



NEWS ROUNDUP

18 MARCH 2024 [07:00 am]

- Growth in sustainable places
- Hong Kong hosts One Earth Summit to set Asia on mission for climate change impact
- Climate graphic of the week: Oceans set heat records for more than 365 days in a row
- Marcos cites gains made from Germany, Czech trips
- What happened when Marcos met all four of the Czech Republic's top officials
- PH joins battle to alter climate change course
- [Opinion] Is our planet beyond saving?
- Australia summit shows Asean wants climate partners. Hong Kong, step up
- Earth Hour calls for action on plastic pollution, climate change
- Space cooperation as vast space itself
- Sustainable tourism

CCC IN THE NEWS:

- PH calls for collaboration, planning to speed up climate adaptation for developing world
- Metro Pacific Investments Corporation and Climate Change Commission forge partnership for climate action
- MPIC, Climate Change Commission forge partnership for climate action
- Be vigilant vs fires amid El Niño, public urged
- Metro Pacific Investments Corporation and Climate Change Commission forge partnership for climate action
- CCC urges public vigilance amid heightened risk of fires exacerbated by climate change
- PH joins UNFCCC Adaptation Committee
- PH calls for collaboration to enhance climate change adaptation

DAILY TRIBUNE

[Growth in sustainable places](#)

The European Union is accelerating the country's transition toward a greener future in a historic collaboration with the Philippines through a program that aims to spur a more sustainable economy.

ECO BUSINESS

[Hong Kong hosts One Earth Summit to set Asia on mission for climate change impact](#)

The Institute of Sustainability and Technology (IST), a Hong Kong-based sustainability research and education institute, announces the launch of the inaugural One Earth Summit, a premier global gathering for international sustainability leaders set to take place at Regala Skycity Hotel, Hong Kong on March 25, 2024.

FINANCIAL TIMES

[Climate graphic of the week: Oceans set heat records for more than 365 days in a row](#)

Oceans marked 365 straight days of record-breaking global surface sea temperatures this week, fuelling concerns among international scientists that climate change could push marine ecosystems beyond a tipping point.

MANILA BULLETIN

[Marcos cites gains made from Germany, Czech trips](#)

By: Raymund antonio

President Marcos arrived in Manila on Saturday, March 16, after back-to-back state visits to Germany and the Czech Republic, where he invited investments and reached multi-billion dollar business agreements in the country's varied industries and sectors.

[What happened when Marcos met all four of the Czech Republic's top officials](#)

By: Argyll Cyrus Geducos

President Marcos took advantage of his three-day State Visit to the Czech Republic and met all four of the Central European country's top officials, including President Petr Pavel and Prime Minister Petr Fiala.

MANILA STANDARD

[PH joins battle to alter climate change course](#)

By: Ray S. Eñano

The Philippines, like the rest of the world, is racing against time to reverse climate change.

PANAY

[\[Opinion\] Is our planet beyond saving?](#)

The aeta are among the most neglected people in the Philippines. Juan Delgos is a poor Aeta farmer living in a bamboo hut with a grass roof in the Zambales mountains, North of Manila. He is bent with age and hard work and has endured lashing rain and burning sun. He is a subsistence farmer with his wife and three children living on ancestral land.

SOUTH CHINA MORNING POST

[Australia summit shows Asean wants climate partners. Hong Kong, step up](#)

By: Stephen Minas

News from the summit, held to mark 50 years of relations between the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and Australia, has been predictably dominated by takes on China's role in the region from leaders past and present. But the summit also confirmed Asean's commitment to a carbon-neutral economy – and its need for partners to help achieve its climate goals. This is an opportunity for Hong Kong.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

[Earth Hour calls for action on plastic pollution, climate change](#)

By: Gaea Katreena Cabico

This year's Earth Hour, happening on Saturday, calls on Filipinos to conserve energy and combat plastic pollution.

[Space cooperation as vast space itself](#)

By: Shanice-Espiritu Amador

In 1975, one of the most significant milestones in space cooperation happened when a joint international space mission by the United States and the Soviet Union named the Apollo-Soyuz was successfully carried out. This event 49 years ago apparently started space cooperation among countries, symbolically thawing Cold War tensions in the world's newest frontier at the time.

[Sustainable tourism](#)

By: Mary Ann LL. Reyes

All 193 member states of the United Nations have just adopted a new global standard to measure the sustainability of tourism.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

ABS CBN

[PH calls for collaboration, planning to speed up climate adaptation for developing world](#)

The Philippines underscored the importance of collaboration, planning, financing, and strategic communication to enhance climate change adaptation action and support.

BUSINESS MIRROR

[Metro Pacific Investments Corporation and Climate Change Commission forge partnership for climate action](#)

Metro Pacific Investments Corporation (MPIC) and the Climate Change Commission (CCC) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding aimed at collaborating to address climate change and promote climate resilience in the Philippines.

MALAYA BUSINESS INSIGHT

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MANILA BULLETIN

[Be vigilant vs fires amid El Niño, public urged](#)

By: Raymund Antonio

As the number of fire incidents grew this year from the same period last year, the Climate Change Commission (CCC) urged the public to remain vigilant and take preventive measures against urban and forest fires exacerbated by the ongoing El Niño phenomenon.

MANILA STANDARD

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PHILIPPINE INFORMATION AGENCY

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The Climate Change Commission urged the public to take preventive measures against urban and forest fires exacerbated by the ongoing El Niño.

[PH joins UNFCCC Adaptation Committee](#)

The Philippines formally joined the Adaptation Committee of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) for the first time, paving the way for deeper engagement to advance adaptation interests for developing countries.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

[PH calls for collaboration to enhance climate change adaptation](#)

Representing developing nations, the Philippines underscored the importance of collaboration, planning, financing, and strategic communication to enhance climate change adaptation action and support.

Information and Knowledge Management Division

DAILY TRIBUNE

Growth in sustainable places

The European Union is accelerating the country's transition toward a greener future in a historic collaboration with the Philippines through a program that aims to spur a more sustainable economy.

“At the core of the Green Economy Program for the Philippines is our collective commitment to promote circular practices and waste-prevention initiatives,” said Environment Secretary Maria Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga. “Through collaborative efforts and strategic partnerships, we are determined to pave the way for a more sustainable and resilient future for our nation.”

The groundbreaking program is mitigating environmental degradation and combat climate change, all while fostering economic growth and social inclusivity.

The program runs until 2028, with a budget of €60 million (P3.65 billion).

It will build partnerships, enhance policy frameworks, and establish a multi-stakeholder dialogue platform.

In collaboration with the private sector and civil society, the United Nations Development Program will help empower local government units to take proactive measures towards sustainable waste management and circular economy practices.

France's technical assistance agency will help engage the private sector and financial industry in promoting sustainable business practices and innovative financial mechanisms that support circular economy objectives.

The project will also carry out initiatives to accelerate the deployment of renewable energy technologies and enhancing energy efficiency measures to mitigate climate-change impacts.

The program will also help Philippine authorities to achieve the goals of a number of the country's international climate commitments and national environmental policies.

“The successful launch of the Green Economy Program for the Philippines is part of the EU's new Global Gateway Strategy and shows our commitment worldwide to combating climate change while promoting inclusive economic development,” said EU Ambassador Luc Véron.

ECO BUSINESS

[Hong Kong hosts One Earth Summit to set Asia on mission for climate change impact](#)

The Institute of Sustainability and Technology (IST), a Hong Kong-based sustainability research and education institute, announces the launch of the inaugural One Earth Summit, a premier global gathering for international sustainability leaders set to take place at Regala Skycity Hotel, Hong Kong on March 25, 2024.

The Summit is a first-of-its-kind platform in Asia Pacific that curates action-focused dialogues for achieving a net-zero, nature positive transition in the region and beyond.

