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By: Jiselle Anne Casucian

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Extreme weather in Afghanistan leaves 17 people dead, authorities say

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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SUNSTAR

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FILIPINOS dedicated more than 1.3 million hours to environmental action during this year's Earth Hour, leading the global movement and cutting 161.98 megawatts (MW) from the power grid. The initiative, led by WWF-Philippines, brought together 44 institutions in a collective stand for the planet.

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DAILY TRIBUNE

Governance for a changing future: Planning together, building better
By: Secretary Robert E.A. Borje

In government, we often talk about coordination as though it were already enough. It is necessary, certainly. But for a country like the Philippines, where risks are increasingly interconnected and development pressures are becoming more complex, coordination must lead to something more durable: coherence, integration and agility in how the state plans and acts.

Group sets tact for gender action plan

A multi-sectoral body tasked with implementing the national gender action plan (GAP), one of the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, has convened and set its unified operational guidelines.

PHILIPPINE INFORMATION AGENCY

CCC Joins Global Community in Recognizing Important Role of Glaciers in Climate Change and Ecosystem Balance

The Climate Change Commission (CCC) joined the global community in recognizing the important role of glaciers in climate change and ecosystem balance in observance of the World Day for Glaciers.

CCC, MMDA, Metro Manila Council to strengthen science-based climate action across NCR

The Climate Change Commission (CCC) presented its science-based climate action and priority areas for collaboration to the Metro Manila Council (MMC) and Regional Development Council (RDC), aiming to strengthen regional coordination and accelerate climate action across the National Capital Region (NCR).

Information and Knowledge Management Division

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The state of the global climate has reached emergency levels, with every key indicator now "flashing red," according to the United Nations.

In its State of the Global Climate 2025 report, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) said the planet's climate system is now "more out of balance than at any time in history."

The WMO identified eight major climate indicators behind the alarming status:

- Earth's energy imbalance: More heat is being trapped by greenhouse gases, reducing the amount of energy released back into space.

- Greenhouse gases: Carbon dioxide levels are at their highest in two million years, while methane and nitrous oxide concentrations have reached levels unseen in 800,000 years.

Global temperatures: January 2025 was the hottest January on record.

- Ocean heat: Ocean heat content hit a record high in 2025, contributing to coral bleaching and increasing threats to marine ecosystems.

- Sea ice and glaciers: Accelerated melting in the Arctic and Antarctica has reduced sea ice extent.

- Sea levels: The rate of sea-level rise has nearly doubled since 2012 due to ocean warming and ice melt.

- Ocean acidification: Declining pH levels are making oceans more acidic.

Overall indicator status: Combined data point to worsening climate conditions.

"It is an emergency because once we breach critical thresholds, it could lead to what we call runaway climate change," said 350 Pilipinas Strategy and Communications Advisor Chuck Baclagon.

"Runaway climate change refers to a point where human civilization may struggle to adapt to rapidly changing environmental conditions brought about by global warming," he added.

Despite the escalating crisis, the Philippines remains unprepared, Baclagon said.

As an archipelagic country, he explained, the Philippines is particularly vulnerable due to its extensive exposure to surrounding waters.

“In archipelagic countries, a larger portion of landmass is exposed to water, and most climate change impacts occur in areas close to it,” he said.

If the crisis worsens, the country could face stronger typhoons, reduced agricultural output due to erratic climate patterns, and more frequent class disruptions caused by extreme weather.

The Philippines has several policies aimed at addressing climate change, including:

- Clean Air Act (1999);
- Renewable Energy Act (2008);
- Climate Change Act (2009);
- Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (DRRM) Act (2010); and
- Energy Efficiency Act (2019).

However, Baclagon pointed to gaps in governance.

“There is a lack of governance structures that ensure our adaptability to climate impacts. Climate change is often approached from a disaster response perspective, when it should be treated as part of the broader development agenda,” he said.

He also highlighted the limited role of science in policymaking.

“Development decisions are often made to address immediate needs, without sufficient consideration of long-term impacts or the use of data to guide planning,” he added.

The advocacy group also urged the Philippines to take a more active role in global climate action.

MANILA BULLETIN

Extreme weather in Afghanistan leaves 17 people dead, authorities say

Severe flooding, a landslide and thunderstorms in parts of Afghanistan left 17 people dead and 26 injured over the last 24 hours, with more heavy rainfall predicted, authorities said Sunday, the latest casualties from extreme weather in the country this season.

