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By: Lucy Sherriff

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ECO BUSINESS

[\[Opinion\] Energy and agrarian justice in Southeast Asia's green transition](#)

By: Prapimphan Chiengkul

Combatting climate change undeniably requires a shift from fossil fuels to renewable energy. The transition to renewable energy, however, places more burdens on some people than others, such as on workers in the fossil fuel industry. Instead of promoting a rapid shift to renewable energy at all costs, many people and organisations have argued about the need to promote “just energy transition” or a shift to renewable energy in fair and inclusive ways. The concept of just transition emerged in the United States and the United Kingdom many decades ago. In Southeast Asia, the concept is being discussed, but further refinements are needed to make it appropriate for the region.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

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The governments that assume power after elections around the world this year will be held to the same climate obligations as their predecessors, the chief of this year's UN climate summit has warned.

THE MANILA TIMES

[NATO: Climate change threatens global security](#)

North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg stressed on Sunday the need to fight global warming and called climate change a "crisis multiplier" with implications for global security.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

[Solutions abound for tackling plastic waste](#)

By: Rose de la Cruz

Sachets used in the Philippines can cover the entire Metro Manila one-foot deep in plastic waste, or about one million metric tons.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

BNN NEWS

[Philippines Champions Global Collaboration for Climate Adaptation Finance at UNFCCC](#)

By: Wojciech Zylm

At the pivotal 25th meeting of the Adaptation Committee under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) held in Bonn, Germany, the Philippines took a significant stance on enhancing global climate change adaptation efforts. The nation underscored the crucial need for increased collaboration, strategic financing, and effective communication among international stakeholders to propel adaptation actions forward, particularly for the developing world.

PHILIPPINE INFORMATION AGENCY

[PH urges collaboration, planning, financing & communication to scale and speed up adaptation for developing world](#)

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

BBC

[Climate change is fuelling the US insurance problem](#)

By: Lucy Sherriff

Extreme weather events are making it hard to insure homes in certain parts of the US. What happens when insurance companies simply stop insuring?

When Frances Acuña received her flood insurance quote for the coming year, she got a shock: it would be increasing from \$450 to \$1,893 (£355 to £1,490). "I couldn't pay it," she says. "And so now I don't have flood insurance. But I don't feel alone as most of my neighbours don't have flood insurance either."

Acuña, a single mother-of-three, lives in Dove Springs in south-east Austin, Texas, an area that had, until recently, escaped the mass gentrification seen in the rest of the city. That is changing, says Acuña. The astronomical rise in flood insurance, coupled with an affordable housing crisis, is pushing many historic Latino communities out of the area.

In March 2024, Acuña, who is an organiser at Go Austin, a coalition working to improve the health of local communities, will leave the neighbourhood she has lived in for decades. "I bought this house thinking I would die in it," she says, in tears over the decision she has been forced to make. "But I can't afford to live here anymore."

Acuña's insurance went up because of a change in floodplain mapping. In 2018, the National Weather Service updated its flood models to reflect 25 years' worth of flood data. Thousands of houses in Austin that were previously expected to flood only once in every 500 years were upgraded to a risk of one in every 100 years.

With the new data analysis indicating that Austin was at a higher risk of flooding than previously estimated, insurance policies for many homes skyrocketed. In the first half of 2023 alone, premiums in Texas rose by up to 16%.

Acuña didn't feel the change until she missed a payment at the beginning of 2024 – she had other bills to pay and couldn't spare the money. It meant her policy lapsed, and when she came to renew her policy, she was told about the dramatic increase.

An unfolding crisis

The hike in insurance costs in Austin mirrors a crisis unfolding across America – along both coasts, and through the Midwest. "If you're not worried, you're not paying attention," California Senator Bill Dodd warned in 2023, following the release of a report which found Florida, California and Louisiana would see dramatic rises in home insurance premiums.

In 2022, insurance firm AllState paused selling new home and condo insurance policies in California. "Our payments to help California residents recover from accidents and disasters have increased significantly in recent years due to higher repair costs and more frequent and severe weather," says a spokesperson for AllState. "We continue to offer coverage to most existing home insurance customers."

