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INSIDE CLIMATE NEWS

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By: Katie Surma

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MANILA STANDARD

[Urban heat risks escalating—CCC](#)

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Information and Knowledge Management Division

ABS CBN

Unhealthy air from Navotas landfill fire lingers over Metro Manila

By: Ariel Rojas and Job Manahan,

MANILA — The air quality in Metro Manila remains poor on Monday morning, as the still uncontained Navotas landfill fire continues to burn.

PM2.5 concentration monitoring from the Environmental Management Bureau of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources showed acutely unhealthy air in Valenzuela City at 6 a.m.

PM2.5 are particulate matters measuring 2.5 micrometers or smaller, which are about 1/20th of the width of the human hair.

These fine particles, which include smoke and combustion products, can penetrate deeply in the lungs and enter the bloodstream, causing chronic illnesses.

Very unhealthy air quality was observed in Marikina City and along Commonwealth Avenue in Quezon City while unhealthy conditions were monitored in Caloocan City, Malabon City, and inside the Ateneo de Manila University campus in Quezon City.

Over the weekend, unhealthy air conditions persisted in the same areas, as well as some localities in Central Luzon. Haze blanketed skylines in northern Metro Manila.

Apart from poor air quality, foul smell from burning organic, plastic, and other materials are also observed in nearby communities.

UP TO TWO DAYS TO CLEAR

In Obando, Bulacan, more residents were evacuated over the weekend, bringing the total to 131 families or about 400 individuals, according to Municipal Social Welfare and Development Office head Reygie Cabucos.

While efforts by the Department of Public Works and Highways, Navotas local government unit, and Bureau of Fire Protection are underway to contain the landfill blaze with soil and mud, Navotas City Mayor John Rey Tiangco said he cannot provide an exact timeline.

“Mahirap mangako dahil forty plus hectares ‘yan – medyo malawak lang po based dun sa thermal scan na ginawa natin. Medyo malawak na po ‘yung affected area dun sa ilalim ng surface so mahirap mag-predict pero ginagawa po natin ang lahat. Nakatutok po tayo dyan at lahat ng resources ng iba’t ibang ahensya at private companies ay nagtutulungan para masugpo itong apoy at usok po,” Tiangco said in an interview with DZMM on Saturday.

(It's hard to commit to a timeline given the fire's 40-hectare extent, based on our thermal scan. While it remains hard to predict, we are doing our best. We are focusing our efforts, with resources from government agencies and private companies pooled together to contain the fire and this smoke.)

Atmospheric scientist and UP professor Gerry Bagtasa said that even after the landfill fire is fully extinguished, it may take up to two days for the air pollution to clear.

“Halimbawa kung mapatay talaga totally ‘yung sunog, siguro it will take one or at most two days para ma-clear hindi lang dito sa NCR, pati sa Manila Bay and sa Bataan,” Bagtasa explained on *Ligtas Dapat* on DZMM.

(Even after the fire is put out, it will take one or at most two days to clear the pollution not only here in NCR but also in Manila Bay and Bataan.)

He added that although hot weather usually allows the suspended particles to be dispersed, the sheer volume of emission from the landfill continues to choke Metro Manila.

“Actually yung init kakampi natin yan in terms of pollution. Kapag mainit na mainit yung panahon, mainit na mainit yung kalupaan, ang ginagawa ng init ng lupa inaakyat nya itong mga pollutants na ito... Despite sa init na tinatangay nya supposedly paakyat [yung pollution], hindi pa rin enough sa sobrang dami talaga ng emissions na nilalabas ng sunog na ito.”

(Hot weather can help disperse pollution. When temperatures are high, the land heats up and warms the air above it, which helps mix and spread pollutants. However, in this case, the emissions from the landfill fire are simply too large to be effectively dispersed.)

‘SOIL COVER’

The Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP) on Monday said it began a “soil cover operation” to extinguish the landfill fire.

“Puspusan na ang pagtakip – soil cover operation naman. Ito ay talagang pang-permanenteng solusyon na para hindi mag-emit ng kahit anong usok,” BFP Spokesperson FSupt. Anthony Arroyo said in a briefing on state-run PTV.

