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BUSINESS MIRROR

US extends wide-ranging aid to PHL
By: Malou Talosig-Bartolome

The United States is coming back full throttle to the Philippine stage with an all-out commitment to help its oldest ally in the region meet its military, economic and environmental needs and achieve its ambitious goal of becoming a middle-income economy by year 2040.

CLIMATE HOME NEWS

Poverty reduction now depends on meaningful climate action

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CNA

Explainer-Why a clean energy transition is so important to G7 chair Japan

Japan needs to import nearly everything from oil to liquefied natural gas (LNG), putting a clean energy transition at the core of domestic and foreign policy for this year's chair of the Group of Seven (G7) developed nations.

MANILA BULLETIN

PH, US to focus on economic, environment, health concerns
By: Raymund Antonio

The Philippines and the United States (US) will advance partnerships and exchanges on varied issues involving economic and environmental security, chief among them are public health emergency resiliency, virology and vaccines, renewably energy, marine protection, and food security.

PAGASA

Tropical Depression "Amang"

Tropical depression “amang” continues to move west northwestward over lamon bay towards polillo islands.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Manila Water Foundation joins UN 2023 Water Conference
By: Antonio Iñares

Aligned with celebrating World Water Day, Manila Water Company’s social development arm Manila Water Foundation joined the United Nations (UN) 2023 Water Conference from March 22-24 in the United States.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

New partnership aims to leverage solar industry professionals
By: Kris Crismundo
With the growing projects in solar energy, BayWa.r.e. Solar Trade and New Energy Academy (NEA) forged a partnership to develop Filipino talents for the country's solar power industry.

Wind, solar generate record 12% of global electricity in 2022

Wind and solar reached a record 12 percent share of global electricity generation last year, up from 10 percent in 2021, according to the latest Global Electricity Review released Wednesday by independent energy think-tank Ember.

SOUTH CHINA MORNING POST

Climate change: agriculture must adapt to ensure global food security

Climate change is a global problem which affects every aspect of our lives. With the world population predicted to grow to almost 10 billion by 2050, the agricultural sector will become even more strained as it seeks to feed everyone on a warming planet. The effect of climate change on food security is an issue that needs immediate attention.

THE MANILA TIMES

Great expectations from World Bank meetings

THE World Bank is holding its annual Spring Meetings in Washington, D.C. this week, and the buzz leading up to the event has been about reforming the giant institution. While many of the ideas contained in the World Bank's reform road map released earlier this year, which have been supplemented by views from influential leaders such as US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen, certainly sound promising, they will not mean much if they do not translate to tangible action relatively soon.

Innovate UK, Searca partner for agri-innovation, RE
By: Leander C. Domingo

The national innovation agency of the United Kingdom along with 10 companies have expressed interest in collaborating with the Southeast Asian Regional Center for

Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (Searca) on agricultural innovation and renewable energy.

[Opinion] Environmental diplomacy and negotiations
By: Antonio Contreras

THE 1,379th meeting of the board of regents (BOR) of the University of the Philippines is now dominated by controversy because of the selection of the chancellor of UP Diliman, and the perception by many Diliman constituents that it lacked transparency and ignored their preference for a particular candidate.

Will Earth soon become uninhabitable?
By: Ernie Cecilia, DPM

DURING the five-day Holy Week respite, I was able to watch "The Silent Sea" on Netflix. (Spoiler alert.) This fiction series is set in the late 2060s, 10 years "after a global drought occurred. Lakes, rivers, and reservoirs around the world have dried up and desalination plants could no longer produce enough potable water, leading governments to enact harsh, unjustly stratified rationing measures." A team of scientists was sent by ROK's Space and Aeronautics (SAA) division to an abandoned research station on the moon to retrieve samples of "lunar water."

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

Philippine calls for increased climate financing
By: Louise Maureen Simeon

The Philippines called on multilateral development banks (MDBs) to ramp up climate financing to vulnerable economies as impacts of climate change continue to worsen.

US, Philippines agree to boost collab in tackling climate change, energy transition
By: Gaea Katreena Cabico

Top defense and diplomatic officials from the Philippines and the United States on Tuesday committed to enhance cooperation in addressing the climate crisis and accelerating the transition to clean energy.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

DWIZ

Marcos administration suportado ng public at private sector
By: Gilbert Perdez

Nagpahayag ng suporta ang Climate Change Commission o CCC sa panawagan ni Pangulong Ferdinand Marcos Jr. na palakasin pa ang renewable energy initiatives at local production para mapaganda ang transportation system sa bansa.

POLITIKO

Benitez-led House group fine-tunes Blue Economy bill
By: Billy Begas

The technical working group of the House Committee on Economic Affairs met to fine-tune the provisions of the proposed Blue Economy Act.

CCC vows to scale up locally-led climate action
By: Prince Golez

The Climate Change Commission (CCC) is prepared to help local government units (LGUs) address climate change.

THE MANILA TIMES

Bacoor explores climate change plans
By: Jenica Faye Garcia

The Climate Change Commission (CCC) collaborated with the city government of Bacoor to explore initiatives to address climate change.

Information and Knowledge Management Division

BUSINESS MIRROR

US extends wide-ranging aid to PHL

By: Malou Talosig-Bartolome

The United States is coming back full throttle to the Philippine stage with an all-out commitment to help its oldest ally in the region meet its military, economic and environmental needs and achieve its ambitious goal of becoming a middle-income economy by year 2040.

The US announced a whole range of specific deliverables after the 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue in Washington D.C. Tuesday (Wednesday PH time) with Antony Blinken and Lloyd Austin III of the US, and Enrique Manalo and Carlito Galvez of the Philippines.

The four foreign and defense ministers followed up on each other's commitments made in January 2023 to deepen their bilateral relationship on defense, climate and energy, food security, maritime affairs, civil space cooperation, sustainable and inclusive economic growth, as well as democracy and human rights.

"We have reached a number of key understandings that the Philippines believes will truly elevate our relationship and translate into direct, substantial, and tangible benefits for our peoples and countries," Manalo said.

The following are the highlights of their talks:

Defense

• Over US$200 million (P11.2 billion) of US assistance to double the Philippines's capacity on defense;

• Additional $100 million (P5.5 billion) to buy medium-lift helicopters under Foreign Military Financing;

• Fast-tracking discussions on an acquisition plan for a fleet of multirole fighter aircraft for the Philippine Air Force;

• Prioritizing the modernization of "shared defense capabilities" especially in maritime domain;

• Over $100 million (P5.5 billion) infrastructure investments at the existing five military sites where US soldiers can preposition troops and equipment under the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA) and support the building of additional four

new sites before the end of 2023; Finalizing the conduct of “joint sails” by the US and Philippine navies in the South China Sea; Adopting the Security Sector Assistance Roadmap in the coming months to identify defense modernization investments in the Philippines and timeline of priority areas for the next 5 to 10 years. The priority defense platforms include: radars, unmanned aerial systems, military transport aircraft, and coastal and air defense systems; Conduct of high-impact and high-value joint exercises, trainings, and other activities;

United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to complement war games with community projects such as increasing access to safe water supplies, education, and healthcare, sustainable fisheries management, biodiversity conservation, and energy security; Fast-tracking discussions under the new US-Philippines Bilateral Defense Guidelines; Expanding information-sharing through the Indo-Pacific Partnership for Maritime Domain Awareness initiative; Concluding bilateral General Security of Military Information Agreement (GSOMIA) before yearend for real-time information-sharing and technology cooperation across domains; “Increase strategic convergence” on counterterrorism and address “gray zone” challenges such as critical infrastructure attacks.

Strategic

THE US supported the Philippine objection to China’s “unlawful maritime claims, militarization of reclaimed features, threatening and provocative activities” in the South China Sea. This includes China’s recent massing of maritime vessels within the Philippine’s exclusive economic zone and harassment of Filipino Navy, Coast Guard and fishermen going to the Ayungin Shoal where a vintage Philippine ship was grounded. The joint statement also “noted with concern” the covert land reclamation being conducted on unoccupied rocks and reefs in the Spratlys.

