



NEWS ROUNDUP

28 MARCH 2023 [08:00 am]

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- CCC, French embassy sanib-pwersa sa pagpapalakas ng climate action

BBC

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THE MANILA TIMES

[Support for incentivized use of electric vehicles grows](#)

By: Franco Jose C. Baroña

A university instructor has added her voice to the clamor of clean air advocates who are calling on the government to incentivize the use of electric vehicles (EVs) to promote their use.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

[Metro Cebu logs 0.573MW load drop on Earth Hour](#)

By: Michelle L. Palaubsanon

CEBU, Philippines — The Earth Hour 2023 has reduced power consumption by 0.573 megawatt within the franchise area of Visayan Electric.

THE WASHINGTON POST

[How Cleaning Up Pollution May Be Heating the Planet](#)

By: David Fickling

One of the rare bits of good news in the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's latest report last week carries a sting in its tail. Thanks to human activity, we've actually managed to slow the progress of global warming over the past two centuries by as much as 0.8 degrees Celsius.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

[CCC joins Earth Hour in nod to address climate change](#)

By: Genesis Medina

The Climate Change Commission PH (CCC) joined this year's #BiggestHourForEarth campaign to further raise awareness on the urgent and collective global climate action.

REMATE

[CCC, French embassy sanib-pwersa sa pagpapalakas ng climate action](#)

Nangako ang Climate Change Commission (CCC) at Embassy of France to the Philippines and Micronesia, na palalakasin pa ng mga ito ang ugnayan at development cooperation para sa climate action.

Information and Knowledge Management Division

BBC

[Climate change: trees grow for extra month as planet warms - study](#)

Global warming is changing the way trees grow, new research suggests. Researchers studying hardwoods in northwest Ohio say a century of warming has extended their annual growing season by a month on average.

The scientists from Ohio State University compared recent observations to detailed notes a local farmer began taking in the 19th Century.

They say the research has implications for how well different types of trees will cope with future climate change.

Between 1883 and 1912, farmer Thomas Mikesell made meticulous notes on local tree growth, precipitation and temperature in his home town of Wauseon, Ohio.

Our planet has warmed by 1.1C since the industrial revolution about 200 years ago. With most of that occurring in recent decades, researchers say Mikesell's observations are a near unique pre-warming dataset to compare with modern times.

Lead author Prof Kellen Calinger-Yoak travelled to Wauseon herself in Spring and Autumn between 2010 and 2014, to monitor seven different species of hardwood.

She said that leaves stayed on trees about 15% longer than they did in Mikesell's day.

"Things are not the way they used to be - they are profoundly different," said Prof Calinger-Yoak. "An entire month of growing season extension is huge when we're talking about a pretty short period of time for those changes to be expressed."

Species responded to warmer temperatures in different ways - most kept their leaf colour longer into Autumn but some budded early.

The implications of the longer growing period are unknown.

Trees are vital in sucking planet-warming carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere, and the researchers said a longer growing period probably meant they did more of that. But they warned that higher, fluctuating temperatures may also stress trees in ways so far unknown.

Species reacted differently to higher temperatures. Prof Calinger-Yoak said that suggested more species-specific research was needed with regard to the role of tree-planting in limiting climate change.

"When we're thinking about a relatively low-cost mitigation strategy, planting a whole bunch of trees that suck CO₂ out of the air is a really good strategy, but to promote those activities you also have to have evidence of the level of benefit you'd derive from it," she said.

EURO NEWS

[COP27 finally put a loss and damage fund on the map. What can we expect on the way to COP28?](#)

By: Lottie Limb

Dozens of countries are meeting for the first time this week to discuss the details of a fund for climate victims. They decided to work together at COP27 last November.

A loss and damage fund was the biggest breakthrough agreement from the UN climate summit, held in Egypt. More than 30 years since the idea was first proposed, countries agreed to help vulnerable nations recover from climate-related disasters.

But the deal is an empty nest at present; countries still need to decide how the new funding stream will work exactly, and who the money will flow from and to.

What is the UN committee on loss and damage?

As per the Sharm El Sheikh Implementation Plan, a transitional committee of 24 members is convening from 27 to 29 March to make progress on this vital issue.

The UN committee meeting is taking place in the Egyptian desert city of Luxor, and is a key event on the road to COP28 in Dubai later this year.

“All eyes are on the transitional committee as it convenes in Luxor,” says COP27 president Sameh Shoukry.

“There are great expectations with regards to progress towards the operationalisation of the relevant fund and all the other elements that constitute the mandate of this committee.”

Who is at the transitional committee on loss and damage?

Only a select number of people are present at the transitional committee. It brings together 24 members from Parties to the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement, carefully grouped together based on wealth and geography.

In total, 10 members from developed countries, and 14 from developing countries have a seat at the table. With so few spots up for grabs, regions have had to compromise on who will represent them.

The Asia-Pacific group - which has three seats - only reached an agreement two weeks ago, after reports of some sharp elbows between countries.

“Everybody wants to be part of the discussion,” said Mohamed Nasr, Egypt’s lead negotiator and committee member for one of Africa’s three slots, dedicated to the COP27 presidency.

As there are two more transitional committee meetings scheduled before COP28, the Asia-Pacific bloc (and others) have compromised by dividing the three meetings between six different countries.

