



NEWS ROUNDUP

03 APRIL 2025 [10:00am]

- U of G, University of the Philippines Los Baños Partner to Share Agricultural Knowledge
- Toyota Aisin Philippines Strengthens Sustainability with MPower Renewal
- Community-based climate model crucial in climate change adaptation — expert
- Feast from the Forest' celebrates Philippine Biodiversity at La Mesa Ecopark
- World Bank OKs \$800-M loan for PH energy transition, resilience

CCC IN THE NEWS:

- Aboitiz Foundation backs climate adaptation at PDRF forum
- Partners for progress: The crucial role of private sector in climate change
- New Zealand reaffirms climate change support

UNIVERSITY OF GUELPH

[U of G, University of the Philippines Los Baños Partner to Share Agricultural Knowledge](#)

The world's top agricultural institutions are partnering to address global challenges in food security, climate resilience and sustainable development.

POWER PHILIPPINES NEWS

[Toyota Aisin Philippines Strengthens Sustainability with MPower Renewal](#)

Toyota Aisin Philippines Inc. (TAP) renewed its partnership with MPower, Manila Electric Company's (Meralco) retail electricity unit, to enhance efficiency and sustainability in its operations.

GMA NEWS ONLINE

[Community-based climate model crucial in climate change adaptation — expert](#)

By: Marile Celine Serquiña

A climate model based on the community is crucial in climate change adaptation because it can show where best to build and which hazardous areas should be avoided, an expert said Wednesday.

INQUIRER.NET

[Feast from the Forest' celebrates Philippine Biodiversity at La Mesa Ecopark](#)

Nature enthusiasts and advocates came together for the recently concluded “Feast from the Forest: A Taste of Biodiversity,” an event held at La Mesa Ecopark (LME) to celebrate the International Day of the Forests (IDF).

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

[World Bank OKs \\$800-M loan for PH energy transition, resilience](#)

By Anna Leah Gonzales

The World Bank's Board of Executive Directors approved a USD800 million loan to support the Philippine government's efforts to scale up the adoption of clean energy technologies, increase the security, flexibility and competition of electricity markets, and improve water management

CCC IN THE NEWS:

DAILY TRIBUNE

[Aboitiz Foundation backs climate adaptation at PDRF forum](#)

Aboitiz Foundation reinforced its commitment to climate action and sustainable development during the 2025 State of Climate Change Forum hosted by the Philippine Disaster Resilience Foundation (PDRF) in partnership with the New Zealand Embassy.

DAILY TRIBUNE

[Partners for progress: The crucial role of private sector in climate change](#)

By Secretary Robert E.A. Borje

These conversations at the State of Climate Forum 2025 and NAP Investment Forum underscored one undeniable truth: the private sector's participation in climate adaptation is essential to our nation's resilience.

PHILSTAR

[New Zealand reaffirms climate change support](#)

By Business Snippets - Marianne Go

The Philippine Disaster Resilience Foundation (PDRF), in partnership with the New Zealand embassy, last week held a meeting with key stakeholders for the second State of Climate Change forum at the Makati Diamond Residences.

UNIVERSITY OF GUELPH

[U of G, University of the Philippines Los Baños Partner to Share Agricultural Knowledge](#)

The world's top agricultural institutions are partnering to address global challenges in food security, climate resilience and sustainable development.

The University of Guelph and the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) have signed a renewed memorandum of understanding (MOU), strengthening a relationship that opens doors to student collaborations, new postgraduate programs and scholarships, joint research networks and innovative knowledge-sharing between Canada and the Philippines.

Renowned for its reputation in agriculture, environmental studies and life sciences, UPLB is a natural partner for U of G and its Ontario Agricultural College (OAC), with its 150-year legacy in agri-food research and innovation.

The MOU was signed by UPLB and a U of G delegation sent to the Philippines, co-led by Dr. Ben Bradshaw, assistant vice-president (graduate studies), and Dr. Helen Hambly, professor of rural development in OAC.

Hambly says food security and sovereignty – the ability to have high-quality, affordable and local food – is a shared goal among the two nations that the partnership will address.

“U of G has the opportunity to learn from UPLB’s rich community-based research — knowledge-gathering that is both responsible and inclusive and transforms students into global citizens,” Hambly says.