“Maliban sa mag-absorb ng init, ito ay magsisilbing blanket or smothering method. Tatanggalin niya ng oxygen o ide-deprive ang oxygen ang mga hotspot sa ilalim, mga baga sa ilalim. ‘Yan ang mga kaparaanan natin para ito ay patuloy na maapula,” he added.

But the official noted some challenges hindering the operation.

“Noong una, hindi yan accessible dahil magkahiwalay yung isla at sa pamamagitan lamang ng barge o RoRo bago makarating diyan ang kagamitan tulad ng fire trucks. Isinasakay 'yan sa RoRo para makarating doon,” he said.

“Kahapon lang nakagawa ng paraan para magka-access ang fire trucks natin anytime kasi malayo ito sa Manila Bay o Navotas cityland, mainland – more or less nasa 2.6 kilometer. Nakasalalay pa dun kung high tide or low tide,” he added.

The BFP official said they had created a “compact road” to the island, forming 8 stations, which would make it easier for them to extinguish the fire.

“Ang ginagawa ng BFP ngayon ay mini-misting o total flooding control. Binabasa natin ang buong lawak ng bundok ng basura at kahit usok lang sa taas, kung makikita yan sa thermal scanner natin, may hotspot pa rin. May init pa rin yung layer ng mga nasabing basura sa ilalim,” he said.

They have also sought the help of partner private companies for the use of heavy equipment.

WEAR MASKS

The Department of Health continues to remind the public to wear N95 masks, which can block PM2.5.

Secretary Teddy Herbosa led the distribution of masks in Obando, Bulacan last week, with a toxicologic survey also underway to determine the level of heavy metal hazard from the smoke from the landfill burn

“Isa pa palang binabantayan namin [bukod] sa PM2.5 yung mga heavy metals. Kasi hindi natin alam kung ito ay maaaring na-a-aerosolize... I think Valenzuela Medical Center ang magpapadala ng tao dun sa Obando. Kukuha ng samples ng dugo nung mga [residente] doon para masigurado na hindi sila naapektuhan dun sa mga sinasabing heavy metals and other substances,” DOH spokesperson Usec. Albert Domingo explained.

(Apart from PM2.5, we are also monitoring the heavy metals, which may have been aerosolized during the fire. I think Valenzuela Medical Center will send personnel to collect blood samples from residents to ensure they have not inhaled fumes with heavy metals and other substances.)

'Hawak mo ang heat'? Bakit nakararanas ng mataas na heat index ang ilang bahagi ng Luzon

By: Ariel Rojas

MAYNILA — Ilang bahagi ng Luzon ang nakararanas ngayon ng matinding init.

Ayon sa datos ng PAGASA as of April 13, umabot sa higit 40°C ang mataas na temperatura sa hilaga at gitnang bahagi ng Luzon, habang 39°C naman sa Metro Manila.

Sa heat index, pinakamataas ang naitala sa Virac, Catanduanes na umabot sa 47°C noong March 31 at April 1, 2026.

Karaniwang nararanasan ang mataas na heat index o alinsangan sa mga mabababang lugar gaya ng kapatagan sa Luzon kaya mas tumitindi ang init.

Inaasahang mararanasan pa ang pinakamataas na temperatura at heat index ngayong Abril hanggang unang bahagi ng Mayo.

Nagpaalala rin ang Department of Health (DOH) ukol sa mga praktikal na paraan upang maiwasan ang heat stress ngayong tag-init, tulad ng pag-inom ng sapat na tubig, pagsusuot ng preskong damit, at iba pa.

– Ulat ni Ariel Rojas, Patrol ng Pilipino

AL JAZEERA

[Kenyan women defy fishing taboos as climate change threatens Lake Victoria](#)

By: Daniel Kipchumba

Kagwel, Kenya — Rhoda Ongoche Akech still remembers the whispers that followed her to the water's edge in 2002. At 39 years old, the mother of seven was about to break one of Lake Victoria's oldest taboos: a woman stepping into a fishing boat.