Organised by the Institute of Sustainability and Technology, co-organised by the World Economic Forum's GAEA (Giving to Amplify Earth Action) Initiative, in collaboration with the World Economic Forum as a Knowledge Partner, and with the Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau (FSTB) and InvestHK of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) as Host Partners, the Summit will leverage Hong Kong's prominence as the region's financial and innovation hub to foster an ecosystem of public-private-philanthropic partnerships dedicated to driving sustainability progress through putting promises into action.

Premier gathering of over 500 leaders and changemakers

With the theme "Planetary crossroads: Investing in innovations for a sustainable future", the Summit will bring together over 500 influential leaders and changemakers from government representatives, green finance experts, young leaders and entrepreneurs, senior executives of multinational corporations, academia, institutional investors, and representatives of international organisations, aiming to foster actionable solutions addressing global sustainability challenges through insightful discussions focusing on five distinct areas: Water & Nature-based Solutions; Infrastructure & Urban Development; Food & Agriculture; Energy Transition; and Materials & Industrial Decarbonisation.

Confirmed speakers include climate envoys, government officials, heads of international organisations and multilateral development banks, as well as top executives of corporates and family offices, prominent philanthropists, and celebrated individuals renowned for their contribution to climate action such as H.S.H. Prince Max von und zu Liechtenstein; Mr Jim Coulter, Founding Partner of TPG & Managing Partner of TPG Rise Climate; Prof Johan Rockström, Director of the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research; Mr Jingdong Hua, Vice-Chair of the International Sustainability Standards Board; Dr Peter Lee Ka-kit, Chairman of Henderson Land Group and The Hong Kong and China Gas Company Limited; Mr Chavalit Frederick Tsao, Chairman of

IMC Pan Asia Alliance Group; Ms Amy Lo, Chairman of UBS Global Wealth Management Asia; and more.

The programme of the full-day Summit will include plenary sessions, open sessions such as roundtable dialogues and fireside chats, and closed-door sessions with invite-only networking events and investor pitches.

Beyond the pledges: putting promises into action

The inaugural One Earth Summit aims to promote personal, organisational, and planetary well-being through fostering interconnectedness, diversity, and inclusion – with the vision of driving collaboration, transformation, and innovative solutions through strategic partnerships that transcend cultural boundaries, divisions, and disciplines. With a focus on knowledge sharing and showcasing talent and cutting-edge technologies in Asia and emerging markets around the globe, the Summit will serve as a platform that promotes “Investment for Good” by connecting high-potential start-ups with the world’s most prominent, purpose-driven investors.

Messages from the organiser, co-organiser, and knowledge partner

Prof Poman Lo, Founder of Institute of Sustainability and Technology, said, “I am thrilled to initiate the launch of One Earth Summit, a ground-breaking partnership with the World Economic Forum and the HKSAR Government with a mission to drive urgent action to save our one and only Mother Earth. The global climate crisis places us at a critical juncture in the history of humankind. Our Summit seeks to reverse this trajectory. Our collective goal is to mobilise the necessary capital to fuel innovative solutions for the most pressing environmental challenges, transforming competition into collaboration, dialogue into action, and transition risks into investment opportunities. To foster international partnerships and technology exchange across the East and West, we are hosting the inaugural Summit in Hong Kong. As a key economic growth engine, the Asia-Pacific region is responsible for over half of the world’s carbon emissions and thus plays a pivotal role in accelerating the sustainable transition. Our event marks the dawn of an impact revolution across Asia, setting new standards for environmental stewardship and purpose-driven investments. Together, we can empower innovations for a sustainable future and drive meaningful change – from Asia to the world.”

Her Majesty Queen Rania Al Abdullah of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and Giving to Amplify Earth Action (GAEA) Global Co-Chair, said, “Human activity has pushed the planet beyond the zone of uncertainty. There is no Planet B. The six remaining years of this Decade of Action are crucial for delivering meaningful climate and nature action. The time is now to unite diverse organisations and stakeholders with a common purpose of addressing climate change through global public-private-philanthropic

collaboration. The One Earth Summit marks a pivotal moment in global sustainability efforts. By bringing together leaders from all walks of life, we can collectively address the challenges our planet faces and forge a path towards a more sustainable and resilient future.”

Mr Ray Dalio, Founder and (Former) Chief Investment Officer of Bridgewater Associates and Giving to Amplify Earth Action (GAEA) Global Co-Chair, said, “Climate change is happening in a big way. A big challenge requires even bigger commitments from everyone in the world, including investors and philanthropists. Private capital will need to be deployed in a big way to help fight the climate crisis. At this critical juncture, the One Earth Summit provides a unique platform that gathers big thinkers from the public, private, and philanthropic sectors to come up with big solutions for our planet.”

Prof Klaus Schwab, Founder & Executive Chairman, World Economic Forum and Global Co-Chair, Giving to Amplify Earth Action (GAEA), said, “Climate philanthropy has the power to be catalytic in helping unlock private finance and government public funds required to finance positive tipping point interventions at the speed and scale required across earth’s systems. This is a historic time to innovate and design the new kind of philanthropic-public-private collaborations needed to put the planet on track to meet its climate ambitions. Come join us, in helping corporates shift their practices and value chains towards sustainable ones, faster, and at scale.”

Support from the HKSAR Government with FSTB and InvestHK as host partners

Mr John Lee, Chief Executive of the HKSAR, said, “As one of the mega events taking place in Hong Kong this year, the inaugural One Earth Summit further consolidates Hong Kong’s position as an international green technology and financial centre and tells the good stories of our city to our local and international audiences. We look forward to joining the thought-provoking dialogues among the world’s leading changemakers and innovators at the One Earth Summit, and participating in concerted global efforts in building a sustainable future for our next generation.”

Mr Christopher Hui, Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury of the HKSAR Government, said, “As a leading international financial centre with its dynamic capital markets, Hong Kong is well-positioned to spearhead green and sustainable finance. We are also developing Hong Kong into a philanthropic centre for global family offices and philanthropists to deploy charitable capital. The One Earth Summit will contribute to enhancing Hong Kong’s international profile in the green and sustainability domain, and showcase our commitment to developing Hong Kong as the leading green and sustainable finance hub, as well as a philanthropic centre.”

Ms Alpha Lau, Director-General of Investment Promotion of InvestHK, said, “The global pursuit to carbon neutrality has created a huge demand for innovative and technological solutions to reduce, mitigate or offset carbon emission. The strong presence of talent, skills and innovation in Hong Kong makes the region stand out as a bright spot for attractive investment opportunities that offer both impact and returns and a beacon of hope in combating the climate crisis. We are committed to providing support that will strengthen the Summit’s capacity for fostering international collaboration and investment in sustainability-focused initiatives.”

FINANCIAL TIMES

[Climate graphic of the week: Oceans set heat records for more than 365 days in a row](#)

Oceans marked 365 straight days of record-breaking global surface sea temperatures this week, fuelling concerns among international scientists that climate change could push marine ecosystems beyond a tipping point.

The consistent climb in temperatures reached a peak on Wednesday when the new all-time high was set for the past 12 months, at 21.2C.

The world's seas have yet to show any signs of dropping to typical, seasonal temperatures, with daily records consecutively broken since they first went off the charts in mid-March last year, according to data from the US National Atmospheric and Oceanic Administration and the Climate Reanalyzer research collaboration.

Driven by human-caused climate change and amplified by the cyclical El Niño weather phenomenon that warms the Pacific Ocean, this exceptional heat has bleak implications.

Richard Spinrad, the US under secretary and administrator of NOAA, said this week that the warming would have "rather dramatic impacts on major storms, on ecosystems".

NOAA warned earlier this month that the world was on the brink of experiencing its fourth global mass coral reef bleaching event.