Austin reiterated that the 1951 Mutual Defense Treaty applies to armed attacks on either of our armed forces, our aircraft, or public vessels anywhere in the South China Sea. He emphasized that the scope would include Coast Guard vessels as well.

Highlights: Expanding the scope of the Mutual Defense Treaty to include other domains such as space and cyberspace. Both countries highlighted their intent to “work toward building interoperability” on those aspects.

Plans to conduct “multilateral maritime activities with other like-minded partners” such as Australia and Japan in the South China Sea later this year Partnerships and arrangements in the Indo-Pacific should uphold ASEAN centrality; Consultations on Australia-United Kingdom-United States (AUKUS) trilateral security partnership; “Welcomed” the Quad’s commitment to support a peaceful and stable, rules-based

region with ASEAN at the center, through its efforts to advance a free and open Indo-Pacific; Joint training and capacity building, including for counterpart nations' coast guards; and The Philippines can "observe and/or participate" in trilateral and multilateral exercises, and the Japan-Philippines-US Trilateral Defense Policy Dialogue can continue.

Economic and Environmental Security

HELPING the Philippines achieve its "ambitious goal" to reduce greenhouse gas emission by 75 percent by 2030; Partnering with private sector on offshore wind development; Development of nickel and cobalt facilities and increasing cooperation on "green mining" to sustainably process minerals for clean energy transition; Energy Policy Dialogue—high-level meeting to develop short- and long-term energy sources such as offshore wind, rooftop solar capabilities, nuclear energy for electricity generation, grid stability, power transmission; Pursuing negotiations for a potential nuclear cooperation agreement ("123 agreement") to enable the US to share technical knowledge, nuclear material and equipment, as well as help the Philippines with small modular reactors; Providing technical assistance and regulatory guidance to support the growth of the Philippines's civil nuclear energy program; Helping the Philippine private sector in infrastructure investments; Feasibility study on airport security screening at the Manila International Airport; Smart Grid Reverse Trade Mission to bring Philippine grid operators to the United States; Healthcare workshop on medical device regulatory frameworks; Future workshop on subsea cables; Building the Philippines' capacities to strengthen Philippine investment screening and countering proliferation finance mechanisms to allow for transparent and accountable review of certain foreign investments and protect national security while maintaining an open and business-friendly investment climate; Developing and building resilient Philippine and US semiconductor industries; Improving the ability to prevent, detect, respond to outbreaks of infectious diseases; Before end of 2023, US and Philippine scientists to meet on virology and vaccines, combating non-communicable diseases, and ridge-to-reef cooperation.

Food security

Exchanging best practices for agricultural innovation, sustainability and transforming food systems with nutritious crops adaptive to climate change, improve soil health and strengthen value chains;US-Philippines Food Security Dialogue later this year.

Disaster preparedness, protection and conservation of the Philippines' rich coastal and marine resources.

Civil space bilateral dialogue in Washington by July 2023, to promote use of space-based technology for climate resilience;

“Deepen” economic ties through the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF) such as increasing training in data science and artificial intelligence, where women have been under-represented, and boosting digital literacy rates.

CLIMATE HOME NEWS

Poverty reduction now depends on meaningful climate action

The Asia and Pacific region is uniquely exposed to the impacts of climate change. Landscapes across the continent are as diverse as the populations, from the Hindu Kush Himalayas to the low-lying islands across its seas.

Despite significant progress in reducing poverty in recent decades, there remains a sizable number of people in the region that are living in poverty. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has further exacerbated this, in some cases reversing trends of poverty reduction.

Some estimates put the number of people living in extreme poverty in Asia as high as 400 million. These households are the same ones most affected by the climate crisis—increased sea levels, flash flooding, and severe drought are but a few examples of what many people are now facing on a regular basis.

Poor communities already living close to the edge have little resilience against extreme weather events and the more incremental climate impacts such as higher-than-average rainfall, or increased salinity on agricultural lands.

Research from the World Bank found that by the end of the decade climate change could force over 130 million people across the world into extreme poverty. Women and children are often the most vulnerable groups within these communities.

Poverty–climate–gender nexus

Earlier this month, a broad range of stakeholders gathered in Bangkok to discuss how to solve this problem.

Everyone from community leaders to government officials attended the first Community Resilience Partnership Program (CRPP) Partnership Forum to discuss what solutions work and how to implement them in double quick time.

Evidence on the nexus between poverty, climate, and gender is not hard to find. Districts in Bangladesh that are repeatedly impacted by climate hazards, for example, are the same ones that have made limited progress on reducing poverty. Climate change is simultaneously exacerbating gender inequalities and undermining progress on poverty and making it worse.

The forum was convened to discuss how this new partnership program can support poverty reduction and build climate resilience for the many. One way to do this is by ensuring that investments are aligned from the start with shared objectives on poverty, gender, and climate.

It's only by joining up efforts that we will have the most impact across these inextricably linked issues. "This intersection is critical. We can't deal with one without the other," commented Warren Evans, a senior advisor at the Asian Development Bank.

Strengthening local agency for building resilience

A key consideration is how to ensure funding is properly directed, with an understanding that less than 10% of adaptation finance currently goes to the local level. Despite this, we know effective climate responses are often highly specific to the regions and communities where they are being implemented.

The tricky part is knowing how to scale up these solutions without losing focus on context and the unique circumstances each community finds itself in.

Syarifah Anggreini, a leader at the Yakkum Emergency Unit, a local organisation in Indonesia, spoke of the need for greater collaboration between grassroots groups and the government to roll out new and innovative climate and poverty schemes, especially among those in the community who are currently being left behind. "Failure does not dampen our enthusiasm to learn," she added.

For too long development finance has worked with a top–down approach—those who supply the money dictate the terms as to how it is spent and on what. It is widely understood that this needs to change, but building a culture of true collaboration where communities are at the centre of decision-making can take time.

It is clear we need to think more strategically about how money flows to communities, focusing much more on building local partnerships, strengthening institutions, and supporting policy reforms that promote downward accountability toward communities and prioritise gender-specific responses.

Asian countries on the frontline of the climate crisis, such as Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia, and Nepal, already have plans and policies to adapt to the widespread impacts they are seeing, such as climate migration, decreased agricultural income, or spikes in inequality. Development financing needs to be appreciative of these plans, many of which focus on bolstering social protection programs.

Put women in charge

While time is against us, one idea discussed at the forum was to support women-led approaches that build resilience. Female leaders repeatedly pointed out that if we believe in no one being left behind then we should put women in charge.

Suranjana Gupta, an advisor at the Huairou Commission, a women-led social movement, spoke of the need for a change in perception on how to implement climate and poverty solutions.

“What is transformational is the idea that women’s groups get to renegotiate their roles, that they are viewed in a different way: as partners, as stakeholders, and not purely as beneficiaries,” Gupta said.

One of those roles must be for local grassroots women’s organisations to be a central part of the process. Those women who live in the community, who are on the ground day in and day out, are naturally best positioned to improve our understanding of what works and what doesn’t.

Collecting this ‘hyperlocal’ data is one way to identify which are the most vulnerable households. But to further close the evidence gap, we will also need to look at the whole suite of data collection, from satellite imagery to deploying machine learning techniques.

It is this focus on reliable and relevant data that will support better policy-making, sensitive to the complex ways in which climate and poverty interact within local contexts.

Experts in their respective fields, from academics to community leaders, agree on the essential connectedness of poverty, climate, and gender. Tackling one crisis on its own may seem daunting enough, but the task is made harder by ignoring the whole.

Policies and financing to solve the problem will need to be highly targeted with local communities and adaptation plans at its heart. A willingness to be innovative and test out new ideas without fear of failure will also be key.

The time is now to scale up these solutions and ensure the millions of vulnerable people across the region have a fighting chance against the crisis.

