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CCC IN THE NEWS:

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BUSINESS MIRROR

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By: Cai Ordinario

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BUSINESS WORLD

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By: Ashley Erika O. Jose

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CIEL

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CNN

[A sunken oil tanker is threatening biodiversity in the Philippines. And it could take months to contain](#)

By: Kathleen Magramo

A slow-moving environmental catastrophe is unfolding in a marine ecosystem home to some of the world's rarest species, including the critically endangered hawksbill turtle, as well as whale sharks, giant manta rays and dugongs.

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Metro Manila (CNN Philippines, April 7) — The World Health Organization (WHO) sounded the alarm over looming global outbreaks of dengue and other diseases caused by mosquito-borne arboviruses amid effects of climate change.

DAILY NEWS EGYPT

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The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the European Union (EU), the African Climate Foundation, the embassies of Denmark and Switzerland in Cairo, and the Climate Emergency Collaboration Group met for the 2nd board meeting of the \$6.2m project to support Egypt’s presidency of the 27th Session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP27).

INSIDE CLIMATE NEWS

[This Dime-Sized Battery Is a Step Toward an EV With a 1,000-Mile Range](#)

By: Dan Gearino

Researchers at Argonne National Laboratory and the Illinois Institute of Technology have created a solid-state battery that could be used to vastly expand the range of EVs, and it could unlock the ability to use batteries on short-haul aircraft and heavy trucks.

JOURNAL ONLINE

[Follow through UN Climate Ruling, Makakalikan Party urge government](#)

The Makakalikan Party welcomes the landmark United Nations (UN) ruling asking the world’s top court to clarify states’ obligations regarding climate change in demanding more action from greenhouse gas emitters.

MANILA BULLETIN

[Finding balance: Sustainable agriculture and forest conservation in the Philippines](#)

By: James Tababa

The Philippines is blessed with an abundance of forest ecosystems, including tropical rainforests and mangroves. These forests provide vital ecosystems for water regulation, soil conservation, and carbon sequestration and support a rich biodiversity of plant and animal species. However, despite their ecological importance, Philippine forests have been under threat for many years, primarily due to agricultural expansion and unsustainable logging practices.

[NGCP urged to speed up approval of power projects](#)

By: Myrna M. Velasco

The Department of Energy (DOE) is urging system operator National Grid Corporation of the Philippines (NGCP) to shorten its approval timeline for the system impact study (SIS) on power projects being developed in various parts of the country.

MONGABAY

[Floating solar project on Philippines natural lake brings hope — and questions](#)

By: Jewel S. Cabrera

Boats and water hyacinths aren't the only ones floating in the Philippines' Laguna Lake. In some areas of Los Baños and Bay, small-scale floating solar photovoltaic (FPV) installations can be seen afloat. With a warm breeze and the setting sun in the background, the FPV beds provide a scenic view. These installations are part of a pilot project for a planned 2,000-hectare (4,900-acre), 1,300-megawatt FPV project in Laguna province with expected operations to begin in 2024.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

[Gov't should consider nuclear power – senator](#)

By: Marlon Ramos

After repeatedly opposing nuclear power and saying that coal was a cheaper and "safer" source of energy, Sen. Sherwin Gatchalian on Sunday said the government should now consider nuclear power and other modern technologies to address electricity woes that are expected to last for years to come.

[Rice market's stability threatened by rising input costs](#)

By: Ronnel W. Domingo

Soaring prices of farm inputs and the effects of climate change are threatening the stability of the rice market, which is a main concern for countries like the Philippines, according to the OECD Development Center.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

[LPA to enter PAR Sunday; likely to become tropical depression](#)

A low pressure area (LPA) is forecast to enter the Philippine Area of Responsibility (PAR) Sunday night and likely to become tropical depression after six days.

RESILIENCE

[Loss and damage: How can culture and heritage loss be measured and addressed?](#)

By: Daisy Dunne

A group of archaeologists, climate scientists and policy experts met at the University of East Anglia last week to discuss how unique cultures and heritage are fast disappearing because of climate change – and what can be done to properly measure and address this.

SOUTH CHINA MORNING POST

[Climate Change: acquiring technology and getting suppliers on board are vital to corporate success in carbon-reduction efforts](#)

By: Eric Ng

A lack of funding to acquire digital technology and difficulties in getting suppliers on board are key reasons why companies are struggling to make good progress on their carbon-emission reduction goals, according to an industry consultant.

[Climate change: Sinopec's parent to build China's first long-distance hydrogen pipeline to boost green fuel usage](#)

By: Eric Ng

China Petrochemical Corp, the nation's largest oil refiner and fuel supplier, unveiled a plan to build the country's first long-distance hydrogen pipeline to accelerate green energy development.

THE MANILA TIMES

[Dance warns against earth's damage](#)

By: Cora Llamas

The upcoming restaging of "Encantada," National Artist for Dance Agnes Locsin's celebrated production espousing a passion for Mother Earth, intends to reach an entirely new audience with its message of environmental protection.

[\[Opinion\] Another PH distinction: 'Plastic-spewing superpower'](#)

By: Yen Makabenta

During the solemnities of Holy Week, I took the opportunity to review some major long articles online.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

[Climate-hit island pushes to reshape World Bank, IMF](#)

While conflict and inflation will dominate World Bank spring meetings next week, campaigners are pushing for a redesign of global financial architecture to help countries cope with climate change.

['Minidumps' of trash: EcoWaste laments return of pre-pandemic littering at pilgrimage sites](#)

By: Cristina Chi

Similar to pre-pandemic commemorations of Holy Week, groups of devotees again left trails and minidumps of garbage at pilgrimage sites this week, according to an environmental watchdog.

[\[Opinion\] Easter and the Earth's sustainability](#)

By: Joseph Lacson

Today, Christendom will once again celebrate her oldest and most important festival: Easter. Also known as Pascha or Resurrection Sunday, Easter commemorates the resurrection of Jesus on the third day after his crucifixion, his triumph over death. "He is not here, He is Risen! Remember how he told you, while He was still with you in Galilee: 'The Son of Man must be delivered to the hands of the sinners, be crucified and on the third day be raised again'." (Luke 24: 6-7) From the "Salubong" or welcoming to Easter masses to Easter egg hunts to lavish family meals, Easter is a celebration for Christians, but perhaps most so for Filipinos.

[Philippines faces slower growth in 2023](#)

By: Louella Desiderio

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippines is expected to post the second fastest growth in Southeast Asia this year, but the projected growth is slower than last year due to challenges such as a global economic slowdown and high inflation, according to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Plus 3 (ASEAN+3) Macroeconomic Research Office (AMRO).

THE STANDARD

[Scary IPCC projections must not dampen spirits](#)

By: Lynet Otieno

The recently released IPCC synthetic report has a scary projection on possibility of exceeding the 1.5°C global warming limit, which means more disasters, especially in the global South.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

POLITIKO

[New report 'crucial' in LGU commitment to climate action: Borje](#)

By: Prince Golez

The Climate Change Commission (CCC), Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), and the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) jointly released the first Local Climate Investment Brief (LCIB) that provides consolidated data on the landscape of climate investments at the sub-national level between the fiscal years 2016 and 2020.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

[Bill creating Philippine 'disaster map' passes first reading in Congress](#)

MANILA, Philippines — A bill mandating the issuing of a national disaster map of the Philippines has passed the first reading at the House of Representatives.

Information and Knowledge Management Division

BUSINESS MIRROR

[PHL could see unsustainable debt levels with climate risk](#)

By: Cai Ordinario

THE Philippines is among those that could see unsustainable debt levels due to climate change, according to the latest report released by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (Unescap).

Based on the latest Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific 2023: Rethinking Public Debt for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the UN agency said the average government debt level in the Asia-Pacific region is at an 18-year high.

The report said climate risks are threatening the sustainability of public debt in many developing countries, especially those that are vulnerable to climate change, such as the Philippines.

“A higher debt level does not necessarily mean a higher risk of debt distress,” said Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana, United Nations Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of Unescap, in a statement.

“Nor is higher debt necessarily detrimental to economic growth. Rather, deploying public debt as an investment in people and the planet offers sizable medium- and long-term economic, social and environmental returns,” she added.

Citing another study, Unescap said the exposure to climate risk has an impact on the borrowing costs of sovereigns.

The study estimated that countries vulnerable to climate could see a climate-related premium of 275 basis points on their sovereign debts.

The study defined that this high-risk group comprises India, Indonesia, Japan, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Viet Nam.

The premium for high-risk countries is much higher than the 113 basis point premium for other emerging economies and 155 basis point premium for ASEAN countries in general.

“These findings support the need for policy measures to increase the fiscal space of climate-vulnerable economies, enabling them to finance the most pressing adaptation expenditure through a mix of debt and non-debt financing flows,” the report stated.

Based on the Unescap data, using 2021 data, the Philippines’s gross public debt accounted for 59.95 percent of the country’s GDP.

This is composed of external debt, which accounts for 15.04 percent of GDP, and domestic debt at 41.91 percent of the country’s GDP.

Unescap said the higher share in GDP of domestic debt in the Philippines is common for ASEAN countries, especially after the 1997 Asian financial crisis.

The report said debt securities account for more than 90 percent of total domestic government debt in Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand.

In order to address these debts and finance climate change as well as SDG needs, Unescap said countries like the Philippines must broaden the tax base and undertake improvements in tax administration.

Unescap also said opportunities to raise financing through the introduction of progressive direct taxes could help finance climate change adaptation and mitigation as well as the achievement of the SDGs.

“The Survey proposes an innovative approach to public debt sustainability analysis that augments the conventional short- to medium-term methodologies of international financial institutions and credit rating agencies. This approach considers a country’s SDG financing needs and strategies along with the Governments’ structural development policies,” Unescap said in a statement.

Unescap also said it may also be time for international financial institutions and credit rating agencies to consider the positive long-term economic, social and environmental outcomes of investing in the SDGs in their assessments of public debt sustainability.

These should also consider whether such spending would boost economic productivity. Unescap said debt relief should be viewed as helping to support the fiscal outlook, rather than as a sign of an upcoming debt default.

It added that effective public debt management reduces fiscal risks and borrowing costs, and there are several examples of good public debt management practices in the Asia-Pacific region.

At the same time, countries with high debt distress levels may need pre-emptive, swift and adequate sovereign debt restructuring, while efforts towards common international debt resolution mechanisms and restructuring frameworks also need to be accelerated.

Growth

The growth prospects of economies in Asia and the Pacific, including that of the Philippines, have weakened, according to the Unescap.

Based on the report, the region is expected to only post a growth of 4.2 percent in 2023 and 4.7 percent in 2024.

The Philippines is expected to grow faster at 5.5 percent in 2023 and 5.7 percent in 2024. This is below the government's 6-7 percent GDP target this year and 6.5 to 8 percent target for 2024 onward.

"This assessment is influenced by elevated price levels and expected further monetary tightening, which will hold back economic activities," the report stated.

"The projected slowdown in developed economies can translate into a slowdown in demand for exports, a major growth driver for the region," it added.

Citing the World Trade Organization (WTO), the report added that global trade volume growth is projected to moderate to 1 percent in 2023 from 3.5 percent in 2022.

Inflation in Asia and the Pacific is projected to moderate slightly to 5.9 per cent in 2023 from 7.6 percent in 2022. It is projected to decline further to 4.4 percent in 2024.

In the Philippines, inflation is seen to average 4.3 percent this year and 3 percent next year. These are within the government's inflation targets for this year and next year.

"The expected gradual decline in inflation in the next two years is on the back of moderating commodity prices, softening global demand and monetary tightening responses by central banks," the report stated.

“Core inflation is still on the rise while growth is weakening, and central banks are expected to continue their course in raising interest rates,” the report, however, added.

Revised GDP forecast

Meanwhile, the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) also revised GDP growth for the fourth quarter in 2022 to 7.1 percent from the initially reported 7.2 percent.

However, the PSA retained growth estimates for 2022 and 2021 at 7.6 percent and 5.7 percent, respectively.

“In the Philippines growth was driven by robust private consumption, investments and public infrastructure spending along with tourism recovery,” the Unescap report stated of the country’s 2022 growth performance.

The PSA revises the GDP estimates based on an approved revision policy (PSA Board Resolution No. 1, Series of 2017-053), which is consistent with international standard practices on national accounts revisions.

BUSINESS WORLD

Singapore-based Vena Energy eyes expansion projects in PHL

By: Ashley Erika O. Jose

SINGAPORE-based Vena Energy plans to launch more renewable energy projects in the Philippines with a combined capacity of 500 megawatts (MW) within the next three years, a company official said.