"People were alleging that when women go into the waters accompanied by men, they would engage in sexual intercourse," the now 61-year-old said. But after they realised she was going there just to learn, and would not stop because of the stigma, "they kept quiet".

Prior to that, things were very different in Akech's community in Kagwel, a lakeside village in Kisumu County's Seme subcounty.

For decades, she had worked as a fishmonger in the village where fishing – only done by men – had sustained families for generations. But her income was dwindling. The cost of buying fish from male fishermen, combined with expenses for firewood, frying oil, and bus fare to markets, was becoming unsustainable.

Then in 2001, some women from neighbouring Homabay County arrived in Kagwel and did something unthinkable: they went fishing. Akech watched them and was inspired.

"I sought the help of two young men by then to assist me with fishing as I learned," she said. Despite warnings from community members who insisted women had no place on the water, she persisted. Her family depended on it.

The cultural prohibition against women fishing in Lake Victoria communities stems from beliefs deeply woven into the social fabric of fishing villages. According to William Okedo, a 57-year-old Kagwel village elder, the traditions were particularly strict regarding menstruation.

"It was believed that if women went into the lake while on period, they would scare away the fish and that would cause losses to people who are fishing," Okedo explained.

The discrimination extended even to male fishermen, who were forbidden from engaging in sexual relations with their wives the night before fishing expeditions, lest it diminish their catch.

A team of women

Although Akech's bold move in 2002 broke through the taboos, it was more than a decade before another woman joined her.

For 16 years, Akech fished alone, a solitary figure among several male fishermen. Then in 2018, Faith Awuor Ang'awo, a 37-year-old mother of four, went to the water herself.

For years, Ang'awo had worked as a fishmonger at the nearby Luanda market, where the same economic pressures were mounting.

"My husband refused the idea at first," Ang'awo said, out of fears about resistance from the fishing community, "but later on allowed me to join Rhoda".

Two years later, in 2020, Dorcas Awiyo, a 22-year-old mother of three and housewife, joined the team. Her husband, himself a fisherman, initially resisted.

"At first, my husband was not receptive to the idea, but later on allowed me," Awiyo said. She needed additional income to complement her husband's earnings.

By 2022, the sight of women fishing had become common enough that Janet Ndweyi, a 42-year-old mother of two, faced no resistance when she joined Akech's team.

"I didn't face any challenge or receive any warning when joining them because the community around was used to seeing Rhoda and Faith fishing," Ndweyi said. With no husband to support her and her fishmongering business facing challenges, fishing offered a viable alternative.

On productive days when fish are plentiful, boat owners at Kagwel Beach can earn between 6,000 and 8,000 Kenyan shillings (approximately \$46 to \$62). Crew members earn between 500 and 800 shillings (\$3.88 to \$6.20), and traders, including fishmongers, can earn up to 1,000 shillings (\$7.75), according to Wilson Onjolo, Seme subcounty fisheries officer. This represents substantially more than the 500 shillings the women earned daily as fishmongers buying fish from male fishermen.

Economic necessity drives cultural change

Village elder Okedo has watched the transformation with mixed feelings.

He recalls seeing women fishing in Suba, a region bordering Lake Victoria, where fishing is the main economic activity, several years before Akech started. But the practice was never as prominent as it has become.

"This is all because of economic hardships that the community is facing; it is pushing women to break the taboo," Okedo said.

He acknowledges there is no longer any barrier preventing women from fishing because Akech, inspired by the women from Homabay, provided a living example that challenged long-held beliefs.

Dalmas Onyango, a 35-year-old fisherman and father of three, confirmed that attitudes among male fishermen have shifted.

“The majority of my fellow fishermen now support their decision to fish,” Onyango said. Economic difficulties, he explained, have pushed women towards decisions that were once unthinkable.

The women’s success comes at a time when Lake Victoria’s fishing communities face mounting environmental challenges. Akech has noticed a gradual decline in her catch compared to when she first started fishing in 2002.

Chris Mutai, a senior meteorologist in charge of the Kisumu meteorological station, attributes the dwindling fish populations to climate change impacts on the lake’s ecosystem. Rising water temperatures have encouraged algae growth and reduced oxygen levels, directly affecting fish populations.