India, the Philippines and Saudi Arabia will share one seat, while China, South Korea and Pakistan will share the other. The third seat is reserved for a representative of the incoming COP28 presidency: Hana AlHashimi from the UAE.

The US, the UK, France, Norway, Finland, Australia, Canada and Japan occupy the developed country seats, with Denmark and the Netherlands, and Ireland and Germany sharing the remaining two seats for the wealthier, industrialised groups.

As part of the transition between COPs, Nasr has handed over control of the committee to newly elected co-chairs Outi Honkatukia (Finland) and Richard Sherman (South Africa).

What form could a loss and damage fund take?

The committee is tasked with proposing how the fund should be set up and managed, presenting its findings to all countries at COP28 in December for a unified decision.

“This is a huge responsibility and one that cannot be taken lightly,” Brandon Wu, head of policy and campaigns at ActionAid USA said ahead of the meeting.

“Defining how the new loss and damage fund will work in practice, including ways it will be governed, is of utmost importance. For far too long developed countries have failed to take responsibility for the overwhelming role they have played in causing the climate crisis.”

The transitional committee will be looking at identifying and expanding sources of funding, and considering how a new fund or finance facility will work alongside existing arrangements.

As the UN Environment Programme states, it is important that the new fund tackles the gaps that current climate finance institutions such as the Green Climate Fund and Adaptation Fund do not fill.

Campaigners argue that the loss and damage fund must be accountable to the most vulnerable, drawing on the experience of community-based organisations, and using financial instruments that are non-debt-inducing and grant-based.

It should be programmatic and long-term, rather than project-based, head of global political strategy at Climate Action Network (CAN) International Harjeet Singh told the committee today.

What are the dividing lines on loss and damage?

With question marks over practically all parts of the new arrangement, tensions are running high. To help smooth conversations and “allow for an informal exchange of views to support the Committee,” the Egyptian presidency hosted members on a two-day retreat over the weekend.

Sticking points from COP27 are likely to re-emerge, such as the EU’s argument that relatively wealthy, high-emitting countries like China should also pay into the fund. UN climate negotiations rest on a 1992 categorisation of developed and developing countries; though China does not bear nearly as much historical responsibility as the US (for example), some developed countries argue that times have moved on.

Asked at a recent briefing whether the contributor base for the fund should be broadened, Nasr responded that “the main thing for now is to see that there are funding arrangements that can deliver.”

Getting buy-in from everybody should be the first step, he said. “Our focus should be mainly to deliver to those communities who are impacted. In Pakistan, people are still in the streets. And if you go to South Africa, Latin America, small islands, lives have been devastated.

“Should we fix this discussion on who’s going to pay, or should we respond to them as soon as possible, and continue our process? I think this is the way we see it; we should respond as soon as possible.”

Writing his suggestions in Climate Home News, veteran COP campaigner and director of the International Centre for Climate Change and Development (ICCCAD) Saleemul Huq also warned committee members “not [to] make ‘perfect’ the enemy of ‘good enough’!”

“An imperfect fund that starts to operate quickly is better than waiting years for the first dollar to be delivered,” he writes, advising them to operate in ‘reality time’ rather than ‘UNFCCC time’.

But those with the most at stake will be anxious to set the fund up on solid foundations, and defend it from being watered down.

“We are concerned these countries may try to move attention away from the fund and discuss other options for funding arrangements, in order to dodge their responsibility to contribute hard cash to poorer countries,” adds Wu. “They cannot be allowed to employ any distraction tactics during these meetings. It’s vital this fund delivers for those living at the forefront of the climate crisis.”

Other important questions - such as what role ‘innovative sources’ like taxing fossil fuel companies might play - must be secondary to setting up the framework for the fund, he says.

Addressing committee members this afternoon, Singh described the loss and damage fund as “not only a lifeline, but also access to justice.”

He implored countries to start making up for the “huge trust deficit” that has emerged over the decades.

“The world is looking to you with the expectation that your actions will change lives, ensure safe futures and regain their trust by operationalising the fund at COP28, and that meets their needs with the required speed, scale and adequacy.”

[The era of 'mega forest fires' has begun in Spain. Is climate change to blame?](#)

By: Angela Symons

Wildfires in Spain have forced more than 1,500 people to flee their homes and firefighters were still battling blazes in Valencia's Castellon province into Sunday. More than 4,000 hectares of land have been engulfed by the fire.

This marked an early start to the country's wildfire season amid dry conditions and high temperatures, which exceeded 30°C in Valencia on Sunday.

"We're looking at the first major fire, unfortunately, this year," said Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez. "And it is also taking place out of season."

Last year, Spain suffered nearly 500 wildfires that devastated huge swathes of land and upended lives.

Like much of Europe, the nation experienced record-high temperatures in 2022. Following a winter drought, these look set to continue into 2023.

What caused the recent wildfire in Spain?

The cause of the fire is still being investigated. Regional newspaper Las Provincias says police believe it may have originated with a spark from a machine used to collect brushwood.

Hot, dry weather conditions helped the fire to spread.

"The combination of high temperatures and west wind in recent weeks, with the lack of rain in recent months, has resulted in the topsoil being very dry in 100 per cent of the territory," tweeted Valencia's weather agency, AEMET, on Friday.