Bradshaw added, “We also have an opportunity to bring U of G’s expertise to support the Philippines to address some pressing matters in the agricultural sector, such as building climate resilience, especially among small landholders, and controlling the spread of African swine fever, which was first identified in the country in 2019.”

“This delegation is part of the University of Guelph’s initiative to partner with leading research universities around the world, as we seek to confront global challenges,” says Dr. Stuart McCook, assistant vice-president (international). “We share in UPLB’s long-standing commitment to research in food security and sovereignty, One Health, sustainability, communities and social justice, which make them a natural partner for the University of Guelph in the Philippines. This visit has affirmed a foundation for future collaborations in these areas.”

Partnership to strengthen Canada-Philippines relations

The signing of the MOU follows several years of partnership-building between UPLB and U of G, OAC and the One Health Institute. It builds on UPLB’s leadership in the Philippines-Canada Network for Sustainability (PCNS), a consortium of higher education institutions from both countries, with the support of the Canadian Embassy in Manila.

During the trip, U of G delegates met with various government agencies, including the Philippine Department of Science and Technology, Bureau of Agricultural Research and Commission on Higher Education.

“These opportunities are critical to solidifying Canada-Philippines relations amid intensifying global trade,” Hambly says, “as the Canadian government has made it clear we need to diversify our trade relations.”

Hambly’s work in the Philippines, through the non-profit Forest Foundation Philippines, supports nature-based solutions for climate adaptation led by women and youth in the country’s rural sector.

She emphasizes the mutual benefits of the renewed partnership, particularly for U of G students who can enrich their studies by learning from Filipino communities.

“When students learn about biodiversity and climate adaptation in a country so different from their own, they come to understand the similarities and differences and where we can work together,” Hambly says. “That kind of experiential learning is so critical in an age of AI.”

Other U of G delegates included: Francis Jabile, MSc capacity development and extension candidate; Carina Lang, manager of research development in the College of Social and Applied Human Sciences; and Dr. Grace Nichol, a recent PhD graduate in population medicine with a specialization in One Health.

Opportunities to exchange One Health knowledge – the holistic study of human, environmental and animal health – are also key to this partnership and could enhance both universities’ One Health education and research programs.

“We need to think inventively about how we might collaborate on training that takes advantage of our growing capacity for remote learning but still features technical, even hands-on, elements that are essential to addressing One Health challenges,” Bradshaw says.

Dr. Helen Hambly speaks into a microphone at a podium with the seal of the University of the Philippines College of Agriculture. A Philippine flag stands to the side, and a whiteboard is visible in the background. She appears to be giving a talk or lecture during a formal academic visit.

Climate crisis, food insecurity remain global challenges

Despite their geographic differences, Canada and the Philippines share similar challenges, Hambly says.

Nearly half of Filipino households experience food insecurity, a growing concern that also affects many Canadians amid rising food costs.

Both nations are also grappling with the impacts of climate change on their biodiverse ecosystems and rural populations. With more than 7,500 islands, the Philippines requires innovative, adaptable agricultural strategies that can aid vulnerable regions – an area that U of G can both contribute to and learn from through its research on rural and remote communities.

With this renewed partnership, U of G and UPLB aim to equip the next generation of agricultural leaders to address the planet's most urgent issues.

POWER PHILIPPINES NEWS

[Toyota Aisin Philippines Strengthens Sustainability with MPower Renewal](#)

Toyota Aisin Philippines Inc. (TAP) renewed its partnership with MPower, Manila Electric Company's (Meralco) retail electricity unit, to enhance efficiency and sustainability in its operations.

The renewed retail electricity supply agreement continues a successful collaboration of over a decade. Through this partnership, TAP will continue receiving reliable and cost-effective energy tailored specifically for its manufacturing facility in Sta. Rosa, Laguna.

TAP, the first Toyota Motor Corporation manual transmission manufacturing plant outside Japan, plays a critical role in the global automotive supply chain. With 95% of drivetrain components exported worldwide, uninterrupted power supply remains essential for TAP's production excellence.