The number of casualties could increase as crews from the country's National Disaster Management Authority survey the affected areas, the authority's spokesman, Yousuf Hammad, said in a statement. Thirteen of Afghanistan's 34 provinces, mostly in the western, central and northwestern parts of the country, were affected.

The severe weather also left 147 homes either completely or partially destroyed, wiped out 80 kilometers (about 50 miles) of roads and destroyed agricultural land and irrigation canals and businesses, Hammad said. In all, he said, 530 families were affected.

Heavy rainfall was also forecast to affect eastern and central parts of the country Monday, and Hammad warned flooding was also possible in those areas. The disaster management authority warned residents to avoid river banks and areas at risk of flooding in those regions, and ordered local officials to be on standby to provide assistance.

Earlier this year, heavy snowfall and flash floods left dozens of people dead across the country. Afghanistan is highly vulnerable to extreme weather events, with snow and heavy rain that trigger flash floods, often killing dozens, or even hundreds, of people at a time. In 2024, more than 300 people died in springtime flash floods.

Decades of conflict, coupled with poor infrastructure, a struggling economy, deforestation and the intensifying effects of climate change have amplified the impact of such disasters, particularly in remote areas where many homes are built of mud and offer limited protection against sudden deluges or heavy snowfall.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Earth Hour turns 20, pushing action beyond the switch

By: Kurt Dela Peña

Every year, millions of people around the world pause for 60 minutes of collective action for the planet through World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)'s Earth Hour.

More than a symbolic "lights off" campaign, Earth Hour has evolved into what organizers describe as a "moment of unity," bringing people together to confront accelerating nature loss and the worsening climate crisis, while inspiring sustained action beyond a single hour.

Launched in 2007, the movement has grown into a global call for participation, encouraging individuals, communities, businesses and governments to turn one hour into "thousands and millions of hours of action" for the planet.

This year's observance, set for Saturday, March 28, from 8:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. local time, carries added significance. As 2026 marks the 20th year of Earth Hour, it comes at a time when global systems — ecological and energy-related — are under increasing strain.

The urgency is underscored not only by the climate crisis but also by ongoing instability in global oil supply, which has exposed the fragility of energy dependence and the far-reaching consequences of fossil fuel reliance. Recent disruptions have driven up fuel costs, strained economies and highlighted the vulnerability of countries heavily dependent on imported energy, including the Philippines.

Based on data from the Southeast Asia Information Platform for Energy Transition, power generation in the Philippines is dominated by fossil fuels, with coal and natural gas accounting for more than 60 percent and 18 percent, respectively.

In 2022, established renewable energy sources such as geothermal (10 percent) and hydro (8 percent) generated a meaningful but relatively small share of the country's electricity. Solar and wind shares are increasing but remain small at 1.4 percent and 1.2 percent, respectively.

Against this backdrop, Earth Hour's message takes on deeper significance. What began as a symbolic gesture now resonates as a reminder of the need to transition to more sustainable, resilient energy systems and reduce dependence on finite and volatile resources.

WWF said the world is approaching a critical tipping point. Current trends indicate global temperatures could exceed the 1.5-degree Celsius limit set under the Paris climate agreement as early as 2030, a threshold scientists warn could trigger irreversible environmental damage.

At the same time, nature — a vital buffer against climate change and a foundation for human livelihoods — continues to decline at "alarming and unprecedented rates."

“The next few years are crucial,” the organization said, stressing the need to stay within the 1.5-degree limit and reverse nature loss by the end of the decade.

WWF said achieving these goals will require coordinated, immediate action across all sectors. Earth Hour serves not only as a global event but as a growing movement — one that reflects both the scale of the crisis and the collective responsibility to address it.

When mangrove planting goes wrong

By: Cristina Eloisa Baclig

Along a stretch of coastline, volunteers wade into shallow water, pressing mangrove seedlings into the mud — one by one, row after row.

It is a familiar scene across the Philippines, often repeated after storms, during company-led drives, and in community activities promoted as climate action.

The intention is clear: to protect coastlines and restore ecosystems. But many of these efforts proceed without a full understanding of the science behind where mangroves should be planted and the conditions they need to thrive.