“We want to do 300 to 500 MW of projects every year for the next couple of years, and we do believe that given the number of projects which the Philippines need, especially from RE (renewable energy), together with partners, we can go on and execute that,” Samrinder Nehria, head of Vena Energy Philippines, told reporters on March 30.

“It is all about how much demand is there in the market. At least for the next two or three years, 300 to 500 MW,” he added.

He said that such projects will involve different types of renewable energy sources, including solar, wind, and floating solar.

To date, Vena Energy has around 330 MW of operating renewable energy projects in the Philippines.

On March 30, Vena Energy together with MGen Renewable Energy, Inc. (MGreen) inaugurated the 68-megawatt-alternating current (MWac) solar plant project in Ilocos Norte.

Mr. Nehria said his company is also exploring potential partnerships beyond Manila Electric Co. (Meralco).

“Yes, we do have more projects in the pipeline and you will hear about them,” he said.

MGreen is the renewable energy subsidiary of Meralco PowerGen Corp., the power generation arm of Meralco.

Vena Energy is also keen to participate in the second round of the green energy auction program (GEAP), which is set for June.

“Yes, we evaluate all options. GEAP is one of those. We are looking and evaluating the green energy auction program as well and we’ll see. It is a good opportunity for developers to go,” he said.

The Energy department has announced that it is set to conduct the second round of GEAP in June with 11,600 MW in capacity on offer.

Headquartered in Singapore, Vena Energy is a renewable energy company that owns, develops, constructs, operates, manages, and commercializes a renewable energy portfolio.

CIEL

[Latest IPCC Report Warns: We Do Not Have Time to Waste on False Solutions](#)

In March, the international authority on climate science released its new Synthesis Report on the current status of climate change, its impacts and risks, and our options to adapt to and confront the crisis in these pivotal years ahead.

The takeaways from this massive document by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) are numerous and detailed, but they are also unequivocal about our best chance at climate justice and a liveable future:

After eight years and six individual reports, the latest Synthesis Report marked the end of the IPCC's most recent assessment cycle. The IPCC has been conducting these cycles and producing reports since it was established in 1988, and the Sixth Assessment Report (AR) was the most comprehensive one yet.

Members of the CIEL team spent a week in Interlaken, Switzerland, engaging with representatives of the IPCC's 195 member governments and the scientists who have drafted the Synthesis Report during negotiations to finalize and approve the report, including a Summary for Policymakers. Each day, sessions went on for hours, often until late at night, until delegates finally reached consensus on every aspect of the final text of the Summary for Policymakers.

Crystallizing the thousands of pages of work done over the course of the assessment cycle, the succinct Summary for Policymakers of the Synthesis Report has a critical role in catalyzing political action. It must clearly, accurately, and urgently communicate to global decision makers about the state of science, the drivers of the climate crisis, and the most effective pathways for protecting people and the planet.

CIEL and fellow civil society observers engaged with delegates throughout the negotiations to prevent the science in the IPCC's reports from being compromised during the final stretch as a result of political pressure and to ensure that the scientific information is clearly translated for policymakers. We advocated for its conclusions to highlight rights-based approaches and real solutions, not speculative, dangerous, and mostly ineffective technofixes like carbon capture, carbon removal, and solar geoengineering.

The findings that the IPCC has been compiling for decades unequivocally demonstrate that we can prevent irreversible harm to people and the planet if we scale up proven solutions that are available now. Replacing fossil fuels with renewables, increasing

energy efficiency, and reducing energy and resource use are the surest path to limiting global warming to 1.5°C.

The science is clear, but there is still a significant gap between governments' climate plans and pledges and the scale and pace of action needed. The negotiations last month highlighted the clash between the latest climate science and the mainstream economic models that perpetuate a business-as-usual approach.

The intensity of negotiations also demonstrated that big polluters are feeling the heat — from the resounding scientific consensus and the promise of renewables — which is why they are pushing risky and unproven technofixes to continue business as usual and delay a just transition, increasing the likelihood of overshoot.

We cannot ensure a livable future for all if we fail to act on the latest and most urgent alarms sounded by the IPCC last month. The most ambitious pathways put out by the IPCC set the floor, not the ceiling, for necessary climate action. Solving the climate crisis is not about what works on paper but what delivers in practice. We do not have time to waste on false solutions.

As States develop plans and make commitments for climate action in the months ahead, CIEL will be unwavering in our advocacy to heed the IPCC's findings and warnings. Global climate action must be ambitious; focus on real solutions; and center equity, social justice, climate justice, and human rights.

CNN

[A sunken oil tanker is threatening biodiversity in the Philippines. And it could take months to contain](#)

By: Kathleen Magramo

A slow-moving environmental catastrophe is unfolding in a marine ecosystem home to some of the world's rarest species, including the critically endangered hawksbill turtle, as well as whale sharks, giant manta rays and dugongs.

It has been more than a month since the MT Princess Empress, carrying 800,000 liters (211,340 gallons) of industrial fuel, capsized near the Philippine island province of Oriental Mindoro – a rich fishing ground that provides food and livelihood to more than two million people.

Aided by a Japanese response team, Philippine maritime authorities located the wreck on March 21, but the vessel remains underwater and there are concerns oil continues to leak out, though precisely how much remains unknown.

The Philippine Coast Guard told CNN on Wednesday its teams “cannot substantiate or quantify ongoing oil leakage.”

The slick has since stretched across 250 kilometers (155 miles) of sea, polluting the shores of at least three provinces, costing the livelihoods of thousands of fishermen and threatening over 20 marine protected areas.

It was only on Monday, with assistance from the US Navy, that operations began to salvage the vessel and attempt to plug the leakage.

In the aftermath of the initial leak, the Coast Guard raced to clean up the slick and improvised spill booms made from cogon grass and coconut materials were used as floating barriers to contain the oil.

But the effort failed to stem the tide and campaigners say more needs to be done to contain the spill, remove oil from affected areas, and protect against future disasters by taking punitive action against polluters.

What's at stake?

As much as 36,000 hectares (88,958 acres) of marine area could be affected by the oil slick as recovery efforts drag on, according to the University of the Philippines Marine Science Institute.

The Coast Guard estimates cleanup teams have so far removed 60% of the oil that has reached the shores of a dozen towns in Oriental Mindoro, using booms and skimmer vessels.

A previous estimate, made by the Department of Environment and Natural Resource on March 14, suggested the sunken vessel was pumping out between 35,000 to 50,000 liters of oil a day and should be empty after 15 to 20 days, though this information has been contested.

Oil has now spread to the Verde Island Passage, a marine reserve home to dozens of endemic species, said Irene Rodriguez, an associate professor with the Marine Science Institute.

The passage, north of where the tanker sank, has the highest concentration of coastal fishes, corals, crustaceans, molluscs, seagrasses, and mangroves in the archipelagic country, and the spill could lead to long-term damage and declining population of these organisms, says Rodriguez.

“There are quite a number of marine organisms that have not yet been identified and are only present at the Verde Island Passage ... and that’s something that we should protect. And hopefully, we do everything that we can to prevent the oil from causing damage in that area,” Rodriguez said.

The Verde Island Passage is particularly important as a breeding ground for native marine species, whose population may decline in the future because they are unable to mate in the polluted waters, Rodriguez said.

Mangroves that line the shores of affected communities prevent coastal erosion and also play a role in carbon sequestration – the process of reducing carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, Rodriguez said.

The lack of protection from mangroves puts locals at risk from extreme weather events, especially typhoons that regularly hit the Philippines, she added.

And there are growing concerns the disaster could have a major, more immediate economic impact too.

According to the country’s National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council, more than 170,000 people in shoreline communities have been impacted by the spill, and nearly 17,000 fishermen have lost their incomes after authorities imposed a temporary fishing ban.

The Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources estimates the fishing sector is losing \$900,000 (5 million Philippine pesos) per day, with potentially months to go before the spill is fully contained.

Who's responsible?

The Philippines, an archipelago of more than 7,600 islands, has a poor maritime safety record, and oil spills and ferry accidents are not uncommon.

While affected and concerned Filipinos have been proactively engaging in the clean up and containment of the spill, the government has yet to take any punitive decision or action against polluters one month since the catastrophe, said Gerry Arances, executive director at the Center for Energy, Ecology, and Development (CEED).

"To date, there has been no clear effort to assess how badly marine and coastal ecosystems have been affected," Arances added.

"We have yet to hear of policy reforms to ensure that a tragedy like this will not happen again, one of which would be the inclusion of the Verde Island Passage in the country's protected areas system," he said.

The environmental disaster has prompted a Senate probe centered on accusations that the MT Princess Empress operated without a permit.

The country's justice minister, Jesus Crispin Remulla, has also called for criminal charges over the spill and said the department is building a case against the vessel operator.

RDC Reield Marine Services, the vessel owner and operator, declined to confirm with CNN whether it had license to operate. A senate hearing said that the Department of Justice is investigating the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) and the Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA) for allegedly allowing the vessel to sail without updated paperwork.

Affected communities are also demanding transparency on the extent of damage from the oil spill and accountability from the vessel operator and its owners, said Greenpeace Philippines campaigner Jefferson Chua.

"Oil spills can never be cleaned up properly. There's always going to be something stuck, something left behind, especially in this area which is one of the largest centers of marine biodiversity in the country," Chua said.

He urged the government not to give in to pressure from powerful oil companies and marine agencies, calling for a national probe into lapses of due diligence across the maritime sector.

Little relief

Clearing the oil spill is taking time, and for fishers, it's also draining their income.

Under a government program, fishers who aren't able to work are being deployed to join cleanup efforts in exchange for compensation.

The government has allocated more than \$1.5 million (84.4 million Philippine pesos) for the scheme, initially intended for 14,000 participants, and it has been extended to May.

However, the compensation is barely enough to cover their usual daily wage, according to Jennifer Cruz, mayor of Pola, one of the heavily affected municipalities in Oriental Mindoro.

And buckets and shovels aren't enough to remove oil from affected shorelines given the massive scale of the spill.

Response teams from Japan, South Korea and the US are assisting the Philippine Coast Guard with technical expertise and specialty equipment not readily available in the Philippines.

Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. said he hopes the clean up can be completed within four months. But Chua said that seems unlikely, as authorities were not equipped to handle the disaster to begin with and response efforts have dragged on.

"Now we're seeing that it's bigger than everyone thinks and it's exploding in the faces of the government officials," Chua said. "There is some progress [in the cleanup] but the lingering impacts are getting worse for those on the ground."

WHO: Climate change prompts spike in mosquito-borne diseases

Metro Manila (CNN Philippines, April 7) — The World Health Organization (WHO) sounded the alarm over looming global outbreaks of dengue and other diseases caused by mosquito-borne arboviruses amid effects of climate change.

In a press conference, health experts from WHO warned of the surge in dengue and chikungunya cases in many parts of the world and said new epidemics of zika could also be expected.

All those diseases are caused by arboviruses carried by *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes, which have spread to new places as temperature continues to rise.

“Climate change has played a key role in facilitating the spread of the vector mosquitoes,” said Raman Velayudhan, the coordinator for WHO's dengue and arbovirus initiative.

According to WHO, 129 nation's are at risk from dengue, including 100 countries where the disease is categorized as endemic.

Meanwhile, chikungunya, which has been reported in 115 countries since its detection in 1950, is facing a surge in cases.

Velayudhan and Diana Rojas Alvarez, WHO's technical lead on chikungunya and zika, called for urgent action to stop the spread of the virus-carrying mosquitos as fears for outbreaks in new regions grow.

Alvarez said around 135,000 cases have been reported in the Americas this year, as compared to 50,000 cases reported during the first half of 2022.

DAILY NEWS EGYPT

[2nd Board meeting for 'Supporting Egypt's hosting of COP27' project highlights its achievements, transition to COP28](#)

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the European Union (EU), the African Climate Foundation, the embassies of Denmark and Switzerland in Cairo, and the Climate Emergency Collaboration Group met for the 2nd board meeting of the \$6.2m project to support Egypt's presidency of the 27th Session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP27).

The hybrid board meeting was hosted at the UNDP premises, in the presence of Ambassador Mohamed Nasr, Director of the Department of Climate, Environment and Sustainable Development, Mr. Alessandro Fracassetti, UNDP Resident Representative in Egypt, Ambassador Christian Berger, Head of the European Union Delegation to Egypt, Counsellor Heidi Beshir, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ms. Mshai Mkoji, COP27 Project Manager, African Climate Foundation, Ms. Sara Gottfredsen, Charge d'Affaires Embassy of Denmark to Egypt, and Ms. Michal Harari, Deputy Head of Office for International Cooperation, Embassy of Switzerland in Egypt.