CNA

Explainer-Why a clean energy transition is so important to G7 chair Japan

Japan needs to import nearly everything from oil to liquefied natural gas (LNG), putting a clean energy transition at the core of domestic and foreign policy for this year's chair of the Group of Seven (G7) developed nations.

Energy-poor Japan, the world's third-biggest economy, aims to reach carbon neutrality by 2050 using a mix of fuels like hydrogen, wind and nuclear power.

WHY DOES HYDROGEN AND ITS DEFINITION MATTER FOR JAPAN?

Hydrogen has been touted as a clean alternative to fossil fuels, and major industries including energy, autos, steel and chemicals are looking at how to switch to hydrogen to reduce carbon emissions.

Japan wants to change the definition of hydrogen to two types - clean or not clean. Clean hydrogen is produced from renewable energy or from fossil fuels but with carbon capture and storage (CCS), according to Japan's ministry of economy, trade and industry (METI).

Currently hydrogen is colour-coded by the type of the source it is produced from, a definition that also reflects its cleanliness or greenness.

Japan wants to boost hydrogen supply to 12 million tonnes annually by 2040 from some 2 million tonnes now and has agreed with a number of countries worldwide from Australia to the Middle East on supply chains.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF AMMONIA?

Japan aims to extend the lifespan of its coal-fired power plants in an ambitious project to add ammonia, a toxic gas made of nitrogen and hydrogen, to its fuel mix, targeting stable energy supply and lower carbon dioxide (CO_2) emissions in one stroke.

Its top power generator JERA has been conducting a trial project at its power station in central Japan since 2021. Japan wants to establish supply chains together with Australia, Norway and the Middle East among others, while boosting its fuel ammonia demand to 3 million tonnes annually by 2030 from zero at present.

It has so far agreed with other G7 nations to acknowledge hydrogen and ammonia's role as effective emission reduction tools but has opposed Britain's proposal to G7 nations to phase out domestic unabated coal power generation by 2030.

WHAT DOES JAPAN THINK OF LNG?

Japan sees LNG as a transition fuel to greener energy which could be needed for at least 10 to 15 more years, but it so far has failed to convince other G7 members to pledge big investments into this fossil fuel.

At present, it still imports some of its LNG from Russia.

For Japan, CCS technology - which removes CO2 emissions from the atmosphere and stores them underground - is also essential for it to keep using fossil fuels. A long-term roadmap released this year targets annual CO2 storage capacity of 6 million to 12 million tonnes by 2030.

HOW CAN JAPAN CUT POWER SECTOR EMISSIONS?

Japan, the world's fifth-biggest emitter, gets around one-quarter of its electricity from clean sources including generation from solar, wind, hydropower, biomass and nuclear.

Japan aims to install up to 10 gigawatts of offshore wind capacity by 2030 and to cut emissions by 46 per cent from 2013 levels. That would involve boosting renewable energy to 36 per cent to 38 per cent of its electricity mix - double 2019's levels - and nuclear power to 20 per cent to 22 per cent from 6 per cent.

Quake-prone Japan, which previously said it had no plans to build new reactors, made a major shift in nuclear power policy last year. It will now seek to replace decomissioned reactors and extend the lifespan of others after the 2011 Fukushima disaster prompted it to idle most of them.

DOES JAPAN HAVE A CARBON PRICING SCHEME?

Japan is introducing a carbon pricing scheme in stages starting this month that combines emissions trading and a carbon levy to encourage companies to curb pollution.

G7 climate change and energy ministers believe that carbon pricing is a key measure in the developed world's move to net zero, according to a draft communique from April 5.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF BATTERIES?

Batteries are central to Japan becoming carbon neutral by 2050 because they are critical for the electrification of mobility devices and the storage of renewable energy.

Japan is targeting more than $24 billion in investments both from the public and private sectors to develop domestic battery production capacity of 150 gigawatt hours (GWh) by 2030, and global production by Japanese companies of 600 GWh.

MANILA BULLETIN

PH, US to focus on economic, environment, health concerns

By: Raymund Antonio

The Philippines and the United States (US) will advance partnerships and exchanges on varied issues involving economic and environmental security, chief among them are public health emergency resiliency, virology and vaccines, renewably energy, marine protection, and food security.

This was revealed during the PH-US 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue attended by Foreign Affairs Secretary Enrique Manalo Defense Secretary Carlito Galvez, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, and US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin.

In a joint press statement sent by the Philippine Embassy in Washington, the parties acknowledged “that the Alliance must be able to address security in its broadest sense and deliver direct, substantial and tangible benefits to our peoples and future generations.”

The officials, the statement added, are “committed to exploring additional avenues to enhance economic engagement.”

Both sides plan to chart “new ways to become more resilient for future health emergencies, including by improving the shared ability to prevent, detect, and respond to outbreaks of infectious diseases” as it builds on their “successful cooperation” during the Covid-19 pandemic.

In support of this, the countries would convene this year a kick-off planning session for the first meeting of the Joint Committee under the 2019 Science and Technology Agreement, where virology and vaccines, combating non-communicable diseases, and ridge-to-reef cooperation would be part of the discussions.

The agreement is “a tool to promote scientific collaboration, build relationships between U.S. and Philippine scientific institutions, and provide opportunities to exchange ideas and information to advance scientific and technological endeavors of mutual interest.”

The statement also highlighted how the Philippines and the US plan to maximize the US-Philippines Food Security Dialogue by exchanging best practices “for agricultural innovation, sustainability, and transforming food systems by adapting nutritious crops to climate change, improving soil health, and strengthening value chains.”

Such moves would ensure reliable access to a safe food supply.

The dialogue centered as well on environmental protection and the climate crisis, where both countries must “identify opportunities for future collaboration in enhancing disaster preparedness, and for the protection and conservation of the Philippines’ rich coastal and marine resources.”

There must be an enhanced cooperation to address the climate crisis and prevent its impacts, especially on vulnerable population, the statement said.

“To this end, the Secretaries further committed to collaborate on assessments of climate threats, and incorporating these assessments into joint planning, innovation, training, investments and financing to accelerate and increase renewable energy capacity as well as the grid expansion needed to facilitate its deployment, in support of the Philippines’ clean energy transition,” it added.

As both sides welcomed the recent launch of the US-Philippines Offshore Wind Development Partnership and discussed climate transition financing, they also agreed to launch the Energy Policy Dialogue.

The dialogue would be a high-level platform that aims to develop new forms of energy cooperation, including on short- and long-term energy planning, offshore wind development, rooftop solar capabilities, nuclear energy for electricity generation, and grid stability and power transmission.

There would also be negotiations for a “potential” US-Philippines Civil Nuclear Cooperation Agreement, or 123 Agreement.

It would “provide a legal framework for possible nuclear cooperation between the United States and the Philippines, as well as continue capacity building efforts on small modular reactors as potential clean energy solutions under the Foundational Infrastructure for Responsible Use of Small Modular Reactor Technology (FIRST) Program.”

The two countries plan to hold their first civil space bilateral dialogue in Washington by July 2023 in promotion of a “space-based technology” that would open opportunities for the Philippines to use remote sensing and Earth observation applications in its climate resiliency response.

Aside from environmental protection, both sides also agreed to work on shared economic goals, including the development of the Philippine and US semiconductor industries and the strengthening of the Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment (PGII), the Blue Dot Network, and Transaction Advisory Fund (TAF).

Modernizing the Philippines' infrastructure would include "a feasibility study on airport security screening at the Manila International Airport, a Smart Grid Reverse Trade Mission to bring Philippine grid operators to the United States, and a healthcare workshop in the Philippines focused on medical device regulatory frameworks."

They would also like to "pursue further cooperation, to build the Philippines' capacities to effectively implement its trade and investment reform agenda, including to strengthen Philippine investment screening and countering proliferation finance mechanisms."

In the statement, both parties also agreed to deepen bilateral trade and investment relationship through the Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) and the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF).

PAGASA

Tropical Depression "Amang"

Tropical depression “amang” continues to move west northwestward over lamon bay towards polillo islands.

