



NEWS ROUNDUP

0 APRIL 2024 [09:00 am]

- Parched farms, cancelled classes: Extreme heat scorches Southeast Asia
- Climate change disrupts education for millions in Philippines
- 26M Filipino learners suffer the most from climate change, says Save the Children Philippines
- German FDIs to PH reach \$150 M in 2023
- DND Eyes More Engagements With India On Climate Action, Defense
- Solon urges creation of protocols for extreme heat
- Women and climate change
- Lawmaker: Elevate PAGASA to lead weather-related decision-making
- PH, UK deepens collaboration on climate, biodiversity priorities

ASIA NEWS NETWORK

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DAILY GUARDIAN

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By: Francis Allan L. Angelo

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JOURNAL ONLINE

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MANILA BULLETIN

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PAGEONE

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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By: Gabriel Pabico Lalu

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By: Reena Francisco

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PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

Lawmaker: Elevate PAGASA to lead weather-related decision-making

By: Filane Mikee Cervantes

A congressman on Wednesday proposed elevating the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) as the primary authority in weather-related decision-making processes, such as the suspension of classes during adverse weather conditions.

PH, UK deepens collaboration on climate, biodiversity priorities

By: Marita Moaje

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Information and Knowledge Management Division

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The high temperatures are also a reminder to South-east Asian governments that the region remains “extremely vulnerable” to the impacts of climate change.

Seven-year-old Daryl Siongco was sweating even while doing his homework at home in Quezon City, near the Philippine capital Manila, on April 2.

His state-run school had closed for the day because of the warm weather, which reached 35 deg C recently.

The second-grader, who has asthma, told The Straits Times that staying in school during the summer months of March to May was difficult because the classroom he shares with 39 other pupils has only two electric fans.

Due to the unbearable heat, the Department of Education has allowed schools to either hold remote lessons or cancel classes altogether.

The country is also in the process of shifting back to a June to March academic calendar, following complaints among students and teachers over holding classes during the peak summer season. The academic year had moved to August to May in 2020 in a bid to synchronise it with that of other countries.

The El Nino weather phenomenon has brought hotter, drier weather over South-east Asia due to changes in sea surface temperatures and surface winds over the Pacific Ocean.

Though the phenomenon has begun to weaken, it will continue to fuel above-average temperatures across the globe, the World Meteorological Organisation said on March 5.

Temperatures topped 40 deg C in parts of Thailand, Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar, while hitting at least 35 deg C in Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines in the week of March 17 to 23, latest data from the Climate Prediction Centre at the US’ National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration showed.

In Singapore, several schools eased uniform regulations in late March to allow students to dress in their physical education attire until further notice, while a church in Vietnam's Ho Chi Minh City has been helping others beat the heat by giving out free iced tea to passers-by.

However, a 22-year-old Malaysian man died of heatstroke in Pahang on Feb 2, and a total of 27 other heat-related cases have been reported in Malaysia in the first three months of 2024. The National Disaster Management Agency and the Malaysian Armed Forces are now considering carrying out cloud seeding in certain areas to help deal with the heat.

Recurring bush fires have also been recorded in the states of Selangor, Johor and Sarawak, with the disaster management agency saying that the fire and rescue department plans to focus on more than 650 hot spots nationwide to prevent more bush fires from breaking out.

"To tackle the heat, do not expose yourself under the hot sun in the afternoon, especially in outdoor areas, stay away from rivers and waterfall areas due to sudden water surge from heavy rainfall," said Malaysia's Meteorological Department deputy director-general Mohd Hisham Anip.

Malaysian business owner Suzanna Said, 49, said residents in her area in Langkawi had to endure temperatures as high as 39 deg C in the past week.

"Due to the hot spell, we have also had bush fires. Luckily for me, my homestay business was not impacted because of repeat customers," she said.

Over in Thailand, the authorities said on April 1 that temperatures could reach 43 deg C to 44.5 deg C in the coming month, with some occasional relief due to summer storms. Still, the Thai Meteorological Department warned people to expect temperatures to be about 30 per cent higher than normal.

The extreme weather is also affecting farmers in the region, as scorching temperatures and dwindling water supplies parched large swathes of farmland.

Padi farmers in Kedah, Malaysia, face a heightened risk of water shortages and lower production yields.