The US agency's Coral Reef Watch introduced three new bleaching alert levels as several regions, particularly in the eastern Pacific and Greater Caribbean, experienced such extreme heat stress that it was no longer sufficiently captured by the old scale.

Scientists further worry that the coming Atlantic hurricane season has the potential to be devastating because of this sustained heat, even as the El Niño system weakens to give way to the opposing La Niña weather cycle that results in a cooling effect.

Spinrad said that, historically, the hurricane season started at the beginning of June and ended in November, but this pattern had shifted, with areas of the central Atlantic far warmer for March than normal.

"If you look at the record, we are seeing certainly tropical cyclones forming earlier than June 1, and we're seeing systems extending well beyond the end of November. So that, hurricane season has certainly become longer both on the front and the back," he said.

The world's oceans absorb 90 per cent of the excess heat and energy released by greenhouse gas emissions that are trapped in the Earth's system and are the cause of climate change.

The largest carbon sink in the northern hemisphere is the Atlantic Ocean, where the circulation of water helps ensure that temperatures on land are regulated.

There was "a lot of concern", Spinrad said, about what is described as the conveyor belt of circulation in the oceans, known as the Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation, which may be slowing because of excess heat, with unknown consequences for habitable conditions on Earth.

MANILA BULLETIN

Marcos cites gains made from Germany, Czech trips

By: Raymund antonio

President Marcos arrived in Manila on Saturday, March 16, after back-to-back state visits to Germany and the Czech Republic, where he invited investments and reached multi-billion dollar business agreements in the country's varied industries and sectors.

Philippine Airlines flight PR001 carrying the Chief Executive, First Lady Liza Araneta-Marcos, and the Philippine delegation landed at exactly 3:11 p.m. at the Villamor Airbase in Pasay City from his six-day visit to the two European states.

In his arrival speech, the President talked about meeting German businessmen and the \$4 billion worth of business agreements that they reached.

"They are keen to expand their ventures to the Philippines and I am glad to announce that my German visit resulted in business agreements for projects with an aggregate value of \$4 billion," he said.

These agreements are focused in the sectors of renewable energy, manufacturing, health care, innovation and start-ups, Information Technology and Business Process Management (IT-BPM), minerals processing, agriculture, and aerospace, he added.

While in Berlin, he also discussed with aviation services provider Lufthansa Technik its planned P8-trillion expansion in the Philippines, including the construction of the second hangar at the Clark International Airport.

He also met with German multinational technology conglomerate Siemens, whom he thanked "for their unwavering support and confidence in Filipino talent and the company's' continuing commitment to support the capacity building of Filipino Technical Personnel in the field of healthcare."

Marcos also shared about his invitation to German and Czech companies to invest in the Philippines, particularly in his administration's clean energy and renewable energy initiatives.

"In Germany, I was able to meet with Chancellor Olaf Scholz, and discussed matters of significance to both our countries," he said.

Among the topics he discussed with the German chancellor were upholding the rule of law and promoting rules-based international order, enhancing cooperation in the areas

of peace and development, defense cooperation, maritime cooperation, trade and investment, including on critical raw materials and renewable energy, climate change, and labor.

“I emphasized the Philippines’ commitment to a clean energy future and invited German investments in green energy initiatives,” Marcos added.

As Scholz remarked on the critical role that overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) in Germany play in their society, the President said he “highlighted their contributions to the economy and to the society of Germany.”

In Czech Republic, he met with Czech Republic President Petr Pavel and Prime Minister Petr Fiala, as well as the heads of the Czech Parliament.

There, Marcos said that he also secured business agreements in the semiconductors and ITBPM sectors “that underscore a shared commitment to bilateral cooperation facilitating exchange programs and skill enhancement initiatives.”

The Chief Executive shared that discussions centered on how to strengthen the two countries’ bilateral cooperations in the areas of trade and investment, defense, agriculture, renewable energy, transport, and people-to-people exchanges.

“I underscored the Philippines’ remarkable economic performance and invited Czech businesses to invest in the areas of IT-BPM, electronics, manufacturing, food and agriculture, and automotive and electric vehicle manufacturing, amongst other things,” he added.

Meanwhile, Marcos also received support from the German and Czech Republic governments on the resumption of the Philippines-European Union Free Trade Agreement (PH-EU FTA) negotiations, which have been stalled since 2017.

He said that he asked DTI Secretary Fred Pascual “to make the necessary follow-up of the progress of the FTA discussions” at the EU headquarters in Brussels as the official was currently there.

This “valuable support” from the two countries came after the Philippines and EU announced their intention to begin technical discussions to potentially resume FTA negotiations last July 2023.

Several agreements were also signed during the Chief Executive’s two-country state visits, namely, the Joint Declaration of Intent on Strengthening Cooperation in the Maritime Sector between Philippines and German Transportation Agencies and the

cooperation program between the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) and the German Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training.

The Joint Communique on the Establishment of Labor Consultation Mechanism between Philippine and Czech labor agencies was also signed since the Czech Republic has expanded its quota for Filipino workers from 5,000 a year previously to 10,300 a year now.

“Overall, I am confident that these visits to Germany and the Czech Republic have strengthened our bonds with these two countries in Central Europe and created opportunities for cooperation and prosperity,” Marcos said.

The President and his delegation, composed of Senate President Juan Miguel Zubiri and House Speaker Martin Romualdez, among others, were welcomed by Vice President Sara Duterte, Executive Secretary Lucas Bersamin, and other Cabinet officials.

[What happened when Marcos met all four of the Czech Republic's top officials](#)

By: Argyll Cyrus Geducos

President Marcos took advantage of his three-day State Visit to the Czech Republic and met all four of the Central European country's top officials, including President Petr Pavel and Prime Minister Petr Fiala.

The meetings, which all took place here in Prague on Thursday, March 15, are aimed at strengthening the bilateral cooperation and multilateral partnerships between the Philippines and the Czech Republic. He was accompanied by Senate President Juan Miguel Zubiri and Speaker Ferdinand Martin Romualdez in his meetings with the four officials.

Arrival honors were accorded to President Marcos and First Lady Liza Araneta-Marcos at the Prague Castle where he was warmly welcomed by Czech Republic President Petr Pavel and First Lady Eva Pavlová.

Marcos and Pavel discussed a range of topics, including measures on how the Philippines and the Czech Republic can strengthen the bilateral ties, cooperation, and multilateral partnerships between the two countries.

They also witnessed the signing of the Joint Communique to establish a labor consultation mechanism between the Department of Migrant Workers (DMW) and the Czech Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs.

In addition, both leaders discussed the position of the Philippine government in the South China Sea issues, and the continued efforts to explore various opportunities in terms of trade and investments, agriculture, green economy, renewable energy, space, aerospace, education, tourism, and defense, among others.

Shortly, President Marcos had a working lunch with Czech Senate President Miloš Vystrčil at the Czech Senate where he highlighted the importance of the bicameral system in the Philippines.

The President noted with appreciation the recent positive exchanges between the Philippines and Czech Republic parliaments and encouraged the Senate President to help promote trade, investment, and economic cooperation between the two countries.

They likewise discussed the 50th anniversary of the Philippines-Czech Republic bilateral relations and ways to strengthen cooperation on labor, agriculture, food security, and climate change. Both leaders also exchanged views on regional and international issues.

President Marcos also expressed that the Philippines' priority is the safe and orderly migration of Filipinos into the Czech Republic, guided by both nations' labor regulations, and the protection of their rights and well-being.

President Marcos then met with the Czech Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies Markéta Pekarová Adamová where he expressed pride in the industry and skills of the Filipino workers and emphasized that the Philippines has the biggest assets in terms of its young workforce.

He welcomed the more enhanced people-to-people relationship with the Central European country, as well as its decision to allow more Filipino workers to join its labor market. Starting in May this year, the Czech Republic is allowing 10,300 Filipinos to enter the country yearly.