HAZARDS AFFECTING LAND AREAS

Heavy Rainfall Outlook

Forecast accumulated rainfall for the next 24 hours (from this early morning to tomorrow early morning,

Up to 25 mm in most areas of Central Luzon, Metro Manila, and CALABARZON, reaching 50 mm in a few locations (mostly in Central Luzon and northern Quezon) caused by scattered rainshowers and thunderstorm.

Under these conditions, isolated flashfloods and rain-induced landslides remains possible, especially in areas that are highly or very highly susceptible to these hazards as identified in hazard maps and in localities that experienced considerable amounts of rainfall for the past several days.

Severe Winds

Areas under Wind Signal No. 1 may experience strong winds (strong breeze to near gale strength) associated with the tropical depression which may cause minimal to minor impacts to life and property. However, winds are likely to weaken over the next several hours.

HAZARDS AFFECTING COASTAL WATERS

In the next 24 hours, moderate to rough seas (1.2 to 3.0 m) may be experienced over the western seaboards of Northern Luzon, and the northern and eastern seaboards of Luzon. Mariners of small seacrafts are advised to take precautionary measures when venturing out to sea and, if possible, avoid navigating in these conditions.

TRACK AND INTENSITY OUTLOOK

Tropical Depression “AMANG” is forecast to weaken into a low pressure area within 12 hours as it moves towards Polillo Islands and northern mainland Quezon.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Manila Water Foundation joins UN 2023 Water Conference

By: Antonio Iñares

Aligned with celebrating World Water Day, Manila Water Company's social development arm Manila Water Foundation joined the United Nations (UN) 2023 Water Conference from March 22-24 in the United States.

After almost 50 years since the last UN Water Conference, world leaders of government and businesses share commitments to a sustainable future through collaboration and cooperation surrounding water action.

This urgent gathering of world leaders shows that water truly unites the world, especially amid climate change.

Manila Water Foundation was the only Philippine private organization granted special accreditation to participate in the 2023 UN Water Conference at the UN Headquarters in New York City. The conference was convened by the United Nations General Assembly and co-hosted by the Government of Tajikistan and the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

Manila Water Foundation Integrated WASH Program Manager Bess Par was part of the delegation from the Philippines. Representatives from national government agencies also attended the Water Conference led by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Department of Health, Department of Foreign Affairs, Department of Finance, Department of Budget and Management, Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System – Corporate Office, Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System-Regulatory Office, National Water Resources Board, Local Water Utilities Administration, National Economic and Development Authority, and National Housing Authority.

The primary outcome of the conference will be the Water Action Agenda, which is "the collection of all water-related voluntary commitments to accelerate progress in the second half of the Water Action Decade 2018-2028 and the second half of the 2030 Agenda."

There were five interactive dialogues within the Conference: Water for Health, Water for Sustainable Development, Water for Climate, Resilience, and Environment, Water for Cooperation, and milestones on the Water Action Decade.

The conference's closing session featured summaries from the five interactive dialogues, which got to the heart not only of what water is but what it can be: a driver of equality, a solution to the climate crisis, a facilitator of peace.

UN-Water Chair and Director General of the International Labor Organization Gilbert Houngbo concluded: "Water is and shall remain everyone's business." He also noted that the conference demonstrated the importance of cooperation across sectors, stakeholders, and borders.

At the closing plenary, governments, businesses, and civil society shared commitments and investments for the water agenda and overall sustainable development.

The Manila Water Company Sustainability Policy and Climate Change Policy, along with WASH and environmental programs of Manila Water Foundation, demonstrate the company's commitment to contribute to the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals or UN SDGs.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

New partnership aims to leverage solar industry professionals

By: Kris Crismundo

With the growing projects in solar energy, BayWa.r.e. Solar Trade and New Energy Academy (NEA) forged a partnership to develop Filipino talents for the country's solar power industry.

In a statement Wednesday, global renewable energy developer BayWa.r.e. Solar Trade and education platform NEA said their latest partnership aims to offer training modules for solar industry professionals in the country.

The partnership aims to leverage Philippine solar energy professionals through an eight-week online training program and by providing workshops to better equip solar professionals with the right technical and business skills.

"The solar industry is wide, diverse, and growing, and we want to be a part of the process in upskilling the technical know-how of installers. In driving the transition to renewable energy in the Philippines, we need to arm our professionals with adequate skills and knowledge such as keeping them up to date on the rapidly changing technology in the solar industry, while ensuring that they know the correct protocols for safe design and installation," BayWa.r.e. Solar Trade managing director Junrhey Castro said.

Castro said that with the growing solar industry, there is a need for continuing education and upskilling of solar power professionals in distributing and servicing inverters, solar modules and installation and commissioning of small and large solar projects.

"As an industry, we need to make sure that there is proper certification for installers, with the government ensuring there are certification procedures in the qualification of solar installations. We hope our partnership will pave the way for these procedures. This is the perfect opportunity to not only help our customers, but also help accelerate the development of the solar industry in the Philippines," he added.

For her part, NEA Philippines country manager Brenda Valerio said leveraging the skills of Filipino talents in the solar energy industry will support the development of the country's solar industry amid the government's push for increasing the share of renewables in the energy mix.

“We are excited to onboard BayWa r.e. Solar Trade on our journey to accelerate the growth of trained talent and professionals. This will contribute greatly to the rapid growth of the solar, storage, and other distributed energy solutions in the global high-growth energy markets. This is part of our strategy to support a greater energy transition in these markets,” Valerio said. “We are looking forward to what the future holds for the Philippines’ solar industry and are confident that it will continue to grow from here.”

Wind, solar generate record 12% of global electricity in 2022

Wind and solar reached a record 12 percent share of global electricity generation last year, up from 10 percent in 2021, according to the latest Global Electricity Review released Wednesday by independent energy think-tank Ember.
The growing electricity generation from wind and solar is forecast to push the world into a new era of falling fossil generation and power sector emissions from 2023, the fourth annual report found.

"In this decisive decade for the climate, it is the beginning of the end of the fossil age," said Małgorzata Wiatros-Motyka, report author and Ember's electricity analyst. "We are entering the clean power era."

The report presents electricity data from 2022 in 78 countries, representing 93 percent of global electricity demand.

The share of wind in global electricity generation reached 7.6 percent in 2022, up from 6.6 percent in the previous year. Electricity generation from wind rose by 17 percent year-on-year, enough to power almost all of the UK.

Solar's share was 4.5 percent in the world's power output last year, up from 3.7 percent in 2021.

Solar became the fastest-growing source of electricity for the 18th year in a row, growing by 24 percent year-on-year and adding enough electricity to power all of South Africa.

The growth in solar power's share across the world was driven by the rise in China, accounting for 37 percent of the global increase, while the growth in US solar generation accounted for 17 percent of the global rise.

Over 60 countries now generate more than 10 percent of their electricity from wind and solar, the data reveals.

The rise in electricity generation from wind and solar last year met 80 percent of the increase in global electricity demand, which reached 2.5 percent compared to the previous year.

Countries with highest shares of wind and solar in electricity generation

China generated the most electricity from solar last year with 418 terawatt-hours, or 4.7 percent of its electricity from solar.

Chile had the largest share of solar in its electricity output with 17 percent last year, while the Netherlands followed with 15 percent and a 13 percent solar share in their electricity mix.

China was also the biggest generator of wind power in the world, with a 9.3 percent wind share in its electricity mix, while Denmark had the largest wind generation by percentage share at 55 percent in 2022.

The share of wind and solar in the European Union stood at 22 percent last year.

Türkiye's electricity generation from wind and solar remained above the global average at about 15.5 percent.

Coal still largest electricity source with 36%

All clean electricity sources combined generated 39% of global electricity, reaching a new record high.

Hydro generated 15 percent of global electricity as the largest clean energy source and was followed by nuclear with 9 percent as the second largest source.

Despite the record generation from clean sources, fossil fuels still accounted for 61 percent of global electricity output. Coal power remained the single largest source of electricity worldwide, generating 36 percent of global electricity in 2022.

