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[El Niño may persist until 2024 - PAGASA](#)

By: Ariel Rojas

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By Katrina Domingo

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AL JAZEERA

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BUSINESS WORLD

[PHL seeks \\$400-million digital transformation loan from WB](#)

By: Luisa Maria Jacinta C. Jocson

The Philippines is seeking a \$400-million loan from the World Bank (WB) to support digital transformation initiatives.

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EURO NEWS

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By: Angela Symons

Should fossil fuel companies face homicide charges for their contributions to climate change? That's the question explored in a paper set to be published in the Harvard Environmental Law Review next year.

GMA NEWS

[DBM backs Earth Hour, says Marcos admin allotted P464.5-B budget for climate change projects](#)

The Department of Budget and Management (DBM) on Saturday expressed support for Earth Hour, adding that the Marcos administration has allotted P464.5 billion in the 2023 budget to address climate change.

MANILA STANDARD

[More smart cities emerging to protect natural resources](#)

By: Patricia Bianca S. Taculao

Throughout the globe, countries and societies prioritize environmental sustainability by following sustainable development pathways, including social and economic improvements. Even in the Philippines, people can see sustainable cities here and there as they aim to meet the worldwide cooperative social development goals.

[Renewable energy obtains top priority to offset climate change](#)

By: Alena Mae S. Flores

The drive to reduce global carbon emissions and air pollution is getting the full backing of the Marcos administration.

PHILIPPINE INFORMATION AGENCY

[Pres Marcos calls on nation to join 2023 Earth Hour](#)

President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. on Saturday called on the entire Filipino nation to join the observance of Earth Hour to mitigate the devastating effects of climate change.

RAPPLER

[93% of Filipino adults experienced climate change impacts in past 3 years, SWS survey says](#)

By: Laurice Angeles

Ninety-three percent of Filipino adults personally experienced the impacts of climate change in the past three years, according to a survey by pollster Social Weather Stations (SWS).

SKY NEWS

[Climate change: Why we struggle to process the doom](#)

By: Tom Heap

How do we react to these kinds of statements? "Humanity is on thin ice and that ice is melting fast." "The world has suffered greatly from ongoing climate change." "More poor people die. In every heatwave that we have, thousands of people die."

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

[Huge river restoration effort launched at UN water summit](#)

By: Agence France-Presse

Several African and Latin American countries on Thursday launched a major initiative to restore 300,000 kilometers (186,000 miles) of rivers by 2030, as well as lakes and wetlands degraded by human activity.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

GMA NEWS

[WWF-Philippines calls on Filipinos to help combat climate change and nature loss by joining the biggest hour for Earth](#)

Filipinos from all walks of life are encouraged to participate in the coming Earth Hour 2023 celebration on March 25 and contribute to the fight against climate change and biodiversity loss.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

[Filipinos urged to join in Earth Hour 2023](#)

By: Antonio Iñares

As the world continues to battle climate change and biodiversity loss, Filipinos from all walks of life are being urged to join the global Earth Hour 2023 celebration, which will mark the first in-person celebration in two years due to the pandemic.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

[Climate Change Commission bats for Bicycle Act revival](#)

The Climate Change Commission on Saturday sought the revival of the Bicycle Act, citing the harmful impact of mechanized modes of travel on both the environment and public health.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

['Be part of solution to climate change'](#)

By: Alexis Romero

President Marcos urged Filipinos yesterday to be part of the solution to climate change and to join efforts to protect the environment as the world observed Earth Hour.

Oil spill: US Coast Guard arriving for cleanup

By: Helen Flores

A contingent of the United States Coast Guard (USCG), along with its air assets, will arrive in the Philippines today to help in the ongoing cleanup of the massive oil spill in Oriental Mindoro, Malacañang said yesterday.

Information and Knowledge Management Division

ABS CBN

El Niño may persist until 2024 - PAGASA

By: Ariel Rojas

El Niño, a weather phenomenon characterized by below-normal rainfall that can lead to dry spells and drought, may persist until 2024, the state weather bureau said Thursday.

Climate projections by PAGASA show that El Niño will begin by the third quarter of 2023 or between July and September, and will last until next year.

The forecast prompted the weather agency to issue an El Niño Watch, which is released when "conditions are favorable" for the development of El Niño in the next 6 months and the probability is 55 percent or above.

Ana Liza Solis, chief of PAGASA's climate monitoring and prediction section, said the El Niño Watch is meant to lead early preparations. The weather phenomenon's effects will not be immediately felt, she added.

"Monitoring and preparatory activities pa lang po so sa mga darating na panahon ay hindi di pa po makikita ang impact ng El Niño," Solis told reporters in a press briefing.

(It's just monitoring and preparatory activities so in the coming days the impact of El Niño will not be seen yet.)

El Niño is the warm phase of the naturally-occurring climate pattern El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO), marked by changes in wind direction and sea surface temperatures in the equatorial Pacific.

RAINFALL

PAGASA said the western part of the Philippines might experience above-normal precipitation during the habagat or southwest monsoon season which usually starts from May to September.

But Thelma Cinco, the bureau's climatology and agrometeorology division chief, said a reversal in the rainfall pattern happens during an El Niño year.

The northern part of the country is usually very wet but becomes dry towards the end of the year.

If El Niño persists the following year, drier conditions are experienced.

Cinco added areas in Visayas and Mindanao under Climate Types III and IV, which have evenly distributed rainfall throughout the year, usually feel the immediate effect of the reduced amount of rain.

WATERSHEDS, DAMS

Meanwhile, Hydrometeorology Division Chief Roy Badilla said that the rainfall forecast over watersheds and dam reservoirs remains normal until September.

"Ang forecast po natin sa ngayon kung titingnan hanggang September is normal. Kung iyon po ang mangyayari, wala pa namang magiging problema," Badilla said.

"Let us wait siguro for the update of our forecast then we can update the projections. Ang tinitingnan natin na magkakaroon tayo ng challenges sa water supply is next year," he said.

(Our forecast for now if we look at it until September is normal. If that happens, there will be no problem. Let us wait for the update of our forecast, then we can update the projections. What we are looking at is that we will have challenges in the water supply next year.)

EL NIÑO AND CLIMATE CRISIS

Apart from rainfall, El Niño also impacts tropical cyclone activity. Storms tend to become stronger as they form farther from land and travel over the sea longer but they recurve before approaching the country.

However, very intense typhoons sometimes hit the country. The current climate crisis has also exacerbated the effects of El Niño. Solis said that prior to 2000, intense El Niño events occur every 15 years.

But after 2000, she noted that more intense episodes happen every seven years. Cinco added that tropical cyclones tend to be less frequent but they become stronger due to warmer sea temperatures.

UK to 'increase collaboration' with PH in maritime security: envoy

By Katrina Domingo

The United Kingdom is committed to have an “increased collaboration” with the Philippines in maritime security efforts, British Ambassador to the Philippines Laure Beaufils said on Saturday.

The two countries have engaged in maritime security dialogues “for us to take stock of the relationship and all we are doing from the areas of maritime from a legal perspective and a training perspective from a problematic perspective, even from an environmental perspective, investing in good ocean management,” Beaufils told reporters on the sidelines of the Great British Festival in Taguig.

“Maritime interest is a common interest between the UK and the Philippines. We’re both maritime nations. We take this issue very very seriously,” she said.

“Both for the UK and the Philippines, the respect for the international law of the sea and the UNCLOS is really, really essential and so this dialogue was an opportunity,” she said.

“This is a scenario of increased collaboration. We will continue to do a lot more in the space of maritime security with the Philippines,” she added.

Earlier this week, the Philippines and the UK called for stability and security in the Indo-Pacific Region as China continues to militarize and operate in seas that fall within Manila’s exclusive economic zone.