Beneath the neat rows of newly planted seedlings lies a quieter reality: many will not survive, and some planting efforts may even damage the very ecosystems they are meant to protect.

“They’re always well-meaning, but how do we take that to a level where their good intentions are aligned with science-based protocols?” said Mariglo Rosaida Laririt, assistant director of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources’ Environmental Management Bureau.

The science behind where mangroves grow

At the heart of the issue is a principle known as species zonation — the natural arrangement of mangrove species along coastlines, shaped by salinity, tidal patterns, elevation, soil conditions, and wave energy.

Mangroves are not interchangeable. Each species occupies a specific ecological niche, formed through long-term adaptation to these conditions.

Along exposed, seaward zones, where wave action is stronger and salinity is higher, species such as Sonneratia (pagatpat) and Avicennia (bungalon) dominate. These species develop deeper, more extensive root systems that anchor them to unstable sediments and allow them to tolerate constant environmental stress.

“For context, there are two genera, Sonneratia and Avicennia, that are more resilient in seaward areas,” said Leo Anthony Castro of the Global Mangrove Alliance Philippines.

Some of these species can shed bark to prevent barnacle buildup, while others grow specialized roots that allow them to “breathe” in waterlogged soils — adaptations critical for survival in harsh coastal environments.

Further inland, where waters are calmer and salinity is lower, species such as Rhizophora (bakhaw) thrive. Despite being the most commonly planted species, they are less suited to exposed coastlines.

“That’s the species that’s usually planted in many mangrove planting projects or initiatives because it’s easy to propagate,” Castro said.

That convenience, however, has led to a widespread mismatch.

“Many studies and post-typhoon assessments show that bakhaw has a higher mortality rate compared to Avicennia and Sonneratia,” he added.

Environmental cues, such as the presence of barnacles or existing mangrove species, often indicate which organisms can or cannot survive in a given site. But these signals are not always taken into account.

Proper restoration, experts said, begins long before planting. It requires baseline studies, site assessments, and an understanding of natural regeneration processes. In some cases, planting may not be needed at all.

Why mistakes keep happening
If the science is well established, why do the same mistakes persist?

Part of the answer lies in the gap between knowledge and implementation.

“I wish I could say it’s templated, but some of us really just learn by experience,” Laririt said.

Mangrove restoration is inherently site-specific. Subtle differences in elevation, tidal flow, and sediment conditions can determine whether a species survives or fails — factors that are not always captured in generalized guidelines.

At the same time, key steps such as baseline studies, species identification, and ecosystem assessment are not always prioritized. In many cases, planting proceeds without a full understanding of what is already present on the ground.

This is particularly evident in cases where mangroves are planted over seagrass ecosystems.

“The thing is, when they plant mangroves in seagrass beds. The roots of mangroves are extensive; they could ultimately damage the seagrass beds. These are nursery grounds for commercially important fishes,” said Matthew Tabilog, founder of Mangrove Matters PH.

“They don’t understand that seagrasses are another ecosystem that also needs to be protected because they’re also vulnerable to climate change, coastal reclamation, and anthropogenic factors,” he added.
These missteps reflect a broader misunderstanding: that mangrove planting is always beneficial, regardless of context.

Coordination gaps further complicate the issue.

“If groups or even local government units interact with DENR personnel in their vicinity, then the likelihood of them getting correct information is higher. But we also tell our field personnel — if you’re not sure, you can always ask the experts. And the experts don’t have to be us. We have a good relationship with non-government organizations who perhaps know better than we do,” Laririt said.

Yet, as some experts note, this coordination does not always happen.

“One of the problems is that they don’t consult experts. Some of these projects just come up suddenly. It can’t be one-sided, where NGOs are always the ones reaching out — they also need to take the initiative to engage and meet with us,” Castro said.

Without these linkages, projects are often implemented in isolation and detached from both scientific expertise and local knowledge.

A pattern of misplanting
Across the country, these gaps have produced a pattern of recurring mistakes.

Wrong species, wrong zone
In Catanduanes, a 2023 mangrove planting activity drew criticism after Rhizophora was planted in seaward zones already occupied by Sonneratia and Avicennia. These zones are defined by high salinity and wave exposure — conditions that favor species with stronger anchoring systems and higher tolerance to environmental stress.

Planting Rhizophora in these areas does not just lower survival rates. It can also disrupt existing ecosystems by introducing competition in zones where other species are already established.