The report found the rise in wind and solar generation limited the increase in coal generation at 1.1 percent.

The share of gas in global electricity generation fell slightly by 0.2 percent last year, accounting for 22 percent.

Last year may be peak of power sector emissions

As the share of coal and gas was still high in global electricity generation, power sector emissions increased by 1.3 percent last year, reaching an all-time high. Despite the record generation from clean sources last year, the rise in power sector emissions was driven by increased electricity demand.

If all the electricity from wind and solar instead came from fossil generation, emissions from the power sector would have been 20 percent higher last year, Ember calculated.

However, 2022 may be the "peak" of electricity emissions and the final year of fossil power growth, with clean power meeting all demand growth this year, the report forecasts.

There would be a fall of 0.3 percent in fossil generation this year, with larger drops in subsequent years as wind and solar deployment accelerates.

"The stage is set for wind and solar to achieve a meteoric rise to the top. Clean electricity will reshape the global economy, from transport to industry and beyond. A new era of falling fossil emissions means the coal power phasedown will happen and the end of gas power is now within sight," Wiatros-Motyka said.

"Change is coming fast. However, it all depends on the actions taken now by governments, businesses and citizens to put the world on a pathway to clean power by 2040."

Electricity generation is the single biggest contributor to global CO2 emissions, responsible for about 40 percent of the world's total energy related emissions in 2021. Coal accounted for 75 percent of the power sector emissions in 2021, while gas accounted for almost 25 percent of it.

Thus, the global electricity sector is the first sector that needs to be decarbonized to achieve net zero emissions by 2050 and it requires much faster deployment of clean sources.

"The cumulative global solar PV capacity has reached about 942 gigawatts in the last decade, while the global wind capacity reached 853 gigawatts. Countries like China, the US, India and Japan have made some of the largest contributions to the global solar PV capacity," Ajay Mathur, director general of the International Solar Alliance, said on the report.

He said the cost for solar and wind has declined drastically by 82 percent and 34 percent respectively, while the cost of coal-fired energy remained at similar levels and that of nuclear increased by 61 percent.

"The global renewable share is increasing, but to achieve net zero by 2030, the renewable generation must cater to at least 60% of the total generation from

renewables," Mathur said, stressing that the way forward lies in pacing up renewable energy and making renewable energy technology a global public good.

SOUTH CHINA MORNING POST

Climate change: agriculture must adapt to ensure global food security

Climate change is a global problem which affects every aspect of our lives. With the world population predicted to grow to almost 10 billion by 2050, the agricultural sector will become even more strained as it seeks to feed everyone on a warming planet. The effect of climate change on food security is an issue that needs immediate attention.

Crop harvests in a warming climate will suffer amid rising temperatures and changing rainfall patterns. Current agricultural lands, particularly those closer to the equator, might no longer be suitable for growing crops. Dry spells reduce water availability and can cause water stress, while too much rain will cause soil to become waterlogged and suffocate plants, all of which will lead to lower yield and quality.
Climate change can also directly affect productivity through extreme weather such as floods, droughts and storms. These can damage crops, destroy infrastructure and cause soil erosion. Last summer, droughts and heatwaves devastated crop yields across several continents, while Australia endured extensive flooding. Scientists expect that such extreme events will only become more frequent and intense.

We must adopt smarter practices to ensure food security in a changing climate. These include adopting sustainable land management and conservation agriculture to enhance soil quality and reduce greenhouse gas emissions; developing heat- and drought-tolerant crop varieties to mitigate risks of crop failure; and reducing agricultural water demand by discouraging farmers from growing water-intensive crops.

We can also enhance access to water by implementing efficient irrigation systems, harvesting rainwater and restoring degraded water catchment areas; address food waste to help reduce overproduction and food inequality; and enable technology and knowledge transfer to help developing countries embrace best practices and adapt to climate change.

Warming temperatures, changing rainfall patterns, extreme weather – the effects of climate change go beyond a direct disruption to our daily lives, with consequences for global food security and price stability. With global surface temperatures now 1.1 degrees Celsius higher than in the pre-industrial era, the agricultural industry must adapt to a changing climate.

THE MANILA TIMES

Great expectations from World Bank meetings

THE World Bank is holding its annual Spring Meetings in Washington, D.C. this week, and the buzz leading up to the event has been about reforming the giant institution. While many of the ideas contained in the World Bank's reform road map released earlier this year, which have been supplemented by views from influential leaders such as US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen, certainly sound promising, they will not mean much if they do not translate to tangible action relatively soon.

The impetus for the reform has come from many directions. On the negative side, the World Bank has unfortunately been the focus of a number of controversies in recent years, including questionable views on climate change expressed by outgoing World Bank president David Malpass, and a minor scandal involving manipulation of data in the World Bank's now-defunct annual "Doing Business Report." On the more progressive side, the World Bank — as well as other multilateral development banks (MDBs) and development finance institutions — has come under pressure from Yellen to increase its capital deployment, and find ways to encourage more private sector investment in climate change and development financing.

Yellen's concerns, as well as those of others both inside and outside the MDB ecosystem, are largely driven by worries that investment in climate change adaptation and mitigation is falling woefully short of actual needs. As the world's biggest MDB, the World Bank should take the lead in providing and marshaling funding, Yellen has said on a number of occasions, and that is a perfectly reasonable point of view.

All of which leaves quite a task for the presumptive incoming World Bank president Ajay Banga, the only nominee for the job; unless something extraordinary happens, he will take over from the departing Malpass at the end of June. Banga is somewhat of an unknown quantity, coming from extensive private sector experience, including a stint heading up credit card giant Mastercard. In interviews leading up to the World Bank meetings, Banga has largely stayed in his comfort zone and emphasized reform ambitions for the International Finance Corp. (IFC), the World Bank arm that most directly works with private sector investment.

While more private investment in climate change and development needs would certainly be good for the world, attention to the more conventional aspects of the World Bank's work should not be diluted. The challenges facing the developing world, a spectrum of economies ranging from the profoundly poor to middle-income or near

middle-income like the Philippines, are sobering. Climate financing is nowhere near the level promised by the developed countries in the 2015 Paris Agreement, and even if it was, it has become increasingly apparent that the amount is nowhere near the level of funding that is actually needed to effectively carry out climate adaptation and mitigation.

The global economy also continues to be somewhat tenuous, plagued by widespread inflation; the ongoing effects of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine; the destabilizing effect of other potential geopolitical crises, such as China's increasingly aggressive actions toward Taiwan and in the West Philippine Sea; and the lingering effects, largely manifested in the form of high and in some cases unmanageable debt levels, of the costs of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The reform ambitions of the World Bank will be effective if they result in tangible improvements in a couple of key areas within a relatively short period of time, perhaps a year or two.

The first of these is streamlining and accelerating the pipeline of climate adaptation and mitigation funding. While the amount of funding is important, untangling the labyrinth of processes in accessing that funding, as well as rationalizing the great number of funding instruments, some of which duplicate or contradict each other, should be given priority. The second improvement we would like to see is more funding for policy support rather than being heavily tilted in favor of individual programs or projects; this is something that has also been suggested elsewhere, but it remains to be seen if World Bank and other institutions will follow through. Finally, the bank needs to make improvements in its relationship management. It has been, but it cannot let that effort slacken; controversies such as the Doing Business Report scandal, or the conflict between World Bank and the Department of Education here a couple of years ago must be avoided if progress is to be made.

Innovate UK, Searca partner for agri-innovation, RE

By: Leander C. Domingo

The national innovation agency of the United Kingdom along with 10 companies have expressed interest in collaborating with the Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (Searca) on agricultural innovation and renewable energy.

According to Searca headed by Director Glenn Gregorio, a team from Innovate UK recently explored possible areas of partnerships, discussed their respective thrusts and activities, and toured the Searca Hub for Agricultural and Rural Innovation for the Next Generation called Sharing, an interactive museum of agricultural innovation.