Temperatures were above 25°C when the fire broke out, and relative humidity sank below 30 per cent following an unusually dry winter in the area.

500 firefighters supported by 20 planes and helicopters attempted to bring it under control near the village of Villanueva de Viver. Firefighters said such a blaze was more typical of summer than spring.

The fire was made more "voracious" by summer-like temperatures, according to Ximo Puig, president of the Valencia region.

March 2023 is shaping up to be Valencia's second warmest on record since 2001.

Due to the extreme risk of forest fires in the region, it has been forbidden to start any kind of fire.

Is Spain's heatwave a result of climate change?

As our climate warms, wildfires are burning more frequently and intensely. They are also starting earlier in the season, as seen in Spain.

Like much of Europe, Spain has experienced a hot, dry winter.

If the country faces "another summer in which temperatures don't fall below 35C for 20 days and it doesn't rain for four months, the vegetation will be liable to go up in flames" with the first lightning bolt, warns wildfire expert Pablo Martin Pinto.

Greenhouse gases released by human activity are causing global temperatures to spike. Like glass in a greenhouse, CO₂, methane, nitrous oxide and other gases trap the sun's heat, causing less warmth to return to space.

The concentration of CO₂ in the atmosphere soared by 48 per cent between 1750 to 2020, according to the European Commission.

The planet's average temperature has risen by 1.1C since pre-industrial levels.

Global warming also increases evaporation on land, which can worsen drought, create conditions more prone to wildfire, and lead to a longer wildfire season.

Are wildfires getting worse in Spain?

In 2022, 306,000 hectares were lost to wildfires in Spain. This was more than three times as much as the previous year, according to Statista. The country's worst blaze devastated 60,000 hectares of Sierra de la Culebra in the northwest.

Pinto says that the fires were caused by "extraordinary atmospheric situations" triggered partly by the effects of climate change. Such conditions are likely to become more frequent, he adds.

"We are moving from the era of big forest fires to mega forest fires in Spain," says the Valladolid University professor, warning that such vast blazes were "here to stay".

Not only do fires destroy land and homes, they expose people to dangerous levels of air pollution. Smoke particles including carbon monoxide can spread thousands of kilometres, causing respiratory issues, headaches and nausea.

High-intensity fires can also damage soil, causing erosion, reducing nutrients and preventing water absorption. This all leads to biodiversity loss.

How can we reduce the risk of wildfires?

Experts say conserving Spain's forests is key to addressing the risk of wildfires.

The forests “must be protected” by looking after the undergrowth that can generate wildfires, says Jose Angel Arranz Sanz, forestry policies director in the Castilla y Leon region.

Pinto advocates the creation of areas which are “more resilient” featuring a varied “patchwork landscape” made up of “wooded forest areas... and livestock farms, interspersed with areas of scrubland”.

Where forested landscapes are more homogenous, “it really limits the ability to stop a fire from spreading,” he warns.

Forest ranger Jorge de Dios, who represents a regional environmental workers union, says more resources are needed, warning of a lack of firefighters who are trained to tackle such situations.

“We are going to see more and more fires, and bigger ones,” he said, saying most local firefighters “are not professionals and don't have enough training,” echoing concerns also raised by regional firefighters.

Greenpeace also urged the authorities to adopt a new approach focusing on early preemptive action to minimise the risks.

“Wildfires must be at the top of the political agenda and shouldn't be tackled only when there is heat and fire, but by early preventative action with appropriate environmental management tailored to this new reality,” says Monica Parrilla of Greenpeace Spain.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Life in submerged island communities

By: Segundo Eclar Romero

Summer days are upon us and whole families with swimming gear are trooping to swimming pools in our neck of the woods. At the height of this crunch, one wonders just how many people of various ages and shapes can be contained in what can only be described as overwhelmed swimming pools. Cars, tricycles, e-quads, motorcycles, etc. are parked outside, with vendors of floaters, water toys, swimwear, etc., creating a festive atmosphere.

Now, let's pan to Batasan island off Tubigon in Bohol. This island is permanently submerged in clear seawater. On a typical day, young children to senior citizens relax in the seawater, sitting, wading, and swimming. The whole island is submerged in seawater, and it has been that way since the Bohol earthquake of 2013 caused the subsidence of Batasan and nearby islands—Pangaspasan, Bilangbilangan, and Nocnocan.

But this seemingly idyllic situation is actually a slow-motion nightmare. Drinking water is either imported from the Bohol mainland or collected from the rain. The sanitation system is an unimaginable or unmentionable challenge. Children wade to the submerged elementary school with packed lunches, so they do not have to wade home at noon. Here are several videos by a very insightful and productive young vlogger, Joseph Pasalo (SEFTV on YouTube) that more dramatically capture the dire straits of these islanders (<https://bit.ly/3IHoSr9>, <https://bit.ly/40Fak3o>, <https://bit.ly/3ZfS67f>).

These islands have sunk by as much as 75 centimeters. The communities are flooded from May to August during the day, and at night from November to January during high tide. These islands have also suffered from typhoons, the most destructive of which was Typhoon "Odette" (international name: Rai) in December 2021.