In 2023, State Farm, one of the US' biggest insurance providers, announced it too would stop selling new home insurance policies in California. "[We] made this decision due to historic increases in construction costs outpacing inflation, rapidly growing catastrophe exposure, and a challenging reinsurance market," a statement from the company read. It was the latest insurer to pull back from the state, which has been hit by devastating wildfires and floods in recent years, and has the ever-looming threat of a major earthquake. Meanwhile, in Florida, Farmers Insurance discontinued its own-brand home insurance in the state, joining at least a dozen insurers who had already left. "This business decision was necessary to effectively manage risk exposure," a Farmers Insurance spokesperson told the BBC.

I don't have flood insurance. But I don't feel alone as most of my neighbours don't have flood insurance either – Frances Acuña

The abandonment of these areas is part of a wider story – thanks to climate change, the US is becoming a more volatile place to live. Hurricanes, floods, storms, and fires have caused widespread mass destruction in the US over recent years. It's also becoming more expensive, due to the costs associated with extreme weather events. A report released in 2022 analysed 120 million homes and found one in 10 properties were impacted by natural disasters. Winter storms impacted 12.7 million homes, causing \$15bn (£12bn) in property damage in 2021 alone, while hurricanes caused \$33bn (£26bn) in damage across 1.2 million homes.

And the future looks even worse. A recent report by First Street Foundation, a non-profit focusing on climate risk research, found 23.9 million properties in the US are at risk from damaging winds, 4.4 million properties at risk from wildfire, and a further 12 million properties have a significant risk of flooding – in addition to properties in the Federal Emergency Management Agency (Fema)'s Special Flood Hazard Areas (100-year flood zones that the government has already identified). "Private insurance companies are effectively labelling areas as uninsurable," the report found.

The home insurance market was valued at \$233bn (£184bn) in 2023. It's a business, and if business is bad, insurance companies have no obligation to stick around. Regulations in states such as California, Florida and Louisiana – some of the hardest hit when it comes to climate change impacts – have suppressed insurance prices for years. So, when disaster hits, and insurance companies have to pay out, they can't raise prices the following year to cover their losses. As a result, the insurance industry isn't

turning as much profit as it used to, and so the financially sensible thing for them is simply to withdraw from high-risk markets, like California.

State Farm explained its decision to stop accepting new insurance policy applications in California in a press release, citing that the decision was necessary to improve the company's finances.

"It's necessary to take these actions now to improve the company's financial strength," a statement from State Farm added.

Who bears the brunt?

The most severe effects from climate change fall disproportionately on socially vulnerable populations, and the US becoming increasingly uninsurable means economically disadvantaged people will bear the burden.

Flooding is the most common and expensive natural disaster in the US, yet fewer than 60% of single-family homeowners living in areas where there's mandatory flood insurance have the insurance.

Communities like Acuña's have two choices: either risk being uninsured or leave. "Our community is disappearing," says Acuña, who doesn't wholly blame the insurance companies but says that rising premiums have exacerbated her community's struggles. Most community members don't have the time to campaign for change – they're working two or three jobs to get by, says Acuña.

So what are the alternatives?

When insurance companies pull out of states, homeowners are forced to rely on the state's "insurance of last resort".

In California, this is called the FAIR Plan and it's for properties located in areas at high risk of fire that can't otherwise get insurance. The plan covers less and charges higher premiums than conventional providers.

And yet between 2018 and 2023, the FAIR Plan's customers have risen from 140,000 to 330,000 despite the plan only being intended for temporary use. (Californians cannot purchase a home without having adequate home insurance to satisfy banks' home lender requirements.)

In a move to prevent more insurers from fleeing the state, California's Insurance Commissioner recently announced the state would let insurance companies consider

climate change when setting their prices. However, this will likely mean higher rates for homeowners – which have already been increasing. Even through California's FAIR Plan, premiums have tripled for some homeowners, and thousands of people are simply dropping out of insuring their homes altogether. Non-renewals of home and fire insurance policies jumped from 11% in 2018 to 13% in 2021 (an increase of 127,581). A similar pattern is happening in Louisiana, where the state's insurer of last resort increased rates by 63% over the past year.

There is a lack of support for those who can no longer afford insurance. They simply fall through the cracks, says Acuña, whose neighbours' houses were flooded in 2019. Their houses are still water stained. She says they have received little help from government officials.

"They just send me back and forth, blaming each other. I am a proud woman and I have been on the phone begging for help."

Carrying on as normal

Another major concern is the real estate market continuing as usual in the face of increasing extreme weather events, meaning that home buyers have no idea when they are buying in a high-risk area.

