



NEWS ROUNDUP

12 APRIL 2024 [08:00 am]

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- Corporate climate pledge weakened by carbon offsets move
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- UN climate chief presses for faster action, says humans have 2 years left 'to save the world'
- Heatwaves impacting children to increase fivefold compared to previous generations
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- Why do we need a National Environmental Protection Agency?
- ADB on track to deliver food security commitment

CNN

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By: Heather Chen,

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THE MANILA TIMES

[ADB on track to deliver food security commitment](#)

By: Niña Myka Pauline Arceo

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) is on track to deliver on a commitment to provide \$14 billion to improve food security and mitigate the effects of climate change across Asia and the Pacific, its chief said on Tuesday.

Information and Knowledge Management Division

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The death of a toddler from extreme heat highlighted the risk of climate-related illnesses across Malaysia. The same week, Vietnam declared a state of emergency after abnormally high temperatures in the south dried up entire rice fields. And in the Philippines, hundreds of schools suspended classes after daily temperatures soared past 107 degrees Fahrenheit (42 degrees Celsius).

Sweltering heat is back in Southeast Asia, one of the regions most vulnerable to climate change. And it is not going away any time soon, scientists have warned.

Home to more than 675 million people across 11 countries, the region has seen temperatures reach unprecedented levels – with little respite from merciless heat and humidity, climatologist Maximiliano Herrera told CNN.

Thailand has been worst hit, Herrera said, adding that heat forecasts there have been especially dire. Temperatures across the country had been “breaking non-stop records” for 13 months – and heat and humidity levels were relentless, he said.

“We thought temperatures last year were unbearable but (what we are seeing) this year has beaten that – temperatures in Bangkok won’t drop below 30 degrees Celsius, even at night for the rest of April,” Herrera told CNN.

“The trend is inescapable. The region has to prepare for terrible heat for the rest of April and most of May.”

On April 3, as Thailand entered its annual dry season, the capital Bangkok clocked temperatures of around 109 degrees Fahrenheit – prompting many to stay indoors in air-conditioned comfort.

In nearby Vietnam, the heat wave brought intense droughts to the south – driving temperatures up to nearly 104 degrees Fahrenheit and wreaking havoc on the country’s vital agriculture industry. Vietnam is one of the world’s largest rice exporters and low rainfall spells trouble for farmers in its Mekong delta region.

Rice fields and rivers have dried up, according to Vietnamese media reports, and farmers have been struggling without rainwater for their crops.

Record heat waves in 2023 caused severe power outages in several cities. This year, Vietnamese meteorologists have attributed the unusually long dry spell to El Niño, a natural climate pattern that originates in the Pacific Ocean along the equator and influences weather all over the world.

But alongside these natural variations, the world continues to blast through climate records, with deadly heat waves becoming the norm.

‘No definitive end’

Though average temperatures in Southeast Asia have risen every decade since 1960, experts say one of the most worrying characteristics of the heat wave now sweeping across the region is its prolonged duration - with no end in sight.

Researchers from Swiss climate research group IQ Air attributed the current heat wave to “a combination of factors which include human-induced climate change and the El Niño event.”

“This phenomenon has led to unprecedented high temperatures across the region,” IQ Air said in a statement on April 5. “There is currently no definitive end date projected as an abatement to the heat will depend on factors such as weather patterns and (government) mitigation efforts.”

One mitigation effort being considered in Malaysia is cloud seeding, injecting particles into clouds – usually from an airplane – to make it rain.

“Our air assets are always ready,” said Adly Zahari, the deputy defense minister. “Cloud seeding should take into account various weather factors such as cloud conditions and the wind before it is carried out.”

At least two heat-related fatalities have been reported in the country – a 22-year-old man from the northern state of Pahang and a 3-year-old boy, in neighboring Kelantan. Both died of heatstroke, according to health officials.

Officials in Sabah, a state on Borneo island, also reported close to 300 fires that started at farms, plantations and forests throughout February.