"At TAP, we continuously seek partners who not only share our values but can also actively contribute to advancing our operational excellence and sustainability goals. MPower has consistently proven to be a reliable energy provider, ensuring the seamless operation of our manufacturing processes while fully aligning with our commitment to clean, renewable energy solutions. Their dedication to supporting our environmental objectives has been instrumental in maintaining the efficiency and sustainability of our operations," Toyota Aisin Philippines Acting General Manager Allan Cantal said.

Since 2013, MPower has supplied TAP's electricity needs, significantly aiding TAP's transition to 100% renewable energy in December 2019. This achievement aligns with Toyota's global sustainability and carbon neutrality goals, underscoring TAP's environmental commitment.

"We are honored to continue our partnership with Toyota Aisin Philippines, a company that shares our vision for sustainability and innovation. MPower remains committed to delivering dependable, efficient energy solutions that empower businesses like TAP to thrive. By offering competitive energy prices, MPower enables Toyota to be competitive in their own industry and remain top-of-mind," Meralco First Vice President and Head of MPower Redel Domingo said.

GMA NEWS ONLINE

[Community-based climate model crucial in climate change adaptation — expert](#)

A climate model based on the community is crucial in climate change adaptation because it can show where best to build and which hazardous areas should be avoided, an expert said Wednesday.

A climate model is a computer simulation of Earth's climate system, which can recreate the past climate or predict the future climate, the UK National Centre for Atmospheric Science said.

Alfredo Mahar Francisco Lagmay, executive director of the University of the Philippines Resilience Institute, said "These climate models for the region are very important, and they need

to be downscaled as well to the community level. Downscaling is very important. Science is very important" because a community adaptive to climate change can lessen the damage in its area.

"When the hazard strikes in the future, [when] big floods happen in the future, critical infrastructure and development are out of arm's reach. If they are out of harm's way, we don't have any disasters to discuss," he added.

Lagmay also said these climate models must be "downscaled," "processed," and "translated" into hazards so that they can be used when a certain area is being developed.

"When there's development and economic progress happening for a community unhampered by disaster, the growth and development will benefit the community, and it will give them a better chance to attain the sustainable development goals," he added.

Lagmay presented the Manifestation of Climate Change Hard Impacts in Greater Manila in the UN International Migration's Climate Mobility Innovation Lab Co-Creation Hub Brown Bag Session.

He also explained that reclamation projects continue because "real property is valuable."

"The consideration, the decisions, sometimes are not just based on science. It is also based on business models, so we have to create a balance," Lagmay said, nothing developments in a certain area should be consulted with the locals.

"The stakeholders would define, the people in the community would define what their vision is for their community in the future and let them decide what they wish to undertake," Lagmay said.

There are two pillars to climate: Mitigation, which is when the intent is to stop climate change, and adaptation, which is when we prepare for climate change.

According to Lagmay, climate adaptation allows communities to adapt to climate change through preparedness.

"Adaptation means we're trying to plan communities and trying to anticipate the adverse impact of climate change through planning. Come the time it happens, we are prepared, and we can address all of those concerns," he said.

Effects of climate change is already being felt in the Philippines. According to the 2025 Climate Risk Index, the Philippines ranks as the 10th most affected country by extreme weather events in the last 30 years.

According to the report, the Philippines has endured a total of 372 extreme weather events that caused \$34B in losses throughout given 30-year period.

In 2024, the country experienced a parade of six typhoons within a month, with four of them thrashing the country all at the same time. According to the National Disaster Risk Reduction Management Council, infra damages from the typhoons hit at least P469M.

Meanwhile, PAGASA said zero or one tropical cyclone is expected to enter the Philippine area of responsibility (PAR) in April.

The state weather bureau also observed that a large part of the country experienced above-normal rainfall from March 1 to March 31, while several areas also had near-normal rainfall even without typhoons entering PAR.

It said the rains were brought about by various weather systems, including the northeast monsoon (Amihan), easterlies, and the shear line.

INQUIRER.NET

[Feast from the Forest' celebrates Philippine Biodiversity at La Mesa Ecopark](#)

Nature enthusiasts and advocates came together for the recently concluded “Feast from the Forest: A Taste of Biodiversity,” an event held at La Mesa Ecopark (LME) to celebrate the International Day of the Forests (IDF).

Organized by MAD Travel, in partnership with Manila Water Foundation, the event highlighted the rich biodiversity of the Philippines while promoting sustainable livelihood and conservation efforts.