"[The] increase in the quota gives us an opportunity in the Philippines to have another avenue for our overseas workers who have traditionally have become rather a very large part of our economy and very large part of the contributions that they make to our economy," Marcos said during the meeting.

"And it's not only in terms of the remittances that they send back, the money they send back to their families. It is the good performance that they have shown in their host countries. That has been a great advantage to the Philippines, the assimilation of our people to Czech society has become an important and fruitful one," he added.

Before concluding his visit, President Marcos sat a bilateral meeting with Czech Prime Minister Petr Fiala where they both agreed to further strengthen the bilateral relationship between the two countries.

This is the third meeting between the two leaders since the 2022 Commemorative Summit of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) – European Union (EU) in Belgium and the Czech Prime Minister's official visit to the Philippines in April last year.

During their meeting, President Marcos conveyed the Philippines' commitment to work with like-minded countries like the Czech Republic in upholding a rules-based international order. He also sought more engagements with Czech defense establishments to enhance cooperation on security, defense-industrial, and cybersecurity.

Both leaders also discussed the huge potential of increasing cooperation on trade and investment, agriculture, labor, and climate change.

In terms of people-to-people ties, President Marcos said the Philippines is keen on strengthening this relationship through tourism and university-to-university linkages. He invited the Czech people to visit the Philippines and experience its beautiful tourist destinations and excellent Filipino hospitality.

"Hopefully, we will see more of your citizens coming to the Philippines. And I can see that this is an area that will continue to increase for us," he said.

"We take pride in the Filipino hospitality, and we take pride in our beautiful country," he added, noting that the Philippines considers its tourism sector an important part in reviving the economy after the pandemic.

The Czech Republic is second home to 7,026 Filipinos working in the processing industry, automotive, repairs and appliances, manufacturing, IT communications, real estate, health/wellness, and household service work.

Diplomatic relations between the Philippines and the Czech Republic were officially established on Oct. 5, 1973.

Before flying back to Manila, the President will speak at the Philippine-Czech Republic Business Forum in Prague on Friday and conduct a bilateral meeting with a local firm. He will also meet with the Filipino community in Prague to cap his state visit to the Czech capital.

MANILA STANDARD

[PH joins battle to alter climate change course](#)

By: Ray S. Eñano

The Philippines, like the rest of the world, is racing against time to reverse climate change.

From cleaning up waterways in Metro Manila and relying more on renewable energy resources to reforestation initiatives in the countryside, the Philippines has joined nations across the globe in reducing carbon emissions and preserving a delicate ecological balance. The stakes are high—extreme weather and a biodiversity catastrophe will alter mankind’s way of life, and eventually result in hunger, rising unemployment and diseases.

The world has seen record-high temperatures last year that caused wildfires in parts of the western hemisphere and induced severe storms and floods elsewhere.

The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) has officially confirmed that 2023 is the warmest year on record, by a huge margin. The annual average global temperature neared 1.5° Celsius above pre-industrial levels.

The dubious record is symbolic because the Paris Agreement on climate change is aiming to limit the long-term temperature increase to no more than 1.5° Celsius above pre-industrial levels.

“Climate change is the biggest challenge that humanity faces. It is affecting all of us, especially the most vulnerable,” said WMO Secretary-General Prof. Celeste Saulo. “We cannot afford to wait any longer. We are already taking action but we have to do more and we have to do it quickly. We have to make drastic reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and accelerate the transition to renewable energy sources,” she said.

Scientists blame heavy carbon emissions, mainly from fossil-based fuels like crude oil and coal, for rising temperatures. Earth, as we know it today, is the only planet in the universe that is capable of hosting life because of its perfect conditions. Earth is often called the ‘Goldilocks’ planet—its conditions are just right, not too hot or too cold, allowing life to thrive—as described by the US National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

It is called the greenhouse effect or the process through which heat is trapped near Earth’s surface by substances known as ‘greenhouse gases.’ They serve as a cozy blanket that cover Earth and keeps a warmer temperature.

Greenhouse gases consist of carbon dioxide, methane, ozone, nitrous oxide, chlorofluorocarbons and water vapor. NASA explains that water vapor, which reacts to temperature changes, serves a 'feedback' because it amplifies the effect of forces that initially caused the warming.

Scientists across the globe have determined that carbon dioxide plays a crucial role in maintaining the stability of Earth's atmosphere. If carbon dioxide were removed, the terrestrial greenhouse effect would collapse, and Earth's surface temperature would drop significantly by approximately 33°C (59°F).

Scientists say that part of what makes Earth so amenable is its natural greenhouse effect, which maintains an average temperature of 15°C (59°F) . But in the last century, human activities, mainly from burning fossil fuels that have led to the release of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, have disrupted Earth's energy balance.

It has led to an increase in carbon dioxide in the atmosphere and ocean. The level of carbon dioxide in Earth's atmosphere, notes NASA, has been rising consistently for decades and traps extra heat near Earth's surface, causing temperatures to rise.

So, is Earth on the precipice of a carbon dioxide imbalance that could threaten life itself?

"We are in a disastrous five-minutes-to-midnight situation," warns Sean Kidney, the chief executive office of the Climate Bonds Initiative, an advocacy group. "The extent of change we need to make is no longer gradual, it's sudden. We have to jump off a cliff into a low-carbon world to have any kind of future for our children."

Hope is not lost in saving Earth. In December last year at the UN Climate Change Conference, countries for the first time agreed to transition away from fossil fuels.

Investments in renewable energy are starting to outstrip those in fossil fuels. For some, that is a sign that an irreversible shift in the markets is underway. There is no doubt the future will be green. "The only question now for investors is the speed—and who will be a winner and who will be a loser," said Kidney.

The Philippines, too, must act fast to stem the tide of global warming The current generation of Filipinos and mother Earth are keeping their fingers crossed.

PANAY

[\[Opinion\] Is our planet beyond saving?](#)

The aeta are among the most neglected people in the Philippines. Juan Delgos is a poor Aeta farmer living in a bamboo hut with a grass roof in the Zambales mountains, North of Manila. He is bent with age and hard work and has endured lashing rain and burning sun. He is a subsistence farmer with his wife and three children living on ancestral land.

Juan's grandfather was a hunter and gatherer in the once lush rainforests of Zambales. After World War II and Independence, massive deforestation destroyed the rainforests during the 1960s. The logging families and politicians cut every tree they could find leaving the mountains in the Philippines with only three percent of primeval forest. After a massive public outcry by environmentalists in the 1990s, logging was outlawed but it was too late and there is still illegal logging today. If the forests were regrown, they would absorb billions of tons of CO₂.

The Aeta indigenous people survived and remained poor. They sold banana and Pico mangos to commercial traders for exploitative low prices. To help them, the Profairtrade Development Enterprise (PDE) organization came in and paid triple the traders' price for Pico mangos. They picked up the mangos, paid cash in the field and gave them a share of the earnings after the mangos were processed into mango puree and exported. The PDE also helps provide sanitation and water supply projects in the villages. It also provides as many as 2,000 mango saplings and fruit trees every year to restore the mountains and provide income.

Five years ago, the PDE helped the 360 Aeta farmers reach the certified international organic standard for mango. That was a big achievement for poor farmers and they renewed their certification every year after passing strict inspections. They then sold tons of organic mangoes. The Aetas were doing very well during mango harvest until the climate changed for the worst.

"Now there are no more good harvests, it is too hot," Juan said. "The rain storms and wind come at the wrong time and wash away the mango blossoms. The fruit flies lay their eggs and kill the flowers on the trees. Then the heat dries what little fruits survive," he said. That is the tragic impact of climate change. The farmers and the PDE are now working on growing banana for processing into puree since the mangos are failing due to global warming and coal-fired power plants are the main culprits.