Climate change has made “Malaysia vulnerable to extreme heat,” the country’s Deputy Prime Minister Ahmad Zahid Hamidi said on the sidelines of a talk in late March following heatstroke cases. “We are thankful that we have not yet reached the third level of extreme heat waves but this could happen at any time.”

But there is still much to be done, say some living in the capital Kuala Lumpur.

Like many Malaysians, university student Aidil Iman Aidid has been trying to adapt to the ongoing heat, especially in recent weeks when he fasted for Ramadan. “This year’s Ramadan has been the hottest and most challenging,” he told CNN, while staying hydrated was especially tricky, given that hot days “now feel much longer.”

“We are living in extreme weather conditions,” said Aidil, adding that he often woke up thirsty and tired after taking naps during the fasting period.

“There’s so much to be done and I really want to see governments across the region not just adapting (but also) establishing greater climate resilience against extreme hazards,” he said.

In Singapore, some schools have told students to wear cooler, looser gym gear until further notice, given persistently high temperatures in recent weeks.

“We are continuing to monitor the heat situation and well-being of students and staff closely – especially those who may be more vulnerable to the effects of higher temperature conditions,” an Education Ministry spokesperson told CNN.

Similar actions were taken by hundreds of schools in the Philippines, including dozens in the capital Manila, that canceled classes after temperatures reached unbearable levels.

But watchdog groups have expressed concerns about children’s safety.

“Educators and local authorities have been forced to take the extreme decision to shut hundreds of schools because this extreme heat means children are simply unable to concentrate in the classroom and their health is also at risk,” said a statement by Save The Children Philippines.

“We need to see urgent action now to limit warming to a maximum of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels.

“Failing to do this will have dramatic consequences for children’s health, safety and wellbeing.”

DAILY TRIBUNE

Corporate climate pledge weakened by carbon offsets move

The world's main benchmark for vetting corporate climate action has been accused by its own staff of "greenwashing" after allowing businesses to use carbon credits to offset pollution from their value chains.

The ruling by the Science Based Targets Initiative (SBTi) was slammed as a "coup" on Thursday and has sparked a revolt by staff who want the decision reversed and the non-profit's CEO and board to resign.

Experts say it could irreversibly damage the credibility of the SBTi, which is partnered with the UN Global Compact and WWF, and is the gold standard for assessing the net zero plans of big business.

An internal letter sent to SBTi leadership, and seen by AFP, said the board's decision was taken without adequate consultation, defied science, and "resulted in significant harm to our organisation's reputation and viability.

"We stand ready to support any efforts aimed at ensuring that the SBTi does not become a greenwashing platform where decisions are unduly influenced by lobbyists, driven by potential conflicts of interest and poor adherence to existing governance procedures," read the letter to SBTi's CEO and Board of Trustees.

"In the event that our concerns are not addressed, SBTi staff will have no choice but to take further action," it added, without elaborating on what that would mean.

It was signed by staff from "the Target Validation Team, Target Operations Team, the Technical Department, Communications, Impact and IT, and multiple department heads."

Comment has been sought from SBTi, which receives funding from the Bezos Earth Fund and IKEA Foundation, among others.

On April 9, SBTi issued a statement rolling back its previous opposition to the use of carbon credits to offset Scope 3 emissions.

These occur in the value chain, and represents the lion's share of the carbon footprints - - in some cases more than 90 percent -- of most companies.

Carbon credits are generated by projects that reduce or avoid emissions -- like renewable energy, tree planting and forest protection -- and sold to companies wanting to offset pollution from their activities.

"The voice of business on this issue is clear... This change empowers companies to bring more innovation and investment into cutting emissions from their value chains," María Mendiluce, CEO of the We Mean Business Coalition, and a board trustee to SBTi, said in a statement.

'Extremely serious'

But critics say offsets give corporations a free pass to keep polluting without cleaning up their act, and their usage to make claims of "carbon neutrality" has become increasingly contentious.

Gilles Dufrasne from Carbon Market Watch, who sits on the technical advisory group to SBTi, said allowing their usage by companies represented a "fundamental U-turn on SBTi policy so far".

