



NEWS ROUNDUP

18 MARCH 2025 [08:00 am]

- Report forecasts climate change to drive rise in heart disease
- Regional green trade bloc to fight both climate change and protectionism
- DENR to conduct biodiversity research in West Philippine Sea this April
- Japan's youth climate activists still searching for a breakthrough
- Indonesia's cocoa farmers fight bitter impact of climate change

CCC IN THE NEWS:

- CCC supports Bacoor climate action efforts
- Japan pledges aid to boost climate resilience

AL JAZEERA

[Report forecasts climate change to drive rise in heart disease](#)

Researchers have reported a link between cardiovascular issues and hot weather, forecasting that heart disease could double or triple in the next 25 years if current climate trends continue.

EAST ASIA FORUM

[Regional green trade bloc to fight both climate change and protectionism](#)

By: Ma Jun

US President Donald Trump's decision to raise tariffs on imports from Canada, China and Mexico, and all imports of aluminium and steel has led the world to brace for major trade disruptions and economic confusion. Protectionism has come back into vogue and countries are cultivating critical sectors at home to bolster their economic security.

GMA NEWS

[DENR to conduct biodiversity research in West Philippine Sea this April](#)

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) announced it will conduct an integrated research on biodiversity conservation at the Recto Bank and Rizal Reef in April.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

[Indonesia's cocoa farmers fight bitter impact of climate change](#)

The loud whirr of a chainsaw sounds through the forest as a small group of farmers gathers around a tree filled with red seed pods. With one slow stroke, a severed knobby branch hits the ground.

JAPAN TIMES

[Japan's youth climate activists still searching for a breakthrough](#)

By: Eric Margolis

On the second Friday of every month, a small group gathers.

In February, it was in front of the industry ministry's annex building, just a stone's throw away from the plum blossoms unfurling in pink and white at Tokyo's Hibiya Park. A small but passionate group of three dozen people — young and old alike — lifted a vibrant banner that read in Japanese: "The Climate Crisis is a matter of life and death!" The group is Fridays for Future, a climate activist organization originally inspired by Greta Thunberg's 2018 school strike. They have branches in 20 regions across Japan, with the shared mission of raising Japanese voices in favor of tackling climate change.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

MANILA STANDARD

[CCC supports Bacoor climate action efforts](#)

The Climate Change Commission (CCC) reaffirmed its support for Bacoor City's climate action initiatives, recognizing the local government's efforts to enhance resilience against flooding, rising sea levels and other climate-related threats.

[Japan pledges aid to boost climate resilience](#)

The Climate Change Commission (CCC) lauded Japan's P290-million funding commitment to bolster climate resilience and sustainable livelihoods in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM).

Information and Knowledge Management Division

AL JAZEERA

[Report forecasts climate change to drive rise in heart disease](#)

Researchers have reported a link between cardiovascular issues and hot weather, forecasting that heart disease could double or triple in the next 25 years if current climate trends continue.

In a report published on Monday, researchers in Australia said they had found that 49,483 years of healthy life were lost every year to cardiovascular disease caused by hot weather. They warned that under current climate trends, the impact of extreme weather is set to multiply in the coming decades.

The study, published in the European Heart Journal, used data from the Australian Burden of Disease Database on illness caused by heart disease from 2003 to 2018.

“When the weather is hot, our hearts must work harder to help us cool down. This added pressure can be dangerous, especially for people with cardiovascular disease,” said Professor Peng Bi from the University of Adelaide.

The researchers calculated that 7.3 percent of the total burden due to cardiovascular disease or death could be attributed to extreme weather conditions.

Modelling suggests that the figure could double or even triple by 2050, depending on different greenhouse gas emission scenarios outlined by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, according to the report.

‘First study of its kind’

“Although our study is focused on Australia, the fundamental link between higher temperatures and increased cardiovascular risk has been documented globally,” said lead author Jingwen Liu from the University of Adelaide.