The gap between the cost of climate risk and the real estate market has been described as a "climate bubble". A recent study found residential properties that are at risk of flooding are grossly overvalued by up to \$237bn (£187bn). This means that when a property is put on the market for sale, the cost of flooding is not reflected in the value of the home. Essentially the housing market is mispricing the risk.

In Miami, home prices continue to rise – by 27% – despite the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) predicting that south-east cities like Miami will be facing more than 30 days of high-tide flooding a year by 2050. Projected sea level rise, which Miami is particularly vulnerable to, threatens \$400bn (£320bn) worth of Florida property.

"This unpriced flood risk could perpetuate perverse incentives for continued development in floodplains and underinvestment in hazard mitigation, further inflating the housing bubble," the authors of one study added. First Street Foundation's 2023 report found that policies for 39 million properties, roughly a quarter of all homes in the US, are under-priced for the climate risk to insure those properties.

"The population exposure over the next 30 years is a serious concern," said Evelyn Shu, senior research analyst at the First Street Foundation and lead author on the report.

"For decades we've chosen to build and develop in areas that we believed did not have significant risk, but due to the impacts of climate change, those areas are very rapidly beginning to look like areas we've avoided in the past."

Mitigation and adaptation

One state-level action that could help mitigate the impacts of climate change is the implementation of flood disclosures. Organisations like the Natural Resources Defense Council have urged states to require flood disclosure policies during property sales to help buyers decide whether buying is worth the risk. Research has shown disclosure can devalue flood-prone properties and discourage development in risky areas.

Even though the number of states requiring flood disclosure policies is slowly increasing, Florida remains noticeably absent, and one-third of states still have no requirement that sellers must disclose a property's flood risk to potential buyers.

The key is investing in mitigating the impacts of climate change in the first place, says Jesse Gourevitch, an economics researcher at the Environmental Defense Fund, who co-authored the study on unpriced climate risk. "One critical step to take is investment in disaster risk reduction," he says. "This can occur at the individual house level and the community level – one of the best things a community can do is try to decrease their risk of loss."

It's an attractive prospect but in reality there are few funds available for low-income communities to adapt. Gourevitch highlights that there needs to be "much more" targeted government investment in reducing impacts on vulnerable communities. "At present there's more funding available in adaptation and disaster risk reduction than ever before. But that's not to say it's enough."

Bowen agrees. "This is a broader, more ethical question," he says. "Where is the money going to come from? Some from the Inflation Reduction Act but that's not nearly enough. It can't just be [that] a select few have access to be better prepared."

In the Biden administration's 2023 Inflation Reduction Act, \$1.8bn (£1.4bn) was pledged to build climate resilient infrastructure and fund flood mitigation programmes. The previous year the government had received grant applications which totalled \$4.6bn (£3.5bn).

"We're talking trillions of dollars if home and businesses are going to be retrofitted and our infrastructure is going to be modernised," says Bowen. "And that would be a pretty tough amount of money to get through any government."

BOMBO RADYO

Earth Hour 2024 nakatuon sa paglaban sa plastic pollution

By: Jovino Galang

Nakatuon ngayon ang gagawing Earth Hour sa araw ng Sabado, Marso 23 ay ang bukod sa pagtitipid sa kuryente ay ang paglaban sa plastic pollution.

Sinabi ni World Wide Fund For Nature (WWF) Philippines executive director Katherine Custodio, na maraming sakit na ang naidudulot dahil sa plastic pollution.

Base sa kanilang pagtaya na mayroong 2.15 milyon na plastic waste ang nakulekta noong 2019.

Ngayong taon ay magiging main partner ng Earth Hour ang lungsod ng Maynila kung saan gaganapin ang programa sa Kartilya ng Katipunan sa Manila.

Ilang mga kilalang landmarks sa Lungsod gaya ng city hall clock tower, Rizal Monument at iba pa ay papatayin ang ilaw mula 8:30 ng gabi hanggang 9:30 p.m.

Nagsimula ang obserbasyon ng Earth Hour sa Sydney, Australia noong 2007 at matapos ang isang taon ay sumali na ang Pilipinas kung saan ito na ang pang-16 na taon na inoobserbahan ito sa Pilipinas.

CNN

[Global ocean heat has hit a new record every single day for the last year](#)

By: Laura Paddison

The world's oceans have now experienced an entire year of unprecedented heat, with a new temperature record broken every day, new data shows.

Global ocean surface temperatures started breaking daily records in mid-March last year, according to data from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the University of Maine's Climate Reanalyzer, fueling concerns for marine life and extreme weather across the planet.