Nur Azura Adam, Searca deputy director for programs, presented the National Agriculture and Fishery Modernization and Industrialization Plan (Nafmip) 2021-2030, a directional strategy of the Department of Agriculture (DA).

According to Nur, Nafmip, a strategic plan that will guide the agriculture sector's growth, is linked to other plans such as the commodity industry roadmaps, Provincial Commodity Investment Plans and the National Climate Change Action Plan of the Philippines (NCCAP).

Supported by the Asian Development Bank, Searca will develop the Nafmip in partnership with the DA and the Food and Agriculture Organization.

Nur said the agri-fishery sector, among others, is vital in addressing the impacts posed by environmental changes, including climate change, and in mainstreaming climate action at all levels.

She noted that with the NCCAP, the seven strategic priorities are updated to align with the latest climate science and national development priorities.

"These priority areas are food security, water sufficiency, ecological and environmental stability, human security, climate-smart industries and services, sustainable energy, and knowledge and capacity development as the strategic direction for 2011 to 2028," Nur said.

She said the national agencies on agriculture and energy came out with a joint memorandum on formulating and implementing a renewable energy program for the agri-fishery sector.

Romeo Labios, Searca technical consultant, said the center has initiated a project on carbon farming and is working together with Straw Innovations Ltd. on the Rice Straw Biogas Hub project.

He said the Web-Based Integrated Spatial Engine and Smart Ecosystem (Wise) Carbon Farming project aims to develop standards for allowing agro-industry to offer carbon credits.

"Specifically, Wise carbon farming hopes to implement on-farm-level carbon mitigation technologies and approaches; develop profitable carbon agribusiness models; and reduce carbon footprints on Southeast Asian farms," Labios said.

With this, Labios said Searca will hold a series of roundtable on sustainable food and agriculture systems in partnership with the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.

Also during the exchanges, Straw Innovations Ltd. founder Craig Jamieson showcased the Rice Straw Biogas Hub, a collaboration with UK-registered startup Straw Innovations Ltd., as lead proponent, Searca, UK SME Koolmill and the UK as academic partner.

According to Searca, the project that started in September 2022 is expected to generate biogas as clean energy from waste rice straw and provide innovative technology services for rice farmers.

It said the hub is preparing for its first commercial-scale in Laguna with funding from Innovate UK, and intends to enable rice farmer cooperatives to see a working model that can be applied across the Philippines for income resilience.

Innovate UK showcases various energy startups

Emmanuel Matsika, Environmental and Quality Solutions Ltd. director, showed the company's financial model for rural areas to produce clean and affordable renewable electricity.

Matsika said large quantities of biomass wastes that are affecting the globe present a great opportunity to turn the abundance of rice husk waste to generate clean and cheaper electricity in rural areas.

John Allport, University of Huddersfield Department of Engineering and Technology professor, presented how their energy integration laboratory turns waste from local companies into energy and eventually as fertilizers.

"[Our] full-scale systems could be developed and are open to being tested further at energy test sites worldwide," Allport said.

Mark Paulson, Mostex Global Solutions Ltd. director, discussed the link of wood pellet production to deforestation and alternatives to the high cost of forest raw materials. In 2019, Mostex was set to find sustainable sources of nonwoody biomass for clean and cheap fuel in power generation.

Sergio Cardamas, DpSun Ltd. managing director, said they work on rural electrification, e-mobility and building-integrated photovoltaics. "[We] have recently partnered with Indonesia to support a remote community in producing coconut commodities and with the Indo-Pacific to reduce emissions, costs and energy insecurities for ice cream retailers."

Chief Executive Officer Martim Cunha of Aeon Energy said their mission is to create innovative net-zero renewable energy solutions for climate-vulnerable communities. "The rise of wave power to generate clean and sustainable energy for all mankind is vital to save money and the environment."

Director James Diddams of Archelous Energy said there is a need to embrace hydrokinetic power generated by water motion in rivers and tidal currents.

In 2021, he said their 200-kilowatt prototype project on Flooding Instream Tidal and Solar hydrokinetic generation unit was proven over a series of successful test rounds on the Hlaing River in Myanmar.

"With our system in place, a community will benefit from safe, reliable, clean electricity, replacing greenhouse gas emissions and providing them multiple opportunities for improved livelihoods," Diddams said.

[Opinion] Environmental diplomacy and negotiations

By: Antonio Contreras

THE 1,379th meeting of the board of regents (BOR) of the University of the Philippines is now dominated by controversy because of the selection of the chancellor of UP Diliman, and the perception by many Diliman constituents that it lacked transparency and ignored their preference for a particular candidate.

We saw images of acts that would amount to vandalism. While this issue needs serious consideration and reflection, what should not be lost is that at the same meeting, other decisions were made that have important ramifications, and are so remarkable that they need to be celebrated.

One of these decisions made by the board during the meeting was the approval of the proposal from the School of Environmental Science and Management (Sesam) of the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) to set up a PhD program in environmental diplomacy and negotiations. It was a momentous decision not only because this is the first program of its kind in the country and in the region, perhaps even in the world. It is of utmost importance simply because it addresses a demand for professional expertise that is needed not only by our country but by the global community.

Skeptics who doubted this program raised the issue of whether there is a need to have a specialist on environmental diplomacy when we already have trained diplomats. What this doctoral degree program will achieve is to bring science into the process. Indeed, there are professional diplomats, but as the history of many environmental global agreements has shown, such as those involving biodiversity, forestry, climate change, desertification, the wetland ecosystems and wildlife trade, these agreements were reached not only with the involvement of professional diplomats but with a strong and active participation of the scientific community.

In international relations theory, we political scientists would refer to state-to-state diplomacy as Track 1 processes where state political actors, such as heads of states and governments and their diplomatic representatives, engage in bilateral and multilateral discussions. However, and particularly on issues and topics like the environment, the need to involve scientists and academics is recognized, and is given space. Global agreements in these areas are forged with their participation. Scientists are engaged in what we refer to in the discipline as Track 2 platforms, where non-state actors who are experts in the appropriate scientific disciplines engage in what can be construed as "backchannel" diplomacy and interact with the decision-making process by

providing technical inputs. The channels where these happen are done through scientific meetings and workshops attended not only by scientists but by key decision-makers. This domain is what we refer to as an epistemic community.

What the PhD in environmental diplomacy and negotiations would achieve is to provide an avenue to produce someone who is both a diplomat and an environmental scientist, effectively enabling a platform where the process of negotiations is now turned into an epistemic community, and where the latter is now integrated in the formal diplomatic processes. We no longer need a scientist to advise a diplomat. We will have experts who started out as diplomats but acquired knowledge and skills in environmental science, or as environmental scientists who are now adept with the theories and practices in diplomacy and environmental negotiation.

Skeptics may also raise the issue of the special need for this expertise in the area of the environment. Actually, this program is admittedly just addressing the tip of the larger demand for expertise in science diplomacy which should also be developed with expertise in agriculture, health, energy and other areas of human concern that require science-informed diplomats. This does not diminish the argument for experts in environmental diplomacy, but even amplifies it, particularly when we consider the fact that the greatest threat to humanity is climate change. This is an issue that has serious implications on food security and health not only of humans but also of the environment. It also has a significant intersectionality with energy issues and concerns.

Professional expertise in environmental diplomacy and negotiations is highly valued at a time when misinformation and disinformation abounds, particularly about climate change, and when the decision-making of states is even undermined with the election and appointment of climate change deniers in key government positions. It should also be impressed on people that many of the political conflicts that we are facing right now have environmental roots and causes. The civil war in Northern Africa is largely because of social discord brought about by ecosystem degradation which aggravated territorial disputes among warring groups. The current crisis in the Middle East, particularly in the Levant, started with the degradation of lands which forced people to migrate to cities. This served as powder kegs that dramatized political cleavages not only between citizens, but amplified the inability of states to govern, which only further hastened their failure and breakdown. The current conflict in the West Philippine Sea is largely about access to important environmental and natural resources.