Just how many of the 7,641 Philippine islands are submerged or home to coastal communities? How many more will be submerged due to earthquakes, sea level rise, overdrawn groundwater, liquefaction, and other causes? How should the Philippines deal with the slow and sudden onset of island or coastal submersion? How can this scattered and sporadic situation capture enough national and local government attention to move minds, move people, and move resources toward a workable, long-term solution?

These are the questions a group of social and natural scientists belonging to Future Earth Philippines decided to present in an online "transformation collaboratory" session

in the Asian Spotlight Event at the Sustainability Research and Innovation Congress (SRI2023) where the international audience will actively participate in diagnosing, understanding, and proposing innovative and feasible solutions to the problem. SRI is the world's largest transdisciplinary gathering for the global sustainability community. This year, it will be held in Panama City in June.

The FEP panel of experts who will present the problem for collaborative diagnosis and identification of solution pathways is composed of doctors, professors, and National Academy of Science and Technology academicians Fernando Siringan, Mahar Lagmay, Jurgenne Primavera, Guillermo Tabios III, and Dr. Rene Rollon. As the proponent of the panel, I will serve as moderator.

The session will suggest this problem to be similar to the effect of sea level rise due to climate change, making it a good focus for developing multisectoral partnerships to design and implement anticipatory mitigation and adaptation action. There are two levels to the call for policy and science inputs from the SRI2023 Congress participants: How to resolve the immediate problem, and how to use it to generate institutional collaboration and readiness for similar future events.

There are several cases that fall into this general category of submerged islands and coastal communities—the rapid subsidence due to earthquakes such as in Batasan; the slow subsidence of the coastal delta plains like in Bulacan and Pampanga; the slow subsidence of islands in the West Philippine Sea; the subsidence due to liquefaction as in Northern Luzon due to the 1990 earthquake; and the coastal erosion due to sand mining like in Cavite to feed reclamation projects in Manila Bay.

International interest in this topic is expected due to analogous experiences elsewhere in the world, such as in the Maldives, Nauru, and Hawaii. It is exciting to imagine that the transformation collaboratory session will generate innovative, adaptive, and resilient designs of residential, commercial, transportation, and other structures, as well as whole neighborhoods, barangays, coastal zones, and municipalities and cities.

The most difficult question that the international audience might ask is, with 7,641 islands, why hasn't the Philippines been able to find room for the relocation of what seems to be proliferating cases of submerged island and coastal communities?

No to plastic drinking containers

By: Michael L. Tan

More and more, we hear the calls all the time to reuse, to recycle, and they seem all the more urgent when it comes to plastics.

Those of us with young children are familiar with some of the school projects to recycle plastics, mainly to convert them into planters and handicrafts like Christmas lanterns.

People also sometimes reuse those plastic bottles for water and other beverages, looking at the bottom of the bottle for a number, with a common conception that the number indicates how many times you can reuse the bottle. The number is enclosed in a “chasing arrows code,” referring to the arrow symbols that make a triangle. But I was shocked to learn only recently, from a chemist friend, that the numbers tell you what kind of plastic is being used, not the number of times you can refill the bottle for drinking water.

I looked up several sources for explanations of the numbers and the best one was from www.plasticfreebottles.com. Here are the explanations:

The number “1” refers to PET or polyethylene terephthalate, the most common material for plastic bottles used for water and beverages. It turns out PET bottles were designed for single-use only and yet are the most commonly manufactured plastic for beverages so, generally speaking, you can’t reuse the plastic bottles for anything you intend to drink. Please, that includes your pets.

The other numbers used for recycling code are for other types of plastics used for consumer products. Those with the numbers 3, 4, and 5 are classified as “appears to be safe.”

The plastic medicine containers are usually polypropylene (number 5), which is considered safe. But if you do reuse for other medicines, as my fellow senior citizens love to do, make sure to wash out thoroughly and relabel.

Now, on to particularly problematic plastics. The number 6 is used for polystyrene, a possible human carcinogen, and is sometimes used for plastic cutlery so watch out. A number 7 refers to other plastics including polycarbonates, which are used for baby bottles, water cooler bottles—and should be avoided because they contain bisphenol A, which can cause chromosomal damage. Many children’s bottles now carry a label “bisphenol-free.”

Most alarming is polyvinyl chloride or PVC, which has the number 3 and is nicknamed the poison plastic, found in many consumer products from blister packs that kids love to “pop” to garden hoses.

The recycling codes are there as guides for places where recycling is practiced, so they can be sorted out. PVC, for example, is produced in such large volumes that without recycling, we would be deluged by this toxic product.

In countries like the Philippines, very little recycling is being done so the codes are of limited use. The sometimes tacky planters and Christmas lanterns, with the soft drink brand still readable, can help raise environmental awareness. But in the long run, we need recycling facilities to process all kinds of plastics, in particular, the plastics used for the sachets for food, cosmetics, toothpaste, and other common consumer items. Even if they “appear to be safe,” the huge amounts used for our tingi sachet economy end up clogging our waterways.

Note that the problem is not just the container—but those plastic rings used in packaging the bottles can reach our seas and cause choking and death in marine animals (including seabirds).