Meantime, Beaufils said that the UK has yet to join a slew of other countries that have come to aid the Philippine government efforts in the clean up of the oil spill off the coast of Oriental Mindoro.

The UK has a “huge environmental program and a huge climate change program,” the Ambassador said.

“It’s not focused on the oil spill but we are doing a lot more on the adaptation, coastal management of resources and support for livelihood of coastal communities,” she said.

“So we have a slightly different angle but undoubtedly covering the same areas of good ocean governance and environmental management of the sea and the coasts,” she said.

Manila has yet to seek London's aid to fast-track the oil spill clean up but the British government would be "happy to engage with the government on their priorities" should they want to, she said.

Philippines joins first in-person Earth Hour since pandemic

By: Larize Lee

The Philippines on Saturday marked the first in-person Earth Hour celebrations since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

According to the Department of Energy, the country saved 65.23 megawatts of power after Filipinos nationwide switched off their lights Saturday evening.

In Quezon City, hundreds flocked to the Quezon Memorial Circle to witness the ceremonial switch-off at 8:30 p.m. Saturday.

Officials from the city government and the World Wildlife Fund for Nature Philippines (WWF) led the Earth Hour celebrations, dubbed “The Biggest Hour on Earth.”

Angela Consuelo Ibay, head of the WWF Philippines’ climate and energy program, said that they plan to make Earth Hour celebrations bigger between 2023 and 2030 in an effort to uphold “the laws of biodiversity.”

The event also aimed to spread awareness on the effects of climate change.

“As we all know today mayroon na po tayong climate change. As individuals we also have our own responsibilities. It is important that we do our own part in joining environmental activities,” said Thea Mercader, who joined the switch-off ceremony.

A solidarity run was also held as lights were switched off at the Quezon Memorial Shrine.

Elsewhere in Metro Manila, the Quezon City Hall, Araneta City in Cubao, and SM Mall of Asia in Pasay City also turned off their lights in celebration of Earth Hour.

Malacañang also joined in the celebration by turning off its lights for 60 minutes.

In his YouTube page, President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. called on Filipinos to switch off and “give Mother Nature 60 minutes to breathe.”

“It only takes 60 minutes to do good for our future, 60 minutes to take notice and commit to saving the nature and to be united to take action because together nothing is impossible,” he said.

Outside Metro Manila, the city of San Fernando, Pampanga also joined in switching off its lights. About 50 percent of the lights in hallways and billboards in Clark, Pampanga were also turned off for an hour.

In Laoag City, Ilocos Norte, residents also turned off their lights following a resolution passed by its council urging them to switch-off their lights daily from 8:30 to 9:30 p.m.

Since 2007, the Earth Hour has been observed worldwide as a symbol of commitment to the planet.

It also aims to reduce the Earth's carbon emission and greenhouse gases, as well as to raise awareness on environmental issues.

AL JAZEERA

[It is time to phase out fossil fuels](#)

By: Saber Chowdhury and Ed Markey

On March 20, the United Nations' top experts on climate science released a synthesis report on climate change. In it, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the world's peak climate science body declares that we have fallen dangerously behind in trying to control climate change as our greenhouse gas emissions continue to grow instead of decline.

"The pace and scale of what has been done so far, and current plans are insufficient to tackle climate change," the authors of the report warn.

Despite these and previous warnings by scientists, the world is dragging its feet on taking the drastic climate action needed to keep the world from warming more than 1.5 degrees Celsius – the threshold beyond which climate change will have the most devastating consequences for humanity.

We are already witnessing what climate chaos can do to our civilisation. Our nations – the United States and Bangladesh – are already suffering. Millions of Americans and Bangladeshis have been hit by floods, droughts and other extreme weather made worse by climate change. We have lost countless lives and suffered enormous economic losses due to our inaction.

As elected representatives in the US and Bangladeshi legislatures who care for the fate of our communities, we call for immediate action on climate change. We know that we cannot limit global warming to 1.5C unless we cut significantly our carbon emissions. That is why, we need to agree to phase out fossil fuels starting right now.

The IPCC report is the latest and direst warning that we need to reduce drastically our reliance on fossil fuels.

Burning of coal, oil and gas has been the source of 64 percent of carbon dioxide emissions since the industrial revolution; over the past 10 years, this ratio has grown to 86 percent. Carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases drive up the Earth's temperature, which creates a spiralling crisis of extreme weather, rising sea levels, disease, biodiversity loss, water stress and poverty.

Despite being aware of this problem for decades, the fossil fuel industry continues to put profits first and ignore scientists' warnings. That is why, we need leaders who will put the people first.

We need leaders at international financial institutions like the World Bank to firmly commit to addressing climate change and better supporting vulnerable nations – not doubling down on fossil fuel investments.

Since the Paris Agreement was signed, the World Bank has continued to invest billions in fossil fuel projects. It has fallen behind on its already meagre climate commitments, which are less ambitious than the baseline targets set by other development banks. The World Bank and other international financial institutions need to take immediate action and commit to a fossil fuel phase-out that complies with the 1.5C target.

We also need elected officials in nations across the globe to work in concert to address this planetary crisis. We need heads of state to pick up the pace on talks to end fossil fuels and follow the example of those who are leading the way.

Tuvalu, Vanuatu and the European Parliament have endorsed the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty. Colombia says it will ban new oil and gas exploration. Costa Rica and Denmark created the Beyond Oil and Gas Alliance, a growing cluster of countries driving forward the managed phase-out of oil and gas production. That list needs to grow.

Developed nations like the United States hold a much greater responsibility for climate change than the nations most affected by it, like Bangladesh. Yet, the latter are forced to foot the bill for the devastation wrought on their shores. We cannot continue to allow wealthy countries to externalise the damage of their pollution spree.

That is why, we also need leaders to uphold the promise of support made at last year's COP27 to nations at the front line of climate change and contribute meaningfully to an international loss and damage fund.

International cooperation, commitments and treaties work because they provide accountability and set deadlines. As we work simultaneously on domestic efforts – from Bangladesh's visionary Mujib Climate Prosperity Plan to the United States' Inflation Reduction Act – we must commit as a global community to phase out fossil fuels.

A global commitment to phase out fossil fuels would inject urgency and decisiveness into a debate where we have no more time left to lose. That is why, we have joined hundreds of parliamentarians from across the world calling for stronger international collaboration to end fossil fuels.

This year, a political opportunity to make that possible is on the horizon. The first “global stocktake” – a convention held by the United Nations to measure the progress of countries and other shareholders in meeting the goals established in the Paris

Agreement – is our chance to get a reality check, hit the political reset button and start working hard to avert the most devastating consequences of climate change.

It is time to end the cause of this carnage and seize the moment to phase out fossil fuels for good.

BUSINESS WORLD

[PHL seeks \\$400-million digital transformation loan from WB](#)

By: Luisa Maria Jacinta C. Jocson

The Philippines is seeking a \$400-million loan from the World Bank (WB) to support digital transformation initiatives.

“The proposed operation in the amount of \$400 million is the first of a programmatic series of two development policy loans (DPLs) that aims to assist the government of the Philippines to foster an enabling environment for digital transformation, to boost inclusive and resilient economic growth,” according to a document uploaded on the World Bank website.

The World Bank is expected to approve the Philippines’ first digital transformation development policy financing on Dec. 8.

The project aims to improve digital government service delivery, and foster pro-competition infrastructure policies; expand financial inclusion for individuals and firms through digital finance; and boost business growth in digital services.

“Digitalization has a large potential to increase productivity by reducing firms’ operational costs and allowing them to reap economies of scale,” the World Bank said.