Advocates also raised concerns about the lack of baseline studies and consultation prior to the activity — steps considered essential in determining whether planting was appropriate in the first place.

Similar issues have been documented in Bohol and Negros Occidental, where planting efforts were criticized as “unscientific,” with species selected based on availability rather than ecological suitability.

ENR planted ‘wrong’ mangrove species, say advocates

Planting in the wrong ecosystem
In Cebu, a corporate-led mangrove planting initiative drew backlash after seedlings were placed directly on seagrass meadows. Seagrasses are not empty spaces. They are critical ecosystems that support marine biodiversity, serve as nursery grounds for fish and sustain coastal livelihoods.

Introducing mangroves into these areas, experts said, can alter sediment conditions, block sunlight and eventually displace seagrass communities — replacing one functioning ecosystem with another.

Planting for targets, not outcomes

Large-scale planting efforts, particularly after disasters, have also revealed how urgency can override ecological considerations.

Following Typhoon Yolanda, mangrove rehabilitation programs were rapidly implemented across affected areas. In many cases, planting was carried out in mudflats, seagrass beds and exposed coastlines — sites where mangroves do not naturally thrive.

These efforts were often driven by targets: the number of seedlings planted, the area covered, and the speed of implementation. However, without proper site matching, many of these plantations failed.

The emphasis on quantity over quality reflects a broader issue in restoration programs, where visible outputs are prioritized over long-term ecological outcomes.

When good intentions fall short

The consequences of mangrove misplanting are often not immediate but cumulative, and in some cases, difficult to reverse.

At the most basic level, improperly planted mangroves fail to survive.

“Our No. 1 consequence is that we won’t be able to achieve our ultimate goal, which is to achieve a higher survival rate,” Tabilog said. “It will be ultimately wasteful to our resources, to our time.”

But the impact extends beyond failed seedlings. In some cases, planting is carried out in areas where mangroves would have recovered naturally, raising questions about whether intervention was needed at all.

“Planting is often done in situations where no planting is needed at all,” global organization Wetlands International noted, explaining that natural regeneration can occur when the right ecological conditions are present.

Even when mangroves do grow, their long-term ecological value may be limited if the wrong species are planted in unsuitable areas.

“Quality over quantity,” said mangrove botanist Genea Cortez, warning that planting thousands of the wrong species in the wrong places may do little to support long-term sustainability.

Learning from the ground

In some communities, these lessons have been learned through experience.

In Sorsogon, Benito Doma, a provincial board member, recalled how repeated planting of Rhizophora often failed during storms.

“When a storm hits, and it gets damaged, it dies. Even if just a branch breaks off, it won’t survive. You have to plant again,” he said.

By contrast, Doma said Avicennia species proved more resilient — able to survive even when cut and continue growing over time, a reflection of its matatag (hardy) nature.

Over time, such observations shaped local approaches. Communities like those in Sorsogon recognized that different mangrove species support different forms of marine life, reinforcing the importance of maintaining ecological diversity rather than relying on a single species.

Changing the conversation

As awareness of mangrove misplanting grows, so too has public scrutiny, much of it unfolding online. But for Laririt, correcting the science should not come at the cost of discouraging participation.

“Let’s be kind,” she said. “There’s so much gatekeeping, and sometimes it’s because we want to sound like we know more than others. Maybe you do. But does it help?”

She warned that overly harsh criticism can alienate those trying to help.

“Do you think that those people who were shamed for planting the wrong species or planting in the wrong places would want to plant again? Maybe — or maybe not. Because they were already humiliated and embarrassed.”

At the same time, Laririt said many of these mistakes stem from a lack of accessible information.

“They thought about it. They thought it was a good idea to do something for nature. Unfortunately, no one explained to them how to do it correctly,” she said.

In recent years, the Philippines has seen measurable gains in mangrove cover, rising from about 240,824 hectares in 2010 to about 311,400 hectares in 2020. It is a sign that conservation and rehabilitation efforts are making an impact.

The challenge, then, is not just to call out what is wrong — but to make it easier for people to do it right.

Because while public participation remains critical, experts said it must be paired with clearer guidance, stronger coordination, and wider access to science-based knowledge.

“It’s not just about planting,” said Von Hernandez, vice president at Oceana. “It’s about doing it systematically.”