Back to land. For any kind of plastic used for food or beverages, do be aware that leaving the container in a hot place (for example, your car in the parking lot) can mean toxins leach out from the plastic into the beverage. If you or other friends have been drinking from the same bottle, you may have created an incubator for bacteria. (No reports yet of the fungi cordyceps, the focus of the sci-fi series “The Last of Us” on HBO.)

The long-term solution is to avoid using plastic bottles when you can. Instead, use glass, porcelain, or stainless steel containers. Make it a habit to bring these alternative containers—for both food and beverages, whenever you eat out, for take-out from the restaurant.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

[PH saves 62.69 MW during 2023 Earth Hour](#)

By: Kris Crismundo

The Department of Energy (DOE) reported Monday that the country saved 62.69 megawatts (MW) of energy from turning off the lights from 8:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m., or the Earth Hour, last March 25.

The DOE said the event was a symbolic demonstration of unity aimed at reversing nature loss and achieving a climate-resilient future.

Of the energy saving in this year's Earth Hour, the largest savings came from Luzon with 33.29 MW, followed by 20.5 MW from Mindanao and 8.9 MW from Visayas.

"This also illustrates how purposeful behavior could achieve something big and worthy. Imagine when individuals, businesses, government, and communities unite not only during Earth Hour but in making energy conservation their everyday way of life, the overall impact would be even much bigger," said DOE Secretary Raphael Lotilla in a statement.

Lotilla urged Filipinos to continue energy efficiency and conservation efforts to help in managing energy demand, especially during dry season when power supply often becomes critical.

"Let us help sustain the momentum by simply consistently practicing energy conservation measures at home, offices, communities, and businesses from switching off non-essential lights to choosing more energy efficient appliances, equipment and machines. These are simple yet valuable actions that we can do easily not only for our planet but more especially during periods of high demand such as this summer season," he added.

However, this year's Earth Hour energy savings slightly declined from 65.32 MW in 2022.

The DOE said many consumers used air-cooling appliances like air conditioners as the heat index last Saturday was at 39 to 40 degrees Celsius, which was higher than last year's index.

The country achieved its highest electricity savings during Earth Hour in 2019 with total savings of 195.34 MW.

Earth Hour is an annual event that started in Sydney in 2007 to work together on the planet's biggest environmental challenges.

Over the years, Filipinos have embraced the Earth Hour movement as a way to show their support for environmental conservation and sustainability.

It has grown to become the largest grassroots movement to reach more people around the world to work together and focus on climate and biodiversity actions.

Tacloban council passes anti-plastic ordinance

By: Roel Amazona

The city council has approved a measure that will regulate the use of plastic bags and the utilization of polystyrene as packaging materials.

Ordinance author Councilor Aimee Grafil, chair of the city council's committee on environment and natural resources, said the move will be the city's contribution to the government's campaign to reduce the volume of solid waste.

The ordinance will be fully enforced once signed by Mayor Alfred Romualdez, according to Grafil in an interview Monday.

"The ordinance aims to eventually reduce the volume of solid wastes generated in the city, promote the use of indigenous or reusable bags, and provide opportunities for livelihood and productivity to communities, thereby upholding health, safety, and welfare not only of the people but including the environment," Grafil said.

Once enacted, business establishments in the city will be mandated to encourage customers to bring their own reusable bags to carry their goods. Eco bags or reusable bags must be available for sale.

A special lane or "green lane" must be put up in every establishment to cater customers who bring their own reusable bags.

Also, the ordinance will ban party flags used during fiestas and parties.

Establishments who violate the ordinance will be fined PHP2,000 for first offense; PHP5,000 for second offense with suspension to operate for six months; and PHP5,000 for third offense and cancellation of license to operate for the period of one year.

For individual violators, penalties are PHP1,000 for first offense, PHP3,000 for second offense, and PHP5,000 for third offense and imprisonment of not more than six months subject to the discretion of the court.

RAPPLER

[Alternergy to fuel renewable energy projects with first IPO of 2023](#)

By: Lance Spencer Yu

Local renewable energy company Alternergy Holdings is setting its sights on completing solar, wind, and hydro energy projects in the next five years, using the P1.61 billion in capital that it raised during its recent initial public offering (IPO).

The company debuted on the Philippine Stock Exchange on Friday, March 24, as the first company to go public in 2023. It offered 1.150 billion primary shares and 115 million overallotment shares, representing 32.16% of the company's stock, at an initial price of P1.28 per share.

Alternergy raised P1.47 billion from the primary offer shares and P147 million from the overallotment offer shares for a total of P1.61 billion.

"We have always been strong advocates for what we call the 'green democratic capitalism' – giving every Filipino family, every young professional, every family office, the opportunity to participate in a renewable energy IPO and own a part of a green energy company," said Alternergy chairman and former energy secretary Vince Pérez during the listing ceremony.

Pérez said the IPO has also paved the way for other capital raising activities, such as green bonds. He hinted that green bonds could be used for future financing requirements of projects in the next three to five years.

Power project pipeline

Bolstered by the proceeds from its IPO, Alternergy will begin construction on its two shovel-ready projects in the coming months. The projects – the Solana Solar Power Project in Hermosa, Bataan, and the Lamut Run-of-River Hydro Project in Lamut, Ifugao – will receive 35% of the IPO proceeds.