The board highlighted in their remarks the project's support to Egypt's COP27 presidency and its work towards implementing the Paris Agreement through initiatives in several priority areas, including renewable energy, climate change adaptation and climate security. Through the joint project, some of these initiatives were on breakthrough topics such as Climate Response for Sustaining Peace (CRSP).

The project reinforced the delivery of tangible results in the host city. It has been demonstrated in the greening Sharm El Sheikh initiative by banning single-use plastic, installing solar PV in hotels with an approximate total capacity of 3 MW, the convention center with a capacity of 1 MW, and the car-shed in the airport with a total capacity of 280 MW.

The project has also contributed to the renovation of Nabq and Ras Mohammed, taking them to a new level of sustainable eco-tourism.

With the joint project's support, the COP27 presidency convened multiple needed meetings pre-COP, at COP and post-COP including the African negotiators meetings and the recent transitional meeting to operationalize the loss and damage fund.

Ambassador Christian Berger, the Head of European Union Delegation to Egypt, said that: “Despite the current economic challenges the world is facing, the European Union continues to aspire for worldwide progress and climate action is definitely a field where the EU would like to see significant advancement. Today’s meeting aims to support the Presidency of COP27 to implement what was agreed and make sure it will be taken on board in COP28. The external dimension of the EU’s Green Deal aims to inspire EU partners to adapt to the new paradigm and to accelerate a clean energy transition that brings a just and sustainable recovery to our Neighbourhood and beyond.”

At the board meeting, UNDP’s Resident Representative in Egypt, Alessandro Fracassetti, said: “UNDP has worked on convening partners to support the presidency team in achieving positive and tangible results. Through the joint project, we have provided policy and capacity-building support and assisted technically and logistically at this critical juncture in our collective efforts against climate change. Thanks to our partners for their generous contributions.”

Charge d’Affaires of Denmark to Egypt, Sara Gottfredsen, said, “We are very glad to see through the results of this important joint project supporting the path of the Egyptian Government COP presidency not only working to accelerating global climate action and green transition but furthering sustainable and inclusive climate response in the region and beyond.”

Ms. Michal Harari, Deputy Head of Office for International Cooperation, Embassy of Switzerland in Egypt, stated that: “Switzerland is pleased to be part of this project, which has effectively contributed to the successful organization of COP27, working together with likeminded partners and the Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Switzerland remains committed to supporting Egypt in its journey towards green growth.”

From the Climate Emergency Collaboration Group, a sponsored project of Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors, Dina Zayed said: “We are committed to continuing our support to any initiatives that shepherd and champion the operationalization of the Loss & Damage Fund. The COP27 Presidency has a tremendous role to play in helping convening the Transitional Committee to ensure the fund is designed equitably and with the highest level of impact. We are pleased to support these endeavors.”

The project will continue to support the COP27 Presidency Team until the COP presidency is handed over at COP28 in the United Arab Emirates next November.

INSIDE CLIMATE NEWS

[This Dime-Sized Battery Is a Step Toward an EV With a 1,000-Mile Range](#)

By: Dan Gearino

Researchers at Argonne National Laboratory and the Illinois Institute of Technology have created a solid-state battery that could be used to vastly expand the range of EVs, and it could unlock the ability to use batteries on short-haul aircraft and heavy trucks.

But for now it's a lab-scale battery cell, about the size of a dime.

I spoke with two of the leaders of the research this week.

"I was doubtful in the beginning," said Larry Curtiss, a senior chemist at Argonne.

He has been at the lab for more than 40 years and knows from experience that initial results might not be repeatable. But he and his colleagues from the two Chicago-area institutions found that their work could be replicated, with the results published in February in the journal Science.

Before I go on, some battery basics:

Most EVs today run on lithium-ion batteries. When the batteries are charging, ions flow from one side (the cathode) to the other side (the anode), and then reverse when discharging. The ions make this trip by passing through an electrolyte, which is a liquid or gel.

In solid state batteries, the electrolyte is solid, often a ceramic material. The overall battery can hold more electricity per unit of mass than current lithium-ion batteries for a variety of design reasons.

Automakers and battery manufacturers are working to develop solid-state batteries. They see the potential for longer ranges due to higher energy density, and the batteries would be safer because they are less flammable than current lithium-ion systems.

The design at Argonne and Illinois Tech is a version of a lithium-air battery, a category that has been around for about a decade but hasn't yet had a commercial breakthrough.

In this specific battery, the anode is made of a solid form of lithium. The "air" part comes from outside air that flows in through tiny holes in the cathode. Oxygen from the air reacts with lithium ions that have passed through the solid electrolyte. The electrolyte is

made from a combination of ceramic and polymer materials—a solid that still allows for the passage of ions.

To understand what makes this battery different, it helps to know that in previous lithium-air batteries each oxygen molecule would react with one or two electrons.

In this new battery, each oxygen molecule reacts with up to four electrons.

Think of this like when you're unloading a trunkful of grocery bags from the car. It's a lot more efficient if you can carry four bags on each trip as opposed to one or two.

So why are the oxygen molecules in this battery reacting with more electrons? It's complicated, and the researchers are still in the process of answering that question. But the most likely answer is that the combination of materials results in an environment that cajoles the oxygen to have the four-electron reaction.

The real world implications of the technology are substantial, with the potential for batteries that could power an EV for 1,000 miles on a single charge. That's a lot, even when compared to other designs for solid state batteries, and it's three to four times more than most current EVs.

Mohammad Asadi, a chemical engineer at Illinois Tech, was another leader of the team that developed the battery and a co-author of the paper.

"It's all about the chemistry and energy density," he said about what makes this battery special.

For him, one of the most exciting aspects of this research is the potential to develop batteries for use in maritime transport and aviation. Those modes of transportation need so much energy that battery packs have been impractical because of the substantial size and weight that would be needed.

When looking at the potential for cars, the battery could be used for EVs with super long ranges, but I don't see that as the most practical use. A better use would be in helping to make EVs that have much smaller battery packs than today but can still have substantial ranges. This would reduce a car's weight and its cost.

But this is early stage research that's probably a decade or so away from hitting the market, if it ever hits the market. One of the initial challenges would be turning the lab-scale cell into a prototype, which would be about 100 times larger.

In the meantime, automakers and battery manufacturers are just a few years from releasing the first cars with solid state batteries.

Toyota said last year that it would have a solid-state battery by 2025, but it would be in a gas-electric hybrid as opposed to an all-electric vehicle. The decision not to build an EV is a head-scratcher, but it is in line with Toyota's continuing fondness for hybrids.

Every major automaker is working on solid-state batteries, either in-house or through partnerships with battery manufacturers like QuantumScape and Solid Power. The plans vary, but they point toward having a few EVs with the batteries on the market within about five years, and having a lot more on the market in the early 2030s.

Nissan set a goal two years ago to ramp up solid state battery production at a pace to begin selling an EV with the technology by 2028, and a company executive said last month that the company is on track to hit that goal.

But there also is some skepticism about the prospects and timetables. The chairman of CATL, the global leader in EV battery market share, said last month that his company was having a difficult time developing a solid-state battery. China-based CATL is a supplier for Tesla, among others, and it has been able to expand its battery ranges and reduce costs while still using liquid electrolytes.

The rush of development activity by the auto industry, and the continuing research at places like Argonne and Illinois Tech, shows the promise of solid-state batteries to help make EVs much more attractive to consumers.

In the near future, EVs are likely to be less expensive than equivalent gasoline vehicles, and EVs should be able to travel for longer on a single charge than gasoline models can go on a single tank.

Or, as Curtiss puts it, solid-state batteries "can make the cars cheaper as well as go farther."

JOURNAL ONLINE

[Follow through UN Climate Ruling, Makakalikahan Party urge government](#)

The Makakalikahan Party welcomes the landmark United Nations (UN) ruling asking the world's top court to clarify states' obligations regarding climate change in demanding more action from greenhouse gas emitters.

Favorable judicial pro-environment interpretations of our constitution and laws have proven very supportive of pushing our Green Agendas in the past. This includes the Supreme Court (SC) Alcala vs Factoran decisions on intergenerational equity, the continuing SC Mandamus on the rehabilitation of Manila Bay and affirmation of the National Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (IPRA), among others. Quasi-judicial bodies such as the country's Commission on Human Rights (CHR) has also made its own ruling in the accountability of Carbon Majors to the climate emergency.

This UN Climate Ruling and the anticipated clarification from the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on the obligations of states to combat climate change will further strengthen and add to the growing pressure for climate justice to complement our own country's judicial rulings.

Thus, the Party urges the government to follow through now to demand for climate justice from industrialized countries and their multinational companies that are the major emitters of greenhouse gasses (GHG) that are driving global warming and our current climate emergency.

"Our representation in the UN and its relevant bodies on climate actions must move more aggressively now to articulate our demands on lost damages, deep cuts on GHG emissions, sufficient & timely climate action financing and other similar positions", says Party President Roy Cabonegro.

Party Spokesperson Rommel Ortega added that "...domestically, it is timely now for the government to pursue more widely and aggressively more expansive EPR (extended producers' responsibility) policies and enforcement upon companies operating in the Philippines to curb pollution and GHG emissions; starting with our current EPR on plastic pollution law."

MANILA BULLETIN

[Finding balance: Sustainable agriculture and forest conservation in the Philippines](#)

By: James Tababa

The Philippines is blessed with an abundance of forest ecosystems, including tropical rainforests and mangroves. These forests provide vital ecosystems for water regulation, soil conservation, and carbon sequestration and support a rich biodiversity of plant and animal species. However, despite their ecological importance, Philippine forests have been under threat for many years, primarily due to agricultural expansion and unsustainable logging practices.

During the presentation of the 2023-2026 results framework of the Forest Foundation Philippines, Dennis Joseph Salvador, the chairperson of the programs committee of Forest Foundation Philippines and the Executive Director of the Philippine Eagle Foundation, said that agriculture continues to pose direct threats to forest ecosystems. This includes the conversion of forests into farms and plantations, unregulated and unsustainable use of biological resources such as logging, wood harvesting, and hunting or trapping of wildlife, as well as accidental trapping and disturbance of species in areas where they breed. These activities can have significant negative impacts on forest ecosystems and their biodiversity, highlighting the need for sustainable land use and better enforcement of forest management policies.

Salvador stressed that the conversion of forests into farms and plantations is a major threat to old-grown forests that provide vital habitats for many plant and animal species. To address this issue, it is essential to provide alternative livelihood opportunities to communities, particularly in upland areas, to reduce their dependence on natural resources.

“One of the things we’re trying to work on is providing green jobs in the community to help reduce poverty in these areas. I think, especially with the Mandanas ruling, there is now an opportunity for LGUs to take charge of protecting their own natural resources and providing budget and funding to their constituents to act as the guardians of their specific areas,” he added.

Atty. Jose Andres Canivel, the Executive Director of Forest Foundation Philippines, emphasizes the need to address the negative impact of agriculture on the remaining forests in the Philippines. According to him, one of the actions that can help minimize the impact of shifting cultivation is the mapping of forest and forest lands. This approach

involves looking at forests in relation to all other ecosystems in a sustainable lands forest landscape approach.

Through this approach, local government units and related agencies can identify areas for farming, conservation, and restoration activities. Policies can also be developed to disincentivize the opening of new lands and maintain them as watersheds, communal forests, and wildlife sanctuaries.

“It’s important as well to understand why farmers and farming communities continue to shift or transfer from one area to another and perhaps help them become more sustainable,” Canivel said. “One of the reasons that we found out why they keep shifting, why they keep opening up new areas [in forests for farming], is that former farms become unproductive, and their farm become unsustainable because of farming practices.”

Canivel suggests that improving farm practices can lead to more sustainable agriculture and potentially drive it towards a greener path. He emphasizes that it’s not just about conserving forests but also about improving post-harvest practices and linking farmers to markets.

By improving these practices, farmers can increase their income and reduce their dependence on the regular shifting of farming areas, which contributes to deforestation. It can also reduce the pressure on forests as a source of livelihood for forest-dependent communities. He also emphasizes the importance of taking a landscape-scale approach, not just focusing on individual forests but considering how they fit into the larger ecosystem.

Salvador added that agriculture and forest conservation could coexist. “This is not to say that agriculture is bad for forests. I think we just need to tweak it so that it benefits both farmers while maintaining the integrity of our forest ecosystems. And one of the ways they can do this is through agroforestry, for instance,” he said.