This year’s celebration of IDF, themed “Forests and Food,” emphasized the importance of these initiatives.

Attendees enjoyed a curated tasting experience featuring locally sourced coffee, tea, and honey, showcasing the unique flavors of the country’s most biodiverse regions. Through storytelling and discussions, participants gained insight into the environmental challenges faced by these communities and the role they can play in preserving nature.

Beyond the tasting, guests embarked on an eco-walk through La Mesa Ecopark, where they engaged in tree-planting activities to contribute to ongoing reforestation efforts.

Proceeds from the event will support the redevelopment of the ecopark and MAD Travel’s sustainability initiatives.

“The event successfully fostered a deeper appreciation for nature, uniting individuals in their commitment to environmental preservation. As reforestation and conservation continue to be pressing global issues, Feast from the Forest served as a powerful reminder of how small actions can make a significant impact,” said Murphy Amparo, Operations Manager of La Mesa Ecopark.

The La Mesa Ecopark plays a crucial role in preserving the health of the La Mesa Dam and its water sources, which aids in ensuring water supply availability for Metro Manila, through forest conservation, sustainable practices, and environmental stewardship and education.

Additionally, LME promotes food security and enhances biodiversity by maintaining a balanced ecosystem. It also serves as a buffer zone, protecting the Dam from encroachment.

LME is home to numerous Philippine endemic trees such as Molave, Narra, Namio, Antipolo, and Pili.

It may be recalled that Manila Water Company (MWC), in partnership with the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) and the Quezon City Government, successfully opened the La Mesa Ecopark to double down on promoting environmental stewardship.

Under the supervision of the Manila Water Foundation, the management of the ecopark aims to contribute to UN Sustainable Development Goals, or SDGs: SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy), SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), SDG 13 (Climate Action), and SDG 15 (Life on Land).

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

[World Bank OKs \\$800-M loan for PH energy transition, resilience](#)

By Anna Leah Gonzales

The World Bank's Board of Executive Directors approved a USD800 million loan to support the Philippine government's efforts to scale up the adoption of clean energy technologies, increase the security, flexibility and competition of electricity markets, and improve water management

In a statement Wednesday, the World Bank said the First Energy Transition and Climate Resilience Development Policy Loan will help accelerate energy transition and increase resilience to climate in the Philippines.

It is expected to increase the share of renewable energy in installed generation capacity from 30 percent in 2023 to 42 percent by 2027; support the procurement of 1,000 megawatts of new offshore wind capacity; and implement energy efficiency measures saving 5 GWh annually.

"Focusing on renewable energy sources and using energy more efficiently can help the country reduce electricity costs, improve energy security, and cut down on pollution," said World Bank Division Director for the Philippines, Malaysia, and Brunei Zafer Mustafaoglu.

"Using more affordable renewable energy in the energy and transport sectors is crucial for the Philippines to build a strong economy," Mustafaoglu added.

The World Bank noted that investing in energy transition by focusing on local renewable energy (RE) sources, energy efficiency (EE), and other clean energy sources can help lower electricity generation costs while increasing energy security.

It added that expanding the proportion of consumers that can choose their electricity supplier and improving the framework for competitive procurement of renewable energy will help lower electricity prices.

"To accelerate energy transition and keep electricity affordable for all Filipinos, the Philippines needs reforms to ensure achieving the government's renewable energy and energy efficiency targets, improving grid capacity and flexibility, and enhancing competition in electricity markets," said Feng Liu, World Bank Senior Energy Specialist and Task Team Leader of the operation.

“These reforms can help lower power supply cost and improve the reliability and resilience of the power system, thereby making electricity more affordable and reliable for Filipino households and businesses,” Liu added.

The loan from World Bank will also be used to improve governance and cohesiveness in the water sector by introducing policy reforms for water resources management and water supply and sanitation by promoting better coordination between national and local governments.