In the end, the measure of success is not how many seedlings are planted — but whether they grow into forests that can truly protect coastlines and sustain life.

SUNSTAR

PH leads global Earth Hour Bank with record-breaking 1.3M hours

FILIPINOS dedicated more than 1.3 million hours to environmental action during this year's Earth Hour, leading the global movement and cutting 161.98 megawatts (MW) from the power grid. The initiative, led by WWF-Philippines, brought together 44 institutions in a collective stand for the planet.

According to EarthHour.org, self-reported data showed the Philippines logged 1,377,368 hours, followed by China with 783,674 hours and India with 359,652 hours. The global total reached 2,925,040 hours, collected from 118 countries and territories. This surge reflects a growing commitment to environmental and climate action.

"Filipinos want breathable air, cooler weather, clean water, healthy forests and more renewable energy. By joining the global switch-off, they have sent a strong message that leaders and officials should do more for the environment," said lawyer Angela Consuelo Ibay, Earth Hour Philippines national director and WWF-Philippines climate and energy program head.

The Philippines' participation this year saw a more than 1,000 percent increase from 2024, when 116,273 hours were recorded. Earth Hour 2025 also engaged 28 partners from national and local government agencies, as well as multiple corporations that held their own switch-off activities.

Communities take action

In Manila, residents and volunteers transformed bare walls in four barangays into community murals inspired by local visions for a cleaner, greener future. In Donsol, Sorsogon, environmental advocates and volunteers reinforced their commitment to marine conservation and sustainability.

The Earth Hour "Hour Bank" encourages individuals to self-report hours spent on positive environmental actions. Activities include coastal cleanups, zero-waste cooking, urban gardening, watching nature documentaries, teaching environmental lessons and more.

The Department of Energy reported a significant grid load drop of 161.98 MW during the one-hour switch-off, surpassing 2024's recorded 132.11 MW drop. This reduction highlights the power of collective action in energy conservation.

Call for action

"Earth Hour began in 2007 as a symbolic movement to raise awareness of climate change. Today, it has evolved into a push for societal, cultural and political actions for a more sustainable world," Ibay said.

She added that with the Philippines consistently ranking among the most disaster-prone countries in the world, it is time for Filipinos to demand concrete policies and protective measures from leaders, not just promises.

This year's Earth Hour, with the theme "Switch Off and Secure Water for All," highlighted the connection between water security, climate change and nature conservation. WWF-Philippines led efforts nationwide, ensuring a broader reach and a greater impact.

As Earth Hour grows, so does the urgency for sustained environmental action — not just for an hour, but every day.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

DAILY TRIBUNE

Governance for a changing future: Planning together, building better
By: Secretary Robert E.A. Borje

In government, we often talk about coordination as though it were already enough. It is necessary, certainly. But for a country like the Philippines, where risks are increasingly interconnected and development pressures are becoming more complex, coordination must lead to something more durable: coherence, integration and agility in how the state plans and acts.

Climate risks do not arrive neatly within institutional boundaries. Flooding affects agriculture, infrastructure, settlements and livelihoods at once. Drought touches food systems, water security and even energy supply. Coastal hazards reshape ecosystems, communities and economic assets simultaneously.

Policy coherence, therefore, is not simply a bureaucratic ideal. It is a nation-building necessity.

This is also why one principle must be clear: respecting mandates should never become a reason for fragmentation.

Each institution of government has a specific role to play. That clarity matters. It keeps responsibilities defined and accountability intact. But clear mandates should not lead to silos. They should help identify where work naturally meets, where responsibilities intersect and where collaboration produces better outcomes.

Respecting mandates, in this sense, is not a limit to collaboration. It is its starting point.

For the Philippines, this matters even more now as we increasingly deal with not only isolated threats, but with multi-risk realities.

Typhoons interact with flooding and watershed degradation. Drought affects both agriculture and water availability. Rising seas and ecosystem decline shape where and how communities can grow safely. These risks are connected. And because they are connected, our governance response must also be connected.

This is where both horizontal and vertical integration remain essential.

Horizontally, agencies and sectors must work more closely together. Agriculture, environment, infrastructure, energy, water, local development and social protection are deeply interconnected in practice, even if separated in structure.

Vertically, national policy must find real expression at the local level. It must shape planning, budgeting, investment and implementation in provinces, cities, municipalities and communities. If good policy remains only at the center, then it cannot fully protect lives and livelihoods where it matters most.