There are 28 coal-fired power plants in the Philippines and 22 more are planned and approved by the Department of Energy. Will the Philippines cancel the planned 22 coal-

fired plants and get development funds to build renewables like geothermal, wind and solar as new sources of electricity? It's not likely, as elsewhere in the world many politicians are puppets controlled by the coal and oil corporations.

Forty percent of the world's electricity is produced by burning coal and they produce the highest concentration of CO₂ in the atmosphere. China is the worst of all, followed by India, the US and Australia. As many as 80 countries depend on coal plants and another 15 countries are planning to join them. Only 19 have pledged to quit. So what hope is there for reducing CO₂ in the atmosphere to hold global temperatures at 1.5C by 2030? Not much really.

Only when economic forces greatly favor low-cost renewable energy sources and the people are free and enlightened to elect candidates of integrity, with virtue and values, and with commitment to justice and equality, will the warming slow and the planet will be saved.

SOUTH CHINA MORNING POST

[Australia summit shows Asean wants climate partners. Hong Kong, step up](#)

By: Stephen Minas

News from the summit, held to mark 50 years of relations between the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and Australia, has been predictably dominated by takes on China's role in the region from leaders past and present. But the summit also confirmed Asean's commitment to a carbon-neutral economy – and its need for partners to help achieve its climate goals. This is an opportunity for Hong Kong.

Asean is on the front line of climate change. In the Global Climate Risk Index 2021 produced by NGO Germanwatch, Myanmar, the Philippines and Thailand are among the top 10 countries most affected by longer-term climate change. The region's combination of high poverty levels, dependence on climate-hit sectors such as agriculture, extreme weather and coastline-hugging population makes it highly vulnerable.

Asean is also a rising source of greenhouse gas emissions, with a growing population, an energy mix dominated by fossil fuels, new coal plants planned or under way, and deforestation. With a collective gross domestic product that doubled from 2009 to 2019, the need to decouple economic growth from emissions growth in Asean is clear.

To respond to these challenges, Asean members last year adopted its carbon neutrality strategy, setting out initiatives that cover areas from physical infrastructure to financial markets. At the Melbourne summit, Asean members reaffirmed this strategy.

In the Melbourne Declaration, Asean and Australia commit to cooperation in “accelerating efforts towards the phase down of unabated coal power, and transitioning away from fossil fuels in energy systems, in a just, orderly and equitable manner”. This language is taken from the final decision of the Dubai Cop28 UN climate conference. Its inclusion shows the hard-won Dubai consensus has traction as a basis for regional planning and cooperation on moving beyond fossil fuels.

The Melbourne declaration also asserts that the “pursuit of renewable and clean energy ambitions across the region, on both land and sea, will create lasting regional security”.

Additionally, Asean and Australia commit to “deepening collaboration on reducing emissions as well as decarbonising our energy systems, establishing renewable energy markets, deploying low emissions technologies and developing our workforces' skills and capabilities to drive an inclusive energy transition”.

The partnerships announced at the summit highlight Asean's need for support to achieve its carbon neutrality goals. Meeting the goals will be extremely difficult.

Alongside policy uncertainty, finance is a persistent challenge. The clean energy investment gap runs into the tens of billions of US dollars at least and the challenges of matching available finance with investible projects is a constraint.

This investment gap is an opportunity for Hong Kong and the Greater Bay Area. By helping Asean finance its climate goals, Hong Kong can simultaneously contribute to climate action in Asia, pursue its ambition of becoming an international green technology and financial centre, and build market share in Asean, which is projected to become a larger economy than Japan by 2030.

Hong Kong-Asean cooperation is already on the agenda. While Chief Executive John Lee Ka-chiu did not mention climate or renewable energy in his admittedly brief speech at last year's Hong Kong-Asean summit, climate cooperation was certainly discussed. In his recent budget speech, Finance Secretary Paul Chan Mo-po spoke of facilitating commercial exchanges between the Greater Bay Area and Asean.

What's needed is a sharper focus on the climate dimensions of the relationship, matched with sustained Hong Kong engagement with Asean members and institutions. For instance, the Hong Kong Monetary Authority recently announced a joint climate finance conference in partnership with Dubai, focused on transition financing in the Middle East and Asia. Why not something similar with an Asean counterpart?

Hong Kong is the host of the largest issuance of ESG (environmental, social and corporate governance) bonds in Asia and is a conduit to mainland technology and finance. That Hong Kong is basing its green finance standards on the "common ground" of Chinese and European Union standards should also create an advantage for Hong Kong-originated financial products.

With the Cop28 consensus on transitioning from fossil fuels, the world has entered a new phase of climate action. New decision points are quickly coming, with countries required to commit to strengthened national climate goals in 2025. As its recent summit showed, Asean has high climate ambitions. Helping to achieve them is in our collective interest.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

[Earth Hour calls for action on plastic pollution, climate change](#)

By: Gaea Katreena Cabico

This year's Earth Hour, happening on Saturday, calls on Filipinos to conserve energy and combat plastic pollution.

Earth Hour 2024 will focus on addressing plastic pollution, a "pressing concern and public health issue" in the country, conservation organization World Wide Fund For Nature (WWF) Philippines said.

"As we are an archipelago of 7,640 islands, the damage caused by plastic pollution to our environment is magnified," said Katherine Custodio, executive director of WWF-Philippines.

According to WWF-Philippines, 2.15 million tons of plastic waste, the third largest component of the country's solid waste, were generated in 2019 alone. However, only 9% of these plastics are recycled due to limitations in recycling high-value plastics.

"As one of the countries most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, we need to ask ourselves how can we as Filipinos help save the planet by addressing our contribution to plastic pollution and we hope to use Earth Hour as the platform for awareness and actions," said Atty. Angela Ibay, national director of WWF-Philippines.

Twin crises

Scientists have found that biodiversity loss and climate change are two of the planet's biggest problems.

Custodio stressed that humans will be okay only if the "planet is okay."

"Too many of us have forgotten that we are deeply connected with nature, but the way we live, the way we produce and consume, the way we create the spaces we live—all have made a tremendous impact on our environment, on biodiversity," she said.

The Philippines is among the countries most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, with poor and rural communities bearing the brunt of disasters.

The impacts of the climate crisis extend far beyond changes in temperature or weather patterns. It disrupts ecosystems, affects food production and human health, intensifies disasters, threatens coastal communities with rising sea levels and exacerbates social inequalities.

The Philippines also faces degradation of ecosystems due to deforestation, mining, land conversions, unsustainable resource use, and overfishing.

Earth Hour is an annual event that encourages individuals to turn off non-essential electrical lights for one hour on the last Saturday of March.

The city government of Manila is the main partner for this year's Earth Hour, which will be held at the Kartilya ng Katipunan in Manila.

Several iconic landmarks, including the city hall clock tower and Rizal Monument, will switch off their lights from 8:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m to express the local government's commitment to protect and restore the environment.

The Earth Hour celebration started in Sydney, Australia in 2007. The Philippines joined in 2008, making this year's Earth Hour the 16th year it is observed in the country.

Space cooperation as vast space itself

By: Shanice-Espiritu Amador

In 1975, one of the most significant milestones in space cooperation happened when a joint international space mission by the United States and the Soviet Union named the Apollo-Soyuz was successfully carried out. This event 49 years ago apparently started space cooperation among countries, symbolically thawing Cold War tensions in the world's newest frontier at the time.

Today, cooperation in countless different areas whether domestic or across countries has become a household concept, especially in areas that concern our lands and seas. However, the topic of space cooperation continues to be foreign to most, especially to many who do not recognize the efficiency and effectiveness of using space science and technology applications (SSTA).

In giving popular yet unassuming examples of the wider uses of space-based technologies, one can look at weather forecasting and monitoring as a strong illustration of their usefulness. This is most especially important to the Philippines given that our nation is prone to drastic weather patterns like typhoons and storms.