Liu noted that the research was “the first of its kind globally”, adding that “our comprehensive approach makes the study valuable for planning future climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies”.

The authors also found that there was scope for lowering the impact of high temperatures on cardiovascular disease with strategies helping people to adapt.

“Our findings also call for urgent investment in adaptation and mitigation strategies, including urban cooling plans, public health campaigns and improved emergency responses during hot weather,” said Bi.

EAST ASIA FORUM

[Regional green trade bloc to fight both climate change and protectionism](#)

By: Ma Jun

US President Donald Trump's decision to raise tariffs on imports from Canada, China and Mexico, and all imports of aluminium and steel has led the world to brace for major trade disruptions and economic confusion. Protectionism has come back into vogue and countries are cultivating critical sectors at home to bolster their economic security.

The retreat from free trade will accelerate under Trump, with far-reaching consequences — especially in the fight against climate change.

But the world has changed significantly in recent years. A deeper trend visible beyond the posturing and threats includes growing recognition of the urgency of cultivating home-grown green industries to combat climate change. This climate imperative must serve two mutually reinforcing goals — staving off further temperature increases and boosting economic growth and job creation.

Green trade is international trade in green goods and services in areas such as renewable energy, green transportation, energy efficiency, waste management, sustainable agriculture, nature-based solutions and environmental professional services. Allowing free green trade — the trading of green goods, services and technologies as freely as possible across nations — will help decarbonise the economy and protect the environment at low cost.

A green trade arrangement would involve reductions in tariffs and non-tariff barriers on a carefully selected list of green goods and services that deliver environmental and climate benefits. This will reduce the costs of green goods and services in most countries, boost green industries and enable faster and wider adoption of low-carbon practices and technologies.

Introducing green trade policy on a global scale is challenging as one or two nations can obstruct a complex global deal. But it can be built on the foundations of existing regional trade agreements, among a smaller 'coalition of the willing'. In the Asia Pacific region, the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) offers one avenue for freeing up green trade. As the world's largest trading bloc, by population and GDP, it comprises 15 countries and accounts for 30 per cent of global economic activity.

A green trade arrangement could operate within the terms of RCEP, eliminating tariffs and significantly reducing non-tariff barriers on green goods and services ahead of the bloc's existing eight-year timeline for full tariff removal.

Designing the list of green goods and services that should be covered by the green trade arrangement is the first step that is needed. An initial study by the Institute of

Finance and Sustainability (IFS) suggests that this list could include a few dozen categories and a few hundred products and services.

Demonstrating the economic benefits of a green trade agreement to all member states will be key. Robust design of the arrangement must ensure that all member countries in the bloc benefit economically, accelerating their pace of decarbonisation and advancing the growth of their green industries.

Incentives for green foreign direct investment and technology transfers — such as a more stable policy environment, enhanced protection for investors and intellectual property rights — need to be incorporated into the green trade arrangement to increase trade and encourage cross-border green investment and technology transfers and help low-income countries develop green industries and jobs.

If RCEP adopts the idea, a larger number of Chinese, Japanese and South Korean electric vehicle and renewable energy equipment manufacturers are likely to invest in supply chain development and license technologies to local producers across ASEAN countries.

There needs to be a balance between the need for policy incentives to stimulate green industries and trade-distorting subsidies. Government incentives for the production and consumption of green goods and services are often viewed favourably, but they can lead to trade disputes. Within the RCEP framework, it would be helpful if some no-significant-harm principles and prohibited subsidies could be agreed upon.

Non-tariff barriers not only tariffs must be removed or reduced. Under many free trade arrangements, non-tariff barriers are often more significant impediments than tariffs to international trade and investment in green industries. This requires a serious stocktake of all non-tariff barriers, including import and export quotas, quality inspection against domestic standards, customs clearance processes, product traceability requirements, trade finance and export credit insurance and cross-border payment and settlement. Options should be developed to reduce these barriers, including harmonising green product and traceability standards and reducing the cost of trade finance using green finance instruments.