However, diplomacy is not just about mediating conflict between states. It is also needed in negotiating a solution to local and internal disputes, such as the one in the Masungi Georeserve, or in the Kaliwa Dam. Even our local insurgency problem has an

environmental dimension, particularly on the issue of denial of access to lands and resources, and the degradation of these lands that aggravated the social conditions experienced by rural and indigenous peoples that fanned their discontent and pushed them to take up arms.

I have a personal stake in this important initiative which the UP BOR has green-lighted. I am now part of the academic unit, Sesam, that will be largely responsible for the course offering. We are celebrating its approval, even as we are in deep awe of the enormous challenge and responsibility now vested on our shoulders not only by UP but by the country. It may be self-serving, but this has enormous significance to my personal homecoming and redemption. This program is the very reason why despite the strong lobby against my hiring, I am now back at UPLB.

Will Earth soon become uninhabitable?

By: Ernie Cecilia, DPM

DURING the five-day Holy Week respite, I was able to watch "The Silent Sea" on Netflix. (Spoiler alert.) This fiction series is set in the late 2060s, 10 years "after a global drought occurred. Lakes, rivers, and reservoirs around the world have dried up and desalination plants could no longer produce enough potable water, leading governments to enact harsh, unjustly stratified rationing measures." A team of scientists was sent by ROK's Space and Aeronautics (SAA) division to an abandoned research station on the moon to retrieve samples of "lunar water."

What strikes me most is the scary theme about the near future, not the technical aspect of the film or the actors' performance. A global drought in 27 years is unimaginable — unless global warming and climate change are not controlled now.

Complex problem

Experts have spoken. To stabilize climate change, stop using fossil fuels to generate electricity.

But the climate change problem is more complex than it seems. It is not just a matter of planting more trees. The Economist posted on April 5, 2023: "The trouble is that the scale of changes needed to adapt the world's electricity grids is vastly underappreciated. Too little investment is taking place. Planning rules get in the way. And, in a deep and damaging irony, some of the biggest advocates of slowing climate change do not accept the logic that to do so requires building more."

We need to build more green and renewable sources of electricity. With more electricity available, the world would be riding on electric vehicles rather than on those that burn dirty fossil fuels. When poor countries have access to clean electricity, there will be lesser emissions from biomass burning. The possibilities are endless, but what's hindering this ideal situation from happening?

The International Energy Agency, an intergovernment think tank, reckons that worldwide spending on electric grids is currently around $260 billion a year: far less than is needed and, tellingly, less than is invested in upstream oil and gas."

There has been much rhetoric and polemics about green and renewable energy, but still our dominant energy sources are fossil fuels — gas, oil and coal. I salute those who operate hydroelectric power plants and wind farms in the Philippines. At this time,

countries should already have plans to phase out all forms of energy-generating plants that contribute to global warming.

I agree that the climate change issue is of a different magnitude from other environmental issues. If we need to stop pollution that comes from burning fossil fuel, we must transition immediately to renewable sources of energy. But, in order to build renewable power installations, there is a need to mine the minerals to be used. There will be construction activities as well. In the transition, there will be the usual economic activities that environmentalists tend to criticize.

In a change process, there is often a bitter pill to swallow.

Wake-up call

Whenever the issue of climate change is being discussed, many people think about this "human-induced" phenomenon as something that can happen in the future. It is ongoing now!

When temperatures become hotter, people shrug it off as expected ... because summer is near. When I was young, my parents would remember severe typhoons at 15 to 20 years' intervals. Lately, the 10 strongest typhoons in the Philippines came almost one year after the other: Pepeng (Parma, 2009); Pedring (Nesat, 2011); Pablo (Bopha, 2012); Yolanda (Haiyan, 2013); Glenda (Rammasun), 2014; Lando, (Koppu, 2015); Ompong (Mangkhut, 2018); Rolly (Goni, 2020); Ulysses (Vamco, 2020); and Odette (Rai, 2021). And don't forget Yoling and Ondoy, too.

Global warming also causes increased drought, rising ocean temperatures, loss of species, food shortages, more health risks, and poverty and displacement.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) of the US Department of Commerce reported that "Global temperatures rose about 1.98 degrees Fahrenheit (1.1 degrees Celsius) from 1901 to 2020." Climate change also affects "water, energy, wildlife, agriculture, ecosystems, and human health."

NOAA's global climate dashboard gives useful information, as it monitors the planet from pole to pole. Here are a few relevant global climate data from NOAA:

– Global temperatures rose about 1.98 degrees Fahrenheit from 1901 to 2020.

– Sea level has accelerated from 1.7 mm/year throughout most of the 20th century to 3.2 mm/year since 1993.

– Glaciers are shrinking average thickness of 30 well-studied glaciers of the 20th century has decreased by more than 60 feet since 1980.

– The area covered by sea ice in the Arctic at the end of summer has shrunk by about 40 percent since 1979.

– The amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere has risen by 25 percent since 1958, and by about 40 percent since the First Industrial Revolution.

– Snow is melting earlier compared to long-term averages.

On Feb. 28, 2022, Seth Borenstein wrote in the Associated Press, "The UN report warns climate change will likely make the world sicker, hungrier, poorer and more dangerous in the next 18 years with an 'unavoidable' increase in risks."

There's no telling when the world will eventually become uninhabitable because of global warming. But imagine this: If you find the extreme heat or cold unbearable now, listen to the UN science report: "Today's children who may still be alive in the year 2100 are going to experience four times more climate extremes than they do now even with only a few more tenths of a degree of warming over today's heat. But if temperatures increase nearly 2 more degrees Celsius from now (3.4 degrees Fahrenheit), they would feel five times the floods, storms, drought and heat waves."

The UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change reported: "The cumulative scientific evidence is unequivocal: Climate change is a threat to human well-being and planetary health. Delaying cuts in heat-trapping carbon emissions and waiting on adapting to warming's impacts will miss a brief and rapidly closing window of opportunity to secure a livable and sustainable future for all."

As of last year, at least 3.3 billion people or 40 percent of the world's population "are highly vulnerable to climate change and 15 times more likely to die from extreme weather. Large numbers are being displaced by worsening weather extremes. And the world's poor are being hit by far the hardest."

"Climate change is killing people," said Helen Adams of King's College London. "Yes, things are bad, but actually the future depends on us, not the climate."

According to UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, "The IPCC report is an atlas of human suffering and a damning indictment of failed climate leadership. With fact upon fact, this report reveals how many people, and the planet are getting clobbered by climate change."

Perhaps, I had been watching too many movies lately — "The Day After Tomorrow," "The Day the Earth Stood Still," "The Inconvenient Truth," "Interstellar" and "Geostorm" — and creating my neurosis tomorrow today.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

Philippine calls for increased climate financing

By: Louise Maureen Simeon

The Philippines called on multilateral development banks (MDBs) to ramp up climate financing to vulnerable economies as impacts of climate change continue to worsen.

During the G-24 Ministerial Meeting of the 2023 Spring Meetings of the World Bank Group and International Monetary Fund (IMF) in Washington, Finance Secretary Benjamin Diokno said the climate crisis continues to be one of the biggest adversaries of economic development.

Diokno sits as the first vice-chair of G-24 Bureau and the World Bank Governor for the Philippines.

Climate crisis was one of the four areas that needed to be addressed that Diokno raised during the meeting. The others were inflation, international tax reform, and ongoing reforms to the World Bank and IMF.

“When disaster strikes, climate-vulnerable countries such as the Philippines stand to lose the most,” Diokno said.

“We continue to advocate for climate finance that would provide for efficient and ample mobilization of financing for concrete climate action,” he said.

The finance chief maintained that global cooperation must be heightened to support a just green transition and provide aid to countries at risk.

“MDBs should redouble their efforts in raising capital and expanding private sector participation to scale up climate investments,” Diokno said.

An earlier study of the Department of Finance showed that the Philippines may incur as much as P1.5-trillion in losses from natural disasters in the next five decades.

It is also estimated that implementing climate change mitigation actions for priority sectors of energy, forestry, industry and transport alone will cost as much as $4.12 billion from 2015 to 2030.