Southern Vietnam, and its “rice bowl” in the Mekong Delta region, suffered a long heatwave in February, said officials. The resulting drought has made it difficult for farmers to transport their crops due to low water levels in the region’s canals.

Meanwhile, concerns over a rice shortage due to the dry weather led Indonesian President Joko Widodo in December 2023 to order the military to join farming activities and use idle military land for planting in a bid to boost domestic production and curb the rising prices of agricultural products.

Climate change expert Rose Perez, former chief of the Philippines’ meteorological agency, advised people to be more mindful of their government’s early warning signals for extreme temperatures. She told the public to stay hydrated, and advised companies to give resting periods for labourers exposed to the warm weather during work hours.

These high temperatures are also a reminder to South-east Asian governments that the region remains “extremely vulnerable” to the impacts of climate change, said Mr Dave Sivaprasad, South-east Asia lead for climate and sustainability at Boston Consulting Group.

“So, this is something that our region collectively and countries in South-east Asia need to start planning for. We need to build measures to adapt and build resilience,” he said.

DAILY GUARDIAN

[Climate change disrupts education for millions in Philippines](#)

By: Francis Allan L. Angelo

More than 26 million students enrolled across the Philippines are enduring the severe effects of climate change, which threaten their education by causing school calendar changes and class suspensions due to increasingly violent weather events.

The alarming statistic is part of a global crisis that disrupts the education of approximately 75 million children annually.

“In the past four years, we have experienced changes in the school calendar and mode of delivery due to the pandemic and to adapt to the changing climate, on top of all the class suspensions due to frequent typhoons. We are yet facing another calendar shift due to El Nino,” said Rohj Olivo, a 17-year-old climate campaigner.

Olivo, a dedicated youth advocate for Save the Children Philippines, represented his peers at the 11th Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development in Thailand. There, he discussed the vital rights of children to a healthy environment with notable UN figures, asserting the need for uninterrupted access to education amidst climate crises.

“Our argument is clear: in the midst of climate change, government action should ensure that we have uninterrupted access to quality education, and to effectively solve this problem, leaders must not only listen to children and youth’s voices but also heed our wisdom, for it is our future that hangs in the balance,” Olivo emphasized.

At the forum, Congresswoman Ma. Cynthia King Chan highlighted the significance of R.A. 10821, or the Children’s Emergency Relief and Protection Act, in safeguarding educational continuity for affected children.

Save the Children Philippines has actively supported this legislation, ensuring its implementation across regions. Chan also acknowledged initiatives such as incorporating climate change into curriculums and the Green School Program, which aim to make nearly 47,000 public schools more resilient to climate change.

“By imparting knowledge, and skills, and fostering critical thinking in our children, we empower them to become climate champions,” Chan articulated.

Further, the organization's Comprehensive School Safety and Quality Assurance System programs, active in thousands of schools and barangays, are essential to fostering climate literacy and resilience among children and communities.

JOURNAL ONLINE

[26M Filipino learners suffer the most from climate change, says Save the Children Philippines](#)

Over 26 million enrolled students in the Philippines are confronted with the multifaceted impacts of climate change, including the possibility of El Nino bringing intolerable heat, more powerful typhoons, and limited access to water for basic needs. This happens to about half of the 75 million children around the world whose education is interrupted every year by natural disasters like floods and drought.

“In the past four years, we have experienced changes in the school calendar and mode of delivery due to the pandemic and to adapt to the changing climate, on top of all the class suspensions due to frequent typhoons. We are yet facing another calendar shift due to El Nino,” 17-year-old climate campaigner Rohj Olivo said.

Recently, Olivo was in Thailand as a youth representative for the 11th Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD). He is a youth advocate for Save the Children Philippines’ Generation Hope campaign against climate change and inequality. During the APFSD, Olivo spoke with Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana, Executive Secretary of UN ESCAP, and Surya Deva, UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Development, about children’s rights to a healthy environment.

“Our argument is clear: in the midst of climate change, government action should ensure that we have uninterrupted access to quality education, and to effectively solve this problem, leaders must not only listen to children and youth’s voices but also heed our wisdom, for it is our future that hangs in the balance,” Olivo shared.