A dialogue that considers all these factors will be crucial and larger economies such as China, Indonesia, Australia, Japan and South Korea can play a key role in forming an initial consensus on the economic and climate merit of a green trade initiative within RCEP.

A regional green trade arrangement can be an inclusive approach to support a 'just' climate transition. It will promote decarbonisation and mutual economic benefits in all member states — via job creation and revenue growth. A multilateral approach will build mutual trust for broader cooperation on climate and trade issues.

The case for green trade arrangements is even stronger compared to the approach being embraced by some advanced economies. While the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) favoured by the European Union can reduce carbon leakage from imports, it harms incomes and employment in developing economies exporting carbon-intensive goods. Such unilateral measures are likely to lead to retaliation and yet more protectionism.

CBAM amounts to a 'stick' that punishes developing countries for not sacrificing domestic growth and development to reduce emissions. In contrast, a green free trade arrangement provides a 'carrot' encouraging green production and trade. Aligning climate goals with trade and development objectives rewards all participating economies for making progress on the green transition with mutual gains from trade, an initiative of the type a just green transition demands.

GMA NEWS

[DENR to conduct biodiversity research in West Philippine Sea this April](#)

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) announced it will conduct an integrated research on biodiversity conservation at the Recto Bank and Rizal Reef in April.

DENR Secretary Maria Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga made the statement on Friday during the first all-women maritime security forum organized by the Stratbase Institute in partnership with the Australian Embassy in the Philippines.

In her speech, Loyzaga said the DENR move follows the Biodiversity Conservation and Carbon Sequestration in the West Philippine Sea Project in Pag-asa Island the department conducted last February.

The research is in collaboration with the Marine Environment and Resources Foundation.

The West Philippine Sea has a rich biodiversity that contributes around 27% of the country's commercial fisheries production and around 30% of the nation's coral reefs.

The region, however, is now under threat due to the continuous aggressive actions of China which seeks to control the large portions of the critical waterway.

"We expect to discover more and measure the Philippine treasures in the ecosystems of the West Philippine Sea, a big part of our natural capital for the present and the future," Loyzaga said.

The DENR aims to establish a marine scientific research station in Pag-asa Island as part of the eight stations across the country's biogeographic regions.

The other stations are the Tubbataha Reef Ranger Station and Snake Island Station in Palawan and the Verde Island Passage Station to be established with the private sector and academic and research partners.

The DENR said these stations will have unique research programs, serving as sites for specific areas of collaboration with scientists from the Philippines and like-minded countries who respect the rules-based international order.

"A leading and critical example of our strategic bilateral collaboration is our work with the government of Australia, under the new strategic partnership relationship, in developing science and policy leaders and scholars in ocean science and maritime security," Loyzaga explained.

During the forum, Australia also reiterated support in strengthening maritime security and protection in the Philippines.

Australian Ambassador to the Philippines Hae Kyong Yu emphasized the importance of ensuring gender equality in the maritime domain, citing maritime security and protection as a complex challenge requiring more inclusive cooperation.

“This is no area where we can afford to have just half of the population participating in that. We need all the brilliant minds, including women, coming forward to solve this challenging issue for the world,” Yu said.

Stratbase President Professor Dindo Manhit recognized the important role of women in the maritime sector.

“We celebrate the decisive and invaluable role that women have been taking in the pursuit of a secure and prosperous nation. Looking ahead, we must ensure that women are empowered to participate and lead initiatives for a more secure and more prosperous Indo-Pacific,” said Manhit.

Armed Forces of the Philippines Spokesperson Col. Francel Taborlupa further emphasized the importance of allies like Australia in enhancing maritime security in the country.

She highlighted previous collaborations in humanitarian assistance and disaster response operations, joint maritime patrols around several training activities, and capacity-building with subject matter experts from both countries.

“The Philippines is not an expansionist country. We are a peace-loving nation, and we are merely defending our own territory, which is backed by international laws,” said Taborlupa.