“These reforms in the water sector are expected to increase access to safely managed water supply and sanitation services; raise funding and financing for water and sanitation projects; and improve the financial sustainability of local government-run water service providers. Ultimately, the DPL, a first for the Philippine water sector is a move toward more effective coordination, planning and management across sectors and levels of government,” said World Bank Senior Water Supply and Sanitation Specialist Maria Fiorella Fabella. (PNA)

CCC IN THE NEWS:

DAILY TRIBUNE

[Aboitiz Foundation backs climate adaptation at PDRF forum](#)

Aboitiz Foundation reinforced its commitment to climate action and sustainable development during the 2025 State of Climate Change Forum hosted by the Philippine Disaster Resilience Foundation (PDRF) in partnership with the New Zealand Embassy.

With the theme “Advancing Private Sector Engagement and the National Adaptation Plan,” the event gathered key stakeholders from government, civil society, and major corporations to foster stronger collaboration in addressing the impacts of climate change and promoting disaster resilience in the Philippines.

As one of the private sector leaders championing sustainability, Aboitiz Foundation joined the ranks of Coca-Cola Philippines, First Philippine Holdings Corporation, and San Miguel Corporation in supporting the forum. The event emphasized how businesses can play a significant role in shaping climate policy, investing in green technologies, and scaling up community-level adaptation efforts.

New Zealand Climate Change Ambassador Stuart Horne acknowledged the Philippines’ progress and emphasized the importance of public-private partnerships.

“Through cooperation and innovation, we can create solutions that not only protect communities but also drive economic growth and investment,” he said.

Climate Change Commission Vice Chairperson and Executive Director Secretary Robert E.A. Borje echoed this sentiment, highlighting the need for active private sector involvement. “Accelerating climate action and resilience demands the strong participation of the private sector and international partners,” Borje noted in his keynote address.

Forum discussions explored how sustainable business practices can be aligned with national climate policies under the Paris Agreement, including the country’s Nationally Determined

Contributions (NDCs). Experts underscored the importance of harnessing technological solutions and private capital to scale up climate adaptation.

“Achieving climate adaptation requires a unified effort. The private sector must be a driving force in climate adaptation, spearheading innovative solutions and collaborating with government and international partners to build resilient and sustainable communities,” said Giggay Hontiveros-Malvar, president of Aboitiz Foundation.

By supporting the PDRF Climate Change Forum, Aboitiz Foundation signaled its continued commitment to inclusive and impactful climate action — working alongside stakeholders to build resilient communities, encourage innovation, and ensure a sustainable future for the Philippines.

DAILY TRIBUNE

[Partners for progress: The crucial role of private sector in climate change](#)

By Secretary Robert E.A. Borje

For the past week, I had the privilege of engaging with different private sector leaders in discussions related to the National Adaptation Plan (NAP). These conversations at the State of Climate Forum 2025 and NAP Investment Forum underscored one undeniable truth: the private sector’s participation in climate adaptation is essential to our nation’s resilience. The Philippines, among the most at risk to climate change impacts, cannot afford to neglect the power of private investments and partnerships in securing long-term stability, growth and survival.

To be effective, the NAP process must be country-driven, transparent and inclusive, involving key sectors such as the vulnerable communities, civil society organizations, the academe and the business community. Industry players bring not only capital but also unique expertise and experience that can accelerate adaptation efforts and contribute to greater national resiliency.

When the private sector considers climate action as an opportunity to adapt to the impacts of and mitigate the root causes of climate change, transformation can finally happen. Businesses can create social, ecological and technological gains while generating financial returns. Businesses can use climate risk avoidance and reduction to drive growth with scale and speed. Businesses can invest, innovate and create impact, thereby ensuring long-term benefits, not just for their shareholders but also for society as a whole.

The Philippines has taken important steps to establish the enabling environment for businesses to embrace the needed change and lay the groundwork for private sector engagement in climate adaptation.

Programs such as the Land Bank’s Ecosystem Program and the Development Bank’s Green Financing Program, and regulatory measures including the Banko Sentral ng Pilipinas’ Sustainable Finance Framework, are examples of our country’s commitment.

These efforts have contributed to over P100 billion in sustainable bond issuances. Yet, we must do more to fully engage the private sector, particularly in infrastructure and other critical industries.

The NAP outlines several strategies to deepen private sector engagement in climate adaptation. One key strategy is the creation of an investor database that provides access to historical climate data and predictive models. This database will equip stakeholders with valuable insights to direct investments toward priority adaptation projects. Continuous data monitoring and trend analysis will help ensure that adaptation efforts remain responsive to evolving risks.