The progress made under the leadership of President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. is, therefore, important and worth underscoring.

Under this administration, the Philippines has advanced key frameworks that strengthen the country's long-term climate and development direction. These include the National Adaptation Plan (NAP), the Nationally Determined Contribution Implementation Plan (NDCIP), and the broader direction provided by the Philippine Development Plan (PDP).

These are foundational frameworks and plans.

They provide a clearer basis for aligning resilience, low-carbon development, economic transformation and social protection. They move climate action away from slogans and toward planning, investment and implementation.

That is why across government and beyond, it is critical to engage these frameworks seriously.

The NAP and the NDCIP, in particular, should not be seen as documents for climate specialists alone. They are planning tools for national development. They help clarify how climate risk, public investment, sector priorities and local realities come together in practice.

Just as important, they reinforce a principle we must uphold more consistently: science-based and data-driven decision-making.

Today, we have more climate information, hazard data, geospatial mapping and risk analysis than ever before. The challenge is no longer generating data. It is ensuring that data is actually used — in planning, budgeting, project design and implementation.

This is where agility becomes essential because harmony and integration, while important, will not be enough if institutions are too slow to respond to changing realities.

Climate change has made one thing unmistakably clear: the clock is ticking.

Change will come with time but the pace of change is accelerating while the room for delay is shrinking.

That means governance today must not only be coordinated. It must also be capable of learning, adjusting and acting with urgency.

This is not a call for alarm. It is a call for seriousness and also a call for co-creation.

The work ahead cannot rest on one agency, one level of government, or one sector alone. The challenges are too interconnected and the opportunities too important. If we are to build a more resilient, inclusive and future-ready Philippines, then solutions must increasingly be shaped together across institutions, sectors and communities.

That is the deeper promise of harmony and integration: Not simply better meetings. Not simply cleaner matrices.

It is a government that can anticipate risk earlier, make better decisions faster and act with greater coherence when lives, livelihoods and development gains are on the line.

In the end, the real test of institutions is not how they perform under ideal conditions. It is how well they work together when pressures intensify, when uncertainty grows and when the cost of delay becomes too high.

That is the task before us now.

In a changing climate and an increasingly uncertain world, governance must do more than keep pace. It must help the country stay ahead of risk, protect hard-won development gains and build a future that is not only more resilient, but more deliberate, more inclusive and more secure for generations of Filipinos to come.

Group sets tact for gender action plan

A multi-sectoral body tasked with implementing the national gender action plan (GAP), one of the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, has convened and set its unified operational guidelines.

The Gender and Climate Change Advisory Group (GCAG) led by the Climate Change Commission (CCC), Department of Environment and Natural Resources, and the Philippine Commission on Women aims to ensure gender-responsive climate governance across agencies and sectors.

The meeting successfully forged a unified implementation strategy for GAP until 2030, clarified member roles and responsibilities, and identified immediate priority actions to sustain momentum across all government levels, according to CCC. Supporting the GCAG are the Agence Française de Développement, Asian Development Bank and Miriam College's Women and Gender Institute.

CCC Joins Global Community in Recognizing Important Role of Glaciers in Climate Change and Ecosystem Balance

The Climate Change Commission (CCC) joined the global community in recognizing the important role of glaciers in climate change and ecosystem balance in observance of the World Day for Glaciers.

Proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly, March 21 was designated as the World Day for Glaciers to highlight the rapid degradation of glaciers driven by climate change. The CCC underscored that while glaciers are not part of the country's ecosystem, their decline profoundly affects Filipino communities through rising seas, disrupted water systems, and the unraveling of interconnected climate processes.

When glaciers melt at unprecedented rates, they signal a planet under severe ecological stress. This rapid loss directly contributes to sea level rise, which in turn places coastal communities—including those in the Philippines—at heightened risk of flooding, erosion, and displacement.

Citing the National Adaptation Plan, the CCC warned that sea levels in the Philippines are projected to rise at approximately double the historical global average. By 2030, the national average rate of sea level rise is projected to be between 5.4 mm and 6.6 mm per year, compared to the global average of 3.2 to 4.2 mm per year recorded between 2006 and 2018.