“We strengthened partnerships towards a free and open Indo-Pacific, which is the overarching goal of all like-minded nations and the well-meaning nations,” she added.

JAPAN TIMES

[Japan's youth climate activists still searching for a breakthrough](#)

By: Eric Margolis

On the second Friday of every month, a small group gathers.

In February, it was in front of the industry ministry's annex building, just a stone's throw away from the plum blossoms unfurling in pink and white at Tokyo's Hibiya Park. A small but passionate group of three dozen people — young and old alike — lifted a vibrant banner that read in Japanese: "The Climate Crisis is a matter of life and death!" The group is Fridays for Future, a climate activist organization originally inspired by Greta Thunberg's 2018 school strike. They have branches in 20 regions across Japan, with the shared mission of raising Japanese voices in favor of tackling climate change.

"Delaying climate action is not a course of action available to us," says Ayako Kawasaki, a recent college graduate and activist with Fridays for Future. "We need to figure out a way to get more youth involved."

But by at least one key measure, Fridays for Future and groups like it are struggling to make their voices heard: last month, the government approved twin energy and emissions plans that experts say are insufficient to meet the globally agreed goal of trying to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.

Such struggles highlight the difficulty these groups have had in boosting climate education and localizing their messaging. They also raise the question of what exactly they can do to have a greater impact.

Nonetheless, climate change has already arrived, impacting Japan in the form of record-breaking temperatures, more powerful typhoons and more besides. A survey published last year found that young people in Japan are worried: 87% believe that it is either "very" or "somewhat" important to respond to climate change.

Despite those concerns, apathy is apparent. While similar youth-led climate protests around the world have seen thousands and even tens of thousands of marchers, climate demonstrations in Japan rarely break the 100-person barrier. Japan was the only country in that survey where over 10% of youth indicated that they didn't care about responding to climate change; in another, more than a third of 17- to 19-year-olds either didn't know or did not believe that greenhouse gas emissions caused climate change.

"The level of understanding of climate change among Japanese youth is generally limited," says University of Tokyo researcher Kelvin Tang. "Relatively few young people expressed a willingness to engage in political or activist-related climate actions."

Hard at work

Kawasaki first became involved with Fridays for Future four years ago. A college course had reintroduced her to the climate crisis, and she realized the problem she had read about in her middle school textbooks wasn't anywhere near solved. In addition to Fridays for Future, she works with a number of other nongovernmental organizations and community initiatives, including the activist group Watashi no Mirai. She's also part of a youth-led climate lawsuit filed against thermal power companies for failing to stop greenhouse gas emissions.

"Our government is still trying to promote nuclear energy as a solution to climate change, which is very slow and very expensive. I feel that our government pretends to listen to youth, but really has no intention of addressing our concerns," Kawasaki says, recalling how public comments on the 7th Strategic Energy Plan were largely ignored.

Through Watashi no Mirai, which translates as "My Future," Kawasaki works to connect a wide variety of environmental NGOs to young people in order to spark youth involvement in a number of fields. While she feels that her own activism has a long way to go, Kawasaki noted several recent successes. These include an energetic protest in Tokyo's Shinjuku district organized in collaboration with pro-Palestinian activists last March, and an upcoming symposium in the city of Kyoto that will bring together activists from Taiwan and South Korea who successfully launched similar climate lawsuits in their own countries.

Climate Youth Japan (CYJ) is another prominent organization led by young people. They focus on participating in policy sessions with government bodies, amplifying young people's voices on climate change and sending a youth delegation to the annual United Nations climate change conference.

"The presence of 'youth' is not a strong one in Japanese society," says Yuki Wada from CYJ's youth empowerment division. "In Europe, youth are recognized as stakeholders in society, and therefore have both influence and opportunities. But in Japan and Asia, there is a tendency for both adults and youth to overlook the importance of young people as a group." Japan is far from lacking in smart thinkers on environmental issues in its next generation.