“To reverse this, people should keep off riparian land to allow undergrowth that will serve as the breeding ground of fish, and avoid pollution of the lake that traps more heat than plain, clear water,” Mutai said.

He warned that water temperatures are expected to rise by an additional 0.5C (0.9F) over the next 10 to 20 years, reaching between 29.5C and 31C (85.1-87.8F). Without pollution control measures, protection of riparian zones, regulated fishing, and alternative livelihoods like farming, Lake Victoria will experience further reductions in fish quantities.

Mutai’s station disseminates five-day weather forecasts across the region, distributed to fishing communities through WhatsApp groups and the Kisumu County government. This information enables fishermen – and now fisherwomen – to take proper precautions before venturing onto the water.

Lake Victoria supports more than 42 million people who depend on it for food, employment and drinking water. The lake faces mounting pressures from overfishing, pollution, invasive species and climate change that have reduced per capita catch rates despite annual harvests of about one million tonnes.

In a legal limbo

Despite their achievements, Akech and her team exist in a state of official limbo. Susan Claire, acting director of fisheries and blue economy for Kisumu County, denies women fishing in Lake Victoria in any official capacity.

“We have women who own boats and women traders, but they are not involved in night fishing or as boat crew members,” Claire told Al Jazeera. Her statement leaves Akech’s team without

official recognition comparable to their male counterparts. Even as the women perform identical work, they do not get support because of their state of legal limbo.

However, Christopher Aura, director in charge of freshwater research at the Kenya Marine and Fisheries Research Institute, said in 2023 that “Lake Victoria has over 47,000 fishermen, including 1,000 women”, suggesting the current county administration’s data may be incomplete.

Claire acknowledged that declining fish stocks remain a significant challenge. The county is working closely with the meteorological department and Tembea Youth Centre to sensitise fishermen on accessing climate information. They are also collaborating with Beach Management Units – community-based organisations that co-manage fisheries resources alongside the government – to strengthen governance and take action against illegal fishing in the lake.

According to Onjolo, there are 35 Beach Management Units in Kisumu County, with approximately 1,500 to 2,000 fishermen operating in Seme subcounty alone.

Ndweyi, who first joined Akech in 2022, now uses her fishing income to pay college fees for both her children, something her previous earnings as a fishmonger could not cover.

“Through fishing, I am able to cater for my household’s basic needs and also pay for children’s school fees that are in college,” she said.

But the livelihood Akech pioneered is becoming harder to sustain. She says she has watched the lake change over 23 years, and her catches have declined steadily over the decades.

Still, the four women continue to row out each morning before dawn. On days when fish are scarce, their earnings drop below what they made as fishmongers. On good days, they still earn enough to justify the physical labour and the risks of working on open water.

“A man without land is a man without life,” Akech said, adding that the parallel truth remains unspoken: a fisher without fish faces the same fate.

INSIDE CLIMATE NEWS

[Rights of Nature Defender Wins Goldman Prize for Protecting Colombia's Magdalena River From Fracking](#)

By: Katie Surma

As a child growing up along the banks of Colombia's Magdalena River, Yuvelis Morales Blanco learned to read the water.

"Dark spots on the river meant that we were not going to eat," she recalled.

One of those slicks—oil spills from the country's powerful fossil fuel industry—killed thousands of animals and forced hundreds of residents to relocate in 2018. That included people in Morales Blanco's Afro-Colombian fishing community in Puerto Wilches, a tropical river town located in one of Colombia's most biodiverse regions. Just 16 at the time, she emerged from the crisis as one of Colombia's fiercest environmental defenders.

Now 24, Morales Blanco has been awarded the Goldman Environmental Prize—often called the "Green Nobel"—for her role in helping halt hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, in Colombia. That effort reflects a broader legal and moral argument: that ecosystems like the Magdalena River should be treated not as resources to exploit, but as living systems with rights.