"The amplitude by which previous sea surface temperature records were beaten in 2023, and now again in 2024, is remarkable," said Joel Hirschi, associate head of marine systems modeling at the National Oceanography Centre in the UK.

Global average ocean temperatures in 2023 were 0.25 degrees Celsius warmer than the previous year, said Gregory C. Johnson, a NOAA oceanographer. That rise is "is equivalent to about two decades' worth of warming in a single year," he told CNN. "So it is quite large, quite significant, and a bit surprising."

Scientists have said ocean heat is being supercharged by human-caused global warming, boosted by El Niño, a natural climate pattern marked by higher-than-average ocean temperatures.

The main consequences are on marine life and global weather. Global ocean warmth can add more power to hurricanes and other extreme weather events, including scorching heat waves and intense rainfall.

High ocean temperatures are already proving catastrophic for coral. Australia's Great Barrier Reef is experiencing its seventh mass bleaching event, authorities announced in March following aerial surveys.

Bleaching occurs when heat-stressed corals release the algae that live in their tissue and provide their food source. If ocean temperatures remain too high for too long, the coral can starve and die.

Data from NOAA's Coral Reef Watch tool shows that the problem goes well beyond Australia, and that the world could face a fourth global mass coral bleaching event in the next few months.

Ocean heat sets the stage for more ferocious hurricanes. "The warmer the ocean, the more energy to fuel storms is available," said Karina von Schuckmann, an oceanographer at Mercator Ocean International in France.

Temperatures have been unprecedented in the North Atlantic, an area of ocean key to hurricane formation, surprising some scientists, who are still trying to unpick the exact causes.

"At times, the records (in the North Atlantic) have been broken by margins that are virtually statistically impossible," Brian McNoldy, a senior research associate at the University of Miami Rosenstiel School told CNN.

If very high ocean temperatures continue into the second half of 2024 and a La Niña event develops — El Niño's counterpart that tends to amplify Atlantic hurricane season — "this would increase the risk of a very active hurricane season," Hirschi said.

About 90% of the world's excess heat produced by burning planet-heating fossil fuels is stored in the oceans. "Measuring ocean warming allows us to track the status and evolution of planetary warming," Schuckmann told CNN. "The ocean is the sentinel for global warming."

El Niño is weakening and predicted to dissipate over the next few months, which could level off the record ocean temperatures, especially if the cooling effects of La Niña replace it.

"In the past, surface temperature values have decreased after the passage of El Niño," Schuckmann said. But, she added, it's currently impossible to predict when ocean heat will drop below record levels.

While natural climate variability will cause ocean temperatures to fluctuate, over the long term, NOAA's Johnson said, we should expect them to "continue to break records as long as greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere continue to rise."

ECO BUSINESS

[\[Opinion\] Energy and agrarian justice in Southeast Asia's green transition](#)

By: Prapimphan Chiengkul

Combatting climate change undeniably requires a shift from fossil fuels to renewable energy. The transition to renewable energy, however, places more burdens on some people than others, such as on workers in the fossil fuel industry. Instead of promoting a rapid shift to renewable energy at all costs, many people and organisations have argued about the need to promote “just energy transition” or a shift to renewable energy in fair and inclusive ways. The concept of just transition emerged in the United States and the United Kingdom many decades ago. In Southeast Asia, the concept is being discussed, but further refinements are needed to make it appropriate for the region

As a start, land use and access should feature prominently in discussions about just energy transitions. Academic research has documented how renewable energy expansions have significantly impacted land-use changes, which often have adverse effects on rural populations. Expansion of renewable energy, such as solar, wind, hydropower and biofuels, also compete with agrifood production for land and water usage. Southeast Asia is no exception to this global trend, and there are many reports of large-scale land acquisitions for biofuel crops that intensified pre-existing land conflicts, such as in Indonesia, Thailand, Cambodia and the Philippines.

Since the concept of just transition originated from the experiences of labour movements, it is not surprising that conventional just energy transition measures tend to focus on labour market policies — how to protect jobs, compensate and re-skill workers in the energy sector, and create decent green jobs. However, many scholars and activists have attempted to expand the discussion of just energy transition to include concerns for providing energy access to everyone and other development objectives similar to the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Given the energy-agrifood connections discussed above, policies to promote the expanded conceptualisation of just transition should also consider principles of energy justice and agrarian justice.