Young activists include Mutsumi Kurobe, who works on innovative art projects, and leaders originally from abroad who have founded their own organizations to take environmental action, like Katrin Miyazawa in Nagoya. But complex factors converge to discourage mass participation in climate action and prevent these voices from being heard by the powers-that-be.

What's stopping a genuine movement?

The last time a youth-led activist movement effectively mobilized thousands and left its mark on the nation was about a decade ago. In 2015, angered by national security legislation that would allow Japanese forces to engage in acts of self-defense on behalf of allies, tens of thousands of young people protested across the country. The group SEALDs (Students Emergency Action for Liberal Democracy) spearheaded some of the

largest popular protests in Japan since the student-led movements of the 1960s and 1970s.

Shunichiro Kobayashi, who was involved with SEALDs as a translator for the group, explains that SEALDs made use of strong media relations and tapped into rhetorical tools like philosophy and pop music to energize the movement.

“SEALD’s media effort as a whole palatably represented young people’s increasing interest in politics,” explains Kobayashi, who is currently a Ph.D. student at the University of California, Riverside.

“People in advanced capitalist countries like Japan and the United States live in a profound apathy,” Kobayashi says. “In these countries, almost no movement has succeeded in winning transformative social change in the past few decades.” General apathy is compounded by issues of education and the challenges of building a movement. Tang has conducted research on junior high school student’s awareness and understanding of climate change, identifying a wide variety of misconceptions and knowledge gaps — for example, that the depletion of the ozone layer is the primary cause of climate change.

“One of the primary reasons for these gaps is the lack of comprehensive climate change education in schools,” Tang says. “The most critical step is to formally integrate climate education into Japan’s national curriculum.” Unlike SEALDs, which energized a movement in response to the 2015 security bill, most climate groups in Japan lack a strong local angle. Instead, they tend to rely on the messaging of foreign activists like Thunberg or international frameworks like the U.N.’s Sustainable Development Goals.

“When people demonstrate or march, a lot of the chants and signs are written in English, which sometimes leaves me feeling uncomfortable,” Kawasaki reflects. “There hasn’t been an existing narrative of the climate crisis as a distinctly Japanese problem.”

Kawasaki explains that most of the messaging heard in Japan about climate change is that it’s a global problem, rather than a local one, and a problem solved not by political action but by personal action, such as by reducing water or electricity use.

“We need to emphasize the Japanese victims of climate change and the distinct local issues climate change poses to us here,” Kawasaki says.

Opportunities to grow

Reflecting on the legacy of SEALDs, Kobayashi says that beyond generating a sense of hope, it didn’t manage to achieve many concrete goals.

“My fundamental critique of SEALDs is that it did not build an organization. It was meant to be a moment, not a movement,” he says.

“SEALDs was part of the landscape in which mere participation and sloganeering street protests are significantly appreciated even when the actions aren’t leading to any palpable changes,” he says. “(This attitude) is harmful insofar as it reduces the motivation to discuss fundamental strategic matters.”

Kobayashi thinks that in order for climate activists to win better climate policies, they need to focus on achieving specific policy goals, and come up with strategies aligned with them.

Forging stronger partnerships with other groups is another path forward. Kawasaki notes that joint events she has participated in, such as those with anti-nuclear activists and pro-Palestinian activists, have been some of the most energizing. Anti-nuclear activists tend to be from an older generation, which can allow younger climate activists to learn from the successes and failures of the past.

Next month, Kawasaki will start working at an anti-nuclear nonprofit organization, giving her a new vantage point from which to identify fresh collaborations.

CYJ, meanwhile, sees the potential to grow through education.

“Some of the most impactful events I’ve seen are local ones that offer climate change workshops for children, such as Happy Earth Day in Osaka,” Wada says. “Approaching the crisis through education is incredibly important.” As an organization, CYJ is focused less on mass demonstrations and more on what they call “inside approaches,” working directly with government officials on climate policy solutions.