"It is pretty much a coup from the board," he told AFP, adding at least one member of the advisory group had resigned in protest.

"It's extremely serious, I've never seen anything like it."

Verification by SBTi allows companies to say their climate plans align with science and the goals of the Paris agreement to limit global warming.

More than 4,000 companies and financial institutions have sought to have their net zero claims verified by SBTi, the nonprofit said.

Dufrasne said the decision was "extremely damaging" to corporate climate responsibility because it sent a signal that companies could just pay someone else if they can't meet their own targets.

"I'm not sure if SBTi's credibility can survive this," he said.

Carsten Warnecke from the NewClimate Institute, a nonprofit policy organisation, said in a statement: "Anyone who still believed that the voice of science still had weight in this initiative has been proven wrong."

MANILA BULLETIN

[A push for renewable energy in the healthcare sector](#)

By: Climate Reality Project Philippines

Public hospitals in the Philippines are looking to integrate sustainability into their operations, as they recognize the significant risks climate change poses to public health and economic wellbeing.

The healthcare industry is focusing on transitioning to renewable energy, given its significant energy consumption, which contributes around five percent of global greenhouse gas emissions. To achieve this, the Green Energy Option Program (GEOP) offers a pathway for the healthcare system to access 100 percent renewable energy without upfront costs.

GEOP allows entities with a monthly average peak demand of 100 kilowatts and above for the past 12 months to switch from being a captive market of a distribution utility or electric cooperative to sourcing power directly from a renewable energy supplier. With GEOP, entities have the power to choose renewable energy over fossil fuels, allowing them to source 100 percent power directly from a renewable energy supplier.

The Department of Energy (DOE), the Climate Change Commission (CCC), and the Department of Health (DOH) are collaborating to expedite GEOP access for public hospitals. This collaboration emerged from a recent roundtable discussion on greening the healthcare sector, organized by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) with support from Climate Reality Philippines.

Why go green?

The benefits of this transition are multifaceted. Dr. Eduardo Banzon, principal health specialist at ADB, underscored the need to "future-proof" healthcare investments by adapting facilities to the challenges of climate change.

During the discussion, Dr. Banzon also shared the bank's vision to support the climate change adaptation and mitigation needs of developing countries.

"Now that climate change is considered by many as the largest threat to public health in the world, we need to respond to that. The [ADB] wants to become a climate bank. And we have marching orders to have 100 billion [US] dollars of financing available to our

developing member countries by 2030. There is a shift now in ADB. All of our projects need to have a climate assessment,” he said.

This is a welcome pronouncement given the growing demand for multilateral development banks and development finance institution systems to align their operations with global climate goals. Development and financial institutions should understand that climate resilience and the low-carbon transition are not trade-offs, but investments in a more secure, healthy, and prosperous future.

From an economic standpoint, renewable energy offers cost savings and a more sustainable financial model for hospitals. Angelica David, energy policy manager at the Institute for Climate and Sustainable Cities, pointed out that transitioning away from fixed-rate energy sources leads to stabilized operational expenses. These savings can then be redirected to patient care and facility maintenance.

GEOP: Fast lane to renewable energy

The growing demand for renewable energy in healthcare aligns with the consumer-centric mechanisms outlined in the Renewable Energy Act of 2008. Ian Soqueño, energy program lead at Climate Reality Philippines, highlighted GEOP as a way for hospitals to source 100 percent renewable energy at no upfront cost. The program acts as a stepping stone toward energy self-sufficiency, reduced emissions, and financial savings.

To date, four hospitals were recorded to have switched to renewable energy through GEOP, namely: Asociacion Benevola De Cebu, Mercado General Hospital Sta. Rosa, Mercado Ambulatory and Surgical Centers, and Urology Center of the Philippines.

Challenges and collaboration

Despite the growing interest in GEOP, a key challenge lies in the current limited capacity on the supply side.