“Digital platforms and services offer great potential for helping build resilience and preparedness against future crises and for mitigating and adapting to climate change. Digital finance is (also) a key enabler of financial inclusion and women’s empowerment,” it added.

In January, the bank approved a \$600-million loan to strengthen the financial sector’s stability and resilience.

As of 2021, the World Bank’s loans and grants represented 24% of official development assistance (ODA), making it the Philippines’ third-largest source of ODA.

This year, the National Government expects to obtain around \$19.1 billion worth of ODA, with around \$9.2 billion worth of loans coming from multilateral development partners.

CNN PHILIPPINES

[As Antarctica's penguins struggle with record low sea ice, one species is adapting -- and it offers lessons to us all](#)

By: Bill Weir

One hundred years ago, colorful canaries warned humans of the hidden hazards of digging for coal by riding shotgun down the mine and dropping dead.

Now, penguin experts say these birds that move like tuxedoed toddlers are showing us the hidden hazards of burning coal and other fossil fuels by the way they march. And as global warming changes the survival-of-the-fittest game at the bottom of the world, one particular species of Antarctic penguin is modeling a poignant lesson for humanity:

Adapt or die...and make it quick.

With numbers in the millions, Antarctica's six species of waddling aquabats are far from extinction and as I stepped foot on the Antarctic peninsula in early March, and drank in the wildest place I've ever seen, there were hundreds there to make an adorable first impression. Colonies were brimming with life.

But then I learned how the Southern Ocean warmed by the climate crisis is turning my little boy's favorite bird into a sentinel species of the Anthropocene. While some are abandoning nesting sites where chicks have been hatching for thousands of years to find better ground, colonies of those that refuse to move have collapsed.

"It is incredible," Heather Lynch, the Endowed Chair for Ecology and Evolution at Stony Brook University told CNN. "As ecologists, we know that animals shift their range over geologic times, they disappear in one area and colonize new areas. But it's rare to see those dynamics happening over the course of one's career."

Along with seals, seabirds and baleen whales, penguins gorge mainly on Antarctic krill, a shrimp-like crustacean that thrives on the kind of phytoplankton found under sea ice.

Unlike the Arctic, where sea ice has declined consistently, Antarctic sea ice has swung up and down -- although recently scientists have seen a steep downwards trend.

At the end of the Southern Hemisphere winter in September 2014, there were more than 7.7 million square miles of frozen saltwater floating around Antarctica -- a record high -- and many species like humpback whales were feasting on krill and thriving.

But early this year, sea ice reached a record-shattering low of less than 700,000 square miles, breaking the previous record set just last year.

"If we have a 1 degree [Celsius] temperature change in a temperate environment such as the UK or the US, who cares?" Tom Hart, biology lecturer at Oxford Brookes University explained. "Doesn't ruin your day. But down there, 1 degree makes a huge difference -- whether you can stand on water or sink into it. Or whether there's snow cover on a breeding site or not. It's a completely different habitat."

Using satellites, camera traps, citizen science and AI computing to keep tabs on millions of penguins around Antarctica, Hart and Lynch say they are watching a real-time lesson in evolution and adaptation.

While Adélie and chinstrap penguins remain stuck in their ancient ways come hell or warm water, the much more flexible gentoo penguins are ranging further and further south. And as they show willingness to chase new prey or abandon a nest to increase the odds of long-term survival, their numbers are exploding.

"Gentoo penguins are big climate change winners in the Antarctic," Lynch said, confirming reports that some colonies in some parts have grown by 30,000%. "They are perfectly happy to take advantage of a warming Antarctic. They don't mind that it's getting wetter. The flip side of that is that the Adélie and chinstrap populations have cratered in many areas and particularly chinstrap penguins. Their populations have declined in some areas by as much as 80%."

"Adaptation means several things," Hart said. "It means being really tough in a hard environment but it also means reading the room on seasonality. It means averaging, so if you don't do well one year, you've got to do better. And then you really only have to do well one year in three."

"I think there's a lesson in here for us as well," Lynch said. "If we just stick to what we've always done, it's not going to turn out well for us. Just because Manhattan has always been where it is, does it make sense that it will be there in 200 or 300 years? I don't know. But I think we would benefit from being plastic and flexible and adaptive. And I think that's kind of what the gentoos are telling us."

Along with the worry that a crash in krill could follow the crash in ice, avian flu is now present in Chile and Argentina and Hart predicts it could migrate with seabirds to the Antarctic Peninsula next spring and devastate penguin colonies. "I think we're in for a horrible year next year," he told me. "But we won't know until it happens."

These cascading threats also make gentoos an example of what humans in the world of terrifying UN climate reports call the "hard" and "soft" limits of adaptation. If political or financial hurdles block an available strategy, it's considered a soft limit. But if the physical changes are too sudden and severe, there is a hard limit to finding any fix at all.

As I saw during the expedition in early March, even the roll-with-the-punches gentoos are struggling after a warmer, wetter Antarctic created snow and rain events freakish enough to delay this year's penguin nesting season by a month.

We watched with grim resignation as gentoo couples gathered rocks for worthless nests and mothers hatched chicks that simply won't have enough time to grow the feathers and fat needed to survive winter. But Lynch reminded me that was one colony on one island, and so far, what doesn't kill a gentoo only makes it tougher. If they changed neighborhoods so easily, she believes, they'll just shift the timing of their baby-making season.

"I think that if there was a permanent shift towards a snowy year climate, gentoo penguins would probably start breeding earlier," she said. "I think the gentoos are going to be just fine."

[Earth Hour: Why people across the world are turning their lights off](#)

Each year, millions of people from over 190 countries and territories coordinate to turn off their lights for just one hour. The event is part of an annual tradition to raise awareness about climate change.

Here's what you need to know ahead of the 16th annual Earth Hour celebration.

What is Earth Hour?

Earth Hour was launched in 2007 by the World Wildlife Fund and its partners in Sydney, Australia, according to a news release from the organization. The nonprofit describes Earth Hour as the "largest global grassroots movement for the environment."

"Earth Hour aims to increase awareness and spark global conversations on protecting nature, tackling the climate crisis, and working together to shape a brighter future for us all," the WWF says on the Earth Hour website.

The Earth Hour campaign has led to other actions related to curbing climate change. The WWF's chapter in Uganda, for instance, created the first "Earth Hour Forest" in 2013. Additionally, Argentina used its 2013 Earth Hour campaign to help pass a Senate bill for 8.4 million acres of marine protected area in the country, according to the WWF.

What time is Earth Hour?

To participate, all you'll need to do is turn off the lights in your home from 8:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. in your local time zone on Saturday.

Iconic landmarks like the Empire State Building in New York, the Space Needle in Seattle and the Willis Tower in Chicago will recognize Earth Hour by going dark.

How turning off the lights helps the environment

According to the WWF, turning off the lights is a "symbolic" way to raise awareness about climate change.

"The hour of darkness pulls us out of the busyness of our daily routines and allows us to reflect on the one home we all share," said the organization in its news release. "In the face of accelerating biodiversity loss and climate change, there has never been a more crucial time to come together and take action for our collective future."

The Earth Hour website points out that the planet is on track to reach over 1.5 degrees Celsius of warming, "in doing so risking irreversible environmental degradation and runaway climate change that will affect all our societies and economies."

The organization encourages participants to use their lights-off hour "doing something positive for our planet."

This might mean reading an article or listening to a podcast about biodiversity or climate change, spending time outdoors to reconnect with nature, picking up trash in your neighborhood, or sharing information about climate change with friends, family, or local politicians.