During APFSD’s event on Building a Greener Future: Education as a Climate Solution in Bangkok, Thailand, Philippine Congresswoman Ma. Cynthia King Chan proudly shared information about R.A. 10821, also known as the Children’s Emergency Relief and Protection Act, that ensures the continuity of services, particularly education, for children who are displaced before, during, and after disasters.

Save the Children Philippines has been at the forefront of advocating for R.A. 10821, including its localization so that all Filipino children are protected from emergencies at all times.

Congresswoman Cindi commended ongoing efforts such as integrating climate change modules and the Green School Program, a school-based adaptation program, as well

as supporting research and enhancing teacher training. The program will help 47,000 public schools strengthen their climate mitigation adaptation strategies and enhance resilience, thus reducing learning interruptions.

“By imparting knowledge, and skills, and fostering critical thinking in our children, we empower them to become climate champions,” Congresswoman Chan said.

Save the Children Philippines also implements Comprehensive School Safety (CSS) Ecosystems and Quality Assurance System (QAS) programs in over 21,000 schools and 12,000 barangays to ensure that children, schools, and communities are climate-literate, responsible, and resilient to the inevitable impacts of climate change.

MANILA BULLETIN

[German FDIs to PH reach \\$150 M in 2023](#)

By: Khriscielle Yalao

Showcasing the burgeoning ties between the two nations, foreign direct investments (FDIs) from Germany to the Philippines reached nearly \$150 million in 2023, according to the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI).

“Germany has consistently ranked as a top trade and investment partner, and 2023 was a record-breaking year. Foreign direct investment (FDI) from Germany soared to a staggering \$149.89 million, the highest since 2005. This momentum continued with Germany emerging as the leading source of foreign-approved investments in 2023, contributing a remarkable P393.99 billion,” said DTI Secretary Alfredo E. Pascual in a statement delivered during the second Joint Economic Commission (JEC) meeting last March 27.

The JEC was held following President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.'s working visit to Germany last March 12, wherein the national government secured around \$4 billion worth of business agreements for the country. These comprise three letters of intent (LOIs), three signed memoranda of understanding (MOUs), and two memoranda of agreement (MOA), totaling eight deals.

“The meeting revealed the growing potential of our economic relationship with Germany and the remarkable synergy between our economies. Through the JEC, we are building our shared future—one that leverages our strengths and our united goal of bringing inclusive and sustainable growth for all,” remarked Pascual.

The JEC enabled the Philippines' trade and industry sector stakeholders to engage in further dialogue with German officials and businessmen to discuss business opportunities, especially as the country's growth rate is projected to seesaw between 5.8 to 6.3 percent this year.

“Trade policy is a potent tool to address challenges like climate change. Under the Philippine Development Plan (2023-2028), we’re positioning the Philippines as a prime destination for investments, especially in environmental, social, and governance (ESG) initiatives,” said DTI Undersecretary for International Trade Allan B. Gepty.

“We are also committed to advancing purposive, assertive, and forward-looking free trade agreements (FTAs) that will expand economic space and increase the country’s participation in global supply chains,” he added.

According to Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action (BMWK) Parliamentary State Secretary Stefan Wenzel, Germany sees the Philippines as a "promising partner" as it seeks to "diversify and reduce one-sided dependencies," in reference to its international supply chains.

More than 70 representatives from German and Philippine government agencies and business sectors were involved in the JEC. From the Philippines, they were Philippine Constructors Association Inc. (PCA), IT and Business Process Association of the Philippines, Aboitiz InfraCapital, Inc., Aboitiz Power Corporation, San Miguel Corporation (SMC).

The German stakeholders included were German-Philippine Chamber of Commerce & Industry (GPCCI), German Trade and Invest, Bauer, Bosch, Continental, KfW IPEX-Bank Asia Ltd., Lufthansa Technik Philippines, Mercedes-Benz Group Services Philippines Inc., Start2 Group, Triconti ECC Renewables Corporation, and wpd AG.

In the meeting, discussions on bilateral cooperation were conducted, particularly on minerals processing and investment financing, along with manufacturing, renewable energy (RE), construction, and the information technology (IT) and business process management (BPM).

On critical minerals, Board of Investments (BOI) Director for Resource-Based Industries Service Raquel B. Echague and Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Mines and Geosciences Bureau Engr. Bernardo V. Bitanga showcased the value proposition for minerals processing in the Philippines, and proposed projects like technical assistance for establishing an iron-making facility.