The DOF has been aiming to mainstream climate financing through policy harmonization and mobilize finance for green projects, as well as engage with multilateral and development partners to be able to provide and channel grants, investments and subsidies for climate change mitigation and adaptation.

The Philippines remains as one of the most climate-vulnerable countries over the past two decades. The United Nations earlier said the world would be inhabitable unless governments everywhere reassess their energy policies.

Further, Diokno stressed the important role of the World Bank and IMF in supporting countries, especially emerging markets and developing economies, in combating multiple global crises.

“The polycrisis we are facing threatens to reverse the years of progress we have made toward poverty reduction and shared prosperity,” he said.

Diokno said the ongoing reforms to Bretton Woods institutions—the IMF and the World Bank—create the opportunity to reinvigorate the multilateral system.

He noted that the proposed reforms to World Bank’s financial and operating models should not be at the cost of International Bank for Reconstruction and Development borrowers such as the Philippines.

US, Philippines agree to boost collab in tackling climate change, energy transition

By: Gaea Katreena Cabico

Top defense and diplomatic officials from the Philippines and the United States on Tuesday committed to enhance cooperation in addressing the climate crisis and accelerating the transition to clean energy.

Foreign Affairs Secretary Enrique Manalo and Defense officer-in-charge Carlito Galvez Jr. met with State Secretary Antony Blinken and Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin at a so-called 2+2 meeting in Washington to discuss various topics including security, maritime affairs, climate and energy policy, and democracy and human rights.

According to a joint statement released after the meeting, the secretaries "committed to collaborate on assessment of climate threats, and incorporate these assessments into joint planning, innovation, training, investments and financing to accelerate and increase renewable energy capacity as well as the grid expansion needed to facilitate its deployment."

The Philippines is targeting to boost renewables in its current energy mix, which it hopes will hit 35% share by 2030 and 50% by 2040. In 2020, only 21% of the country's generated power came from renewables such as solar, wind, hydropower, and geothermal.

The secretaries agreed to launch the Energy Policy, a high-level platform for the Philippines and the US, to develop new forms of energy cooperation, including on short- and long-term energy planning, offshore wind development, rooftop solar capabilities, nuclear energy for electricity generation, and grid stability and power transmission.

Last year, the US Trade and Development Agency awarded a grant to Aboitiz Renewables, Inc. for a feasibility study to develop up to three gigawatts of offshore wind projects in the Philippines.

Nuclear talks

They also agreed to pursue negotiations for a potential US-Philippines Civil Nuclear Cooperation Agreement — or 123 Agreement — to provide a legal framework for possible nuclear cooperation between the two countries as well as continue capacity building efforts on small modular reactors.

Once in force, the 123 Agreement allows the US to export nuclear equipment and materials to the Philippines to help the country achieve energy security.

The administration of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. is eyeing building nuclear power plants — a pet project of the ousted dictator Ferdinand Marcos Sr.

Groups such as the Center for Energy, Ecology and Development and Greenpeace Philippines have stressed that nuclear energy will not only pose dangers to host communities, but also impede the country's transition to clean energy.

Disaster preparedness

The officials committed to identify opportunities for future collaboration in enhancing disaster preparedness, and conserving the Philippines' rich coastal and marine resources.

Washington provided assistance and technical support to the Philippines in response to the oil spill off Oriental Mindoro.

They also committed to promote the use of space-based technology in supporting the Philippines' climate resiliency response and to advance mutual interest in the use of remote sensing and Earth observation applications.

The Philippines is one of the countries most at risk from the impacts of climate change, with poor and rural communities bearing the brunt of strong cyclones, droughts, and sea level rise.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

DWIZ

Marcos administration suportado ng public at private sector
By: Gilbert Perdez

Nagpahayag ng suporta ang Climate Change Commission o CCC sa panawagan ni Pangulong Ferdinand Marcos Jr. na palakasin pa ang renewable energy initiatives at local production para mapaganda ang transportation system sa bansa.

Ayon kay Climate Change Commission Vice Chairperson at Executive Director Robert Borje makatutulong ito sa mga mananakay at maging sa ating kalikasan.

Sinabi ni Borje na hindi lamang ito mapapalakas ang ekonomiya kundi makabubuti rin ito sa lahat dahil mababawasan daw ang gas emissions sa transport sector sa pamamagitan ng paggamit ng e-jeepneys at e-vehicles.

POLITIKO

Benitez-led House group fine-tunes Blue Economy bill

By: Billy Begas

The technical working group of the House Committee on Economic Affairs met to fine-tune the provisions of the proposed Blue Economy Act.

TWG chief and Negros Occidental Rep. Jose Francisco Benitez said House Bill 69 seeks to combine all the interventions to develop, manage protect, and preserve the country's marine and coastal resources into a single framework.

Benitez said the panel seeks to address issues in establishing a maritime governance framework that will clarify and highlight the complementary roles between government agencies.

The Climate Change Commission (CCC), through its Legislative Liaison System Secretariat Head Mylene Claudio, recommended that the bill should strongly emphasize the need for sustainable actions on matters related to addressing losses and harm inflicted on the country's coastal and marine ecosystems.

The CCC also proposed that the blue carbon ecosystem be made an integral part of the blue economy as a mechanism for pursuing a low-carbon economy.

University of the Philippines Institute for Maritime Affairs and Law of the Sea (UP-IMLOS) Legal Officer Neil Simon Silva suggested that the proposed Blue Economy Act should include airspace over territorial waters.

The TWG will meet again to discuss the proposal.

CCC vows to scale up locally-led climate action

By: Prince Golez

The Climate Change Commission (CCC) is prepared to help local government units (LGUs) address climate change.

CCC Vice Chairperson and Executive Director Robert Borje and Bacoor City, Cavite Mayor Strike Revilla met recently to discuss the city's climate risks and existing adaptive capacity.

"The CCC is here and we are ready to support our LGUs like Bacoor in their efforts to address climate change. Through this partnership, we hope to further equip Bacoor in building sustainable and climate-resilient communities for our people," Borje said during his visit to the Bacoor Government Center.

For his part, Revilla shared the city's efforts to address climate change, including mangrove reforestation, river restoration, and solid waste management practices.

"Rapid environmental change is all around us here being the gateway of the metropolis. We welcome and invite all sectors at the local and national levels to join us in combating the challenges of climate change in our City," he added.

The city government also vowed to strengthen climate resilience through updating of its Local Climate Change Action Plan (LCCAP) and accessing the People's Survival Fund (PSF).

The CCC, on one hand, assured to extend technical support to Bacoor City and other LGUs on LCCAP development and enhancement, including conduct of greenhouse gas inventory and local climate change expenditure tagging, and PSF project proposal development.

THE MANILA TIMES

Bacoor explores climate change plans

By: Jenica Faye Garcia

The Climate Change Commission (CCC) collaborated with the city government of Bacoor to explore initiatives to address climate change.

The CCC announced on April 12 that Bacoor's climate risks and collaboration toward climate change initiatives include mangrove reforestation, river restoration and solid waste management practices.

"Rapid environmental change is all around us here being the gateway of the metropolis. We welcome and invite all sectors at the local and national levels to join us in combating the challenges of climate change in our city," Mayor Strike Revilla said.

The CCC extends technical support to Bacoor City as part of the city's updating of the Local Climate Change Action Plan (LCCAP) and Accessing the People's Survival Fund (PSF), including the conduct of greenhouse gas inventory and local climate change expenditure tagging, among others.

These initiatives of the CCC are part of its commitment toward the Philippine Development Plan 2023-2028."These plans and framework will allow the Philippine government to assess the required climate finance and investments on top of public resources for needed climate change actions," CCC Vice Chairman and Executive Director Robert E.A. Borje said.

A total of P453.1 billion has been allocated for climate change expenditure by National Government Institutions to be used for adaptation and mitigation programs.

The CCC is the lead policymaking body of the government tasked to coordinate, monitor, and evaluate programs addressing climate change in the Philippines.

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