[NGCP urged to speed up approval of power projects](#)

By: Myrna M. Velasco

The Department of Energy (DOE) is urging system operator National Grid Corporation of the Philippines (NGCP) to shorten its approval timeline for the system impact study (SIS) on power projects being developed in various parts of the country.

According to Energy Undersecretary Sharon S. Garin, the shortest timeline that SIS for power projects could be delivered is currently at two years. Such lengthy process is a major headache for power developers in meeting committed commercial operations date (COD) for their facilities, said Garin.

SIS refers to an engineering study that evaluates the impact of planned interconnection or integration of a power facility, primarily if the load can be accommodated by the current capacity of the transmission system without compromising the safety and reliability of the grid.

“We’re trying to cut it down,” the energy official noted although she qualified that a workable timeframe is still under discussion with the transmission firm.

She similarly conveyed that for small projects, primarily those in the renewable energy (RE) investment space, there is already proposal to exempt them from SIS and that is now being evaluated both by the DOE and NGCP.

Garin has not given the megawatt-scale of the projects to be excluded from SIS requirement, but other sources privy to the matter indicated that the power facilities being proposed for exemption are those with capacities of 5.0 megawatts and below.

NGCP is currently swamped with applications for SIS, primarily from RE developers, given the massive projects currently pushed by the government to comply with the increased capacity that must be developed in keeping with the Renewable Portfolio Standards (RPS) of the RE Law.

As emphasized by RE investors, the long-drawn-out timeframe of SIS approvals what has been spoiling the party for capital influx in the sector because that alone could eat up roughly two years of their entire development timeframe.

Based on December 31, 2022 data from the DOE, there have been 1,012 projects awarded with renewable energy (RE) service contracts that when completed could yield installed capacity of 5,450MW and overall potential of 80,344MW with the warranted expansions.

On a per technology basis, the projects bestowed with service contracts include 432 hydropower projects; 314 solar farm developments; 145 targeted wind farm installations; 77 projects for biomass facilities; 36 geothermal energy ventures and six projects for ocean energy technology.

All of these projects will be requiring SIS from NGCP before they can advance into the targeted construction phases of the facilities.

The roll of projects does not fully include yet the 11,600MW of RE capacities that the energy department has been preparing for tendering under the second round of the government-underpinned Green Energy Auction (GEA) program to be administered by June this year.

The RE projects to be awarded under GEA-2 will also add up to the installations that will be applying for SIS with the country's system operator.

MONGABAY

[Floating solar project on Philippines natural lake brings hope — and questions](#)

By: Jewel S. Cabrera

Boats and water hyacinths aren't the only ones floating in the Philippines' Laguna Lake. In some areas of Los Baños and Bay, small-scale floating solar photovoltaic (FPV) installations can be seen afloat. With a warm breeze and the setting sun in the background, the FPV beds provide a scenic view. These installations are part of a pilot project for a planned 2,000-hectare (4,900-acre), 1,300-megawatt FPV project in Laguna province with expected operations to begin in 2024.

The project is a first both for the Philippines and globally. Though floating photovoltaic installations are gaining popularity as interest in renewable energy surges, it will be the first large-scale operation on a natural lake. What exactly this will mean for local people dependent on the lake for survival remains to be seen.

When he first heard of the project, says Cornelio Replan Jr., chairman of the local government-sponsored fishers association, he immediately thought of how it would affect their livelihoods as fisherfolks.

"We are not against development, but I hope they do not leave out fisherfolks in their plans because our livelihood depends on it and we are the ones who know the lake," Replan says, speaking in Filipino. He has been fishing since he was 12 years old.

Rising demand

With falling prices for solar panels and growing concern over the environmental impacts of fossil fuel-based energy, solar photovoltaics are booming globally. But this expansion isn't always without friction. Large-scale solar energy plants require large amounts of land, which can spark conflicts between solar energy producers and people who wish to use the land for agriculture or for conservation purposes.

"Floatovoltaics" could help resolve this tension through the installation of solar PV systems on water rather than on land. The technology is already gaining traction in Asia, with China, India and South Korea leading the way. However, these existing solar farms have mostly been deployed on artificially created reservoirs, not natural lakes.

Laguna Lake, by contrast, is the Philippines' largest natural lake, with a catchment area of 90,000 hectares (222,000 acres) and serves as aquaculture and fishing grounds for the surrounding communities. Around 30 kilometers (19 miles) south of Metro Manila,

the lake hosts 35 shoreline municipalities and serves as a source of food, water, livelihoods and now as an emerging source of energy.

The lake's position at the heart of the region's economic activities, where an established demand for power exists, makes it a good area to explore the potential of FPV, says Adelina Santos-Borja, former manager of the resource management and development department of the Laguna Lake Development Authority (LLDA).

The project, however, is starting small. Santos-Borja's study about how the LLDA is dealing with the uncertainties of a solar FPV installation on Laguna Lake notes that renewable energy developers have proposed installing a solar farm on Laguna Lake since 2016. The LLDA cites the potential benefits of renewable energy generation but determines that the lack of available studies on the impacts of FPV installations on natural lakes makes it difficult to assess the project's environmental and social impacts.

"A reservoir or a pond would have a different behavior or characteristic [compared with a natural lake]. In fact, no two lakes are alike," Santos-Borja says. Laguna Lake, she notes, is both very large and very shallow. It also serves as a water supply and a source of livelihood for dozens of communities. "Any development project right there at the lake really has to be seriously considered and assessed," she says.

Accordingly, the authority decided to test the waters with four small-scale pilot projects, each set for one year between 2018 to 2020: Baras and Cardona in Rizal province and Los Baños and Bay in Laguna province.

"The rationale for allowing pilot projects is to really have firsthand information instead of just speculating," Santos-Borja says. "We are dealing with a lot of uncertainties here because this is new. And a very good approach is to adopt the precautionary principle. So that's the reason why we allow small-scale pilot projects, small size with a certain time limit."

As part of the conditions for the pilot project, water quality assessments have been made independently by the LLDA and the project developers by collecting water samples from inside and outside the areas occupied by the floating solar installations.

According to SunAsia project manager John Raymond Lumawag, who handles the pilot testing in Bay, they are in close coordination with the LLDA and they regularly submit reports to them. Based on available testing data thus far, Lumawag says they have so far found no harmful effects on the lake's water quality.

However, Santos-Borja's study notes five sets of water quality data collected during the pilot testing period, but the data are incomplete and the number of observations too small to make a good statistical evaluation.

"You cannot project that the impact from a 200-meter [650-foot] installation will be the same as the impact on a 100-hectare [250-acre] installation because in nature, it's not linear," she says. "There are community benefits," but so far they are on a small scale with the pilot project. "It would be a different story if it's on a larger-scale project," she says.

The pilot testing site in the district of San Antonio in Bay has already finished the first phase of its pilot testing, which started in 2019. The second phase of the pilot testing started in 2021 in the same location but with revisions to the design of the pilot testing bed. The developers are testing different angles and orientations for the solar panels to assess the yields and impacts ahead of building a larger system, Lumawag says.

During the pilot phase, each test installation provides the generated energy to the host communities free of charge. "[The electricity] produced from the solar [panels] goes directly to the barangay [district], essentially reducing their monthly electricity bill," Lumawag says.

In Bay, the electricity is used to power the barangay hall and covered basketball court. Other communities have chosen to illuminate a park, police station, museum and daycare center.

The second phase of the pilot testing is still ongoing and there is yet no fixed date for its end. However, Lumawag says they are looking at ways to continue supporting the community, such as by installing panels on the roof of the barangay hall if the pilot testing stops.

Benefits and disadvantages still uncertain

Renewable energy provides an environmentally friendly alternative to traditional energy sources. According to the Philippines' Department of Energy, coal-fired power plants continue to dominate, accounting for 58% of the country's power generation in 2021. But a green power push could turn the country into a regional leader in renewable energy. Solar generation already grew by 10.2% between 2019 and 2020.

"In terms of carbon emissions or greenhouse gas emissions, it's less compared to the usual source of power generation like coal," Santos-Borja says. "That's why this is cleaner production. And you know, we are in the tropics and the energy from the sun,

it's just there to be harnessed. So, the resources here are environmentally friendly because it's renewable.”

Other possible advantages are reduced water evaporation and the prevention of harmful algae blooms, Santos-Borja's study notes. However, drawbacks could include reduced sunlight penetration to the water body, increased water temperature and effects on the rate of photosynthesis and the concentration of dissolved nutrients in the lake.

But it's hard to know precisely what the effects would be. “Negligible information is available on the environmental impacts of FPVs,” according to a 2022 report on the broad implications of FPVs, published in *iScience*, an open-access journal by Cell Press. The study notes some potential negative effects that can be extrapolated from other industries. For example, if the installations restrict oxygen and gas exchanges between the water surface and surrounding environment, “it could lead to [an anaerobic] condition, which affects microbial community and water chemistry of the ambient ecosystem.” Other potential problems could include chemical pollution and fuel leaks resulting from the installation and maintenance of the FPVs as well as underwater noise pollution.

The ability to withstand extreme weather is another potential challenge. It is no secret that the Philippines is on the typhoon belt and experiences an average of 20 typhoons annually. Lumawag says his company's pilot testing bed was able to withstand the many storms it encountered during the past four years.

“[We have] pre-typhoon inspections and checks to make sure that our system is ready for the typhoon. During a typhoon, safety is what matters to us. So we have different guidelines [in place such as] when to shut down the system to avoid any electricity being spilled. So we've done that even from the first up to the last typhoon that we encountered. After the typhoon, we are making sure it's ready to be interconnected again and to produce electricity for the benefit of the LGU,” Lumawag says.

Despite potential environmental impacts, Lumawag says the installation eventually becomes part of the natural environment. It serves as a haven for fish, as algae that grow under the floats serve as their food, he says. Birds can also sometimes be seen on the installation feeding on the fish. Moreover, he argues, the project benefits the surrounding communities not just by generating electricity but also by creating jobs for the local community and for the benefit of the local government.

The iScience study notes that the long-term effects of FPV installations on communities are also still widely unknown, as “negligible or no published research exists in which the social or societal implications of FPVs are being examined.” But Replan recognizes that the project has the potential to benefit fisherfolks, as it can provide an alternative source of income if they will be hired as workers in the floating solar farm. When it’s windy and waves are high, local fishers cannot go out onto the lake in their small boats, making income unstable and dependent on the weather.

Ruben Amatorio Pia, a member of Bantay-Lawa, a volunteer organization of fisherfolk in partnership with FARMC that is tasked with implementing the Municipal Fishery Ordinance against those engaging in illegal fishing practices, has been fishing for approximately 50 years. He says he has no problem with the floating solar farm as long as it does not bring harmful impacts to his communities. He also mentions that if the floating solar panels are installed 200 meters away from the shoreline, fisherfolks would have to go beyond the floating solar installations or just fish within the area near the shoreline, which could affect their catch.

Fisherfolks, according to Replan, hope they will be prioritized in hiring workers for the floating solar farm since they will be affected by the reduced fishing area.

As of writing, Lumawag says SunAsia is still in the process of securing the necessary permits and licenses from different national government offices for the large-scale solar FPV installation in Laguna Lake. He also mentions that fisherfolks are their number-one priority when it comes to people power — to hire them, train them, involve them as much as possible.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Gov't should consider nuclear power – senator

By: Marlon Ramos

After repeatedly opposing nuclear power and saying that coal was a cheaper and “safer” source of energy, Sen. Sherwin Gatchalian on Sunday said the government should now consider nuclear power and other modern technologies to address electricity woes that are expected to last for years to come.

Gatchalian, the vice chair of the Senate energy committee, said the country needs to produce nearly 67,000 megawatts every year to meet the average increase of 6.53 percent in demand for power.

He pointed out that the Philippines remains fully dependent on foreign sources for its supply of coal, making the country only “50 percent self-sufficient” in terms of energy generation.

According to the Department of Energy, the country’s energy generation mix is composed primarily of coal (57.5 percent) with renewable energy accounting for 23.4 percent.

Still costly

Even if the country manages to dramatically increase the share of renewable energy—like solar—the experience of other countries, particularly the United States, suggests that the investment in cash and land would be very costly.

“Because we import a huge chunk of fuel for our electricity supply, any disruption overseas, such as the Russia-Ukraine conflict, usually impacts the electricity, fuel cost and livelihood of our poorest folks,” Gatchalian said in a statement.

“This is why we need to continually look for all possible ways to improve energy security and supply of electricity in our country,” he said.