To address this gap, Climate Reality Philippines is working with the DOE on policy amendments for GEOP that will ensure easier registration of renewable energy suppliers within the program.

Moving forward, multi-stakeholder collaboration is key to accelerating hospital access to renewable energy. During the roundtable discussion, the DOH sought technical

assistance from DOE and CCC for capacity building and energy audits for healthcare facilities.

The DOE, on the other hand, is committed to implementing policies and initiatives to bolster the country's renewable energy infrastructure, benefiting both public and private sectors.

For Climate Reality Philippines, civil society will continue to play a role in aligning sustainability practices of industries with renewable energy principles. This year, the organization will expand its RE Energize PH program to promote GEOP across various sectors, including healthcare, telecommunications, academia, and tourism.

It is also set to conduct more regional conferences in the coming months, focusing on matchmaking eligible end-users and renewable energy suppliers, which are slated this year.

[UN climate chief presses for faster action, says humans have 2 years left 'to save the world'](#)

By: Associated Press

Humanity has only two years left "to save the world" by making dramatic changes in the way it spews heat-trapping emissions and it has even less time to act to get the finances behind such a massive shift, the head of the United Nations climate agency said.

With governments of the world facing a 2025 deadline for new and stronger plans to curb carbon pollution, nearly half of the world's populations voting in elections this year, and crucial global finance meetings later this month in Washington, United Nations executive climate secretary Simon Stiell said Wednesday he knows his warning may sound melodramatic. But he said action over the next two years is "essential."

"We still have a chance to make greenhouse gas emissions tumble, with a new generation of national climate plans. But we need these stronger plans, now," Stiell said in a speech at the Chatham House think tank in London. He suggested that climate action is not just for powerful people to address — in a not-so-veiled reference to the electoral calendar this year.

"Who exactly has two years to save the world? The answer is every person on this planet," Stiell said. "More and more people want climate action right across societies and political spectrums, in large part because they are feeling the impacts of the climate crisis in their everyday lives and their household budgets."

Crop-destroying droughts have increased the need for bolder action to curb emissions and help farmers adapt which could boost food security and lessen hunger, he said. "Cutting fossil fuel pollution will mean better health and huge savings for governments and households alike," Stiell said.

Not everyone is convinced such warnings will be helpful.

"'Two years to save the world' is meaningless rhetoric — at best, it's likely to be ignored, at worst, it will be counterproductive," said Princeton University climate scientist Michael Oppenheimer, who is also a professor of international affairs.

Levels of carbon dioxide and methane in the air last year hit all-time highs, according to United States government calculations, while scientists calculate that the world's carbon

dioxide emissions jumped 1.1 percent. Last year was the hottest year on record by far, global temperature monitoring groups concluded.

If emissions of carbon dioxide and methane from burning of coal, oil, and natural gas continue to rise or don't start a sharp decline, Stiell said it "will further entrench the gross inequalities between the world's richest and poorest countries and communities" that are being worsened by climate change.

And behind it all is money.

Stiell's speech comes just ahead of meetings of The World Bank and other big multinational development institutions, where poorer nations, led by Barbados Prime Minister Mia Mottley and Kenyan President William Ruto, are pushing for major reforms in the systems that loan money to poor nations, especially those hit by climate-related disasters.

In conjunction with that push, Stiell called for "a quantum leap this year in climate finance." He called for debt relief for the countries that need it the most, saying they are spending \$400 billion on debt financing instead of preparing for and preventing future climate change.

He called for more financial aid, not just loans, and more money from different groups like banks, the International Maritime Organization, and the G20, the world's 20 most powerful economies. Those countries are responsible for 80% of the world's heat-trapping emissions, he said.

"G20 leadership must be at the core of the solution, as it was during the great financial crisis," Stiell said.

"Every day, finance ministers, CEOs, investors, and development bankers direct trillions of dollars. It's time to shift those dollars from the energy and infrastructure of the past, toward that of a cleaner, more resilient future," Stiell said. "And to ensure that the poorest and most vulnerable countries benefit."