EURO NEWS

[Fossil fuel firms should be charged with homicide for climate change deaths, legal experts argue](#)

By: Angela Symons

Should fossil fuel companies face homicide charges for their contributions to climate change? That's the question explored in a paper set to be published in the Harvard Environmental Law Review next year.

Oil and gas companies have faced a wave of litigation in recent years, typically over greenwashing and fraud.

In February, environmental law charity ClientEarth even personally sued Shell's board of directors over their alleged failure to properly manage risks associated with the climate crisis.

But does this go far enough?

The paper's authors - Donald Braman, a law professor at George Washington University, USA, and David Arkush, a director at consumer advocacy group Public Citizen - argue that it doesn't.

Individuals and corporations regularly face homicide charges for unintentional deaths caused by recklessness or negligence.

Oil and gas majors like Shell and ExxonMobil have known about, and covered up, the devastating impact of their industry for decades.

Rather than scaling back their operations and warning the public, they chose to cast doubt on climate science and lobby against action on global warming in the pursuit of profit.

Oil and gas companies have known about the harm they cause for decades. Research released earlier this year showed that scientists for ExxonMobil predicted climate change with "shocking skill and accuracy" as far back as the 1970s.

The authors of 'Climate Homicide: Prosecuting Big Oil for Climate Deaths', currently published in the journal SSRN (Social Science Research Network), paint this as damning.

“FFCs [fossil fuel companies] were technically sophisticated enough to know that they could hide the harms they were generating from lay observers for decades,” the paper reads.

This allowed them to “earn trillions of dollars while researchers, activists, and regulators struggled to overcome the sophisticated disinformation and political-influence campaigns these profits supported,” it continues.

The catastrophic impact of global warming is already being felt around the world and it is only set to get worse.

Extreme weather events have caused countless deaths and forced migration. Pollution from petrol engine vehicles contributes to millions of deaths and millions more health complications every year.

Given fossil fuel companies’ significant contribution to and awareness of this disaster, civil and regulatory rulings are not adequate at holding them to account, the paper argues.

It then delves into US criminal law to see if homicide prosecutions could be applied to corporate conduct with such far-reaching implications.

Could fossil fuel companies be charged with homicide?

The paper lays out the case for charging fossil fuel companies with homicide.

It posits that their culpability far exceeds that in ordinary homicide cases, particularly in light of recent revelations on their long-standing awareness of the damage they are causing - and their efforts to cover it up.

US homicide law dictates that if a person or corporation contributes to or accelerates any number of deaths, they may be held liable for anything from manslaughter to murder.

Even negligence leading to lethal risks can be punished - and, the paper argues, fossil fuel companies are at the very least culpable of this.

While it acknowledges that carbon emissions from fossil fuels are not solely responsible for extreme weather events, it argues that they make these events “more frequent, more damaging and more deadly”.

Air pollution, ocean level rise, and water and food insecurity are also all set to reach catastrophic levels under current fossil fuel consumption.

Studies attributing a specific number of deaths to extreme weather events could potentially be used to litigate against oil and gas companies.

If charged, companies could be forced to restructure their operations or phase out fossil fuel production, rather than simply paying fines.

“FFCs could be restructured... reducing the production and distribution of fossil fuels at the fastest pace feasible, but not so fast as to cause harm, while protecting displaced workers and local economies and investing in the development and deployment of clean energy,” the paper reads.

How might fossil fuel companies defend themselves?

It could be argued that the actual emitters of fossil fuels - those driving cars, heating homes and flying - are more directly responsible for climate change.

But the paper’s authors say this doesn’t stand up, as it would require these uses and their outcomes to be “unforeseeable” by fossil fuel companies. The end users have also been deceived into taking harmful actions by these companies.

However, determining who’s complicit would bring complications in a court of law.

Some companies claim that curbing fossil fuel production would have led to greater harms associated with poverty. But for a ‘greater of two evils’ argument like this to stand up in court, the choice faced must have been “clear” and “imminent” the paper explains.

The paper also talks down various other defences, including arguments that governments should be the ones held responsible for regulating fossil fuels.

In reality, finding a court willing and able to charge fossil fuel companies with homicide would be extremely challenging - but, the paper argues, not impossible.

GMA NEWS

[DBM backs Earth Hour, says Marcos admin allotted P464.5-B budget for climate change projects](#)

The Department of Budget and Management (DBM) on Saturday expressed support for Earth Hour, adding that the Marcos administration has allotted P464.5 billion in the 2023 budget to address climate change.

"Earth Hour is one of the simple ways we can help save the environment for future generations. This act of solidarity sparks a huge change for our planet," the DBM said in a press release.

The P464.5 billion budget for climate change projects represents 8.8% of the national budget, the DBM added. The national budget for 2023 is P5.268 trillion.

"This is significantly higher by 60.1 percent compared to the 2022 allocation of P289.7 billion," it said.

The DBM said it "strives to implement programs and initiatives that infuse environmental friendly parameters, such as the institutionalization of the Sustainable/Green Public Procurement, which enables the procurement of goods and services that have reduced environmental impact."

Earth Hour aims to generate awareness to help address the climate crisis and promote measures that help reduce energy consumption through the one-hour switch off, the Department of Health (DOH) together with the World Wide Fund for Nature-Philippines (WWF-Philippines) said Friday.

The DOH and DBM encouraged Filipinos to join the rest of the world in observing Earth Hour on Saturday from 8:30 to 9:30 p.m.

The DBM also urged the public to do what they can "to help prevent ecological degradation and disasters by adopting climate change mitigation and resilience programs, switching to renewable energy, maintaining low greenhouse emissions, and many more."

MANILA STANDARD

[More smart cities emerging to protect natural resources](#)

By: Patricia Bianca S. Taculao

Throughout the globe, countries and societies prioritize environmental sustainability by following sustainable development pathways, including social and economic improvements. Even in the Philippines, people can see sustainable cities here and there as they aim to meet the worldwide cooperative social development goals.

Sustainable cities are urban centers that minimize their environmental impact through urban planning and management. Also known as smart cities, these areas often feature sprawling parks and green spaces, pedestrian or bicycle-friendly routes to lessen cars, rooftop gardens, and buildings that rely on alternative energy like solar power.

As many people know, environmental sustainability mandates society to shift their lifestyle and activities that continue to meet their daily needs while preserving the planet. Some trends people adopted in recent years include minimizing their plastic consumption, applying zero-waste practices, and replenishing natural resources through clean-ups or urban gardening.

Cities or societies that consume natural resources equal to nature's ability to replenish reach an environmental equilibrium, resulting in a steady economic and natural state. However, the goal is to consume resources less than nature's ability to renew to allow continuous environmental renewal.

Yet, besides environmental neglect, experts suggest that rural poverty and overexploitation cause unnecessary damage to the surroundings and local resources. As such, they urge cities to treat these natural reserves as significant economic assets or natural capital. Here's where the other two pillars of sustainable development, social and economic, come into play.

Economic development has required growth in an area's gross domestic product for years. However, the concept of sustainable development may yet change this perspective. Unlike traditional growth, sustainable development can improve the quality of life and takes into account how the environment affects social welfare.

As early as the 1970s, scientists have used sustainability to describe an economy balanced with ecological systems. Scientists and economists have been going back and forth to address the impacts of expanding human development on the planet. It was not until 1987 when economist Edward Barbier published the study *The Concept of Sustainable Economic Development*. Through the paper, he recognized that

environmental conservation and economic development goals are not conflicting. He these two goals could reinforce each other if people found a foundation between the two.

The 2022 IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) Sixth Assessment Report tackled how ambitious climate change mitigation policies have created negative social and economic impacts when not aligned with sustainable development goals.