Energy justice requires support for the equitable distribution of benefits and harms relating to energy production and consumption. It also requires inclusive and meaningful decision-making processes, measures to address exclusions in the energy system, and compensation for past harms. Ignoring some of these principles could lead to ineffective energy policy. In Indonesia, for example, a study in 2021 found that the government focused narrowly on energy accessibility and affordability but neglected to include stakeholders such as energy-poor indigenous and minority groups in decision-making processes. As a result, the Indonesian government mainly promoted large-scale on-grid solutions and ignored small-scale off-grid renewable technologies, which could have

been used more extensively to accelerate energy transition and serve the energy needs of marginalised communities.

Agrarian justice should also be central to the design of just transition and sustainable development policies. Agrarian justice calls for access to land and land redistribution to secure the livelihoods of rural actors, especially in the face of the climate crisis and policy responses that often harm agrifood production and rural populations. Additionally, local initiatives and community-based practices to promote inclusive and climate-resilient development, such as community forests, customary land ownership and agroecology, are often neglected or portrayed as inconsequential by policymakers.

Balancing energy justice and agrarian justice could be challenging due to competing land use for energy and food production, but this is an issue that cannot be ignored if one wants to promote just transition. Moreover, policymakers in Southeast Asia should not be too quick in dismissing development innovations that emerge from grassroots experiences, especially those that help to promote agrarian justice and protect marginalised rural populations. In Thailand, for example, the People's Movement for a Just Society (P-move) has been fighting for many decades for state recognition of community land title deeds (CLTDs). P-move is also in negotiations with the Thai government on many land-related issues. In CLTD projects, landless farmers receive usage rights over individual land plots for agricultural and housing purposes. To prevent land grabs and promote land access for those truly in need, these farmers are not allowed to sell the land plots for monetary gains. However, they are compensated when they return the land plots back to their farmer groups.

To promote a truly just energy transition, an adjustment in perspective by those in power is urgently needed. Climate change disproportionately affects vulnerable people and exacerbates poverty and inequality, while energy transition may also have adverse effects on agrifood production and rural populations. Therefore, human and economic development could be affected if there are insufficient social protection measures. This is why just transition policies should consider both energy and agrarian justice and seek to find a balance between the two. At the very least, there should be policies to promote land usage rights for marginalised populations to help meet their basic needs.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

[More waste segregation efforts pushed to cut costs by 65%](#)

By: Liza Agoot

The city government is encouraging the public to help in further implementing and improving waste segregation and management to help cut the city's expenses by at least 65 percent.

"Proper disposal of garbage is crucial. It should be placed inside the garbage bins, not on top of the bin covers," Aileen Refuerzo, the city's chief information officer, said Monday.

Data from the General Services Office, which manages the city's garbage, show that out of the 550 tons of average daily wastes generated here, about 40 percent are biodegradable while 25 percent are recyclables, which could be managed in the household.

Around 35 percent residuals and other wastes are supposedly the only items that leave the houses, disposed of during garbage collection.

Thus, Refuerzo said they are encouraging businesses and households to properly segregate their wastes.

The city government has been urging people here to reuse items such as cups and straws to minimize wastes that need to be hauled to Capaz, Tarlac, where an engineered sanitary landfill is located due to the absence of an ecological landfill here.

The city government spends about PHP2,200 for every ton of garbage brought to the landfill.

The General Services Office has reported that about PHP200 million is being spent for the city's waste disposal annually

The city earlier approved Ordinance 30-2018 or the "Baguio no plastic policy", prohibiting business establishments from using plastic or styrofoam as a waste management and environment protection effort.

Refuerzo said discipline and a sense of responsibility are among the keys in making the city's waste reduction efforts a success.

Authorities estimate that each individual produces at least half a kilo of garbage every day, thus the importance of minimizing waste generation.

For cleanliness' sake

Maria Guadalupe Della, assistant chief of the GSO, in an earlier press release, said the Central Business District produces the most waste.

She said garbage from the CBD is collected twice a day while those from the households are collected once a week.

Della said the large amount of annual expense for waste disposal could have been spent on more valuable projects that can benefit the communities.

She said the local government is working out ways for a long-term waste management system but noted that residents and tourists should contribute to this effort.

Earlier this month, the city government also approved an ordinance for the regular conduct of e-waste trade fair and waste recycling fair.

THE GUARDIAN

Newly elected leaders to be held to same climate obligations, says Cop29 chief

The governments that assume power after elections around the world this year will be held to the same climate obligations as their predecessors, the chief of this year's UN climate summit has warned.