Space-based technologies have the potential to provide critical information for disaster risk management. Another common use by most would be connectivity in both navigation and connectivity to the rest of the world by television and radio. People's lives have undoubtedly been made easier through the use of global positioning satellites (GPS), and our worlds have broadened, thanks to shows on television and radio access.

Agriculture and the environment have also greatly benefited from space infrastructure. Crop health and soil moisture can be monitored more efficiently, while sensors within orbiting satellites in space can monitor significant changes in sea levels, deforestation, and even levels of pollution especially in urban areas. If used properly, the information gathered from the usage of spaceborne instruments becomes vital to conservation and environmental management efforts.

Security is also a key benefit arising out of SSTA. Maritime domain awareness transcends discussions of being able to monitor Chinese Coast Guard and Chinese fishing vessels in the West Philippine Sea.

One benefit under the maritime domain is the ability to monitor vessel movements, maritime traffic, port conditions, and more. People are able to claim and assert our rights in the West Philippine Sea thanks to advancements in the spaceborne monitoring of our seas.

All the sectors mentioned above point to areas that we at the Institute track as part of the Stratbase Institute's 7 geopolitical risks and opportunities. At the heart of it, risks and opportunities of the greater Filipino public are duly addressed and taken care of, thanks to the new technology that has risen.

People now enjoy these benefits due to other countries who have invested their technologies in the Philippines, and who continue to do so through cooperative agreements, or private sector initiatives.

In going back to the example above, no one in 1975 would have guessed the extent and breadth of spaceborne technologies and their ability to impact society at large through the benefits they provide.

Today, through the private sector, the public is seeing a rise in initiatives for cooperation. For instance, private-sector entities continue to collaborate with international partners, including governments, space agencies, and commercial organizations, to pursue common goals and address global challenges such as climate change.

People see more advocacies pushing for more regulation around space, or space policy. Seeing that space is a global commons and that its resources can either be exploited by a malevolent actor or shared by everyone, discussions around space that is open for all to use are becoming more and more of a reality.

Space debris is becoming an increasingly concerning problem, and through the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS), there have been efforts to develop guidelines and agreements to promote responsible space activities and mitigate space debris. This is an effort that is truly made possible by countries working together to manage this problem.

Here in the Philippines, while discussions on space are relatively new, there is no doubt that there will be a drastic rise in space-related interest, information, and consequently, the birth of an industry.

There is a slow but steady interest in wider space-related applications, proof of which can be found through the birth of the Philippine Space Agency in 2019. The question is on how we shape this, government direction, and goals that will ultimately benefit the public at large.

This is why conversations on space need to happen. The beginning of these conversations here in the Philippines lies in a conference that will be held on March 19, 2024 entitled "Navigating the Frontiers of Global Space Collaboration and Promoting Space Science and Technology Applications Across Industries."

This conference will be hosted by the Stratbase Institute in partnership with the Canadian Embassy in the Philippines, in collaboration with the Philippine Space Agency.

The conversations will tackle topics such as how to fully maximize the potential of SSTA and gear to respond to challenges brought on by climate change, natural disasters, marine biodiversity loss, and maritime security threats among others, cooperation among states as a necessity considering its implications, as space cooperation holds significant implications for the stability in the region, and more.

As people move towards a new age in a new and exciting area such as space, let us bring with us the excitement of cooperation and coming together to work on common pressing issues. One beautiful way of keeping this in mind is to remember lessons of working together from 1975, and to take to heart that the possibilities for development are as vast and endless as space itself.

Sustainable tourism

By: Mary Ann LL. Reyes

All 193 member states of the United Nations have just adopted a new global standard to measure the sustainability of tourism.

The Statistical Framework for Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism is now the internationally agreed reference framework for measuring the economic, social and environmental aspects of tourism.

Its adoption by the UN Statistical Commission at its 15th session marks a historical milestone toward harnessing the full potential of the sector, providing a solution to the pressing need for a harmonized methodology to effectively assess the sustainability of tourism.

According to UN Tourism Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili, the adoption of this groundbreaking statistical framework also marks a paradigm shift, going beyond GDP by enabling the measurement of what matters most to people and planet, even as he emphasized that tourism is a powerful force for positive change when managed responsibly and sustainably.

Sustainable tourism, as defined by the UN World Tourism Organization, is the management of all resources in such a way that economic, social and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity and life support systems.

But in order to achieve this, key players including tourists, local communities, government agencies and the tourism industry which includes travel agents, tour operators, airline companies, hotels, restaurants and tourism sites all have to work together.

How our major tourist destinations will fare under this new method of measuring sustainability remains to be seen but we are pretty sure that most will fail.

Remember when in 2018, Boracay was temporarily closed to the public for a much-needed rehabilitation and redevelopment. The island had been described as the poster child for over tourism. Then president Rodrigo Duterte described Boracay as a cesspool, with many businesses discharging untreated sewer waste into the sea.

According to a study, Boracay can accommodate 54,945 people at a time but its existing population of more than 70,700 already exceeded its carrying capacity by almost 30 percent. In 2018, 195 businesses and almost four thousand households were

not connected to the sewage network. About 400 hotels and restaurants were ordered closed for violating local environmental laws while establishments built within the 30-meter shoreline easement were demolished.

Following Boracay's six-month closure, the Department of Tourism issued a warning to local government units in five major tourist destinations, namely El Nido in Palawan, Panglao in Bohol, Oslob in Cebu, La Union and Baguio to follow environmental laws.

A national task force created to oversee the island imposed a limit on the number of visitors.

An article in the New York Times pointed out that few spots across the globe have implemented caps on the number of visitors long-term, so that it is an open question as to whether Boracay which is about an hour south of Manila by plane can find a real and lasting solution to over tourism. And since the national task force was dissolved in June 2022, oversight was returned to local government officials; some of them want to lift some of the restrictions.

The same article noted that many islands are especially susceptible to over tourism because of their fixed space and limited options for economic development. It cited a 2022 report titled "Overcoming Overtourism: A Review of Failure" that looked at dozens of destinations around the world including Boracay and which said that one of the key issues facing destinations is that almost everyone making money out of tourists wants more, and is not prepared to limit, let alone reduce numbers.

The report concluded that "wishful thinking about a smaller, greener tourism industry operating on a non capitalistic framework is likely to remain just that – misplaced optimism." It said that tourism is in a similar situation to climate change, with a lot of people agreeing that there are problems, but few have realistic and acceptable solutions, and so a major change in general attitudes is needed."

After Boracay, Baguio City undoubtedly comes close in terms of unsustainability when it comes to tourism and economic development.

In 2018, the NEDA research and development division commissioned a group of researchers to determine the carrying capacity of Baguio. The group concluded that Baguio has long exceeded its carrying capacity and if nothing is done to reverse it, the summer capital of the Philippines will no longer be livable in the next 20 to 25 years.

According to the study, Baguio is one of the most densely populated cities in the country with around 2,400 individuals per square kilometer. Ideally, it said that each person

would need 1.9 hectares for sustainable living and that at least 122 Baguio cities are needed to meet this ideal balance between people and the environment.

Meanwhile, another study by the DENR revealed that Baguio residents are experiencing tourism fatigue because of the overcrowding they experience every time there is a surge of tourist arrivals especially during peak tourism season. Tourism fatigue is due to the fact that residents need to share limited resources and facilities in the city such as space, roads and domestic water.

Maybe we should follow Bhutan's principle of "high value, low volume" tourism.

Bhutan not only caps tourist numbers to protect its natural resources and fight climate change, it also charges each tourist a daily fee of \$200, down from \$250 previously, to be used to fund conservation and development projects.

Sustainability experts are saying that the traditional approach of evaluating tourism through visitor numbers alone is outdated and damaging to the sector, so that governments should consider ways of welcoming people for longer and more considered stays.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

ABS CBN

[PH calls for collaboration, planning to speed up climate adaptation for developing world](#)

The Philippines underscored the importance of collaboration, planning, financing, and strategic communication to enhance climate change adaptation action and support.