It resulted in a slower transition towards sustainable development mitigation policies. It caused these policies' inclusivity and considerations of justice to weaken or support improvements in particular regions as other limiting factors, such as poverty, food insecurity and water scarcity, and hinder governments' implementation of procedures to build a low-carbon future.

Other than relying on everyday citizens to meet the requirements of SDGs, the concept encourages everyone, from private individuals to small businesses to corporations to governments across the globe, to share in the responsibility of creating a better world where no one is left behind or abusing the Earth's natural resources.

Sustainable development is a goal that everyone hopes to achieve in the following years. The UN's SDGs serve as a framework for how people can work together to achieve a sustainable society that promotes the safety and security of present and future generations and planetary resources.

Nowadays, technology provides access to studies and seminars that help people better understand sustainability, sustainable development, and their roles for all. Before taking the much-needed first step towards sustainable development, people must also reflect on whether or not their actions coincide with the plan that aims to safeguard the welfare of all for years to come.

Renewable energy obtains top priority to offset climate change

By: Alena Mae S. Flores

The drive to reduce global carbon emissions and air pollution is getting the full backing of the Marcos administration.

Aware of the negative impact of fossil-based fuel on the environment, the Department of Energy has prioritized accelerating renewable energy development toward a sustainable and low-carbon energy future.

The DOE, through its National Renewable Energy Program and Philippine Energy Plan 2020-2040, set a target of 35 percent RE share in the power generation mix by 2030 and 50 percent by 2040.

“As the global population continues to grow with climate change upon us, the world rushes towards finding cleaner and more efficient alternative sources of energy. Global trends project an aggressive demand and accessibility for renewable energies in the next decade. Ostensibly, harnessing renewable energy sources is critical to our future,” said Energy Undersecretary Rowena Cristina Guevara.

Guevara said the transformation from traditional to RE sources will require huge investments.

She said DOE was setting the RE targets but it was up to the private sector to make it happen with government support, such as incentives, programs and policies to accelerate the process.

Guevara said several RE policy mechanisms were being developed for implementation in the coming years to achieve the RE goal.

She said DOE would auction the generation of 11,610 megawatts of electricity under the Green Energy Auction Program 2 for the 2024 to 2026 supply period by June.

The GEAP aims to provide an additional market for renewable energy through competitive electronic bidding of RE capacities.

“Compared to the first auction of GEAP-1 last year, we are more aggressive this year and we are looking for RE developers who have ready capacity by next year, to the tune of 3,590 MW and for 2025 and 2026, we need capacity commitments of 3,630 MW and 4,390 MW, respectively or a total of 11,610 MW,” Guevara said.

DOE conducted the GEAP-1 in June last year for a capacity requirement of 2,000 MW.

“The proposed installation targets under the GEA-2 were determined based on the capacity needed by the three grids to ensure sufficient supply, the RE capacity levels to meet the target of 35 percent RE share in the power generation mix by 2030 and 50 percent by 2040, and the volume of RE certificates necessary comply with the mandates under the Renewable Portfolio Standards,” Guevara said.

She said DOE would include in the terms of reference the list of areas and corresponding capacity of transmission that is already available.

National Grid Corp. of the Philippines has committed to accelerate transmission development to match the pace of generation works, she said.

The energy official said GEAP-3 would be held in the fourth quarter for geothermal and impounding hydro.

Meanwhile, Guevara said DOE would issue a circular defining the procedures and requirements for awarding offshore wind service contracts following the publication of the “Philippine Offshore Wind Roadmap.”

She said an executive order that seeks to strengthen and rationalize the regulatory framework for the immediate development of OSW is being reviewed for finalization by the Office of the President.

The DOE has awarded 57 OSW energy service contracts with a potential capacity of 42.22 GW.

“This is 160 percent of our current generation capacity. While the numbers look good, the process of bringing wind developers from service contract award to generating the first kilowatt-hour is a long one. We still have to work out possessory rights, environmental compliance, avoiding marine protected bias, sea lanes, etc.,” Guevara said.

She said DOE started engaging concerned agencies to help speed up the rollout of OSW projects.

The DOE is also moving ahead with the the Open and Competitive Selection Process 4 or OCSP4, an investment promotion mechanism where potential areas for RE development or pre-determined areas will be offered to private investors.

Guevara said these PDAs have sufficient technical data on geothermal, hydropower and wind energy.

The DOE to date has approved 19 PDAs for offering under the OCSP4.

Guevara said the government plans to come out with the circular for OCSP4 in May, conduct the bidding process from June to August and have the contracts awarded in September.

“Amid these all, we remain steadfast in our goal of making electricity accessible to all. And we can do this by first, diversifying our energy mix while ensuring a path towards a sustainable, carbon-neutral, and clean energy future,” Guevara said.

“And second, by requiring more energy sources to support the country’s increasing power demand for economic recovery and development, along with firm and effective policy and regulatory support,” she said.

PHILIPPINE INFORMATION AGENCY

[Pres Marcos calls on nation to join 2023 Earth Hour](#)

President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. on Saturday called on the entire Filipino nation to join the observance of Earth Hour to mitigate the devastating effects of climate change.

The President said Malacañang will observe Earth Hour by switching off non-essential lights during Earth Hour today.

In a video message, the President noted that the Philippines is battered with an average of 20 typhoons yearly, “making it one of the most vulnerable countries to climate change.”

“As the earth’s temperature gets warmer, with the world’s carbon footprint reaching a new all-time high of 36.8 gigaton in 2022, the world braces for the irreversible impact of climate change,” President Marcos pointed out.

“It only takes 60 minutes to do good for our future, 60 minutes to take notice and commit to saving Mother Nature to be united and take action because together nothing is impossible,” the chief executive said as he noted that in doing so people are giving “Mother Nature 60 minutes to breathe.”

Earth Hour is a worldwide movement organized by the World Wildlife Fund.

The event is held annually, encouraging individuals, communities, and businesses to turn off non-essential electric lights, for one hour, from 8:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. on the Saturday of March, as a symbol of commitment to the planet.

President Marcos said the observance of Earth Hour will also help the government enforce its action plans that will benefit the planet.

“So at this hour, let us stop, slow down and dedicate a moment to help the Earth breathe and heal anew. May this shared activity remind everyone that environmental preservation is an inter-generational responsibility and that it should become our individual and collective priority in the pursuit of progress and prosperity,” the President said.

“Let us become part of the solution and embark on advocacies, programs and initiatives that will help us protect and preserve the Earth, our only home,” President Marcos said.

RAPPLER

[93% of Filipino adults experienced climate change impacts in past 3 years, SWS survey says](#)

By: Laurice Angeles

Ninety-three percent of Filipino adults personally experienced the impacts of climate change in the past three years, according to a survey by pollster Social Weather Stations (SWS).

The SWS survey found that 17% of Filipino adults experienced the severe impact of climate change in the past three years, 52% said moderate impact, 24% said little impact, while 6% did not experience climate change impacts.

The percentage of Filipino adults personally experiencing the impacts increased by 6 percentage points from March 2017 and 8 points from March 2013. Those who experienced severe impacts decreased by 3 points, while those who experienced moderate impact increased by 10 points from March 2017.

Meanwhile, 88% agreed that they can do something to reduce climate risks resulting from climate change, 3% disagreed, and 10% were undecided.

The majority of Filipino adults or 76% said that “humanity could do something to stop or slow down climate change if everyone really tried,” while 23% said “climate change is beyond humanity’s control.” A small percentage or 1% were unsure.

A big majority or 81% were aware of climate change before the interview, while 19% were not.

The survey results also showed that almost all Filipinos were aware of solutions to reduce the negative effects of climate change. Here are the following percentages:

- 95% were aware of “planting trees in the right places and protecting forests”
- 95% for “saving energy or electricity at home”
- 93% for “walking, cycling, or taking public transportation”
- 91% for “reducing, reusing, repairing, and recycling”
- 86% for “throwing away less food”.