Moreover, DTI Undersecretary for Industry Development and Investment Promotions Group Ceferino S. Rodolfo addressed the "value proposition of KfW IPEX-Bank Asia Ltd. by highlighting the Philippine companies’ engagement in major infrastructure projects holding opportunities for investment financing."

PAGEONE

DND Eyes More Engagements With India On Climate Action, Defense

The Department of National Defense (DND) is looking to forge stronger climate change mitigation cooperation with its Indian counterparts, aside from boosting its defense ties with the South Asian country.

“For his part, as the Chairperson of the National Disaster Risk Reduction Management Council (NDRRMC), Secretary (Gilberto) Teodoro (Jr.) highlighted the possibility of cooperation between the Philippines and India on climate change mitigation to help secure vulnerable internal and external supply chains,” DND spokesperson Arsenio Andolong said in a statement Monday night.

This came as the DND chief met with Indian Minister of External Affairs Dr. Subrahmanyam Jaishankar and his delegation on March 26 at the DND headquarters in Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City.

“Both officials looked forward to more robust defense and military engagements, particularly the conduct of ministerial-level meetings,” Andolong noted.

Aside from this, Teodoro also thanked India’s unwavering support for the Philippines’ position on the West Philippine Sea/South China Sea issue.

“Minister Jaishankar reaffirmed India’s commitment to upholding a rules-based international order and promoting peace and security in the Indo-Pacific Region,” the DND spokesperson said.

Also, the DND chief acknowledged India’s role in the ongoing modernization efforts of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) which was highlighted by the country’s acquisition of three batteries of the BrahMos cruise missile system which will be utilized for the Philippine Navy’s Shore-Based Anti-Ship Missile System (SBASMS).

These weapons are expected to be delivered within this year.

“As the Philippines continues to develop its own credible defense posture, Secretary Teodoro acknowledged India’s contribution to this effort, particularly through its participation in the modernization of the AFP,” Andolong stressed.

In pursuit of deeper defense and military relations, both officials agreed to convene multi-level dialogue mechanisms, conduct practical cooperative activities focused on capability development, and increase education and training exchanges.

The Indian official shared the best practices of India's Information Fusion Centre-Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR) in promoting regional maritime safety through information sharing and collaboration among member countries.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Solon urges creation of protocols for extreme heat

By: Gabriel Pabico Lalu

A lawmaker has called on state meteorologists to create government protocols whenever the country goes through extreme heat, just like what they have for rainy seasons or during strong typhoons.

In a statement on Wednesday, Valenzuela City Rep. Eric Martinez said that the protocol should be specifically tailored for the dry season, as climate change appears to be inevitable and a new normal for the world.

Martinez explained that the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) should adapt to these changes.

New normal

“This is the new normal with global warming, and Pagasa also has to adapt to this new normal,” Martinez said.

“If there is a protocol for the rainy season, there should be one for the summer period,” he added.

Currently, Pagasa employs a tropical cyclone wind signal warning system, which is based on the wind speed of a cyclone. The warning has five levels—Signals Number One to Five.

However, Martinez said Pagasa can only perform this mandate if it is elevated into a level where it is the primary authority in weather-related decision-making.

This means, the lawmaker noted, that Pagasa should take on a more active role in crafting policies and making key decisions when the issue involves the state of the country’s weather.

“Pagasa should really be the agency being heard by all, not just the mayor who would say that because it is hot, classes will be suspended,” Martinez pointed out.

Taking precaution

Anakalusugan party-list Rep. Ray Reyes meanwhile urged the public to be vigilant regarding the possible prevalence of heat-induced ailments as Pagasa continues to monitor high heat indices across the country.

Earlier, Pagasa said that seven areas in the country have reached the “danger category” heat index — which ranges from 42 to 43 degrees Celsius.

“We really feel the intense heat and we remind everyone to be more mindful of its possible effect to our health,” Reyes said.

“Safety is of paramount importance and extreme caution should be taken during these temperature surges. We should be alert especially if we experience ailments which are related to hot weather,” he added.

Reyes said taking preventive measures are important in avoiding heat-induced ailments—including ensuring that workers are protected from unbearable working conditions.