“We believe that small-scale group discussions and activities — not just on climate change, but on issues ranging from biodiversity to plastic pollution — can become a Japanese-style climate movement,” Wada says.

CYJ, along with other groups like Fridays for Future and the Japan Youth Council, participated in subcommittee sessions for the 7th Strategic Energy Plan. But unlike their counterparts, CYJ feels that its participation was worthwhile, despite their proposals not ultimately making it into the plan. “It was an experience where we really felt the importance of being able to engage in dialogue, in addition to having high-quality proposals,” Wada reflects.

The fight against the climate crisis is a long and arduous one. Activists such as Kurobe have been open about the burnout they’ve experienced.

“There wasn’t much evidence that (our activism) was generating interest or leading to action, much less changing society as a whole,” she told the Asahi Shimbun last summer. “By the time I was in my second year of college, I was troubled and tired.” As a result, youth activists are still in search of some transformational spark — something to light a flame under the movement. As official policy advances at a slow pace, genuine change may have to come from someone and somewhere else.

“It’s not just advancing climate measures,” Kawasaki says. “We also have to take back democracy — to change our system to one where our voices are actually heard.”

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

[Indonesia's cocoa farmers fight bitter impact of climate change](#)

The loud whirr of a chainsaw sounds through the forest as a small group of farmers gathers around a tree filled with red seed pods. With one slow stroke, a severed knobby branch hits the ground.

“Now it will help the tree grow new fruit,” farmer Tari Santoso says with a smile.

Thousands of cocoa farmers across Indonesia like Santoso are working with businesses and other organizations to protect their crops from the bitter impacts of climate change and underinvestment that have pushed cocoa prices to record levels.

Cocoa trees are high maintenance: Grown only near the equator, they require a precise combination of steady temperatures, humidity and sunlight. It takes five years for a tree to start producing the seeds that are processed into cocoa used to make chocolate and other delectable foods.

Climate change raises the risks for farmers: Hotter weather hurts yields and longer rainy seasons trigger the spread of fungus and deadly pests. Increasingly unpredictable weather patterns have made it harder for farmers to deal with those challenges.

So farmers are switching to other crops, further reducing cocoa supplies and pushing prices higher: In 2024, prices nearly tripled, reaching about US\$12,000 per ton, driving up chocolate costs and leading some chocolate makers to try growing cocoa in laboratories.

Indonesia is the third-largest producer of cocoa in the world, behind Cote D'Ivoire and Ghana, according to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, farmers are joining with businesses and nongovernmental organizations to develop better growing practices and improve their livelihoods.

Sitting in the shade of his forest farm in south Sumatra, 3 miles (5 kilometers) from a national park where Sumatran tigers and rhinos roam, farmer Santoso is working with Indonesian chocolate maker Krakakoa.

After he began working with the company in 2016, Santoso starting using practices that helped his cocoa trees flourish, regularly pruning and grafting new branches onto older trees to promote growth and prevent the spread of disease.

He is using organic fertilizer and has adopted agroforestry techniques, integrating other crops and trees such as bananas, dragon fruit, coffee and pepper, into his farm to foster a healthier ecosystem and invest in other income sources.

“It wasn’t very successful before we met Krakakoa,” Santoso said. “But then, we received training ... things are much better.”

Krakakoa has trained more than 1,000 cocoa farmers in Indonesia according to its founder and CEO, Sabrina Mustopo. The company also provides financial support.

Santoso and other farmers in Sumatra said the partnership helped them to form a cooperative provides low-interest loans to farmers, with interest paid back into the cooperative rather than to banks outside of the community.

Cocoa farmers who need bigger loans from government-owned banks also benefit from partnering with businesses, as the guaranteed buyer agreements can provide collateral needed to get loans approved, said Armin Hari, a communications manager at the Cocoa Sustainability Partnership, a forum for public-private collaboration for cocoa development in Indonesia.

Dozens of other businesses, the government and nongovernmental organizations and cooperatives are also working with cocoa farmers to better cope with climate change, benefiting thousands, Hari said.