The Fourth Quarter 2022 SWS survey used face-to-face interviews nationwide: 300 each in Metro Manila, Balance Luzon, the Visayas, and Mindanao. The sampling error margins are $\pm 2.8\%$ for national percentages, $\pm 5.7\%$ each for Metro Manila, Balance Luzon, the Visayas, and Mindanao.

The main question asked was: “In the past three years, have you, your family, or your community personally experienced the effects of climate change?” The question was stated in Filipino.

SKY NEWS

Climate change: Why we struggle to process the doom

By: Tom Heap

How do we react to these kinds of statements? "Humanity is on thin ice and that ice is melting fast." "The world has suffered greatly from ongoing climate change." "More poor people die. In every heatwave that we have, thousands of people die."

All said about climate change by people who really know their stuff in response to this week's report from the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

It is a summary of all the findings on the causes, solutions and effects of climate change revealed by them in the last five years.

Does it make you cut your carbon, scroll on to the next story or hide under the duvet? Let's see what happens when our brains meet climate change.

Sander van der Linden is a professor of Social Psychology at Cambridge University who specialises in our response to news. He believes there is a risk of people being paralysed by fear.

"If you frame things in a way that scares people, it might lead to disengagement and people might tune out because they feel too overwhelmed to want to take action."

But he thinks some concern is useful.

"Worry can be a motivator. If you're sufficiently worried, you'll do your homework and then you try to take corrective action. And I think we want the same thing on climate change," he says.

"We want people to be appropriately worried and motivated to take corrective action, not scared to the point where they're just going to run away and hide."

In that vein, he says effective phrases could be 'experts agree climate change is real, it's us, it's bad, but there's hope' or 'more and more people are changing their behaviour to address climate change'. This signals change within a social group which many of us respond to.

Social signals certainly worked for digital content creator Venetia La Manna. She was already promoting plant-based diets when she was 'called out' and now she champions environmentally friendly clothing.

"Someone said, 'great, that you're eating vegetables, but you're wearing fast fashion and that doesn't really align'. And then I went away, watched documentaries, read some books, and here we go," she says.

"So it was, I guess, being held to account online. So that fact that others were sort of scrutinising and saying, 'maybe you should make a change'.

"Often we say, 'oh, you can't shame someone into changing', but I was kind of publicly shamed."

Although reports like the IPCC's are often reported as all doom and gloom, that is not entirely fair. They do stress that, despite being on 'thin ice', we do have a chance.

The document itself includes a graph called 'multiple opportunities for scaling up climate action' showing massive carbon-cutting solutions. Many are cheap, cost-neutral or actually save us money. Unsurprisingly, the media often prefers to simply sound the alarm.

Friederike Otto is one of the report's authors based at the Grantham Institute for Climate Change and the Environment.

"I think partly it sells better if you have a dramatic story with fear or hysterics. That's a more sexy headline. I think it's really important to highlight that there is a big threat and it's already here. It's not something in the future," she says.

"But we do have the agency to change it and we need to use that agency. I think the headline that is most important would be: 'We have an important job to do to make life better for everyone. But we can do it'."

Getting the psychology of climate change messaging right is not the whole answer: political, economic and whole system changes will be required to meet net zero. But having us engaged, not simply afraid, would help.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

[Huge river restoration effort launched at UN water summit](#)

By: Agence France-Presse

Several African and Latin American countries on Thursday launched a major initiative to restore 300,000 kilometers (186,000 miles) of rivers by 2030, as well as lakes and wetlands degraded by human activity.

The "Freshwater Challenge," led by a coalition of governments that includes Colombia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Mexico and Gabon, is the largest river and wetland restoration project in history.

It aims to restore degraded rivers as long as seven times the Earth's circumference and an area of wetlands larger than India by 2030, according to a statement from the UN Water Conference that ends Friday in New York City.

The initiative calls on all governments to set national river restoration targets to restore healthy freshwater ecosystems critical to humanity's water needs and biodiversity.

No details were given on how the effort will be funded.

As water shortages become more widespread globally—driven by overconsumption, pollution and climate change—freshwater ecosystems are among the most threatened on the planet.

"The clearest sign of the damage we have done—and are still doing—to our rivers, lakes and wetlands is the staggering 83 percent collapse in freshwater species populations since 1970," Stuart Orr of the World Wildlife Fund said in a statement, adding that the initiative may "turn this around."

Inger Andersen, executive director of the UN Environment Program, said: "Healthy rivers, lakes and wetlands underpin our societies and economies, yet they are routinely undervalued and overlooked."

"While countries have pledged to restore one billion hectares of land, the Freshwater Challenge is a critical first step in bringing a much-needed focus on freshwater ecosystems," Anderson added.

Martha Delgado Peralta, Mexico's undersecretary for multilateral affairs, voiced a similar view.

"Healthy freshwater ecosystems are central to water and food security, while tackling the climate and nature crises, and driving sustainable development," she said.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

GMA NEWS

[WWF-Philippines calls on Filipinos to help combat climate change and nature loss by joining the biggest hour for Earth](#)

Filipinos from all walks of life are encouraged to participate in the coming Earth Hour 2023 celebration on March 25 and contribute to the fight against climate change and biodiversity loss.

The yearly global switching off of lights will be observed from 8:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m., local time. Over 150 countries around the world will also follow suit as part of this one-of-a-kind global grassroots movement for nature.

Since the first Earth Hour in 2007, millions of people participate every year in Earth Hour from various sectors, groups, and parts of the world, making it an authentic movement of humanity for the environment. The Philippines joined the global movement in 2008.

Organized by The World Wide Fund for Nature-Philippines (WWF-Philippines), Earth Hour 2023 will be the first time in two years to be celebrated face-to-face since the pandemic.

“We are happy to be making a comeback with in-person celebrations for Earth Hour this year. The best way to really send the message of protecting the environment and the planet is to be with people, talking to them face to face,” Earth Hour Philippines National Director Atty. Angela Consuelo Ibay said.

“We need more people to be part of this movement now more than ever as we continue to see the extreme weather effects brought about by climate change as well as the increased loss of biodiversity. The Philippines is among the countries most vulnerable to climate change, and we have already seen the stronger storms, intensified droughts, and extreme rainfall causing flooding. Further, we are a mega-biodiverse country but also a biodiversity hotspot with at least 700 threatened species. So conservation and preservation, including climate adaptation and mitigation, are key measures,” Ibay said.

The latest Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Sixth Assessment Report already states that our climate system is in crisis, and it is all because of our actions.

Ibay explained that switching off the lights for one hour is just a small act for one person, but when millions of people do it, it adds up to significant savings in terms of energy usage. She said that the switch-off is simply the first step to becoming more aware of our individual roles in protecting the environment.

The Switch Off event will be hosted by WWF-Philippines ambassadors Mikee Cojuangco-Jaworski, Karen Ibasco, and Janine Gutierrez, who are all active advocates of nature and the environment, and will feature performances from Oxfam ambassador Antoinette Taus, GMA crooner Jeremy Tiangco, Kai Honasan and indie musicians Daniel Casurao, Akinse, and Lirio & Riri.

Prior to the ceremonial switch-off at 8:30 p.m., there will be a sustainability fair for partner non-government organizations and social enterprises. The event will also mark the official start of the Earth Hour virtual run organized by Pinoy Fitness.

“I have been a supporter of WWF-Philippines for many years, and I am very aware of the environmental issues we are facing. I want more Filipinos to learn and understand what is happening because knowledge is the first step to taking action,” Cojuangco-Jaworski said.