“No matter how controversial,” he added, “we should also look at new technologies for nuclear power, such as smaller modular reactors and Generation IV nuclear reactors.”

Generation IV nuclear reactors are incipient designs that employ developing technologies that are cheaper, safer and more sustainable than the current Generation III reactors.

There are a number of such state-of-the-art designs, but they are not expected to be fully developed until the year 2040.

Tech adoption urged

Gatchalian noted that the country's sole source of natural gas, the Malampaya gas field off Palawan province, would soon be depleted.

This made it necessary for the government to adopt new technologies in power production, particularly those harnessing clean energy, according to the senator.

"We have to look at emerging technologies such as batteries and other energy storage systems," Gatchalian said.

"Although this needs a little more time, we have to look at these emerging technologies since we also have no laws or any single regulation on these," he added.

Rice market's stability threatened by rising input costs

By: Ronnel W. Domingo

Soaring prices of farm inputs and the effects of climate change are threatening the stability of the rice market, which is a main concern for countries like the Philippines, according to the OECD Development Center.

The think tank said in a report, which covers Southeast Asia, India and China, that while the price of rice has remained relatively stable since the pandemic, higher fuel and fertilizer costs along with adverse weather conditions threaten to disturb long-lasting stability in the rice market.

In particular, droughts and heatwaves due to climate change hamper the yields of rice fields, especially those that lack access to irrigation and depend extensively on rainfall and groundwater.

The OECD unit added that when rainfall is low during the planting season, farmers may be forced to compete for a limited amount of groundwater, which has become less affordable due to soaring diesel costs and currency depreciation.

In a bulletin dated March 9, the United States-based Climate Prediction Center declared that the La Niña phenomenon that brings greater than normal rainfall to the Philippines has ended.

However, the consensus among climate forecasters is that there are “elevated chances” that its opposite—the El Niño phenomenon which brings lower than normal rainfall—might develop in the Philippines in the second half of this year.

“Rice, one of the most important staples in Southeast Asia [which includes the Philippines], plays a vital role as the source of nutrition for the region’s increasing population,” the OECD DC noted.

“Given the crucial role of rice as both a food and an export product in emerging [economies in] Asia, boosting its production is essential,” the report said.

The group added that efficient use of scarce water resources and improved irrigation systems to alleviate the adverse effects of droughts will be vital for food security in Southeast Asia.

Also, safeguarding the availability of high-quality seed and ensuring the affordability and optimal usage of fertilizers and pesticides can also boost the supply of rice and mitigate food shortages in the region.

According to the Philippine Statistics Authority, the increase in prices of rice accounted for 0.2 percentage point of the 7.6-percent inflation recorded in March.

On March 7, President Marcos approved the creation of the Inter-Agency Committee on Inflation and Market Outlook (IAC-IMO) as an advisory body on strategies to alleviate inflation and ensure food and energy security, while balancing the interests of domestic food producers, consumers and the broader economy.

Since then, the IAC-IMO has convened to establish coordination mechanisms for data gathering, assessment and monitoring of supply and demand conditions that exert inflationary pressures.

“By streamlining data collection, the government can share a common understanding, particularly regarding data that can inform public policy and aid in the monitoring and management of inflation,” said Arsenio Balisacan, Secretary of the National Economic and Development Authority.

Balisacan said that the committee’s objective was to offer proactive policy recommendations regarding emerging threats to food supply, such as the potential escalation of African swine fever and the weather disturbances linked with the El Niño.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

LPA to enter PAR Sunday; likely to become tropical depression

A low pressure area (LPA) is forecast to enter the Philippine Area of Responsibility (PAR) Sunday night and likely to become tropical depression after six days.

In its 4 a.m. weather bulletin, the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) said the LPA was spotted 1,285 kilometers east of Mindanao at 3 a.m. Sunday.

Benison Estareja of PAGASA said once inside PAR, the LPA is forecast to remain at the Philippine Sea before slowly crossing eastern of Visayas and Mindanao by Thursday.

“So, the crucial part is Thursday or Friday where there is a likely chance for this LPA, or worst case scenario, this tropical depression will cross Bicol region or central and northern Luzon,” he said.

Though still outside PAR, the trough of LPA will bring cloudy skies with scattered rain showers and thunderstorms over Eastern Visayas, Surigao del Norte and Dinagat Islands, the weather bureau said.

Cagayan Valley and Cordillera Administrative Region will experience cloudy skies with rains due to northeasterly surface windflow.

Ilocos Region and Central Luzon will have cloudy to cloudy skies with light rains also due to northeasterly surface windflow.

Metro Manila and the rest of the country will have partly cloudy to cloudy skies with isolated rain showers or thunderstorms due to trough of LPA and localized thunderstorms.

Luzon and eastern section of Visayas will experience moderate to rough coastal waters due to northeast moderate to strong winds.

The rest of the country will have light to moderate winds blowing northeast to northwest and slight to moderate seas.

The temperate ranges between 24.6 °C to 34.3 °C.

RESILIENCE

[Loss and damage: How can culture and heritage loss be measured and addressed?](#)

By: Daisy Dunne

A group of archaeologists, climate scientists and policy experts met at the University of East Anglia last week to discuss how unique cultures and heritage are fast disappearing because of climate change – and what can be done to properly measure and address this.

From the erosion of the Norfolk seaside to the inundation of ancestral desert land in Mauritania, climate change is already having a serious and often irreversible impact on people's cultures and heritage.

Such impacts are one aspect of “loss and damage” – a term used to describe the consequences of climate change that can no longer be avoided, which tend to be heaped on vulnerable communities.

After the historic agreement on a fund for loss and damage at the COP27 climate summit in 2022, researchers met to discuss how to ensure the loss of cultures and heritage can be included in high-level climate discussions.

Carbon Brief was at the event to listen to the talks and discussion and has summarised the key takeaways.

What is cultural and heritage loss and damage?

“Loss and damage” is a term used to describe how climate change is already causing serious and, in many cases, irreversible impacts around the world – particularly in vulnerable communities. At UN climate talks, the term is often used by groups arguing for big historic emitters to be held responsible for losses incurred in poorer regions, which are the least responsible for climate change.

Loss and damage can be caused by immediate climate impacts, such as more intense and frequent extreme weather events, as well as impacts that gradually worsen over time, such as sea level rise, enhanced coastal erosion and the retreat of glaciers.

According to the most recent assessment of climate impacts from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), loss and damage can broadly be split into two categories: economic losses involving “income and physical assets”; and non-economic

losses, which include – but are not limited to – “mortality, mobility and mental wellbeing losses”.

The loss of cultures and heritage is one aspect of non-economic loss and damage. Explaining the meaning of heritage, Prof Joanne Clarke, an archaeologist specialising in climate change impacts at UEA who organised the conference, told delegates:

“Heritage is all the inherited conditions, objects, places and culture, as well as contemporary activities, knowledge, meanings and behaviours that are drawn from them. Literally, heritage is everything that we are and everything that we want to become. So it is crucial for the preservation of society and social wellbeing. And it is increasingly thought to offer recognition to underrepresented populations.”

At the conference, speakers detailed how climate change is already affecting culture and heritage across the world, including in Ghana, Mauritania, Vietnam, Bangladesh and the UK.

Prof Kwasi Appeaning Addo, director of the Institute for Environment and Sanitation Studies (IESS) at the University of Ghana, explained how climate change is already affecting sites of cultural significance in coastal Ghana, including historic slave forts. He told the conference:

“Erosion, sea level rise and flooding are a major threat to heritage sites – and a major threat to vulnerable communities within our coastal regions.”

To illustrate the scale of coastal erosion in Ghana, he showed delegates images of a coastline in 2008 and 2021 (shown in the tweet above). He told delegates:

“In 2008, I drove on this road. In 2021 I went back and the road was gone.”

Dr Salma Sabour, a postdoctoral researcher of heritage loss from climate change at the University of Southampton, explained her work examining climate impacts in Banc d’Arguin National Park, Mauritania.

As well as being one of the most important fish nurseries in West Africa and a significant breeding site in the “East Atlantic Flyway” for migratory birds, the coastal desert site is also the ancestral home of the Imraguen people, she explained.

This Indigenous community is highly adapted to life in the coastal desert and carries out many traditional fishing practices, including blowing on seashells to attract dolphins, who bring fish with them.

However, sea level rise is already threatening the Imraguen's unique way of life, causing their villages to become inundated with seawater for months at a time. She told the conference:

"Imagine seeing your village becoming an island for three to six months of the year."

Dr Sophie Day, a senior researcher at the UEA's Tyndall Centre on secondment to North Norfolk District Council, spoke about her work examining cultural and heritage loss from climate change along the Norfolk coast in the UK.

One place particularly affected by coastal erosion in Norfolk is the seaside village of Hemsby.

The village has lost about 70 metres of coastline in the last 50 years, with damage from storm surges and high tides increasing over time. In March 2018, the village was struck by a powerful storm dubbed the "Beast from the East", which caused seven homes to fall into the sea.

Day told the conference she asked residents of Norfolk's rapidly eroding seaside villages to explain what the loss of heritage from climate change means to them. In response, residents raised fears about losing a sense of place, sites for recreation, archaeology sites, churches and graveyards, and natural habitats, among other things, she said.

How can the loss of cultures and heritage from climate change be measured?

One of the major themes of the conference was to discuss ways that powerful stories of heritage loss from climate change can be properly measured and tracked to give an idea of impacts at national, continental and global scales.

Doing this will be crucial to get policymakers to take the issue of heritage loss seriously, said Clarke.

She told the conference about a study she was involved in that – for the first time – comprehensively assessed how sea level rise could threaten world heritage sites dotted across coastal Africa.

The research – which Carbon Brief covered in depth – revealed that the number of world heritage sites at risk from sea level rise in Africa could triple by 2050, compared to today. Sites at risk include sacred waterfalls, second-century trading posts and biodiversity hotspots.

Previous research by a similar group of scientists also mapped out the risks facing world heritage sites in the Mediterranean, ranging from the iconic ancient cities of Venice and Naples to caves containing Neandertal artwork in Gibraltar.

Further work is underway to quantify and explain risks facing world heritage sites across the world, Clarke told Carbon Brief.

Speaking from the audience, Nusrat Naushin, coordinator of the loss and damage programme at the International Centre for Climate Change and Development in Bangladesh, questioned whether such an approach could be expanded to include sites of cultural importance that are not classified as world heritage sites.

As an example, she told the conference about a tree in Bangladesh that was considered sacred to those following the Hindu faith. The tree was washed away in a flash flood, she told the audience, with no authority or actor being held accountable for this cultural loss.

Another important way to measure and track heritage loss from warming is through IPCC reports – the most authoritative source of information on climate change, said Clarke.

As noted above, the IPCC's most recent climate impacts assessment does discuss non-economic loss and damage, but does not explicitly mention heritage as an example.

Clarke told the conference that more must be done to include heritage in IPCC reports:

“The [most recent IPCC climate impacts assessment] does not evenly or comprehensively incorporate heritage into its discussions around loss and damage, even though heritage is fundamental to all seven of its central chapters: terrestrial and freshwater ecosystems; oceans and coastal ecosystems; water; food and fibre; cities and settlements; health and wellbeing; economics, poverty and livelihoods.”

In a discussion, Sabour noted that, out of the regional chapters of the IPCC climate impacts assessment, the chapter on Africa was the only one to prominently discuss the impact of climate change on heritage.

This likely reflected the personal interests of one of chapter's lead authors, Dr Nick Simpson, a postdoctoral research fellow at the African Climate and Development Initiative at the University of Cape Town, who contributed to the research on world heritage sites in Africa at risk from sea level rise, several speakers noted. They added that more could be done to ensure heritage is more prominently featured in the next assessment cycle.

How can the loss of cultures and heritage be accounted for at UN climate talks?

As well as discussing how to get heritage into IPCC reports, the delegates also noted the importance of ensuring it features in the burgeoning loss and damage movement making waves at UN climate talks.

COP27 in Egypt saw countries reach a landmark deal on a loss and damage fund following a 30-year struggle largely led by small island states and developing countries.

Speaking to Carbon Brief in 2022, Sandeep Chamling Rai, a senior advisor at WWF and an expert on the UN climate change non-economic loss and damage taskforce, said that the loss of cultural heritage has so far been neglected at UN climate talks, with most looking at loss and damage from a "monetary point of view".

At the conference, Dr Hannah Fluck, an archaeologist working on climate change and heritage who co-chairs the Climate Heritage Network, said the organisation was looking for volunteers to help get heritage spoken about in negotiation rooms at COP28 later this year.