Cop29 will be held in Azerbaijan in November, near the end of a crucial year in which most of the global population – from the UK, the EU and the US to India and Russia – will head to the polls. The US presidential election, likely to be a bitter fight with climate a key issue, will be held on 5 November, with Cop29 to take place days later, from 11 to 22 November, in the Azerbaijani capital, Baku.

Even if new administrations are formed, they will face the same need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and tackle global heating, the incoming president of Cop29, Mukhtar Babayev, has said.

“I don't think that any election will change the policy of any countries to move forward the consolidation of these issues [on the climate],” Babayev told the Guardian in his first big interview since his appointment in January. “That's why our target is to use any chance, any communication, with these countries to move this process to positive results and positive outcomes.”

Incoming governments of whatever stripe would still have to cope with the reality of the climate crisis, he said, and the Azerbaijan presidency would hold them to their commitments. “I think all countries will follow their obligations, and we will move to this direction,” he said. “I'm optimistic. We will do everything and will do our best to [ensure] all countries move in this direction.”

Noting that elections were taking place in many countries, Babayev declined to single out any specific states but acknowledged that the US election was “a very interesting process”.

He said: “Until the end of this year, we will work with the current administration. And I think we have a very good chance, to invite all the participants to Baku to discuss the agenda. We're working with the current administration of the US to at least develop the agenda to work together, to achieve the targets together.”

Azerbaijan has been an oil producer since the 1840s, and is one of the world's top fossil fuel suppliers. Oil and gas account for 92% of the country's exports, according to US data, and about two-thirds of the state budget, and the country is planning to increase its gas output by a third in the next decade.

Babayev said the government was moving to decarbonise the economy, boosting renewable energy and seeking a transition away from fossil fuels. Oil production was expected to reduce, he said, but gas production would need to increase to meet demands from the EU, which since the invasion of Ukraine had sought to find gas supplies to replace those it used to get from Russia.

"We have to deliver [gas] to the European market, because of a big request from the EU. We have already adopted a programme to deliver more gas. But the programme is to invest all these revenues, or at least to consider how it's possible to invest these revenues, to transform the economy in a green direction," he said.

He also highlighted the country's efforts to decarbonise, with a target of moving from 98% fossil fuels in its energy mix to 30% renewables by 2030. "Azerbaijan is the leader in the region to invest in alternative energy. [It is] the intention of Azerbaijan to turn the corner on our economy to green directions. Already, a lot of programmes have been adopted by our government, [in pursuit of this green growth agenda]," Babayev said.

Among these, Azerbaijan is exploring offshore wind in the Caspian Sea, and is working on plans to export green energy under the Black Sea to Hungary and Romania.

Holding a Cop summit in such a fossil fuel dependent country is controversial, and Azerbaijan was a late choice to host. At Cop28, where the decision was taken, Russia vetoed potential offers from eastern European states to host, but decided not to stand in the way of Azerbaijan's eventual offer.

Babayev, who has also written an opinion piece for the Guardian, pointed to the support of Armenia, with which Azerbaijan has been in conflict over disputed territory since before the collapse of the Soviet Union until the surrender of the breakaway region of Nagorno-Karabakh after a military offensive by Azerbaijan last September.

"Azerbaijan can play the role of bridge between [the global] north and south, and between the east and west," he pledged. This would be assisted, he added, by the formal adoption of a "troika" system by the UN, by which the previous hosts – United Arab Emirates, which hosted Cop28 in Dubai last December, and still holds the

presidency of the talks until the start of Cop29 – and the hosts of Cop30, Brazil, will coordinate their work on the negotiations.

At Cop29, one of the key issues is likely to be climate finance, as poor countries struggle to find the funding they need to invest in clean energy and move away from fossil fuels.

Babayev called on the private sector to step up with funding for a green transition in the developing world, as well as publicly funded banks such as the World Bank. “Our task is to invite as much as possible the private sector for climate finance – it’s a very good source for new initiatives, new formats, new mechanisms for finance,” he said.

Cop29 will take place at the end of what is likely to be another year of record-breaking temperatures around the world. Last month marked the first time average global temperatures for a whole year had exceeded the vital scientific threshold of 1.5C above pre-industrial levels.

One year of such heights is not enough to invalidate the Paris agreement, under which countries aspire to hold temperatures within the 1.5C limit, but scientists are increasingly pessimistic, as global emissions have not yet started to fall as they need to, and rapidly.