Alternergy will also pursue pre-development activities for its pipeline of other developments using the capital from the IPO. These include the Ibulao Run-of-River Hydro Project, Tanay and Alabat Wind Projects, and offshore wind projects. Over the next five years, the company intends to develop up to 1,370 megawatts (MW) of wind, offshore wind, solar, and run-of-river hydro projects.

A third of the IPO proceeds will go to repaying liabilities related to the acquisition of the Kirahon Solar Farm in Misamis Oriental.

Aside from its current pipeline, Alternergy is also considering bringing lessons learned from developing its solar farm in the Pacific island nation of Palau to the Philippines.

“Because of its location, which is similar to the type of islands that we have here in the country...this project here in Palau is something that can be replicated here in the country. We will explore that opportunity as well,” Alternergy president Gerry Magbanua said during a media briefing on Friday.

Alternergy’s solar developer Solar Pacific Energy Corporation (SPEC) said its Palau project – a utility scale solar farm producing 15.2 MW of solar energy with 13 megawatt-hours of utility scale battery storage – may already start generating energy in the next few weeks.

“Because the Republic of Palau is a relatively small country, that project will generate 25% of the entire country’s energy. As you can imagine, they’re 100% dependent on diesel power at the moment,” SPEC chief executive officer and co-founder Mike Lichtenfeld said.

In transitioning away from diesel power, Pérez also said renewable energy projects like the ones developed by their company could prevent future ecological disasters, like the Oriental Mindoro oil spill.

“Look at the oil spill. What’s the cause of that? Somebody was transporting diesel from Bataan to the Panay fuel power plant. If we could just replace that power plant with clean energy, we don’t have to have this disaster in a marine environment,” said Pérez during the media briefing.

THE MANILA TIMES

Support for incentivized use of electric vehicles grows

By: Franco Jose C. Baroña

A university instructor has added her voice to the clamor of clean air advocates who are calling on the government to incentivize the use of electric vehicles (EVs) to promote their use.

Abigail Arillaga, a chemist and university general science instructor, said that the adoption of EVs can help reduce the emissions of greenhouse gasses which are harmful to the environment.

"In the Philippines, sad to say if we cannot incentivize, it will be difficult to persuade others to patronize this product over the traditional ones," Arillaga said in an interview.

Last January, Malacañang issued Executive Order (EO) No. 12 that modified the tariff rates ranging from five to thirty percent for certain EVs by temporarily reducing it to zero percent to help the country adapt to e-vehicle usage and decrease carbon emissions.

While the move was praised for promoting a sustainable environment, various groups and stakeholders expressed dismay because the EO did not cover electric motorcycles and other 2-wheeled electric vehicles.

Under EO 12, only kick scooters, self-balancing cycles, e-bicycles and pocket motorcycles with auxiliary motors not exceeding 250w and with a maximum speed of 25 kilometers per hour were given zero percent import duties, while e-motorcycles are still subject to a 30 percent tariff rate.

Stratbase ADR Institute President Victor Andres Manhit earlier pushed for the revision of the order.

Arillaga said that it will be difficult to shift to EVs unless the government rolls out monetary incentives for its use along with an awareness campaign of its benefits and comprehensive research on its effectiveness.

She noted that while EVs are being explored, the shift to the new mode of transport should be gradual as the country still relies on non-renewable energy sources.

"It's also difficult to shift to something new, for example, you have a motorcycle so now you implement [EO 12]. First of all, there are monetary reasons, this will be difficult unless there are incentives, monetary incentives," she said.

The transportation sector in the country emits 31.54 million tons of carbon dioxide which also contributes to climate change.

IQAir earlier said that the rate of PM2.5 pollutants in Manila is twice the World Health Organization's air quality guideline value.

The Philippines is set to limit the sale of internal engine combustion cars as part of its comprehensive plan to transition to what environmentalists foresee as "green traffic" or a decarbonized road network.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

[Metro Cebu logs 0.573MW load drop on Earth Hour](#)

By: Michelle L. Palaubsanon

CEBU, Philippines — The Earth Hour 2023 has reduced power consumption by 0.573 megawatt within the franchise area of Visayan Electric.

Quennie Sanchez-Bronce, Visayan Electric's Reputation and Enhancement Department head, said it was their lowest load drop since 2015 wherein it recorded a load drop of 4.631 megawatt.

Visayan Electric is the second largest electric utility in the Philippines.

It serves the cities of Cebu, Mandaue, Talisay, Naga and four municipalities of the greater part of Metro Cebu -- Liloan, Consolacion, Minglanilla and San Fernando.

The Department of Energy earlier enjoined the public in observing the Earth Hour, an annual global movement that aims to raise awareness on climate change and pressing environmental concerns.

"The conscientious and mindful use of energy is not only our responsibility to ourselves and the country but more importantly to our Mother Earth," said DOE Secretary Raphael Lotilla, in a statement, adding that "sixty minutes of your time would already create a significant impact in contributing to reverse nature loss and a achieve a climate-resilient future".

According to earthhour.com, the Earth Hour is the world's largest grassroots movement for the environment. Earth Hour is flagship global environmental movement of the World Wildlife Fund.