Elsewhere at the conference, Dr Nick Brooks, a climate scientist and director of Garama 3C, a small consultancy firm for climate change and development, suggested that countries should be encouraged to include risks to heritage within their international climate pledges submitted to the UN (known as "nationally determined contributions" or NDCs).

Doing this could be a first step towards quantifying global heritage risks in a UN context, he added.

SOUTH CHINA MORNING POST

Climate Change: acquiring technology and getting suppliers on board are vital to corporate success in carbon-reduction efforts

By: Eric Ng

A lack of funding to acquire digital technology and difficulties in getting suppliers on board are key reasons why companies are struggling to make good progress on their carbon-emission reduction goals, according to an industry consultant.

The result is a dearth of reliable data to measure progress and confidence to make bolder targets and commitments on their climate-change agenda, said Malavika Bambawale, head of Asia-Pacific at Engie Impact, a sustainability and management consultancy owned by Engie SA, a French utility and the world's biggest independent power producer.

Global warming "is a long term problem," she said. "It is important for companies to be bold and ambitious. The faster you get up to speed, the lower your cost of capital and the better your sales could be."

While 62 per cent of the organisations had made commitments or targets on decarbonisation, only 12 per cent said they were meeting or exceeding their ambitious goals, according to a global survey commissioned by the consultancy. Some 68 per cent saw room for improvement while the rest had barely started, it added.

The firm surveyed 505 senior corporate decision makers in 19 locations working for companies with over 10,000 staff globally during the third quarter last year. The findings were published in a report in January.

Some 81 per cent of Hong Kong and mainland China respondents cited data insufficiency as a barrier, higher than 71 per cent of all respondents. Some 78 per cent in Hong Kong and mainland China said getting suppliers to deliver on carbon reductions was a challenge, compared to 75 per cent of all respondents.

Other key barriers mentioned by the survey respondents included insufficient government support, high upfront project investment costs as well as a lack of internal talent and cross-functional collaboration on decarbonisation efforts.

Global greenhouse gas emissions must peak by 2025 and be slashed by 43 per cent by 2030, if global warming is to be limited to 1.5 degrees Celsius, scientists estimated in a United Nations assessment report last year.

Most companies have yet to make ambitious reduction goals on so-called Scope 3 emission, which refers to carbon emissions of their suppliers and customers. Scope 3 typically accounts for over 70 per cent of companies' emissions across the supply chain, according to Deloitte.

They may have to do so by next year, when regulators in some jurisdictions are expected to embrace a set of global baseline corporate climate disclosure requirements. The terms are due to be released by the International Sustainability Standards Board around the middle of this year.

Specifying metrics and setting targets for performance on managing climate risks and opportunities, including Scope 3 emissions, will be mandatory under the proposed standards.

Even among large companies, 40 per cent of the respondents in the Engie Impact survey said they have made no or limited progress in tracking and reducing Scope 3 emissions. This is despite almost 60 per cent of the organisations having communicated their goals to suppliers.

In Europe, new sustainability reporting standards will require companies to disclose their Scope 3 emissions, starting from 2024 for some large and listed companies, and for nearly 50,000 companies by 2028.

"Scope 3 emission reporting remains challenging for many companies, given that much of [the] emissions data of their supply-chain stakeholders is not standardised due to a lack of internal resources or expertise," Sustainable Fitch said in a report published last week.

Clear communications and positive engagement with suppliers are key to success in addressing Scope 3 requirements, according to Bambawale.

"The next steps are educating, incentivising and giving them tools to do what they need to do by a certain time to be the preferred suppliers, such as calculating their emissions and improving their processes," she added.

[Climate change: Sinopec's parent to build China's first long-distance hydrogen pipeline to boost green fuel usage](#)

By: Eric Ng

China Petrochemical Corp, the nation's largest oil refiner and fuel supplier, unveiled a plan to build the country's first long-distance hydrogen pipeline to accelerate green energy development.

The "west-to-east" demonstration pipeline – part of the national fuel transmission network development blueprint – will bolster the country's energy transition effort, said the Beijing-based parent of Shanghai and Hong Kong-listed oil and gas giant China Petroleum & Chemical (Sinopec).

"When completed, it will replace the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region's fossil fuel-based hydrogen production, and help meet [growing] hydrogen demand in the transport sector," China Petrochemical said in a statement on Monday. "It will also greatly relieve the nation's green hydrogen demand-supply mismatch."

Stretching over 400km from Ulanqab in the Inner Mongolia autonomous region to Sinopec's Yanshan petrochemical processing plant in Beijing, the new conduit will be the nation's first cross-regional, large-scale transmission pipeline for pure hydrogen.

Under the current plan, the pipeline's transmission capacity can be expanded to 500,000 tonnes in the long term, up from the initial 100,000 tonnes. Various connection points have been designed for potential sources of hydrogen to be fed into the system. The pipeline and its potential sub-branches will form a key part of the decarbonisation effort in the highly urbanised region that it will supply – which has a population of 110 million and annual economic output of 10 trillion yuan (US\$1.45 trillion).

Beijing wants renewable energy to contribute 14 per cent of the capital city's energy consumption by 2025, and for green electricity imports to double from 2020, to help China complete its dual goals: Reach peak carbon emissions by 2030 and become carbon neutral by 2060.

The new pipeline's routing, technical study and construction design work have been progressing well, with the feasibility study report "basically completed," China Petrochemical said. It did not provide estimates on the construction time frame, investment and returns.

The project will greatly lower the transport cost of hydrogen, the key barrier to faster green hydrogen development in China, the company said.

“Finding a way to deliver green hydrogen [efficiently] from Inner Mongolia and the rest of western China to key consumption centres in the eastern regions has always been a bottleneck,” it said. “Currently, trucking is still the mainstay long-distance hydrogen transport method, which is costly and inefficient.”

Green hydrogen, produced by breaking water into hydrogen and oxygen using renewable energy, is the cleanest way to produce hydrogen power, but it is still a nascent industry in China and abroad.

China Petrochemical said it has planned a large-scale green hydrogen project in Ulanqab, which will be powered by solar and wind farms.

The company previously said it aimed to have the capacity to produce over 1 million tonnes of hydrogen a year, and have 120,000 tonnes of annual refuelling capacity for hydrogen by 2025.

However, it has not announced a target for green hydrogen output.

Under China’s first hydrogen strategy unveiled a year ago, China will have at least 50,000 hydrogen fuel-cell electric vehicles on the road, and produce 100,000 to 200,000 tonnes of green hydrogen a year by 2025.

Hydrogen production in China reached around 33 million tonnes in 2020, or 30 per cent of the world’s total, but about two-thirds of it was produced by coal, generating around 360 million tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions, according to the International Energy Agency.

Natural gas-generated hydrogen, or “blue hydrogen”, accounted for 19 per cent of the total, while “green hydrogen” accounted for only 1 per cent owing to high costs, according to the China National Coal Association. The carbon footprint of natural gas is roughly half that of coal.

THE MANILA TIMES

Dance warns against earth's damage

By: Cora Llamas

The upcoming restaging of "Encantada," National Artist for Dance Agnes Locsin's celebrated production espousing a passion for Mother Earth, intends to reach an entirely new audience with its message of environmental protection.

Performing this month at the Samsung Theater Performing Arts and the Metropolitan Theater, this 21st version reflecting Locsin's unique neo-ethnic style will weave universal themes such as the act of creation with relevant issues like the destruction of nature and its consequences.

The goal of restoring a deeper appreciation for Mother Earth will be interwoven with a layered exploration of Filipino folklore, history and culture. "Encantada" features the artists of the Cultural Center of the Philippines' Professional Artist Support Program and Alice Reyes Dance Philippines (ARDP). The production is a collaboration with well-known singer and songwriter Joey Ayala for music, Al Santos for the libretto, and the late National Artist Salvador Bernal for production design.

Gio Abcede, vice president of the Heritage Conservation Society, agrees that the message animating the dance production "emphasizes the sanctity of our natural resources and the importance of environmental preservation in the Philippines." He says that Locsin's work will portray viscerally "the devastating losses we would experience if our environment's conditions continue to degrade and suffer because of external threats."

Nathaniel Von Einsiedel, consultant for Comprehensive Environmental Planning Inc., echoes that the environment is "under siege from rapid and uncontrolled urban expansion ... thus resulting in the increasing encroachment and destruction of ecosystems which human life depends on."

He hopes that the art forms of dance and music can bring the message of environmental protection to a wider audience "...not only as an artistic expression but as a reminder of our dependence on nature."

Tats Manahan, president of ARDP, believes that the production will resonate with the Millennial-to-Gen-Z audience who are becoming more aware of climate change, environmental damage and their adverse repercussions. She says, "Thematically, [Locsin] touches on many themes but most especially, the destruction of the

environment — an issue that is still relevant to this day. It's a learning curve for the younger generation."

[Opinion] Another PH distinction: 'Plastic-spewing superpower'

By: Yen Makabenta

During the solemnities of Holy Week, I took the opportunity to review some major long articles online.

One such article was a provocative piece by Edward Ring in the American Greatness website, posted on April 4, 2023 and entitled, "How climate alarmism killed true environmentalism."

In the middle of the piece, there leaped into my attention two riveting paragraphs:

"Massive oceanic garbage patches: In the central Pacific Ocean, a body of water larger in area than every continent on Earth put together, there is a concentration of floating garbage spread over nearly 8 million square miles. It is the largest of several massive concentrations of plastic waste, contaminating literally every living oceanic organism from plankton to whales.

"The plastic-spewing superpower these days is the Philippines. With less than 2 percent of the world's population, this island nation produces nearly one-third of the estimated 1 million tons of plastic dumped into the ocean every year. The solution is to develop more sanitary landfills, implement new and more effective methods to reprocess plastic waste, and where possible, invent substitutes to plastic. But 'climate change' has nothing to do with this problem."

I looked at his endnotes to check his source for this information.

The source was the Visual Capitalist website, which posted the item on Feb. 17, 2023, along with a list of plastics pollution by country. The website reported:

"Where does all of this plastic come from? In this graphic, Louis Lugas Wicaksono used data from a research paper by Lourens J.J. Meijer and team to highlight the top 10 countries emitting plastic pollutants in the waters surrounding them

"First, let's talk about how this plastic waste reaches the oceans in the first place. Most of the plastic waste found in the deep blue waters comes from the litter in parks, beaches, or along the storm drains lining our streets. These bits of plastic waste are carried into our drains, streams, and rivers by wind and rainwater runoff.

"The rivers then turn into plastic superhighways, transporting the plastic to the oceans.

"A large additional chunk of ocean plastic comes from damaged fishing nets or ghost nets that are directly discarded into the high seas.

"Some might think that the countries producing or consuming the most plastic are the ones that pollute the oceans the most. But that's not true.

"According to the study, countries with a smaller geographical area, longer coastlines, high rainfall, and poor waste management systems are more likely to wash plastics into the sea."

We chalked up this record despite our Congress passing a waste management act and banning plastics for garbage disposal across the archipelago. And we have a full-fledged environment and natural resources department.

Environmental disasters in progress

The rest of Mr Ring's article shocks in its indictment of climate alarmism as the enemy of environmentalism:

"The overwhelming theme of environmentalism today, designed to obscure its true agenda, is the alleged 'climate crisis.'

"Americans may or may not eventually muster the impertinence to successfully challenge the political power grab masquerading as environmentalism today. But either way, its centerpiece, the 'climate crisis,' is responsible for devastating harm both to what was once a legitimate environmentalist movement, as well as to the environment itself.

"Policies ostensibly designed to manage the planet's climate are taking attention and resources away from genuine environmental threats. At the same time, a growing percentage of people are recognizing the fraudulent essence of the 'climate crisis' agenda and, as a result, are becoming indifferent to legitimate environmental concerns ...

"Here are just a few of the environmental disasters in progress that nobody talks about either because they're making too much money pushing the climate change scam, and disregard all environmentalist concerns.

"1. Loss of insect population: By some estimates, and for reasons we don't yet adequately understand, the total insect mass on Earth is dropping by an estimated 2.5 percent per year, faster than any other endangered species. This is an existential threat.

Insects pollinate many vital food crops. They play a critical role in consuming decomposing animals and plants. They are an essential link in the food chain, the glue that connects microorganisms to smaller predators. Wind turbine blades are a mass killer of insects. Whatever else is killing insects, it won't stop because we banned fossil fuels.