Officials said the climate finance problem needs to be fixed by the end of the year with November's climate negotiations in Baku, Azerbaijan, a crucial point.

Stiell is "absolutely right" that timing and finance are the heart of the matter, said longtime climate analyst Alden Meyer of European think tank E3G. The carbon action plans submitted by next year will "determine whether we can get on the trajectory of

sharp emissions reductions needed to avoid much worse climate impacts than those we are already suffering today," he said.

With so many elections and places where democracies on the brink, "climate finance related to carbon policy is on the line," said Nancy Lindborg, president of the David and Lucille Packard Foundation, at the Skoll World Forum, an ideas conference in Oxford, England.

Climate Analytics CEO Bill Hare said Stiehl was "listening to the science" — namely that global emissions must be halved by the end of the decade to meet the Paris climate accord's ambition of capping global temperature increases to 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 Fahrenheit).

"Governments are nowhere near that, and disastrously many are still supporting new fossil fuel development," Hare said. "We need to see a massive strengthening of action now — faster ramping up of renewables, electric vehicles, and batteries — if we're to get serious reductions by 2030. The longer we wait, the more it will cost."

PALAWAN NEWS

[Heatwaves impacting children to increase fivefold compared to previous generations](#)

A Save the Children recent research said children born now are going to suffer 4.9 times more severe heatwaves, 2.3 times more river floods, 1.2 times more droughts, and 1.5 times more crop losses than their grandparents or those born 60 years ago.

Save the Children Philippines believes that the government must take immediate action to help children in adapting to a climate-changed environment, protect children's well-being from the impacts of climate devastation, and prioritize them and vulnerable communities on the government agenda, finances, and resources.

Rex Abrigo, Save the Children Philippines' Environmental Health Advisor, stresses the urgency: "The effects of climate change exacerbate existing disparities and disproportionately harm underprivileged populations. We call for enhanced accountability from governments, corporations, and international organizations to protect children's rights."

Through its Generation Hope campaign, the leading child rights organization is stepping up its efforts to make sure that the Climate Accountability (Clima) Bill is passed and that policies and services that are child-friendly are included.

The Climate Accountability Bill will hold those responsible for degradation of the environment accountable and allocate resources to mitigate the effects of climate change. Save the Children Philippines highlights the importance of mitigating climate change-related loss and damage, as well as providing support to vulnerable communities, especially children.

Fifteen-year-old Carla from Navotas City shares her firsthand experience: "Before, I used to walk home to save on fare, but now I can't because of the heat. Commuting is difficult, the sidewalks are narrow, and it's so hot! Inequality exacerbates climate change's impact. Big countries and companies contribute to rising temperatures, leaving us poor folks struggling the most. They need to be accountable."

The organization's children and youth campaigners also participated in Earth Hour 2024, along with millions of people worldwide, to raise awareness regarding the issue and advocate children's rights as equal partners and change agents in addressing climate and environmental challenges.

Just last week, the Philippines experienced severe heatwaves that led to cancellation of in-person classes of nearly 4,000 schools nationwide. The Philippine weather said that high heat index from 42 to 45 degrees Celsius is dangerous to health and can lead to heat-related illnesses.

Filipino students bear the brunt of the scorching heatwaves. Their classrooms are not heatwave-proof, and their class schedules have been altered, disrupting their studies for the entire year. Heatwaves also have an impact on children's physical and mental health, impairing their ability to concentrate or focus in school. Others caught coughs and colds and may not be able to rehydrate as regularly as they would want due to limited school hours.

On the global front, climate change has been raising global temperatures and causing unprecedented heatwaves, with more countries experiencing hotter days more frequently. Climate change and poverty threaten one-third of the world's children, or 774 million, simultaneously.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Pagasa says PH to have fair weather due to easterlies on Friday

By: Zacarian Sarao

The easterlies will continue to affect the country with generally fair weather on Friday, said the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical, and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa).