"Kagabie, nahimo kitang kabahin sa usa ka mahinungdanong kalihukan nga gibuhad sa tibuok kalibutan nga mao ang Earth Hour. Ma-gobyerno o pribado, naghiusa gayud nga makab-ot hiniusang tumong nga mao ang paghatag og kahigayonan nga mahatagan og 60 minutos nga makaginhawa ang kalibutan pinaagi sa pagpalong sa tanan natong mga suga," said Lapu-Lapu City Mayor Junard Chan.

The activity in the city was spearheaded by the mayor, his wife, Lapu-Lapu City Lone District Representative Cindi King-Chan, together with the members of the City Council, the Philippine National Police and some department heads.

In Cordova town, Mayor Cesar Suan thanked the municipal employees and officials for participating in the Earth Hour by switching off the lights at the municipal hall, as well as the town's residents in their respective homes.

The Earth Hour, Lotilla added is an annual symbolic lights-out that started in Sydney, Australia in 2017.

This year's Earth Hour in-person happened Saturday, March 25, 2023 from 8:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

Lotilla added that the Earth Hour also serves as an opportune reminder how simple everyday practices could have a great impact on bringing down our energy consumption level.

These simple everyday practices include minimizing the use of electricity during peak hours at 11 a.m. to 12 noon, 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. to 7 p.m. as well as keeping air conditioners at 25 degrees centigrade.

"Behavioral change may seem like a challenge but there are relatively simple things that we as residents, businesses and local governments can do to be energy efficient, increase resilience to climate change and pave the way to a more sustainable future," the energy chief further said.

THE WASHINGTON POST

[How Cleaning Up Pollution May Be Heating the Planet](#)

By: David Fickling

One of the rare bits of good news in the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's latest report last week carries a sting in its tail. Thanks to human activity, we've actually managed to slow the progress of global warming over the past two centuries by as much as 0.8 degrees Celsius.

The bad news is what's been causing that cooling: emissions of fine particles of sulfur and nitrogen compounds and carbon, known as aerosols. Like spray aerosols, these are fine particles suspended in the air — but hardly any come from aerosol cans. Most are produced by the same processes of burning carbon-rich fuel that cause greenhouse-gas emissions. The particles float in the atmosphere, affect the formation of clouds, and reflect solar radiation back into space. That counterbalances the warming effect of carbon dioxide, methane and other gases. As a result, increased aerosol emissions cool the atmosphere, while reductions warm it.

Reducing aerosol emissions should be a key priority for global health, however. There were about 4.23 million excess deaths in 2015 caused by exposure to such chemicals. The worst effects were caused by inhaling smoke from wood and dung fires in poor countries, and transport fuels and road dust in rich ones.

We're making progress on that front. Concentrations of sulfur dioxide or SO₂ in Europe and the US have been declining since the 1980s, when fears about acid rain caused power stations to install scrubbers to remove sulfur compounds from smokestacks. Similar regulations have been drastically reducing power plant aerosol emissions in China and even India, where a government push to roll out LPG stoves has also been cutting smoke from domestic cooking.

That progress on the health front, however, means the cooling effect that aerosols have provided since the dawn of the industrial era is disappearing — a setback in climate terms. As a result, even a fall in carbon emissions may be insufficient to halt the heating of the planet.

"It could be as important as warming from CO₂ over the next few decades," says Natalie Mahowald, a professor at Cornell University. "Temperatures will increase as aerosols are cleared up for air quality."

The effects of this have already been measured in some areas. The Covid-19 lockdowns in early 2020 may have caused temperatures to increase as much as 0.3

degrees Celsius in parts of the northern hemisphere, with warming from attenuated aerosol emissions overwhelming cooling from the reduction in greenhouse gases.

Solar radiation at ground level in Wuhan almost doubled at the peak of China's lockdowns thanks to reductions in aerosols, a group of Chinese researchers found this month. Falling levels of nitrogen oxide may have changed the balance of chemical reactions in the atmosphere and lifted concentrations of methane, a particularly potent greenhouse gas, according to a 2022 separate study.

Regulations introduced in the same year, which banned high-sulfur fuel oil from shipping fuel, may have further reduced sulfur dioxide, the most important aerosol for cooling the atmosphere. One recent study found that sulfur control rules introduced in China between 2016 and 2019 cut regional SO₂ emissions by as much as 40%.

Geoengineering (the idea of arresting global warming by spraying SO₂ into the atmosphere and dimming the sun) is normally treated as the stuff of science fiction, or at least madcap proposals by out-of-control startups. What these studies show is that, to the contrary, we're already doing geoengineering, except in reverse — heating the planet instead of cooling it.

That will make the coming decades particularly challenging. Aerosols typically disappear from the atmosphere within a matter of weeks, whereas CO₂ hangs around for as much as 1,000 years. As a result, when you clean up your smokestack emissions, the bad outcomes last longer than the good ones.

We're at the "turning point of the aerosol era," researchers at NASA's Goddard Institute concluded last year, with their cooling effect already as weak as it's been in a century. As a result of that shift, warming could be as much as twice as rapid between 2010 and 2050 as in the previous four decades, according to a recent study led by Columbia University climate scientist James Hansen.

The good news, according to Bill Collins, a professor of climate processes at the UK's University of Reading, is that we're already incorporating these changes into our models of future climate change. Reducing aerosols should remain a priority, says Mahowald, because for the next few decades they will still be killing more people than climate change, with particularly damaging impacts on poorer and non-White groups who are more exposed to such emissions.

