resilience of climate-vulnerable rural smallholder farmers, the GCF approved the funding proposal on the project called "Adapting Philippine Agriculture to Climate Change" at its 35th board meeting in South Korea, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) said on Thursday.

The project will be supported by a \$26.2-million GCF grant and \$12.9 million in co-financing from the Department of Agriculture and state weather bureau Pagasa.

The seven-year initiative will directly benefit 1.25 Filipino farmers in rural areas by raising their awareness of climate risks and risk-reduction measures, building their capacity to develop enterprises and to access finance and related technologies, and adopting climate-resilient agriculture (CRA) practices.

"Through this, we are giving flesh to the President's pronouncement in his first State of the Nation Address emphasizing that the production of farm inputs or the needs of farmers to increase their productivity should conform to the challenges brought by climate change and global warming," said Senior Undersecretary Domingo Panganiban.

President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. is concurrently agriculture secretary.

At the national level, the project will incorporate CRA into the development agendas of the national government and local government units, and will work with the private sector and financial institutions to develop robust CRA value chains.

FAO also said the initiative is expected to deliver indirect benefits to over five million Filipinos, and pay special attention to indigenous peoples, women and girls.

The project is expected to reduce emissions by some 4.38 metric tons of carbon dioxide-equivalent over a 20-year period as a result of the application of CRA practices and better land use.

The GCF is a fund established within the framework of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change as an operating entity of the Financial Mechanism to assist developing countries in adaptation and mitigation practices to counter climate change.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

[CCC, French embassy to boost dev't cooperation on climate action](#)

By: Azer Parrocha

The Climate Change Commission (CCC) and the Embassy of France to the Philippines and Micronesia have expressed commitment to strengthen partnership and development cooperation on climate action.

CCC Vice Chair and Executive Director (VCED) Robert E.A. Borje received French Ambassador to the Philippines, H.E. Michele Boccoz, and exchanged priorities and strategies for implementing local climate action.

“We express our gratitude to the government of France and the French Development Agency (AFD) for supporting the Philippines in implementing policy initiatives and sustainable solutions to address major climate and environmental challenges in the country,” Borje said in a news release on Thursday.

Among the priorities of CCC and French Embassy is the development and updating of risk-informed Local Climate Change Action Plans (LCCAPs) by local government units.

Through AFD’s ongoing technical support, LGUs will be provided with capacity development and enhancement activities, as well as tools which are useful in the formulation and updating of LCCAPs.

“AFD will continuously provide necessary assistance to the CCC in policy formulation and updating, as well as in enhancing local capacities on LCCAP development towards improved climate resilience,” Boccoz said.

As of March 2, 1,399 or 81.57 percent of the 1,715 LGUs had submitted their LCCAPs to the CCC. Currently, the LCCAP Quality Assurance Mechanism is being developed based on guidelines set by CCC and DILG.

Following the Philippines Country Climate and Development Report (CCDR) by the World Bank Group, both officials explored other possible areas of collaboration aligned with the priorities specified in Chapter 15 of the Philippine Development Plan 2023-2028, such as the updating of the National Framework Strategy on Climate Change (NFSCC) and the Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC).

The NFSCC and the NDC are policies and frameworks which serve as basis of local climate action plans.

Consistent with the pronouncements of President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. on strengthening cooperation with allied countries and development partners, the CCC institutionalized a contact group called “ENACT: Empowering Nurtured Alliance for Climate Action and Transformation.”

ENACT will serve as a platform among CCC, embassies and development partners to discuss, collaborate, and collectively implement investment-led transformative climate action.

CCC welcomes \$26.3-M grant to make transform PH agri sector

The “Adapting Philippine Agriculture to Climate Change (APA)” secured approval for a grant of USD26.3 million from the Green Climate Fund (GCF) to increase the resilience of rural agriculture men and women in climate vulnerable areas and transform the country’s agriculture sector towards climate resilience.

The APA project is a submission by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), with the Department of Agriculture (DA) and the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) as executing entities.

“We welcome the decision of the GCF Board to approve the APA Project, which will be instrumental in building the capacity of our farming communities, as well as of the government and private sector, to understand and manage climate risks and adopt climate resilient agriculture (CRA) practices,” CCC Vice Chair and Executive Director Robert E.A. Borje said in a news release on Thursday.

Domestic resources amounting to USD12.98 million will be used to co-finance the project, putting the total project value at USD39.3 million. The project will cater to at least nine provinces in five regions namely Cagayan Valley, Bicol, Northern Mindanao, Soccksargen, and Cordillera).

The project will have three main outcomes: increased institutional capacities for the development and provision of climate information and CRA services; farmers (female/male) adopt CRA through CRA enterprises; and enabling environment for mainstreaming and scaling up CRA.

At least 1.25 million poor farming household members (half of whom are women) are expected to directly benefit as farmers improve awareness of risks and risk reduction measures and incorporate climate-resilient and low emission technologies into agricultural practices. Over 5 million people living in the area will also benefit indirectly from enhanced information systems and strengthened institutional capacity that will create an enabling environment to promote the widespread adoption of CRA.

“High impact, climate-resilient agriculture initiatives such as the APA, have potential to significantly contribute in the country’s socio-economic development, while enhancing adaptive capacities of our agricultural systems to climate change,” Borje said.

APA will be implemented this year until 2030 and is expected to reduce 1.86 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (MtCO₂e) over 20 years as a result of application of CRA practices and better land use.

“We look forward to the implementation of the APA Project, which will certainly benefit Filipino farming communities living in vulnerable areas in the country. This is one critical project that can further enable our agriculture sector's transformation towards sustainability and resilience,” CCC Commissioner Rachel Anne Herrera, who was former GCF Board Member, said.

The project was approved by the GCF Board at its 35th Meeting in Songdo, Korea from 13 March 2023 and scheduled to end today, 16 March 2023.

The Philippines is currently part of the GCF Board, represented by the Department of Finance (DOF).

“We thank the DOF for pushing our national and global climate agenda forward through its representation and work in the GCF Board,” Borje said.

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