By 2030, flooding from sea level rise could impact 77,000 to 154,000 Filipinos. By 2050, that number could increase to 252,000 to 423,000 individuals. Sea level rise is forecast to cause approximately PHP 18 billion in infrastructure damage by 2030, a figure that can escalate to PHP 41 billion by 2050.

Glaciers also act as natural freshwater reservoirs, releasing meltwater into rivers and streams that sustain communities, especially during dry seasons. As glaciers retreat, this vital source of water becomes increasingly uncertain, a reality that extends far beyond mountainous regions.

For tropical nations such as the Philippines, glaciers serve as vital 'water towers' that ensure a steady river flow for agriculture and hydropower even during dry season, according to a UNESCO report. These are fundamentally linked to local ecosystems through a feedback loop where healthy forests provide the moisture needed to sustain glacial ice. Protecting these peaks is inseparable from safeguarding the forests, as both are essential parts of an interconnected climate system.

As the world commemorates the World Day for Glaciers, the CCC reminded the public that protecting these "guardians of Earth's future" requires action on multiple fronts. The Commission called for a unified response that recognizes the deep links between global climate systems and local vulnerability.

“Glaciers may be far from our shores, but their fate is tied to ours through rising seas and shifting water cycles. The same carbon emissions that melt glacial ice also intensify the typhoons that batter our communities and the droughts that threaten our farms,” said Borje.

“We cannot address one without confronting the other. Protecting glaciers means reducing emissions, restoring our forests, and strengthening the resilience of our own coastal and agricultural systems. These are not separate struggles, they are one and the same.”

The Commission reiterated its commitment to the Paris Agreement and to accelerating the Philippines’ transition to a low-carbon, climate-resilient future, emphasizing that global action on glaciers begins with local action on fossil fuels, forests, and sustainable development.

CCC, MMDA, Metro Manila Council to strengthen science-based climate action across NCR

The Climate Change Commission (CCC) presented its science-based climate action and priority areas for collaboration to the Metro Manila Council (MMC) and Regional Development Council (RDC), aiming to strengthen regional coordination and accelerate climate action across the National Capital Region (NCR).

The presentation outlined the national climate scenario, key policies, and a partnership strategy that brings climate science into urban systems and decision-making, with direct implications for the region's local government units (LGUs).

At the core of the Commission's message is the need to move from fragmented responses to a systems-based approach, integrating climate risk data, projections, and policy frameworks into critical sectors such as flood management, transport, solid waste, and land use planning. This approach enables LGUs to better anticipate risks, reduce asset loss, and protect communities from compounding climate impacts.

"It's critically important that we provide support for the planning ahead. We are encouraged by the vision of President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr., which emphasizes a systems-based approach to the issue of climate change and addressing its impact," CCC Vice Chairperson and Executive Director Robert E.A. Borje said. "We underscore that climate change does not arrive as a single-footed event."

In the presentation, the CCC also highlighted the section of the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) that tackles the Climate Impact Drivers (CIDs) exposure level of LGUs in the NCR. This included sea level rise, extreme sea levels, increased temperature and droughts, fluvial flooding, and extreme weather.

With this, the Commission emphasized that climate risks in Metro Manila are increasingly interconnected and multi-hazard, requiring coordinated, region-wide strategies.

These initiatives are designed to strengthen LGU capacities as frontline actors in climate action, enhancing their ability to integrate climate change into local development plans, access financing, and implement resilience-building measures on the ground.

Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA) Chairperson Atty. Romando S. Artes expressed the agency's full support for the CCC's mandate and its drive for science-based climate action across the region, and pushed for creating a technical working group moving forward. He underscored the importance of sustained collaboration in advancing climate resilience and safeguarding Metro Manila communities.

Moreover, Artes expressed the MMDA's commitment to work with CCC to advance the transformative climate agenda and science-based planning.

The joint MMC-RDC platform, which serves as both the policy-making body for metro-wide governance and the region's development council, provides a strategic venue to align national climate commitments with regional planning and local implementation. The meeting was attended by 13 Metro Manila mayors, with some of them joining online.

The CCC also called on these local chief executives to take part in the National Climate Resilience Forum in July 2026, which aims to further align policies, investments, and partnerships toward a climate-resilient and low-carbon future.

Through sustained engagement with the MMC and RDC, the CCC continues to push for a regional, systems-driven approach to climate governance — one that translates science into action, strengthens LGU capacities, and minimizes economic and asset losses across Metro Manila.

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