The call was made during the 25th meeting of the Adaptation Committee of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

The Philippine Climate Change Commission's (CCC) Robert E.A. Borje, serving as Committee member representing non-Annex I countries, shared first-hand experiences of developing nations in climate change adaptation.

Borje pointed out the need for close collaboration among all adaptation actors at global, subnational, and national levels, ensuring alignment and coherence in adaptation work.

"From adaptation planning to implementation, adequate means of implementation and support (MOIs) must be available and accessible for developing nations. To achieve this, strengthening collaboration among countries and stakeholders is crucial, towards alignment and coherence in adaptation actions, and immediate delivery of MOIs by the developed world," said Borje.

He also cited the need to double adaptation finance from 2019 levels, and the gaps in adaptation financing must be immediately addressed to support developing nations' actions toward global climate resilience.

"With COP29 tagged as 'Finance COP,' we must take this opportunity to push for increased adaptation financing to close these gaps and fully support formulation and implementation of NAPs," Borje added.

He also raised the importance of strategic communications in the Adaptation Committee's approach.

"We must transition from communication strategy to strategic communications to address the need for urgent and transformative adaptation. We need to enhance our ways in communicating climate change and climate change adaptation in a way that would result in more holistic and inclusive climate action on the ground," said Borje.

The 25th meeting of the Adaptation Committee was held at the UN Campus in Bonn, Germany.

Subsequent events include the 2024 Adaptation Forum from March 18 to 19 in Bonn, Germany, and the NAP Expo on April 22 to 23 in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

BUSINESS MIRROR

[Metro Pacific Investments Corporation and Climate Change Commission forge partnership for climate action](#)

Metro Pacific Investments Corporation (MPIC) and the Climate Change Commission (CCC) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding aimed at collaborating to address climate change and promote climate resilience in the Philippines.

MPIC has long been committed to environmental stewardship and sustainability, integrating these principles into each essential service it provides. Through various initiatives and practices, including investments in clean energy, biodiversity protection, and reforestation programs, MPIC continually strives to minimize its environmental footprint and contribute to the communities it serves.

As the country's highest policy-making body for climate change efforts, the CCC coordinates, monitors, and evaluates government programs and action plans related to climate change. This partnership with MPIC will strengthen the country's climate resilience, support climate action, and promote sustainable development.

CCC and MPIC recognize the fundamental role of the private sector in driving climate action and acknowledge the need for collaborative efforts between government and businesses to achieve climate goals.

"The benefit of private-public partnerships is for the government to focus on planning, policy, and regulation. In turn, this gives the private sector the ability to do what it does best—increase service quality and efficiency. Both CCC and the private sector will drive ambition loops: CCC mobilizes private sector partners to commit to ambitious climate action, private sector will push for the creation of credible, long-term policies that will enable them to make the needed investment decisions," emphasized CCC Vice Chairperson and Executive Director (VCED) Robert E.A. Borje.

Both agree that businesses wield considerable influence across diverse sectors and along the entire value chain, positioning them as contributors to climate impacts while also vulnerable to them.

"Sustaining contributions to essential services can only be done with a commitment to climate change protection. Therefore, our dedication to sustainability is crucial. We will work closely with the commission and offer our full support. The primary focus of our efforts is to minimize our carbon footprint," said Manuel V. Pangilinan, Chairman, President, and CEO of MPIC.

MPIC Executive Vice President and Chief Finance, Risk & Sustainability Officer, Chaye Cabal Revilla, stressed this further by stating, “We recognize our responsibility to shape a better world for Filipinos amidst the challenges of climate change. Together with CCC, we are not only minimizing our environmental impact but also laying the foundation for a more resilient future.”

The MOU outlines key objectives, including exploring opportunities for capacity development on climate change adaptation and mitigation, enhancing the knowledge base of stakeholders in the field of climate change, fostering collaborative research and policy development projects, and providing technical assistance and knowledge sharing.

The collaboration between MPIC and CCC highlights the importance of collective action in addressing the challenges posed by climate change. By working together, both organizations aim to drive meaningful change and build a more resilient and climate-smart Philippines.

This partnership represents the group’s efforts to contribute to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), particularly SDG 13: Climate Action.

MALAYA BUSINESS INSIGHT

MPIC, Climate Change Commission forge partnership for climate action

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MANILA BULLETIN

[Be vigilant vs fires amid El Niño, public urged](#)

By: Raymund Antonio

As the number of fire incidents grew this year from the same period last year, the Climate Change Commission (CCC) urged the public to remain vigilant and take preventive measures against urban and forest fires exacerbated by the ongoing El Niño phenomenon.

The CCC has already created policies and strategies under the National Climate Change Action Plan (NCCAP) and the National Climate Risk Management Framework (NCRMF) to prepare the country for climate-related impacts and disasters.

In underscoring the importance of taking preemptive measures against fires during the dry season, the CCC also shared methods how to prevent fires.

Among these methods are fireproofing properties, practicing safe and responsible cooking, and preparing for fire emergencies.

“Implementing the strategies and recommendations outlined in these policies and frameworks strengthens our adaptive capacity to face climate risks such as El Niño, ultimately leading to more climate-resilient communities,” said CCC Vice Chairperson and Executive Director Robert Eric Borje in a statement.

In a statement on Friday, March 15, the Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP) said El Niño is a significant contributor to the fires, especially wildfires and forest fires. It also cited the current wildfires in the Cordillera Region.

“Isa pa ring challenge natin ngayon ay ‘yung El Niño. Nakikita po natin sa news, na particularly sa Cordillera area, we have recorded 72 fire incidents na (Another challenge is the El Niño. We see in the news, particularly in the Cordillera area, we have already recorded 72 fire incidents),” BFP Director Louie Puracan noted.

According to data from the BFP, there were already a total of 3,200 fire incidents recorded nationwide as of March 5, 2024. The month of March is also the Fire Prevention Month in the Philippines.

This marks a 26 percent increase compared to approximately 2,539 occurrences during the same period last year.

The fire incidents in 2024 have also already claimed 70 lives, a 37.25 percent increase from the 51 lives lost in fires that occurred in 2023 around the same quarter.

This year's fires have also resulted in an estimated P2.33 billion loss and damage to property, representing a 59.6 percent increase compared to the P1.46 billion lost during the same period last year.

MANILA STANDARD

[Metro Pacific Investments Corporation and Climate Change Commission forge partnership for climate action](#)

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PHILIPPINE INFORMATION AGENCY

[CCC urges public vigilance amid heightened risk of fires exacerbated by climate change](#)

The Climate Change Commission urged the public to take preventive measures against urban and forest fires exacerbated by the ongoing El Niño.

According to the Bureau of Fire Protection, the combination of heat and the absence of moisture effectively dries up most materials, making them more vulnerable to sparking widespread fires that cause significant losses to lives and livelihoods.

As of March 5, 2024, a total of 3,200 fire incidents were recorded nationwide, marking a 26% increase compared to approximately 2,539 occurrences during the same period last year, according to BFP Director Louie Puraan.

He also shared that the 2024 fires have already claimed 70 lives — representing a 37.25% rise from the 51 lives lost in fires that occurred in 2023 around the same quarter. Similarly, this year's fires have resulted in an estimated P2.33 billion loss and damage to property, indicating a 59.6% increase compared to the P1.46 billion during the same period last year.

The BFP tagged El Niño as a significant contributor to the fires, especially wildfires and forest fires, citing the current wildfires unfolding in the Cordillera Region as an example.

“Isa pa ring challenge natin ngayon ay yung El Niño. Nakikita po natin sa news, na particularly sa Cordillera area, we have recorded 72 fire incidents na,” said Puraan.