“Makakaranas pa rin po ng epekto ng easterlies ang malaking bahagi ng Luzon, generally fair weather conditions, maaliwalas ang maraming lugar sa umaga, at pagsapit ng tanghali magiging mainit at maalinsangan lalo na sa Northern at Central Luzon,” said Pagasa Weather specialist Benison Estareja.

(Large parts of Luzon will continue to experience the effects of the easterlies, with generally fair weather. Pleasant weather is expected in the morning, while it gets warm and humid at noon especially in Northern and Central Luzon.)

Meanwhile, partly cloudy skies are then expected by the afternoon along with chances of rain, especially in the areas of Ilocos Sur, La Union, parts of Cordillera Region, Quezon, Aurora and Bicol Region.

Same weather will likewise prevail over Visayas, along with the same pattern in the afternoon and evening.

On the other hand, partly cloudy to overcast skies are expected in Mindanao with higher chances of rain in the afternoon and evening.

No low pressure areas or storms are also expected to enter or form within the Philippine area of responsibility until the weekend.

Pagasa said the temperature range in key cities/areas across the country for Friday will be:

- Metro Manila: 25 to 35 degrees Celsius
- Baguio City: 17 to 24 degrees Celsius
- Laoag City: 25 to 35 degrees Celsius
- Tuguegarao: 24 to 36 degrees Celsius
- Legazpi City: 25 to 32 degrees Celsius
- Puerto Princesa City: 25 to 33 degrees Celsius

- Tagaytay: 23 to 33 degrees Celsius
- Kalayaan Islands: 26 to 33 degrees Celsius
- Iloilo City: 26 to 32 degrees Celsius
- Cebu: 26 to 32 degrees Celsius
- Tacloban City: 26 to 30 degrees Celsius
- Cagayan De Oro City: 26 to 32 degrees Celsius
- Zamboanga City: 25 to 32 degrees Celsius
- Davao City: 25 to 34 degrees Celsius

No gale warning is currently in effect over the country's surrounding coasts and in-land seas, with only slight to moderate wave conditions — ranging from 0.6 to 2.1 meters — expected.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

Why do we need a National Environmental Protection Agency?

By: Severino C. Samonte

To avoid the destruction of the country's protected and heritage sites for tourism purposes, there is a need for the government to create a National Environmental Protection Agency or NEPA separate from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

This suggestion was made by the widow of former Senator and Environment Secretary Heherson T. Alvarez in the wake of what she considered as "the horrendous assault on a protected area, the Chocolate Hills in Bohol, recognized as a geological monument" and first geopark in the Philippines by the UNESCO or the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

Mrs. Cecile Guidote-Alvarez, a UNESCO Artist for PEACE awardee and Earth Savers' Dreams Ensemble director, deplored "the amazing existence of the construction and operation of a resort at Chocolate Hills without an Environmental Compliance Certificate."

She said: "One wonders how many more protected areas are defiled. Also observed the absence of basic coordinated hearing among all constituency sectors."

According to her, immediate action for reparation and restoration is essential to avoid the possible challenge of delisting from being a heritage site or from being branded with a UNESCO-designated honor realized after years of tedious study and verification.

"We must remember, any honor has the concomitant responsibility of guaranteeing the integrity of the honor bestowed to a country, province or city. We are glad the collective voice of protest has been registered by the Senate Committee on Environment and Climate Change headed by Senator Cynthia Villar, who already filed a resolution for an investigation, while Interior and Local Government Secretary Benhur Abalos has organized an oversight technical team," Mrs. Alvarez said.

"Nobody is above the law, and that must be executed with diligence without favor to anyone. President Bongbong Marcos has committed at several United Nations meetings to promote sustainable tourism while actualizing our fulfillment of the Social Development Goals (SDGs) 2023 agenda linked to the Paris Climate Accord," she added.

In a letter to the Manila Times Opinion editor last March 27, she said that in 1987, when then Senator Heherson Alvarez assumed chairmanship of the Senate Environment committee, his concern was to provide the pioneering voice of defusing the ecological time bomb of global warming as the world now suffers climate catastrophes. He crafted and sponsored the National Integrated Protected Areas System (NIPAS) Act of 1992.