"2. Aquatic dead zones: While criticism has been appropriately directed at unjustifiable attempts to shut down farms that use fertilizers derived from nitrogen and phosphorus, the problems posed by these compounds cannot be ignored. But the consequences of overloading waterways with nutrient runoff, either from flood irrigation, dairy and cattle manure, or insufficiently treated urban wastewater, have relatively little to do with 'climate change.' Instead, the problem is that nutrient-rich waterways nourish overgrowth of algae, which produce deadly toxins that kill fish en masse and create massive aquatic dead zones. A rational approach to this challenge would be to stop connecting it to climate change, which is a stretch at best, and instead develop precision irrigation and fertilizing methods, as well as adaptive reuse of effluent from livestock and humans.

"3. Overfishing: The overfishing of the oceans is another environmental catastrophe in the making that has nothing to do with climate change. Banning incandescent light bulbs will do nothing to stop illegal fishing trawlers from strip-mining the oceans with drift nets that can be over 30 miles long. Cramming humanity into small apartments will not prevent factory ships from clearcutting the floor of the continental shelf with weighted nets that scoop up every living organism. Anyone who thinks humanity hasn't by now acquired the capacity to extract every scrap of living protein out of the oceans isn't paying attention. Rational solutions are to enforce fishing quotas, and encourage industrial aquaculture onshore and in coastal waters.

"4. Energy security in developing nations: One of the many ironic results of the climate alarmist war on fossil fuel is the inability of equatorial African nations to achieve energy security, which is a prerequisite to prosperity, which, in turn, causes population stabilization. Instead of having energy security, these burgeoning, desperately poor populations are stripping the forests of wood for fuel and wildlife for food. The primary threat to wilderness and wildlife on Earth today is not 'climate change.' It is that the climate alarm has inspired the international community to do everything in its power to deny prosperity to the poverty-stricken populations living in proximity to the world's great tropical forests.

"5. The biofuel disaster: Which brings us to biofuel, an example not only of an environmental catastrophe that is ignored in favor of climate alarm, but an

environmental catastrophe explicitly caused by climate alarm. Over 500,000 square miles are now given over to biofuel monocultures, most of them saturated in chemical fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides, most of them replacing what previously were tropical rainforests. In exchange for this devastation, biofuel produces less than 2 percent of global transportation fuel.

"6. Massive oceanic garbage patches: In the central Pacific Ocean, a body of water larger in area than every continent on Earth put together, there is a concentration of floating garbage spread over nearly 8 million square miles. It is the largest of several massive concentrations of plastic waste, contaminating literally every living oceanic organism from plankton to whales. (already quoted above.)

"7. Population crash: The population crash currently afflicting every developed nation on earth may be good news for those environmentalists who have succumbed to misanthropic nihilism, but for the rest of us, it's possibly the biggest catastrophe of all.

"The crash is usually attributed to cultural and economic causes, but environmental factors may play a direct and indirect role. Humans today ingest increasing levels of chemical endocrine disruptors unknown a century ago, present in everything from the air, water, and food, to fabrics and cosmetics, harming health and fertility. They are not only a direct physical cause of declining birth rates through lowered fertility, they may also cause behavioral changes that indirectly lower birth rates. Endocrine disruptors should be removed from the environment and avoided in the meantime. But carbon dioxide, the climate alarmist boogeyman, has nothing to do with endocrine disruption.

"These are just some of the environmental problems confronting humanity and the planet that have nothing to do with CO2 emissions and, in many cases, are worsened by misguided steps being taken to curb CO2 emissions. By now, the fraudulent reality of 'renewables' that aren't renewable is well documented, even if that fact receives scant attention in the mainstream press. But this additional fact — that the climate alarmist focus on achieving 'net zero' is discrediting environmentalism at large, and taking attention away from other serious environmental threats — is perhaps the saddest chapter in the story of a movement that has lost its way."

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

[Climate-hit island pushes to reshape World Bank, IMF](#)

While conflict and inflation will dominate World Bank spring meetings next week, campaigners are pushing for a redesign of global financial architecture to help countries cope with climate change.

Experts say developing nations are struggling to find the funds needed to stop burning planet-heating fossil fuels and prepare for tomorrow's climate disasters, as they grapple with rising costs, soaring debts and extreme weather events.

The question is what to do about it, amid international tensions driven by Russia's invasion of Ukraine and trade tussles between the US and China.

Enter Barbados Prime Minister Mia Mottley.

"We believe that we have a plan," the head of the Caribbean island nation, threatened by storms and sea level rise, told world leaders at the COP27 climate summit in Egypt in November.

Known as the Bridgetown Initiative, the ideas she laid out include using the International Monetary Fund to turn "billions to trillions" in investments to cut carbon pollution, as well as a tax on fossil fuel profits to cushion the economic blows of climate impacts.

While the proposals are still being debated, they have gained traction among the large economies that hold sway over the World Bank and IMF, raising hopes of action in the coming months.

The World Bank is under particular pressure, in the wake of the resignation of chief David Malpass amid questions over his stance on climate change.

French President Emmanuel Macron has embraced the reform push and will seek to keep up momentum with a climate finance summit in June, ahead of Bank meetings and UN climate summits later this year.

Reform plans are gaining momentum because they fill a "policy vacuum" over funding for the global climate response, said Avinash Persaud, the economist running the Barbados campaign with "one and a half people and a spreadsheet".

"I feel we've got a moment here," he told AFP.

'Burning and drowning'

United Nations climate science experts have said time is running out to invest in the changes needed to limit warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius above preindustrial temperatures.

Currently the world is far off track, risking enormous costs, for nature, human societies and the global economy.

"Unless money is put on the table, we won't be able to solve the climate crisis," said Harjeet Singh, Head of Global Political Strategy at the Climate Action Network campaign group.

The last few years have seen waves of crop-withering heat waves, droughts and floods in key global breadbaskets.

In Pakistan, for example, the economy was already struggling after years of political upheaval, but a global energy price surge and catastrophic floods last year have pushed it to the brink.

Developing countries are already losing "big chunks" of their gross domestic product each year to climate impacts, said Persaud.

"We are burning up and we are drowning in the same year, that's climate change for you," he said.

After war

The so-called Bretton Woods financial architecture was created to help rebuild countries shattered by the Second World War and boost global trade and development.

The world has now reached a new inflection point, said Cameroonian economist Vera Songwe.

"If you combine all these crises we have today, it feels like we just came through a war," she told AFP.

Of those crises, climate change is now "the most critical and the most sustained of risk", she said, adding it is already "permeating every aspect of global economic development".

Financial institutions have started to take action.

The IMF has created a new loan-based Resilience and Sustainability Trust to help poorer or vulnerable countries boost sustainable growth. Barbados was the first recipient.

The World Bank says it delivered a record \$31.7 billion last year to help countries tackle climate change and has started to draft a roadmap for change.

But even as wealthy nations have failed to meet their own target of providing \$100 billion annually to help developing nations invest in clean energy and boost resilience to climate impacts, research has shown the true costs already far exceed that figure.

Songwe co-led the Independent High-Level Expert Group on Climate Finance, set up under the UN, which last year said they will need over \$2 trillion a year by 2030 to respond to the climate crisis.

'Change the world?'

The Barbados plan seeks to raise those trillions using roughly \$500 billion in IMF reserve assets—known as Special Drawing Rights—as collateral in a new climate trust, which could borrow cheaply to invest in private sector emissions-reduction projects.

It also calls for multilateral development banks to significantly increase their lending, while stressing that debt arrangements should include, as Barbados has, disaster clauses allowing a country to pause repayments for two years after an extreme event.

And the plan calls for taxes—for example on fossil fuel profits—to help countries cope with climate losses and damages.

Singh welcomed the proposal, although campaigners want debt cancellation on the table and a greater acknowledgement of responsibility from rich polluters.

Persaud said the hope was to build a broad coalition of countries on the climate frontlines—roughly 40 percent of the world's population—to push for change.

"You will change the world for 3.2 billion people, especially because that group is growing," he said.

[‘Minidumps’ of trash: EcoWaste laments return of pre-pandemic littering at pilgrimage sites](#)

By: Cristina Chi

Similar to pre-pandemic commemorations of Holy Week, groups of devotees again left trails and minidumps of garbage at pilgrimage sites this week, according to an environmental watchdog.

EcoWaste Coalition said in a statement Saturday that it has observed the return of the “traditional” level of littering among throngs of pilgrims who flocked to churches and shrines this week after a three-year pause due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Based on its monitoring, the group observed that “some pilgrims chose to ignore the oft-repeated reminder not to leave any trace of garbage as they perform time-honored practices among Catholic Filipinos during the Holy Week.”

“While some opted to bring their discards home or dispose of them in available bins, many visitors, without remorse, threw or abandoned their trash along the streets and in pilgrimage sites, which are places for prayer and reflection, for cleaners or sweepers to pick up,” the coalition said.

Photos shared by EcoWaste with the media show piles of garbage around the Our Lady of Lourdes Grotto in San Jose del Monte City, Bulacan.

The group said it saw bins “overflowing” with mostly single-use plastics and food waste.

Those who visited the shrine also tossed trash on the ground, creating “minidumps” along the 14 Stations of the Cross, the group added.

Participants of the Alay Lakad or Penitential Walk 2023 procession to the shrine of the Our Lady of Peace and Good Voyage in Antipolo City, meanwhile, left improvised sleeping materials and other waste on the ground after an overnight stay outside the Antipolo Cathedral, the group observed.

The annual Alay Lakad to the Antipolo Cathedral typically draws devotees from different parts of Metro Manila and nearby provinces, with the number of participants reaching around 4.2 million in 2019.

The group also observed some level of littering at the National Shrine of the Divine Mercy in Marilao, Bulacan and streets adjacent to the Minor Basilica of the Black Nazarene in Quiapo, Manila.

Catholic mandate to shun harmful disposables, single-use plastics

Most trash left by devotees at pilgrimage sites were single-use plastics, including plastic utensils and wrappers, prompting the group to urge the Catholic faithful to do away with the use of disposables.

“It’s high time to move away from disposable culture. Ecological conversion and solidarity (are) urgently needed amid the triple planetary emergencies involving climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss, which threaten human health and livelihoods and the ecosystems upon which we depend on,” the group said.

The Catholic Bishops’ Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) through its president and Caloocan Bishop Pablo Virgilio David earlier supported the group’s call for a litter-free pilgrimage, according to a Radio Veritas report.

While Filipinos typically resort to using single-use plastics due to its affordability, corporations have also benefited from these products by marketing them for their low cost without being held accountable for their contribution to pollution, a 2020 study commissioned by environmental organization Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives (GAIA) showed.

The CBCP wrote a strongly-worded letter in 2019 that called on Catholics to “eliminate” single-use plastics from their homes and institutions as part of their responsibility to protect and preserve the environment.

The nine-page pastoral statement, which directed dioceses to lead initiatives to address the ecological crisis, was patterned after Pope Francis’ environmental edict “Laudato Si” in 2015.

[Opinion] Easter and the Earth's sustainability

By: Joseph Lacson

Today, Christendom will once again celebrate her oldest and most important festival: Easter. Also known as Pascha or Resurrection Sunday, Easter commemorates the resurrection of Jesus on the third day after his crucifixion, his triumph over death. "He is not here, He is Risen! Remember how he told you, while He was still with you in Galilee: 'The Son of Man must be delivered to the hands of the sinners, be crucified and on the third day be raised again'." (Luke 24: 6-7) From the "Salubong" or welcoming to Easter masses to Easter egg hunts to lavish family meals, Easter is a celebration for Christians, but perhaps most so for Filipinos.

Inspired by the magnificence of Easter, I hope to bring light to the date July 27, 2023 – this year's Earth Overshoot Day. It marks the time when mankind's demand for ecological resources in a year exceeds what the Earth can regenerate in that year. In other words, humanity uses up in over half a year what the Earth can regenerate in a full year. (Strong parallels to how one's monthly paycheck is all used up the 2nd or 3rd week of the month, but that's for another write-up.)

Earth Overshoot Day was in the late November/December timeframe just some 50 years ago, so the velocity of humanity's use of the Earth's ecological resources has increased significantly.

Unlike Easter which has a set date predetermined by the Western Church, Earth Overshoot Day, if done on a country by country basis, would fall on vastly different days. It could be as late as December for Jamaicans, Ecuadorians or Egyptians; July to August for Brazilians, Panamanians or Bolivians; as early as February to March for Americans, Qataris or Australians.

Among our neighbors, China would be in June, Indonesia in December, Thailand in September and Malaysia in May. The Philippines does not have an official Earth Overshoot Day date, but if I were to estimate, our date would be in the latter half of the year, perhaps somewhere between Thailand and Indonesia's dates.