Meanwhile, Department of Interior and Local Government Secretary Benhur Abalos tracked some forest fires to root from embers left out by campers in the wild. Given this, he encouraged the masses to be responsible and ensure that the fires they start during camping be securely put-out.

“Let's be responsible for our actions kase minsan, yung mga naiwan na pinagsawaan nilang apoy dun nagsisimulang lumiliyab at ang daming mga kahoy ngayon ang talagang tuyo. Ang problema natin sa bushfire, ang hirap patayin nito, lalo't gubat ang sinusunog niya,” Abalos said.

The CCC emphasized the importance of preemptive measures against fires during the intensified dry season. The Commission shares methods to prevent fires during this period, rallying the Filipino people to fireproof their properties, practice safe and responsible cooking at all times, and prepare for fire emergencies.

Recognizing the risks associated with climate-induced phenomena like El Niño, the CCC, in partnership with other national government agencies, has crafted policies and strategies that prepare the nation for climate-related impacts and disasters. These strategies are outlined in the National Climate Change Action Plan (NCCAP) and the National Climate Risk Management Framework (NCRMF).

Similarly, the draft National Adaptation Plan (NAP) serves as a blueprint for initiatives aimed at enhancing resilience at both sectoral and community levels against the impacts of climate change. It prioritizes eight sectors requiring urgent interventions: agriculture, fisheries, and food security; water resources; health; ecosystems and biodiversity; cultural heritage, population displacement, and migration; land use and human settlements; livelihood and industries; energy, transport, and communication.

“Implementing the strategies and recommendations outlined in these policies and frameworks strengthens our adaptive capacity to face climate risks such as El Niño, ultimately leading to more climate-resilient communities,” said CCC Vice Chairperson and Executive Director Robert E.A. Borje.

PAGASA has issued a warning about the onset of a severe El Niño event this month, with most global climate models projecting its persistence from March to May. In response to this forecast and in celebration of the 2024 National Fire Prevention Month with the theme “Sa Pag-iwas sa Sunog, Hindi ka Nag-iisa,” the CCC stands with the BFP in reminding everyone to undertake proactive measures to mitigate the effects of El Niño in their households and communities.

[PH joins UNFCCC Adaptation Committee](#)

The Philippines formally joined the Adaptation Committee of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) for the first time, paving the way for deeper engagement to advance adaptation interests for developing countries.

The Philippines' Climate Change Commission Secretary Robert E.A. Borje is participating in the meeting of the Adaptation Committee, following his appointment during the 28th Sessions of the Conference of Parties (COP28).

This is the first time a Filipino national was appointed to the Adaptation Committee in the body's 14-year history since being established in 2010 through the COP16 Cancun Agreement.

"Much needs to be done for at-risk developing countries, including the Philippines. Our active involvement in the multilateral process, such as through the UNFCCC's Adaptation Committee, is crucial to ensure that advancements in the global climate agenda particularly on adaptation aligns with national circumstances, and supports addressing the needs and priorities of nations most affected by climate change," Borje said.

The Adaptation Committee convened its first meeting this year after the COP28 adoption of the following milestone decisions: outcomes of the first global stocktake, and the global goal on adaptation framework.

With adaptation gaps at global-level recognized, the Adaptation Committee will now focus on identifying recommendations anchored on the objectives of the Global Goal on Adaptation Framework: to enhance adaptation action and support, and reduce adverse impacts and risks and vulnerabilities associated with climate change.

Membership in the Adaptation Committee, as well as participation in these meetings are aligned with President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr.'s guidance for the Philippines to advance core Philippine interests in transformative climate action and to actively engage in multilateral fora and events, as part of the country's commitment to address climate change.

President Marcos' guidance reflects climate change as a priority of the Philippine government, with the meetings seen as a means to encourage countries to further accelerate climate action, and discuss resourcing to support actions by developing nations.

Borje served as the Philippines' lead negotiator for global stocktake and transparency workstreams in COP28, and was appointed member of the Adaptation Committee to represent developing countries at the same conference. The Committee comprises 16 members: 2 each from the 5 United Nations regional groups, 1 from a least developed country Party, 2 from Annex 1 Parties, and 2 from Parties not included in Annex 1.

The Adaptation Committee is a constituted body under the UNFCCC tasked to provide guidance to the work of countries on climate change adaptation and resilience.

The 25th meeting of the Adaptation Committee is being held at the UN Campus, Bonn, Germany.

This will be followed by the 2024 Adaptation Forum from 18 to 19 March in Bonn, Germany, and the NAP Expo in April in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

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[PH calls for collaboration to enhance climate change adaptation](#)

Representing developing nations, the Philippines underscored the importance of collaboration, planning, financing, and strategic communication to enhance climate change adaptation action and support.

The Adaptation Committee of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) held its 25th meeting here recently to discuss adaptation and support in line with the global stocktake and the new global goal on adaptation framework.

Secretary Robert E.A. Borje of the Philippines' Climate Change Commission (CCC), a committee member representing non-Annex I countries, discussed the first-hand experiences of developing nations in climate change adaptation.

Borje pointed out the need for close collaboration among all adaptation actors at global, subnational, and national levels, ensuring alignment and coherence in adaptation work.

With only 51 National Adaptation Plan (NAP) submissions by developing countries as of the 2023 UN Climate Change Conference (COP28), he said increased support for adaptation planning and implementation is a critical priority.

“From adaptation planning to implementation, adequate means of implementation and support (MOIs) must be available and accessible for developing nations. To achieve this, strengthening collaboration among countries and stakeholders is crucial, towards alignment and coherence in adaptation actions, and immediate delivery of MOIs by the developed world,” Borje said.

He added that the need to double adaptation finance from 2019 levels and the gaps in adaptation financing must be immediately addressed to support developing nations' actions towards global climate resilience.

The Adaptation Gap Report 2023 of the UN Environment Programme estimated that investments of USD387 billion are needed to close the gap on adaptation financing.

“With COP29 tagged as Finance COP, we must take this opportunity to push for increased adaptation financing to close these gaps and fully support formulation and implementation of NAPs,” Borje added.

For more holistic and inclusive adaptation action, Borje raised the importance of strategic communications in the Adaptation Committee's approach.

"We must transition from communication strategy to strategic communications to address the need for urgent and transformative adaptation. We need to enhance our ways in communicating climate change and climate change adaptation in a way that would result in more holistic and inclusive climate action on the ground," Borje said.

Anchored on the recently adopted outcomes of the first global stocktake, and the conclusion of the Glasgow-Sharm el-Sheikh Work Programme on the Global Goal on Adaptation, the UNFCCC constituted body now charts paths to enhance climate action and support, with a focus on particularly vulnerable and developing nations.

Immediate adaptation strategies include strengthening collaboration with UN and UNFCCC bodies, countries, and other stakeholders; providing support in NAP formulation and implementation; offering technical assistance in adaptation reporting, and monitoring, evaluation, accountability, and learning (MEAL); and advancing strategic communications on adaptation.

Subsequent events of the 25th meeting of the Adaptation Committee include the 2024 Adaptation Forum on March 18 and 19, also in Bonn, and the NAP Expo on April 22 and 23 in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

The Adaptation Committee is a constituted body under the UNFCCC tasked to provide guidance to the work of countries on climate change adaptation and resilience.

The Philippines, through Borje, serves as a member of the Adaptation Committee, following nomination and election by developing countries, and appointment in COP28 in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

This is the first time a Filipino sits on the Adaptation Committee in the latter's 14-year history.

As the lead agency on climate change, the CCC continues to further deepen and broaden Philippine engagement in the UNFCCC and other relevant and related fora to advance core national and developing world interests, consistent with the guidance of President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.

Under the Marcos administration, advancing climate resilience of the Philippines through climate change adaptation and mitigation remains a priority.

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