Earth Hour 2023 is co-presented by Quezon City Government, together with our Official Communications and PR Partner, ComCo Mundo League of Enterprises; media partners GMA, Radyo Veritas, and Globaltronics; promotional partners CICP, Leo Burnett, and GCash; marketing partners Salad Stop, Coca-Cola, SSI Group, Inc., Epson Philippines, Sun Life Foundation, Booths & Partners, Ayala Malls, and Megaworld Lifestyle Malls; and community partners Save the Children, Oxfam Pilipinas, World Vision, United Nations Development Programme, International Organization for Migration, Association of Young Environmental Journalists, The Asia Foundation, De La Salle University, and Philippine Scouts.

The following government offices support this event: the Department of Energy, Climate Change Commission, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, League of Cities of the Philippines, League of Provinces of the Philippines, Department of Agriculture, Court of Appeals, Department of Health, Armed Forces of the Philippines, Department of Information and Communications Technology, National Historical Commission of the Philippines, National Parks Development Committee, National Economic Development Authority, Department of Education, Department of Interior and Local Governance, Laguna Lake Development Authority.

Visit www.earthhour.org to learn more about events happening this Earth Hour around the world. Follow WWF-Philippines on social media for updates and events related to Earth Hour Philippines 2023. Lend your support to the environment with the official Earth Hour hashtags #EarthHour2023, #EarthHourPhilippines2023 and #BiggestHourForEarth.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

[Filipinos urged to join in Earth Hour 2023](#)

By: Antonio Iñares

As the world continues to battle climate change and biodiversity loss, Filipinos from all walks of life are being urged to join the global Earth Hour 2023 celebration, which will mark the first in-person celebration in two years due to the pandemic.

The annual event, organized by World Wide Fund for Nature-Philippines (WWF-Philippines), will take place on March 25, from 8:30 pm to 9:30 pm, local time, and more than 150 countries worldwide will participate in this unique global grassroots movement for nature.

“We are happy to be making a comeback with in-person celebrations for Earth Hour this year. The best way to really send the message of protecting the environment and the planet is to be with people, talking to them face to face,” said Earth Hour Philippines national director Atty. Angela Consuelo Ibay.

The Philippines is among the countries most vulnerable to climate change, and extreme weather effects, such as stronger storms, intensified droughts, and extreme rainfall causing flooding, are already being felt, Ibay said.

“Further, we are a mega-biodiverse country but also a biodiversity hotspot with at least 700 threatened species. So conservation and preservation, including climate adaptation and mitigation, are key measures,” she said.

Switching off lights for one hour during Earth Hour may seem like a small act, but when millions of people do it, it adds up to significant energy savings. Ibay explained that the switch-off is just the first step in raising awareness of our individual roles in protecting the environment.

Earth Hour 2023 will feature performances from various artists and will be hosted by WWF-Philippines ambassadors Mikee Cojuangco-Jaworski, Karen Ibasco, and Janine Gutierrez. Prior to the ceremonial switch-off, there will be a sustainability fair for partner non-government organizations and social enterprises.

Various government offices, such as the Department of Energy, Climate Change Commission, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, and the Department of Agriculture, are supporting the event, as are many private organizations.

Visit www.earthhour.org to learn more about events happening this Earth Hour around the world, and follow WWF-Philippines on social media for updates and events related to Earth Hour Philippines 2023.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

Climate Change Commission bats for Bicycle Act revival

The Climate Change Commission on Saturday sought the revival of the Bicycle Act, citing the harmful impact of mechanized modes of travel on both the environment and public health.

Climate Change Commissioner Albert Dela Cruz Sr. pointed out that motorized or mechanized vehicles emit carbon dioxide -- the most common human-caused greenhouse gas -- and that even the process of burning gasoline and diesel fuel creates harmful byproducts like nitrogen dioxide, carbon monoxide, hydrocarbons, benzene and formaldehyde.

In a bid to solve various related issues and problems faced by the country, including the growing concern over the threats of climate change and global warming, Dela Cruz suggested to revive the measure pushed by President Ferdinand R. Marcos when he was still a senator, according to a news release over the weekend.

In 2011, Marcos filed Senate Bill 2924 or the proposed Bicycle Commuters Incentives Act, which seeks to grant incentives to promote the use of bicycles and other safe and viable non-motorized transport vehicles as a mode of daily commuting and travel to and from workplaces, school, church, malls and other places.

Dela Cruz said reviving the proposed measure would address the problem of pollution and greenhouse gas emissions.

Under the proposal, riders and direct users would benefit from bicycle-related facilities and tax deduction incentives while indirect participants could be afforded tax deductions for expenses and corporate social responsibility programs.

Creating a bike-commuting culture could simultaneously address the ever-worsening myriad of related social issues in the country, such as climate change, air pollution, traffic and road congestion, and rising costs of gasoline and other commodities.

Dela Cruz said the regular bicycle use by the public would lessen the use of motorized transport which will soon translate to the decongestion of roads and lesser demand for parking facilities.

It would also significantly reduce carbon emissions and more people would no longer have to worry about cardiovascular health risks from transportation-related pollution.

“Bicycle users would also enjoy savings on transportation cost, in view of the lessened dependence on motorized transport system, which is admittedly more expensive due to the current fluctuations in the prices of gasoline and diesel fuel,” he said.

“We also realize the fact that we should harness and take advantage of bicycle use in the Philippines because it remains to be popular these days, whether as a mode of exercise and recreation, or a mode of regular means of transportation, as evidenced by the thousands of recreational riders and group of bicycle-riding Filipino workers and laborers who can be seen sharing the road with motorized transport users,” he added.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

'Be part of solution to climate change'

By: Alexis Romero

President Marcos urged Filipinos yesterday to be part of the solution to climate change and to join efforts to protect the environment as the world observed Earth Hour.

In a video message, Marcos said the annual Earth Hour invites everyone to learn more about climate change, which he described as the world's biggest environmental challenge.

The activity, which encourages individuals, communities and businesses to turn off non-essential electric lights for one hour, would benefit the planet and would help the government enforce action plans, he added.

"At this hour, let us stop, slow down and dedicate the moment to help the Earth breathe and heal anew. May this shared activity remind everyone that environmental preservation is an intergenerational responsibility and that it should become our individual and collective priority in the pursuit of progress and prosperity," the President said.

"Let us become part of the solution and embark on advocacies, programs and initiatives that will help us protect and preserve the earth – our only home," he added.

In a video posted on Instagram, Marcos noted that the Philippines is hit with an average of 20 typhoons annually, making it one of the most vulnerable countries to climate change. He said switching off lights would give Mother Nature "60 minutes to breathe."

"As the Earth's temperature gets warmer, with the world's carbon footprint reaching a new all-time high of 36.8 gigatons in 2022, the world braces for the irreversible impact of climate change," the Chief Executive said.

"It only takes 60 minutes to do good for our future, 60 minutes to take notice and commit to saving Mother Nature, to be united and take action. Because together, nothing is impossible," he added.

Marcos' Instagram video showed lights in Malacañang being switched off in support of Earth Hour. The event, which was held from 8:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. yesterday, was organized by the World Wildlife Fund.

Campaign

Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Maria Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga vowed that her department will continue leading the campaign to minimize the impact of climate change and fulfill the country's climate commitments.

"The DENR will continue to do our part in leading and accelerating climate action and in enhancing the integrity of ecosystems," Loyzaga said.

Marcos, who chairs the Climate Change Commission, had designated Loyzaga as his representative in the lead policy-making government body on climate change.

"As the designated representative of the President to the Commission, we will focus on accelerating and completing the work that has been long outstanding for us to deliver on our international commitments," Loyzaga said.