“I recall he pointed out that the DENR has an identity crisis, a conflict of interest ingrained in its function that naturally favors creating wealth through resource development, sacrificing its regulatory function of biodiversity-ecosystem protection, which needs police power so this will ensure the rule of law prevails in granting permits, supervising pollution control causing deforestation and wanton industrialization polluting our water bodies, land, air with black carbon and destroying heritage sites. Circuitous breakage of restrictive barriers must be prevented.

“Thus, Senator Alvarez pushed in the Senate a bill detaching the Environment Management Bureau from the DENR through the passage of an independent National Environmental Protection Agency as the watchdog for Mother Earth.

“Unfortunately, like the anti-political dynasty bill, it could not gather the majority support,” lamented Mrs. Alvarez, who is also a Ramon Magsaysay Foundation award recipient in 1972 and founder of the Philippine Educational Theater Association or PETA.

“We at the Philippine Center of the International Theater Institute, currently led by former Senator Joey Lina, with the Earth Savers now headed by Consul General Fernando Peña, are ready to assist in an effective culture-based information campaign to fill the communication gap of engaging all citizens to be aware of their rights and duties to care for creation. Neither ignorance of the law nor insensitive execution of the law is an excuse for non-compliance with the law.

“It is important to have continuous diligent monitoring and transparent review of needs and conditions, besides excising the culture of corruption and promoting a dedicated public service mindset to achieve peace, justice, truth, and freedom geared toward a unified effort to unlock the gridlock of poverty.

“As Senator Alvarez’s widow, I re-echo his clarion call: Urgent action now to save tomorrow for the survival of mankind and our common home, planet Earth.”

THE MANILA TIMES

[ADB on track to deliver food security commitment](#)

By: Niña Myka Pauline Arceo

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) is on track to deliver on a commitment to provide \$14 billion to improve food security and mitigate the effects of climate change across Asia and the Pacific, its chief said on Tuesday.

"I am happy to report that we have already committed \$7.6 billion of this \$14 billion and are on pace to deliver the rest by the end of 2025," ADB President Masatsugu Asakawa said at the Asia and the Pacific Food Security Forum 2024 in Manila.

"Behind these financial resources is a plan, not only to address the symptoms of food insecurity, like malnutrition, but also to transform the entire agri-food system," he added.

At the end of 2023, the ADB had allocated \$7.6 billion, about 52 percent of the \$14 billion commitment made in 2022, to combat food security issues caused by climate change and biodiversity loss over the last four years.

The Manila-based lender has been assisting in safeguarding food security across various ADB member countries, including Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Nepal, Pakistan, China, the Philippines and the Solomon Islands.

Asakawa said rice prices rose by over 40 percent in 2023, diminishing the purchasing power of numerous impoverished families in Asia.

Nearly 2 billion people in Asia were said to endure this hardship, lacking access to healthy diets, with over half of the world's hungry population residing in the region.

"Climate change, and the worsening droughts and floods that come with it, is another issue that we may not fully understand sitting in this auditorium," Asakawa said.

"This is a reality for 40 percent of the workforce in Asia and the Pacific, who are employed in agri-food systems such as farmers, processing workers and retail workers," he added.

He highlighted that climate change, biodiversity loss and economic shocks are placing significant strain on the region's delicate food systems, leading to a setback in achieving the Sustainable Development Goal of ending global hunger.

"In short, food insecurity is causing tremendous suffering and undermining the prospects for development," Asakawa said.

"The world needs to act urgently to address this crisis, which has grown worse because of extreme weather events and geopolitical conflict," he added.

In response to the need for stronger partnerships in transforming food systems, the ADB has partnered with the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), the world's largest publicly funded group of agricultural research centers.

This agreement aims to scale up innovative technologies developed by CGIAR to tackle food and water security, climate issues, and nutrition challenges.

"We must create a food system that is healthy, prosperous and sustainable for the planet and for generations to come," Asakawa said.

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