“Heat-related illnesses are preventable. Some of the things we can do now is to limit our stay outdoors during noontime, drinking lots of water, and avoiding tea, coffee, soda, and alcoholic beverages,” Reyes said.

“Let us follow this advisory for the welfare of our employees, especially those in manual labor who are working outside office settings,” he added, referring to the Department of Labor and Employment’s Labor Advisory No. 8, series of 2023.

Intense heat is felt in the country alongside the El Niño phenomenon, which is characterized by Pagasa as the unusual rise in average sea surface temperatures (SSTs) in the central and eastern equatorial Pacific, resulting into warmer waters.

As an effect, below-normal rainfall is expected, which can cause dry spells and droughts in several areas.

Women and climate change

By: Reena Francisco

Did you know that more women than men are affected by climate change? I just watched a video on why women get the raw end of the deal. Studies made by the United Nations have identified areas where women are increasingly disadvantaged which are as follows:

Gender-based violence. When there is no food on the table due to drought, domestic violence increases.

A one-degree rise in temperature also causes increased propensity for partner violence.

Land rights of women are also affected by climate change. Even if 50 percent of farmworkers globally are women, only 13 percent of women own the land they work on. Land ownership can be a cushion against abuse because it increases one's status in society.

Time poverty. Women spend more hours working everyday as temperatures rise and most of this is spent on unpaid care work.

Maternal health. Women's health is affected by air pollution and most stillbirths are caused by weather disturbances. Further, women are disadvantaged in handling their monthly periods during times of extreme heat and rise in temperature.

But as Mary Robinson, former president of Ireland expressed: "Climate change is a man-made problem needing feminist solutions!"

Women must continue being incredible stewards of the land and will work the farm to produce food to put on the family table. Just think of how our women farmers work even while breastfeeding children, or while bringing up schoolchildren at home.

When we do trainings for something as varied as agriculture or weaving, women attend until such time that they have to prepare lunch or need to fetch children from school. When we do face-to-face or in-person trainings, mothers have to bring their small children along. Women will want to learn even if it means taking their household responsibilities, like childcare, with them. Globally, women will put more of their earnings back to the family table than men will.

These are just some of the reasons why climate change is an important aspect for women executives and women directors to shift more attention to. How does a woman

director, for example, address dangers to women and children during disasters like floods, typhoons, and rising temperatures? Is there a National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council focus on women and children? Or is the solution the same for everyone regardless of gender? Definitely, women are more vulnerable and must be given the proper care and protection due to the already existing natural vulnerabilities in communities. Extreme weather conditions cause women and children to be more prone to sickness and increased risk to physical and mental health.

While women executives and many career women can hire help to manage the household, our rural women do not have this choice. This is why companies must make sure to provide free medical care, especially to agricultural workers. This is also why women farmers must be given assistance in childcare through daycare centers. Further, women in general must be protected from domestic abuse or violence of any kind.

Did you ever think climate change was gender-blind? And that people sweat whether they are nonbinary, binary, he/she, neurodivergent, or they, as today's pronouns have been more explicit. Physically though, women are more affected because one cannot avoid domestic violence when tempers are on fire in the household.

Come to think of it, if women are more affected by climate change, then all the more we must find solutions that will liberate women from these situations. If we cannot solve climate issues at home, we should look at solving climate issues with special mention of how gender-based violence can be meted out the proper punishment, if it cannot be avoided. Men must be reminded that it is not solely a women's responsibility to address climate change.

For women executives, directors, and other professionals, we have to make sure women have a recourse when men get hot-tempered and proceed to add to the global statistic for partner violence.

Imagine increasing temperatures and sea levels rising each day you come to work. Somewhere in the world a woman is suffering every time temperature rises, even by just one degree. Now is it not time to make sure we plant enough trees to lower the global climate even just a notch? Imagine all the women we would save from suffering. How else can we lower the global temperatures and liberate half the world from climate-induced violence?

We have to start sooner than later.

Plant a tree. Save a woman. There has never been a better reason to work with nature.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

Lawmaker: Elevate PAGASA to lead weather-related decision-making

By: Filane Mikee Cervantes

A congressman on Wednesday proposed elevating the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) as the primary authority in weather-related decision-making processes, such as the suspension of classes during adverse weather conditions.