Still, just as the central message of Easter isn't about the crucifixion or death, the point of Earth Overshoot Day isn't that we've used up more than what the Earth can regenerate. If that was the key message then it becomes a nihilist argument, one of pessimism and doom, unable to inspire.

Instead, like Easter's message of victory over death, the true focus of Earth Overshoot Day should be on humanity's efforts to regenerate the Earth's ecological resources. Earth Overshoot Day is thus more akin to the last days of Lent – a time of repentance

and reflection which gives way to a message of hope. The “Day after Earth Overshoot Day” ought to be humanity’s call to action for a better world for this and future generations.

While Filipino Christians have some awareness of the activities of Easter – it is difficult to ignore the festive atmosphere in the air, with church bells ringing, kids running around looking for Easter eggs and masses delivering a message of salvation and love, etc. – there is probably less awareness of what can and ought to be done so that we push back against Earth Overshoot Day, to replenish and restore what the planet has lost.

As someone from the power and infrastructure industry, let me share with you three activities that are being undertaken by the industry.

One is that we are aggressively pursuing decarbonization. The move towards renewable energy (RE) is well documented, and organizations are devoting significant resources, brainpower and grit to bring about more RE to our power grid.

In the Philippines, there are 37,948.70 megawatts (MW) of indicative RE projects slated for 2023 to 2037 and 3,180.63 MW of committed RE projects with commercial operations targeted for 2023 to 2026, according to data from the Energy department.

We are achieving significant pathways to carbon neutrality and hopefully, perhaps in the future, we are able to even find ways to address carbon emissions already in the atmosphere.

On the infrastructure side, climate-resilient infrastructure is being designed and built so that these critical assets are better able to withstand and recover from natural hazards. Imagine airports that don’t have to shut down after a major typhoon, highways that aren’t inundated by flood water or utility poles that can survive howling winds.

Second, we are devoting resources towards becoming more and more of a circular economy or ecosystem. It would not be ideal to move towards electric vehicles (EVs) that use rare minerals, for example, as this would simply be taking from one pocket (rare earth minerals which take billions of years to form) and transferring it to another. From recycling to using sustainable design and construction methods to finding ways to prolong the useful life of existing power and infrastructure assets, we are able to reduce the need for new resources.

Third, we recognize that social, economic and environmental issues are intertwined, that one cannot untangle itself from the others. This is why we approach things with a holistic, balanced, whole-of-society approach. Optimizing all the factors is difficult but,

guided by the desire to increase the planet's sustainability, we hope to arrive at better informed decisions.

Every new power facility, as an example, incorporates feedback from various stakeholders through a transparent and just process so that the voice of the people are made part and parcel of the decision-making.

For Easter 2023 and all future Easters, may the Resurrection of the Savior also remind us of the urgent need to take care of and be part of regenerating planet Earth. As Genesis 2:15 says: "The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it." We realize that all created things belong to God and that we are accountable to him as stewards of His creation.

Philippines faces slower growth in 2023

By: Louella Desiderio

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippines is expected to post the second fastest growth in Southeast Asia this year, but the projected growth is slower than last year due to challenges such as a global economic slowdown and high inflation, according to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Plus 3 (ASEAN+3) Macroeconomic Research Office (AMRO).

Based on its ASEAN+3 Regional Economic Outlook 2023 report, AMRO expects a 6.2 percent gross domestic product (GDP) growth for the Philippines for this year, the same forecast it provided in a report it released in January.

This forecast is lower than the Philippines' 7.6 percent GDP growth last year, but within the government's six to seven percent growth target for 2023.

Within Southeast Asia, AMRO expects the Philippines to have the second fastest growth this year after Vietnam, which is projected to grow by 6.8 percent this year.

As for next year, AMRO is projecting a faster 6.5 percent GDP growth for the Philippines, which is at the low end of the government's 6.5 to eight percent growth goal for 2024.

AMRO chief economist Hoe Ee Khor said in a virtual press conference, the Philippine economy is driven by remittances from overseas Filipino workers, as well as the services sector, which has benefitted from the digitalization of the economy.

He said tourism is also seen to drive growth for the Philippines.

"Tourism is an area which benefits enormously from infrastructure. They have a lot of beautiful beaches and attractions but they need to build the infrastructure and facility to attract the tourists," he said.

AMRO said there are risks and challenges that cloud the Philippines' economic growth such as elevated inflation and slower global economic growth.

"High inflation caused by the Ukraine crisis and the influence of other supply factors could dampen domestic consumption. High food and oil prices in particular have impacted households' ability to afford other discretionary items," AMRO said.

AMRO expects Philippine inflation to be at 5.9 percent this year and to ease to 3.8 percent next year from the average of 5.8 percent last year.

It said a weak economic recovery in China and slower global growth would affect exports, although the direct impact is expected to be limited given the less significant contribution of merchandise trade to the economy.

“Over a longer term, scarring effects of the pandemic could become more apparent. The challenge will be to address the learning losses from repeated school closures during the pandemic, which may impact productivity and growth potential,” AMRO said.

Climate change is also an important concern for the Philippines as it is among those most susceptible to natural disasters, which have social and economic costs.

“These points raise the urgency for the Philippines to take action to build resilient, sustainable, and inclusive long-term growth,” AMRO said.

For the ASEAN+3 region covering Southeast Asian countries as well as China, Hong Kong, Japan and South Korea, AMRO expects GDP growth to reach 4.6 percent this year, and 4.5 percent next year.

As for the ASEAN, AMRO is forecasting a 4.9 percent GDP growth this year, and a faster 5.2 percent growth next year.

“The ASEAN+3 region is expected to remain resilient notwithstanding the strong headwinds of weaker external demand and tighter global financial conditions. The boost in tourism and intraregional trade from the rebound in China’s economy will help mitigate softer external demand from the United States and Europe,” Khor said.

While ASEAN+3 financial systems are now more resilient and well-regulated with lessons learned from the Asian financial crisis, the policymakers need to remain vigilant and continue to rebuild policy buffers, he said.

“They also need to remain flexible to extend additional support to the economy, if necessary,” he said.

THE STANDARD

Scary IPCC projections must not dampen spirits

By: Lynet Otieno

The recently released IPCC synthetic report has a scary projection on possibility of exceeding the 1.5°C global warming limit, which means more disasters, especially in the global South.

The report recommends taming appetite for fossil fuel profits and significantly increasing action. But how do we deal with fossil fuel cartels when some African leaders are just realising they have been sitting on black gold?

They argue, rightly so, that Africa contributes below 4 per cent to global warming, and that starting new fossil fuel projects will not significantly change the figures.

If anything, this is how the West developed. This is the confusion over achievement of the 1.5°C target. And with the IPCC projections, should we fight on or just give up?

The fossil fuel cartels, who are the biggest hurdles in achieving 1.5°C, control economies.

At least 600 delegates represented the fossil fuel industry at the November 2022 climate talks (COP27) in Egypt, some with access to crucial negotiation rooms.

Civil society condemned the “infiltration”, but that was just it. The same had happened during COP26.

Controversy also marred appointment of Abu Dhabi National Oil Company CEO Sultan Al Jaber as COP28 President.

One of the most convincing justifications for the choice of the man with one leg in fossil fuels industry and the other in renewable energy sounded like setting a ‘thief’ to catch a thief. People have since moved on.

Yet, effects of global warming on the poor remains massive. In February and March, a 40-day tropical Cyclone Freddy killed over 400 people in Malawi, Mozambique and Madagascar. Imagine this magnitude of loss of lives in developed nations, whose fossil fuel backed development is causing all this.

Returning to below 1.5°C, should there be an overshoot, will be the world's sure bet. It requires more than double aggressiveness, with eyes on opportunities, including for big oil firms, and enablers such as banks and insurance firms.

They may not be the best examples, but SMEs' small-scale distribution of solar power in rural areas is employing many and reducing respiratory and other health problems associated with kerosene lamps.

Where children slept early, they now read for longer hours and enjoy more family time. The solar firms also sell TVs with flexible payment plans, increasing access to information, alternative entertainment to sex, hence controlling populations.

Such a population is easier to reach with information on imminent disasters, disease prevention and services. The SMEs are helping in many ways, a lot more not mention, including just transition to renewable energy and reduction of energy poverty. Now imagine everyone doing something positive! There is hope.

The G7 ministers meeting on climate, energy and environment on April 15 to 16 in Japan should use their power to change things for the better.

If the G7 countries alone stop new fossil fuel projects, the results will be huge. Besides, their focus on Africa for oil and gas must stop.

The schools, scholarships, roads, development and jobs they dangle cannot prevent disasters, loss of land, biodiversity and sources of livelihood.

For African leaders, remember the say when the devil ignores you, you are doing something wrong. When the West ignores you, you have nothing. The opposite is also true. Stop being cheap and ask for investment in renewable energy projects. If the West loves you, they will go the extra mile.

We must all go the extra mile to return to the 1.5°C target cognizant of the fact that no amount of green-washing or climate denial will prevent consequences of investment in fossil fuels.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

POLITIKO

[New report 'crucial' in LGU commitment to climate action: Borje](#)

By: Prince Golez

The Climate Change Commission (CCC), Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), and the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) jointly released the first Local Climate Investment Brief (LCIB) that provides consolidated data on the landscape of climate investments at the sub-national level between the fiscal years 2016 and 2020.

Local government units (LGUs) set aside P528 billion for climate change-related programs/projects/activities, accounting for 24 percent of total investment, over the five-year investment period, according to the LCIB.

Of the amount, P463.9 billion was allotted for climate change adaptation (climate-resilient transportation infrastructure, flood protection, and settlements and local land use), while the remaining P64.3 billion was for climate change mitigation (solid waste management, energy efficiency, renewable energy generation, and forest and biodiversity).

The LCIB reported that national government funding accounted for the majority of investments in climate adaptation and mitigation. The LGUs, on one hand, utilized the Internal Revenue Allotment and shared national-local government funding.

“This report is crucial in assessing the progress of LGUs in achieving their climate goals. It also highlights the need for continued support and collaboration from national government agencies, international organizations, and other stakeholders to sustain these efforts,” said CCC Vice Chairperson and Executive Director Robert Borje.

The LCIB contains information gathered from the systematic review and analysis of existing AIPs with Climate Change Expenditure Tagging (CCET) of the CCET Help Desk. Local CCET is part of the country’s multi-level and convergent governance for climate resilience planning and programming, which can be utilized to leverage partnerships and support for climate action.

Information produced from consolidating and analyzing CCET allows the government to learn where investments are directed, how the country responds to the impacts of climate change, and what remains to be done.

Under DBM-CCC-DILG Joint Memorandum Circular 2015-01, LGUs must climate-tag and submit their Annual Investment Programs to the CCC.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

[Bill creating Philippine 'disaster map' passes first reading in Congress](#)

MANILA, Philippines — A bill mandating the issuing of a national disaster map of the Philippines has passed the first reading at the House of Representatives.

House Bill No. 7278 or the National Hazard Mapping Act directs several departments to work together in creating a national disaster map that would eventually be helpful in preventing the loss of lives and properties during calamities.

According to the bill's principal author, Quezon City First District Rep. Arjo Atayde, having a disaster map is beneficial for a more effective and anticipatory approach to natural disasters.

“No one can predict or prevent natural disasters; but we can most certainly prepare our countrymen for them,” said Atayde

The House Committee on Climate Change, chaired by Bohol 1st District Rep. Edgar Chatto, unanimously approved HB 7278 last Tuesday.

Under Section 3 of the said bill, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, through the National Mapping and Resource Information Authority and together with the Department of Science and Technology, Climate Change Commission, and the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council “will be directed to provide and issue a national disaster map of the Philippines.”

“This measure will arm our people with the knowledge they need to take the steps necessary to ensure that their families and their homes are out of harm's way,” Atayde added.

The national disaster map will identify “low-lying areas vulnerable to rising sea levels as a result of climate change and high risk for natural disasters.”

It will also mark lands that are: 1. bordering sea levels 2. exposed to volcanic eruptions and 3. lying on earthquake faults. It shall also provide the criteria for evacuation and illustrations of recommended evacuation sites and routes.

“This information provided by a national disaster map will help people all around our country, which we know is vulnerable to disasters. Kahit po sa QC nakita na natin na may mga lugar na delikado magpatayo ng bahay,” said the neophyte lawmaker.

“The tragic part is that we discover this after the fact; after the damage has been done and lives have been lost. A national disaster map can prevent all these.”

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