Equally important is a strategy focused on providing technical assistance to enhance private sector capacity in adaptation financing, especially for micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), which make up 99.63 percent of businesses in the Philippines. Unlike large businesses with established capabilities in capital markets, MSMEs often struggle to access financing for climate adaptation measures. Through partnerships with local and international experts, we can advise MSMEs on available funding sources and guide them in unlocking financing opportunities.

Another crucial step involves the establishment of a national focal entity for adaptation finance. This unified body will play a key role in coordinating stakeholders, consolidating adaptation-related financing and projects, and creating a pipeline of viable adaptation investments. By streamlining efforts and ensuring greater accountability, the private sector would find climate adaptation projects more attractive and feasible.

Integrating climate resilience into private sector operations is also necessary. For example, businesses must apply not only traditional models and conduct climate stress tests to assess vulnerabilities, identify risks and explore opportunities for adaptation-focused investments. Public-Private Partnerships offer additional avenues for the private sector to contribute to climate-related projects and initiatives. These partnerships promote both innovation, such as new technologies and approaches, and help increase the coverage of solutions to critical sectors like infrastructure, energy and transportation.

Building community resilience is key in protecting assets and business and service continuity — the primary goal of partnerships between local government units and businesses. The Climate Change Commission (CCC) already has ongoing collaboration with key private sector players, including Aboitiz Foundation, Aboitiz Equity Ventures and First Gen, to provide capacity development training for LGUs to help them develop and implement effective Local Climate Change Action Plans.

Scaling and expanding these partnerships under the NAP framework open up new avenues for impactful investments that can be replicated in other regions. This will drive broader climate resilience and for private entities that integrate adaptation solutions into their business models.

At the CCC, we are offering our partners in the private sector with engagement pathways designed to sustain collaboration and accountability, or what we call a “loop of action and ambition.”

One such pathway is “Engage-To-Leverage,” which focuses on CCC’s bilateral partnerships with the private sector that is anchored on the respective strengths of CCC and its partners. It aims to deliver technical offerings such as knowledge and capacity building, policy development and review, and carbon sequestration measurement and projections.

Beyond bilateral partnerships, we have our “Lead-To-Shape” strategy. This CCC’s system of “contact groups” includes CONNECT or Communicating Opportunities to Network, Navigate and Explore Climate Transformation for the private sector, and WECAN or Working to Empower Climate Action Network for the civil society. These contact groups serve as platforms to foster and enhance collaboration, as well as encourage and support businesses to transition from corporate social responsibility to sustainability-centered operations. They also promote cohesive civil society program interventions on the ground, strengthening their voices in shaping national policies and agenda.

We likewise emphasize the importance of social mobilization campaigns through our “Influence-To-Act” strategy. This includes CCC’s social mobilization activities that bring together climate champions and the larger community to work towards climate actions. One example is the Partners’ Solidarity Night that we held during the observance of the Global Warming and Climate Change Consciousness Week last November, in partnership with Ayala Corporation, Metro Pacific Investments Corporation and UN Women.

These pathways are envisioned to provide a concrete platform for collaboration between the CCC and the private sector, working upstream to inform national policymaking and global positioning, and downstream to align investment programs with national emission reduction goals. At the same time, we aim to establish a policy and investment environment that provides the private sector stability and a level playing field as it transitions to a low-carbon, climate-resilient economy.

It is clear that the private sector’s involvement in climate adaptation is crucial for the sustainability of businesses, communities and the planet. The Philippines stands at a crossroads, and with the right partnerships, we can build a resilient future that benefits all.

PHILSTAR

[New Zealand reaffirms climate change support](#)

The Philippine Disaster Resilience Foundation (PDRF), in partnership with the New Zealand embassy, last week held a meeting with key stakeholders for the second State of Climate Change forum at the Makati Diamond Residences.

No less than New Zealand Climate Change Ambassador Stuart Horne attended the meeting last week to reaffirm New Zealand's commitment to support the Philippines in advancing climate solutions.

In his remarks, Ambassador Horne assured that New Zealand is committed to working alongside the Philippines in building climate resilience through cooperation and innovation to "create solutions that not only protect communities, but also drive economic growth and investment."