Babayev insisted the 1.5C goal must still be the central focus of the UN framework convention on climate change talks. “We need to consolidate our efforts to 1.5C,” he said.

“I’m not pessimistic on this issue. We have to move on the target and the implementation of the programme [to reduce global emissions]. If we start the action, start the implementation of the agreements made at previous Cops, we have a chance. We will do our best.”

THE MANILA TIMES

[NATO: Climate change threatens global security](#)

North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg stressed on Sunday the need to fight global warming and called climate change a "crisis multiplier" with implications for global security.

He made the remarks during a news conference in Azerbaijan's capital Baku with President Ilham Aliyev, whose energy-rich country is set to host the 29th United Nations Climate Change Conference, or COP29, in November.

Praising Azerbaijan for its "important role in delivering [natural] gas to key NATO allies," Stoltenberg said, "the challenge is that the world needs energy, but at the same time we need to fight global warming."

"We need to reconcile the need for energy and environment," he said, adding that "climate change matters for security, matters for NATO."

"Climate change is a crisis multiplier, and we see the effects of climate change all over the world," the defense alliance chief said.

Stoltenberg also hailed Azerbaijan for investing in alternative energies, stressing the country's "great potential" as a supplier of hydropower and solar power to the European markets.

The decision to hold a climate summit in oil-and-gas-producer Azerbaijan has been criticized by environmental groups.

But the tightly controlled Caspian nation is seeking to change its reputation as a polluting authoritarian state.

Aliyev said that while his country was a "pan-European gas supplier," it had an ambitious green transition agenda.

He said Azerbaijan's selection as a host of COP29 on November 11 to 24 was a "sign of recognition of our efforts on green transition."

2024 will be the second year in a row that the COP29 will be hosted by an oil giant, with last year's conference held in the United Arab Emirates.

Adding to the controversy, the presidency of the conference has been entrusted to Mukhtar Babayev, a former executive of the State Oil Co. of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

Solutions abound for tackling plastic waste

By:Rose de la Cruz

Sachets used in the Philippines can cover the entire Metro Manila one-foot deep in plastic waste, or about one million metric tons.

Indeed, the Philippines, being the third plastic polluter of the world, contributes 0.75 million metric tons into the oceans each year – thereby choking marine biodiversity.

It is now on the verge of awakening to this sad reality and compelling manufacturers of single-use plastics, particularly sachets, to join the bandwagon in reversing this catastrophic trend.

Even dumpsters and junkyards that previously bought those plastic bottles, basins and so-called recyclable table wares, are now refusing to pay big for such materials that now sadly cost only P1 a kilo. Thus, consumers and former trash collectors would rather leave them to garbage trucks that hurl them into open dump sites, which when strong rains occur, are carried by floodwaters to rivers, lakes and seas.

The Philippines also recently allowed rich and industrialized foreign countries to export their garbage to the country, making the Global North partly to blame for such plastic pollution.

There are attempts by Congress to penalize plastic polluters and require manufacturers' of single-use plastic to share the cost of the impact of their products (through the Extended Producer Responsibility clause). There are also local governments banning the use of single-use plastics by wet and dry market merchants. These are just among the small steps to control plastic pollution on the supply side.

Alternative products

But the demand side is finding ways to develop such polluting plastics into alternative products like cement for civil works (of government projects) and buildings, multi-colored but paintable eco-boards for homes, schools and other structures and even reusing the PET bottles as containers of shampoos, dishwashing and liquid laundry soaps, disinfectants, tote bags, aprons and other uses like the Ateneo de Manila Institute of Sustainability reported doing in 2022.

Plastic bottles can't be recycled or reused for drinking or reheating because the chemicals and toxic substances in microplastics pose danger to human health, when ingested or inhaled, wrote former Senator Orlando Mercado in his column, as he cited new studies showing that even human placenta may already contain traces of microplastics that risk babies' health in the womb.

Scientists said polyethylene — a common plastic used to make plastic bags and bottles — has been detected in 62 placental tissue samples collected. These tiny plastics were also detected in human blood, breast milk and the lungs. The reality of having microplastics in our bodies is no longer an ugly prophecy but a reality.

An NGO, the Community Legal Help and Public Interest Center Inc. (C-HELP), of which Mercado is a member, had taken legal steps to hold seven major fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) companies accountable for violating consumer rights to safety and a healthy environment. The group protested their practice of putting “recycle me,” “recycle,” “recycle ready” and “recyclable” in their product labels despite these items being un-recyclable, he explained.