Valenzuela City Rep. Eric Martinez said PAGASA has the expertise and more reliable data than local government units to spearhead informed decision-making on weather and climate risks.

He said putting PAGASA in a leadership role will streamline decision-making processes in managing climate-related risks across the nation.

"Sila (PAGASA) talaga yung dapat pakinggan ng lahat, hindi si mayor na lang ang magsabi, 'mainit, siges cancelled ang klase (PAGASA should be followed by everyone, not the mayors who would just declare 'it's hot, let's cancel classes')," Martinez said.

Martinez also pointed out that a comprehensive government protocol should be implemented specifically tailored for the dry season, especially given the impact of climate change.

He said adapting to this new normal is essential for safeguarding communities and ensuring effective governance toward climate-resilient Philippines.

"This is the new normal with global warming, and PAGASA (Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration) also has to adapt to this new normal," Martinez said. "Kung may protocol sa tag-ulan, dapat may protocol na rin sa tag-init (If there is a protocol for the rainy season, then there should also be a protocol for the dry season)."

More areas have resorted to alternative learning modes due to sweltering temperatures, according to the Department of Education.

[PH, UK deepens collaboration on climate, biodiversity priorities](#)

By: Marita Moaje

The Philippines and the United Kingdom have agreed to deepen their collaboration across climate and biodiversity priorities.

In a joint statement issued on Wednesday, the British Embassy in Manila and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) said the two countries committed to strengthening their partnership during the fourth annual UK-Philippines Climate and Environment Dialogue held last March 25 in Makati City.

British Ambassador to the Philippines Laure Beauflis expressed pride in the strong partnership between the UK and the Philippines, especially in climate and biodiversity.

"Over the last year, we have delivered great things together – supporting people across the country to adapt to the unavoidable consequences of climate change, driving an uptick in renewable energy, investing in biodiversity through nature-based solutions including the conservation of mangroves and corals, and protecting wildlife ranging from Philippine pangolins to crocodiles. I'm absolutely delighted that, in this fourth Dialogue, we committed to do even more together," she said.

On top of existing partnerships, Beauflis said the UK will also focus on growing the Blue Economy through the Blue Planet Fund by formulating a country-specific plan to support marine protected areas and other effective conservation measures, including the reduction of marine pollution, and managing sustainable fisheries.

The dialogue also set the direction for 2025, with the scaling of coordination platforms to share experience and technology, streamlining of priorities, and strengthening delivery.

Beauflis also assured that the UK will support the Energy Transition Council, Blue Carbon Action Plan, and National Plastics Action Plan in the coming year.

Meanwhile, DENR Secretary Maria Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga, who also serves as the President's Chair Designate of the Climate Change Commission, assured the country's commitment towards a sustainable future, citing the pivotal step taken during the dialogue towards achieving its goal.

She said the Philippines will continue to explore avenues for mobilizing finance and investments into climate, energy, and environment interventions, as outlined in the Philippines National Adaptation Plan (NAP), and Nationally Determined Contributions Implementation Plan (NDCIP).

“The Philippines' efforts toward resilience and sustainable development have received strong financial, technical, and policy-related support from the UK government. We are fully committed to carrying out the UK-PH strategic cooperation. By working together with the UK, we can leverage priority areas of collaboration to create a comprehensive and effective approach to environment and climate action,” Loyzaga said.

Building on the successes of 2023, which saw UK support for the delivery of the Philippines NAP and Philippines Emission Pathway Calculator, Beaufile also expressed commitment to deliver programs and technical assistance to contribute to water security, urban resilience, ecosystems and biodiversity protection, and renewable energy and energy efficiency.

The dialogue also highlighted a strong track record of financial innovation with the UK-funded launch of the Animal Town application early this year, demonstrating an innovative way to get the public to participate in the conservation of Philippine wildlife and biodiversity.

To date, the UK has funded over twenty community-led initiatives, and in the coming months, four challenge funds will be opened to new community project proposals across the country to strengthen local capacity across adaptation and biodiversity.

At the end of the dialogue, both countries agreed to establish a clear engagement approach on critical issues, such as loss and damage, disaster risk financing, and the blue economy, while the UK reinforced its commitment to advancing its work in said areas moving forward and delivering tangible progress in the years ahead.

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