There are a few win-win options, too. Soot from burning fields and forests, from wood and dung fires, and from diesel fuel is a rare aerosol that warms the atmosphere instead of cooling it. Cutting output of that pollutant will help both sides of the climate change

equation. Nitrogen oxides from aircraft can warm the atmosphere even as ground-level emissions cool it, says Collins, so cleaning that up should also be a priority.

We nonetheless face a hazardous path out of the situation we've brought to the world. For all the prominence of carbon dioxide in the discussion of climate change, it's just one of the ways in which human activity has upset the atmospheric equilibrium which we've enjoyed since the dawn of civilization. It will be far harder to restore that balance than it was to disrupt it.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

[CCC joins Earth Hour in nod to address climate change](#)

By: Genesis Medina

The Climate Change Commission PH (CCC) joined this year's #BiggestHourForEarth campaign to further raise awareness on the urgent and collective global climate action.

The CCC took part in the main switch-off event at Quezon City Memorial Circle on March 25 from 8:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m., spearheaded by the Quezon City government and WWF-Philippines.

CCC Vice Chairperson and Executive Director Robert Borje shared that, ironically, "an hour of absence of light sheds a light on the collective need to address the climate crisis."

"By switching our lights off, we want to be a beacon for all and a signal to all. We want to tell the world that we need to act for our country and our world in the face of climate change," Borje said.

In addition to raising awareness on climate change, Earth Hour 2023 also aimed to promote energy conservation. In the Sixth Assessment Report of the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, it is estimated that around 34 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions are caused by the energy sector.

In the Philippines, the energy sector accounts for 55 percent of the domestic emissions, with household and commercial energy consumption ranking as the second and fourth highest demand based on the latest National Greenhouse Gas Inventory, respectively.

To respond to the growing emissions, the National Climate Change Action Plan includes 'sustainable energy' as among its thematic priorities with the aim of promoting and implementing energy efficiency and conservation measures.

Borje urged the public to take climate action beyond an hour and make it a part of their daily life.

"Panahon lang ang maibibigay natin sa mundo (We can only give time to Earth), but the irony of it all, we do not have the luxury of time. Ang climate change ay nararamdaman natin (We started to feel climate change) and we need to act together," said.

Held annually, Earth Hour encourages Filipinos and citizens around the world to switch off non-essential lights for an hour to conserve energy and protect the planet.

"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," said President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. in a video message supporting the event.

Earth Hour first took place as a symbolic lights-out event in Sydney, Australia in 2007.

For its 16th year, the Earth Hour put a spotlight on the #BiggestHourForEarth to call on the need to address climate change.

For more information on the CCC's climate mainstreaming activities, visit www.climate.gov.ph and www.facebook.com/CCCPhl.

In Puerto Princesa City, Palawan, residents and local officials gathered at Balayong People's Park.

Carlo Gomez, head of the City Environment and Natural Resources Office (ENRO), said the more important thing is being responsible environment protectors beyond the one-hour activity.

"Of course, Puerto Princesa City is not behind in terms of manifesting commitment to Mother Earth with the implementation of several ordinances regarding environmental protection -- single use plastic, septage management plan, waste-to-energy program. These are but just examples of our responsibility beyond the hour," Gomez said in an interview.

The City ENRO also conducts iTree for Urban Forest, a regular inventory of trees around the city proper; Mudball Run, part of cleanup activity at the Puerto Princesa Bay; Marine Turtle Conservation; Love Affair with Nature, a mangrove planting activity; and Pista Y ang Kagueban (Feast of the Forest), a tree planting activity in the mountains of the city.

REMATE

CCC, French embassy sanib-pwersa sa pagpapalakas ng climate action

Nangako ang Climate Change Commission (CCC) at Embassy of France to the Philippines and Micronesia, na palalakasin pa ng mga ito ang ugnayan at development cooperation para sa climate action.

Sa pagbisita ni French Ambassador to the Philippines, H.E. Michele Boccoz sa opisina ni CCC Vice Chair at Executive Director (VCED) Robert E.A. Borje, nagpalitan sila ng suhestyon kung paano ipatutupad ng mas mabuti ang local climate action.

“We express our gratitude to the government of France and the French Development Agency (AFD) for supporting the Philippines in implementing policy initiatives and sustainable solutions to address major climate and environmental challenges in the country,” ani Borje sa isang news release nitong Huwebes, Marso 16.

Kabilang sa mga prayoridad ng CCC at French Embassy ay ang pagpapabuti ng risk-informed Local Climate Change Action Plans (LCCAPs) ng mga local government units. Sa pamamagitan ng nagpapatuloy na technical support ng AFD, bibigyan ang mga LGU ng capacity development at enhancement activities, maging ang mga kagamitan na makatutulong sa pagbuo nila ng mas maayos na LCCAP.

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

Hanggang nitong Marso 2, 1,399 o 81.57% ng 1,715 LGUs ang nagpasa na ng kani-kanilang LCCAP sa CCC.

Sa kasalukuyan, ang LCCAP Quality Assurance Mechanism ay binubuo batay sa panuntunan na inilatag ng CCC at DILG.

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