He pointed to a collaboration between Indonesia’s National Research and Innovation Agency and the local division of international chocolate maker Mars, which have released a new variant of cocoa that produces more pods per tree.

Challenges still remain, said Rajendra Aryal, the FAO’s country director for Indonesia. Fewer people see cocoa farming as a lucrative business and instead are planting other crops such as palm oil. And many small-scale farmers still cannot get loans, he said.

But Aryal said he hopes that continued collaboration between farmers and others will help.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

MANILA STANDARD

[CCC supports Bacoor climate action efforts](#)

The Climate Change Commission (CCC) reaffirmed its support for Bacoor City's climate action initiatives, recognizing the local government's efforts to enhance resilience against flooding, rising sea levels and other climate-related threats.

During the CCC's recent visit to Cavite, CCC vice chairperson and executive director Robert E.A. Borje stressed the importance of local governments like Bacoor in leading the fight against climate change, particularly in areas prone to extreme weather events.

Bacoor has faced increasingly severe climate challenges in recent months. In July 2024, the city was placed under a state of calamity after Typhoon Carina displaced over 2,000 residents due to severe flooding.

In September 2024, Bacoor was also hit by Typhoon Enteng. In October 2024, Super Typhoon Kristine struck, which prompted Cavite to declare a province-wide state of calamity as 11 cities were affected by flash floods.

The events stressed the urgency of strengthening local climate adaptation measures. In response, the CCC is actively working with Bacoor LGU to enhance its Local Climate Change Action Plan (LCCAP) and support its People's Survival Fund (PSF) submission.

Japan pledges aid to boost climate resilience

The Climate Change Commission (CCC) lauded Japan's P290-million funding commitment to bolster climate resilience and sustainable livelihoods in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM).

The initiative, which will be implemented by the World Food Program (WFP) Philippines for the next three years, will benefit around 36,000 decommissioned combatants and vulnerable communities through community-based climate adaptation activities.

Japanese Ambassador to the Philippines Endo Kazuya formalized the agreement with WFP Philippines representative and country director Regis Chapman in a recent signing ceremony.

The project, Enhancing Climate-Resilient Livelihoods in Vulnerable Communities in BARMM, aims to strengthen disaster risk management and agricultural resilience in the region.

Endo reaffirmed Japan's support for peace and development in Mindanao, stressing the importance of sustainable livelihoods in fostering long-term stability.

"Through more accessible livelihood opportunities, we aim to ensure that affected communities feel included in the peace process and are given hope for a better future through peaceful economic participation," he said.

Chapman cited the role of collaboration in achieving meaningful impact, noting that the project will work closely with the Bangsamoro Food Security Task Force to improve the livelihoods of smallholder farmers and fisherfolk while enhancing their access to markets.

In addition, fortified rice will be provided to communities engaged in capacity-strengthening activities to address food security challenges.

A key component of the initiative is the establishment of localized early warning systems and disaster risk management protocols to help communities prepare for extreme weather events.

The project aims to support up to 36,000 individuals by enhancing access to climate services and equipping farmers and fisherfolk with critical information to safeguard their assets and optimize cropping schedules.

WFP executive Toshio Murakami said the next step include the identification of priority areas within BARMM, particularly those most susceptible to flooding and drought.

Secretary Robert E.A. Borje, CCC vice chairperson and executive director, welcomed the initiative as a significant step in strengthening climate resilience in BARMM.

“The impacts of climate change continue to challenge our most vulnerable communities, making climate-resilient development a necessity. This collaboration between Japan, WFP and the BARMM government exemplifies how international cooperation can drive meaningful action,” he said. CCC News

Borje reiterated CCC’s commitment to ensuring that climate adaptation initiatives reach the most at-risk communities. “We recognize that climate resilience is integral to sustainable peace and development. The CCC stands ready to support and work with our partners in advancing climate-responsive solutions that empower communities and promote a low-carbon, climate-resilient future,” he added.

=END=