Among these commitments are the national greenhouse gas inventory; the national adaptation plan and its financial plan; the national determined contribution implementation plan and the local climate change action plans of local government units.

"The DENR is naturally at the forefront of climate action due to our mandate of conserving, protecting, managing, restoring and regenerating our country's environment and natural resources. The Philippines is also increasingly becoming a model in the region for our whole-of-society approach in disaster risk reduction and climate action," the DENR secretary said.

She added that the country needs to have ecosystems-based, ridge-to-reef approaches that can enhance ecosystems, prevent disasters and mitigate the impacts of hazards.

"We must explore how nature-based solutions can address the food-water-energy security outcomes we aim to achieve," Loyzaga said.

She said several climate plans are in place to accelerate and complete the work of delivering the country's international commitments.

The Philippines submitted its national determined contribution to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in April 2021, pledging a projected reduction and avoidance of greenhouse gas emissions of 75 percent for the period of 2020 to 2030, of which 2.71 percent is unconditional and 72.29 percent is conditional.

The Cabinet Cluster on Climate Change Adaptation, Mitigation and Disaster Risk Reduction, chaired by the DENR, also adopted a resolution in January 2021 on the phaseout of single-use plastics.

Loyzaga said the resolution further strengthens the Philippine Action Plan for Sustainable Consumption and Production, and supports the UN's Sustainable Development Goal No. 12 on Responsible Consumption and Production.

“Through the newly enacted Republic Act 11898 or the Extended Producer Responsibility Act of 2022 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations, the country is gradually transitioning to a circular economy where plastic waste reduction, recovery and recycling in the private sector will be scaled up,” she said.

The World Risk Index 2022, developed by the UN University Institute for Environment and Human Security, ranked the Philippines first among 193 countries in terms of exposure to natural hazards.

Oil spill: US Coast Guard arriving for cleanup

By: Helen Flores

A contingent of the United States Coast Guard (USCG), along with its air assets, will arrive in the Philippines today to help in the ongoing cleanup of the massive oil spill in Oriental Mindoro, Malacañang said yesterday.

The Presidential Communications Office (PCO) quoted Department of National Defense (DND) Senior Undersecretary Carlito Galvez Jr. in a statement released on the expected arrival of the USCG contingent.

“We are looking forward to the arrival of the entire US Coast Guard contingent for the additional technical support in our disaster response operations,” the DND officer-in-charge was quoted as saying.

Galvez said one US C-17 with equipment (60K loader) already arrived at Subic Air Base yesterday morning and that a C-5 cargo jet, the US Air Force’s largest strategic airlifter, is expected today.

“We will immediately employ these assets and integrate in our response operations. In addition, we continue to closely monitor the ROV’s (remotely operated vehicle) operations for significant updates and to further determine the extent of the oil spill,” said Galvez, who chairs the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council. 6:56:01 PMYesterday, an aerial inspection of the areas affected by the oil spill from the sunken MT Princess Empress was conducted by Galvez with DND Undersecretary Ariel Nepomuceno, administrator of the Office of Civil Defense; Admiral Artemio Abu, chief of the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG); and other officials of the Armed Forces of the Philippines and concerned local government units.

6:56:01 PMThe defense chief cited the significant contribution of the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) in the ongoing oil spill response operations.

6:56:01 PM“They (NOAA) provide support for scientific modeling to estimate the trajectory of the oil spill and satellite imagery to boost assessment efforts,” he said, noting the inclusion of identifying priority areas at risk of environmental damage and assessing needs for ecosystem restoration.

6:56:01 PMGalvez also reported that the Japanese ROV found out that the oil tanker “suffered extensive structural damage after sinking” in waters off Naujan, Oriental Mindoro last Feb. 28. 6:56:01 PM6:56:01 PM“At this point, no visible consumption fuel leak coming from the damaged vessel. Oil leaks had been observed from all eight compartments (tanks). Some through ballast tanks. Volume of remaining oil inside the

compartments cannot be estimated at this point. Oil spillage rate from the source is likewise yet to be determined,” he said. So far, a total of 10,206 liters of oil waste and oily water and 72,643 kilos of oil contaminated debris were collected in the shoreline cleanup operations, he said.

In a separate report, the PCG said a total of 3,377.5 sacks and 22 drums of waste along the shoreline of Oriental Mindoro have been collected from March 1 to 25. It has also gathered a total of 106 sacks of oil-contaminated materials and 8,563 liters of oily water mixture.

6:56:01 PM After the inspection, Galvez said the situation in the affected areas – Mimaropa (Mindoro island, Marinduque, Romblon, Palawan) and Western Visayas – “is a lot better and very encouraging than I imagined.” 6:56:01 PM 6:56:01 PM Meanwhile, the PCO reported that the government and non-government organizations have extended more than P95 million worth of assistance to the residents in areas affected by the oil spill.

Cleanup operations

Prior to the aerial inspection, personnel from the PCG and Malayan Towing and Salvage Corp. resumed cleanup operations in the waters off Naujan, Oriental Mindoro at 4 a.m., laying out the oil spill boom and skimmers and manually scooping up the oil. At the same time, tugboats MTug Lidagat and MTug Titan-1 sprayed oil dispersants on the surface of the oil slick.

During the Shoreline Cleanup and Assessment Technique conducted in Pola town last March 23, the PCG took part in the re-surveying which entailed the documentation and verification of shoreline oiling conditions, and the spill’s impact on miles of affected shoreline, cleanup effectiveness, among others.

Based on their observations during that time, there was no visible oil floating in the water; no oil rubbing off on people or boats; no visible oil on the surface substrate; no subsurface oil layers in pits dug into the shore; no mobile oil on the subsurface; no oiled debris; no pronounced smell/odor of oil; a negative result of the hydrogen sulfide test; no oiled dead animals present inshore; as well passed the water quality standards set forth by Department Administrative Order 2016-08 in compliance with Republic Act 9275, or the Philippine Clean Water Act of 2004. Aloysius Angelus John Bando of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Environmental Management Bureau, French expert Mikael Laurent of Cedré, and representatives from the local government of Pola participated in the operation. PCG Lieutenant Junior Grade Gerald Cordero also discussed the endpoints to measure the condition of environments to the representatives of each barangay in Pola.

In another development, the PCG said that the firm Eco Trends International pledged to donate absorbent pads that could help remove the oil from the water.

The donation of three 40-foot containers of microfiber absorbent pads would be received by Commodore Geronimo Tuvilla, who heads the PCG oil spill incident management team in Oriental Mindoro.

CCC backs USAID initiative

Meanwhile, an official of the Climate Change Commission (CCC) has supported an initiative of the US Agency for International Development (USAID) to train displaced fisherfolk in the oil spill area as citizen scientists.

Climate Change Commissioner Albert dela Cruz Sr. said the US project with the provincial government of Oriental Mindoro and ABS-CBN Foundation could support the displaced fishermen by allowing them to take part in coastal habitat assessments in the province. The USAID last week provided additional P10 million worth of assistance to Oriental Mindoro to support its oil spill management and environmental assessment efforts. Through its partnership with the ABS-CBN Foundation Inc., USAID will also assess and monitor the impact of the oil spill on coastal communities in the Verde Island Passage. Meanwhile, Dela Cruz reiterated his warning against the use of chemical-based dispersants in clearing the areas affected by the oil slick.

Instead of chemical dispersants that produce carbonized tar balls, he proposed the use of skimmers or filtration equipment to remove the oil from the water. "Tar balls are granulated dry oil and these will go to the sea bed and can pollute the marine environment and ecosystem in the areas affected by the oil spill," Dela Cruz, a biologist and pollution control expert, said.

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