New Zealand, he said, remains committed to the goals of the Paris Agreement even in the face of the United States' decision to withdraw from the global accord to combat climate change.

His country, he said, submitted its first Biennial Transparency Report in December last year, and in February was among the earliest countries to release their second nationally determined contribution.

He acknowledged that the problem of climate change requires global partnerships, "but we also understand that how we partner is just as important as what we deliver. We are working hard to support like-minded countries – including the Philippines – in achieving their climate priorities."

New Zealand, he said, "has consistently championed innovative, flexible and high-trust models with our partners. We are committed to working alongside the Philippines in building climate resilience. Through cooperation and innovation, we can create solutions that not only protect communities, but also drive economic growth and investment."

This was evident, he said, during New Zealand Prime Minister Chris Luxon's visit to the Philippines in April last year. Luxon was accompanied by a trade delegation and there were a number of climate focused outcomes. These included:

- A hydrogen cooperation agreement among Tuaropaki Trust, its Japanese partner Obayashi Corp. and Philippine geothermal giant Energy Development Corp. (EDC). The trilateral agreement is the first of its kind.
- Morrison Global also announced it had recently decided to invest in a Philippines renewable energy company.
- Creative HQ and Plant and Food Research respectively signed contracts with national and local Philippine government departments, and the Asian Development Bank in the areas of government innovation and climate smart agriculture.

At the government to government level, Horne continued, Prime Minister Luxon and President Marcos also committed to "discuss the development of a potential Memorandum of Arrangement" relating to Article 6 of the Paris Agreement.

At COP29 in November last year, he added, the governments of New Zealand and the Philippines went further and committed to develop a bilateral climate change cooperation arrangement "to support our countries to achieve our respective climate change goals. Work to progress this is well under way and will see us deepening our cooperation to share information, experiences and best practices on a range of climate change policies and initiatives."

New Zealand, he said, also works closely with the Philippines to support its climate ambitions. One way New Zealand does this is through the Climate Smart Agriculture Initiative which has been operational in the Philippines since 2020.

The Philippine project, he said, seeks to support reduction of agricultural greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by developing national agriculture emissions measurement and regional leadership capability. It enables the Philippines to accurately record GHG emissions and work toward meeting its NDC target to reduce GHG emissions by 75 percent compared to business-as-usual emissions in 2030.

The last 12 months, Horne said, has seen a focus on training Filipino scientists, students and officials whom he met in New Zealand last month and once again during Monday's meeting.

While in Manila last year, Horne also pointed out, "our Prime Minister also announced a \$25-million contribution to the Manila-headquartered ADB's Energy Transition Mechanism. This contribution supports the clean energy transition in the Philippines, Vietnam and Indonesia, and comes under New Zealand's Climate Finance Strategy. Its current focus is providing technical support for the retirement of the Mindanao Coal Fired Power Plant."

He ended his remarks by stressing, "We have an opportunity now to build upon a solid foundation, enabling us to reach our respective goals. We are working at a vital time and see the potential to do more together."

This year's forum, themed "Advancing Private Sector Engagement and the National Adaptation Plan," focused on strengthening partnerships between the private sector, government and civil society to build climate resilience in the Philippines.

In his keynote address, Climate Change Commission vice chairperson and executive director Robert Borje emphasized the vital role of collaboration in addressing climate challenges. In his address, he pointed out that accelerating climate action and resilience demands the strong participation of the private sector and international partners, and that preventing losses and damages "starts with turning our adaptation plans into tangible solutions, with the private sector stepping up as a driving force in building a climate-resilient future."

A panel discussion featuring Secretary Borje, Ambassador Horne, and San Miguel Corp. foundation chair Cecile Ang explored how businesses can drive climate action. The discussion highlighted successful private sector initiatives in climate adaptation, mitigation and disaster resilience – with speakers emphasizing that climate action cannot succeed without business engagement.

"The private sector has the resources, expertise and networks to make a significant impact," said Ang.

"By investing in sustainable practices and supporting community resilience, businesses can help secure a safer, more sustainable future for everyone."

The forum concluded with a renewed commitment from PDRF to continue working closely with the New Zealand Embassy, the Philippine government and the private sector to accelerate climate resilience initiatives.

=END=