In November 2022, C-Help filed a case against these companies. One of these companies, Procter & Gamble held a dialogue with them to address their concerns.

P&G offered a “goodwill” refund on the purchase price of the product and agreed to review recommendations on recycling labels as well as to open communication lines to arrive at environmentally-sustainable solutions to reduce the use of plastics in consumer goods.

Then there is a social enterprise, The Plaf or the Plastic Flamingo, created by foreigners – Francois and Charlotte Lesage in 2018 – operating in the Philippines that collects and transforms plastic waste into a range of sustainable construction materials for use in building new schools, housing and shelters to make the country more resilient against natural hazards each year.

The Plaf collects from its 50 collection points in the country and recycles plastic waste. In just one year, it collected 20 tons of plastic wares from schools, universities, condos, villages, communities, offices, stores, hotels, etc.

Refill revolution

Another initiative launched against plastics pollution was done in Ateneo de Manila in 2022 called the Refill Revolution booth launched by Ateneo de Manila Institute of Sustainability in 2022 when the community members exerted effort to bring their own containers to refill kitchen and personal essentials like hand soap, dishwashing liquid, powder detergent and shampoo. The booth also highlighted locally-made and upcycled

tote bags, hats, aprons and more. During the three-day event, 395 pieces of single use plastic packaging were avoided.

Currently, only nine percent of plastic waste produced in the Philippines is recycled while 74 percent of plastic leaked into the oceans are from collected wastes.

Our plastic waste reality in the Philippines makes it more urgent for the country to come up with more efficient plastic waste management systems – from collection to recycling.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

BNN NEWS

[Philippines Champions Global Collaboration for Climate Adaptation Finance at UNFCCC](#)

By: Wojciech Zylm

At the pivotal 25th meeting of the Adaptation Committee under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) held in Bonn, Germany, the Philippines took a significant stance on enhancing global climate change adaptation efforts. The nation underscored the crucial need for increased collaboration, strategic financing, and effective communication among international stakeholders to propel adaptation actions forward, particularly for the developing world.

Urgent Call for Enhanced Adaptation Financing

During the assembly, the Philippine Climate Change Commission's (CCC) delegate, Robert E.A. Borje, emphasized the dire necessity of bolstering adaptation finance to meet the escalating challenges posed by climate change. Borje highlighted the importance of doubling adaptation finance from 2019 levels to address the financing gaps critically needed to support developing nations in their journey towards global climate resilience. With a spotlight on the upcoming 'Finance COP,' Borje's remarks resonated with the global community's pressing call for action to secure and distribute essential financial resources effectively.

Strategic Collaborations and Communications

Borje also stressed the significance of forging stronger collaborations among countries, stakeholders, and adaptation actors across all levels. Ensuring alignment and coherence in adaptation planning and actions is deemed essential for the immediate and efficient delivery of the means of implementation (MOIs) by the developed world. Furthermore, he introduced the concept of transitioning from conventional communication strategies to more strategic communications, aimed at fostering urgent and transformative adaptation measures. This approach seeks to enhance the global narrative on climate change and adaptation, encouraging more inclusive and comprehensive climate action on the ground.

Global Response and Future Directions

The call made by the Philippines at the UNFCCC meeting has sparked a global conversation on the necessity of scaling up efforts and resources to combat the adverse effects of climate change, especially in vulnerable developing countries. The discussions set the stage for future international climate forums, including the 2024 Adaptation Forum and the NAP Expo, where the world will further deliberate on practical and innovative solutions for adaptation planning and implementation. As nations and stakeholders rally to meet these challenges, the emphasis on collaboration, strategic financing, and effective communication remains paramount in navigating the path towards a more resilient global community.

PHILIPPINE INFORMATION AGENCY

[PH urges collaboration, planning, financing & communication to scale and speed up adaptation for developing world](#)

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 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), serving as Committee member representing non-Annex I countries, actively participated in the discussion, sharing 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), 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 USD 387 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.

The 25th meeting of the Adaptation Committee was held at the UN Campus in Bonn, Germany. Subsequent events include the 2024 Adaptation Forum from 18 to 19 March in Bonn, Germany, and the NAP Expo on 22 to 23 April 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 CCC Secretary Borje, serves as a member of the Adaptation Committee, following nomination and election by developing countries, and appointment in COP28 in Dubai, UAE. This is the first time a Filipino national 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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