Her work, part of the growing rights of nature movement, has centered on protecting her hometown from fracking pilot projects proposed in Puerto Wilches around 2019. Fracking—an extraction method that blasts water, sand and chemicals into rock to release fossil fuels—is notorious for its environmental toll. The process has been linked to groundwater contamination, aquifer depletion, seismic activity and serious human health impacts, including cancer and birth defects.

In response, Morales Blanco co-founded Aguawil, a youth-led anti-fracking organization, in 2019. Its members organized protests and went door-to-door, translating complex technical information about fracking into the daily realities of local fishers and farmers.

As the town became a focal point in the debate over Colombia's fossil fuel industry, Morales Blanco warned her neighbors that promises of prosperity from expanded fossil fuel production were hollow. Decades of drilling, she argued, had already contaminated ecosystems but Puerto Wilches' 30,000 residents still lacked basic services like quality healthcare and education.

Then the backlash came. One resident warned Morales Blanco she would get herself killed. Two years later, she received her first death threat. In 2022, after a peaceful protest she helped organize, armed men arrived at her home. Colombia is consistently ranked among the world's most dangerous countries for environmental defenders—in 2022, more than a third of all recorded killings occurred there. Morales Blanco fled, temporarily relocating to France.

Weeks later, a Colombian court suspended fracking projects pending community consultations. Soon after, newly elected president Gustavo Petro imposed a nationwide moratorium on fracking. But on May 31, Colombians will return to the polls to elect a new president—raising the possibility that the ban could be reversed.

Morales Blanco is one of six recipients of this year's Goldman Prize and part of the first all-women cohort in the award's 37-year history, underscoring the central role women play in frontline environmental struggles worldwide. Women are often both disproportionately affected by environmental harm and at the forefront of efforts to confront it.

Inside Climate News talked with Morales Blanco about her advocacy work, including her role in the rights of nature movement.

This conversation has been translated from Spanish and lightly edited for length and clarity.

KATIE SURMA: You've described the Magdalena River as "like a mother." How has that relationship shaped the way you see your work today?

YUVELIS MORALES BLANCO: The Magdalena region is a very complex region socially and also very biodiverse, so this has helped me to live passionately and to defend it with all my heart. I'm the daughter of the river, and I look at nature not as a resource, but as life itself.

The region is at the heart of our lives. It's part of our life, part of our family and part of ourselves. It is what shows us that there is something bigger than us, and this vision is what helps us continue to move forward and to dream of a future with peace and dignity, away from the effects of the fossil fuel industry.

"I'm the daughter of the river, and I look at nature not as a resource, but as life itself."

SURMA: How does your anti-fracking advocacy connect to your work promoting the rights of nature movement?

MORALES BLANCO: It's often the case that we see nature as something to serve us, something to be used for humans. We believe we have the right to govern it. We've never been asked how it is to live among nature, not to look at it as a resource but as a fundamental part of who you are.

When a community loses a river, the impact is not only about the water itself. It's about the river, its spirit, the way that people see the spirit. Sometimes companies come and tell the people, "We'll give you energy," and people think that's great, we need that energy—but at what price? Or, "We'll give you a refinery," but at what cost?

Nature is everything. It's what gives us life itself. No one has ever been able to live without water, but man has been able to live without fossil fuels.

The fracking industry in Colombia and in all countries justifies its presence by framing water as a mere resource to be consumed or managed for industrial needs. But frontline communities in Colombia and across the globe are rejecting this logic, asking instead: Why must our rivers be dried up and our waterways dammed to fuel an industry that threatens our very existence?

Communities take care of nature and defend the rights of nature not only because they need it for subsistence, but because it's part of their true identity, who they are. That's why the fight against fracking in Colombia, in Argentina, in the United States and in Mexico continues. It's a fight for human rights, a fight for the rights of nature and the rights of the youth and children to have what we have today.

SURMA: What strategies proved most effective in slowing or stopping the fracking pilot projects along the Magdalena River?

MORALES BLANCO: The main strategy is networks. In the Colombia Free of Fracking Alliance, we think that networks are the string that ties communities together. We also see the battle to defend the territory as something where one can think you're alone, but you're not. There are hundreds of organizations that are also working on this effort.

We also think about this as an educational movement—we have schools where we educate ourselves, the community and the youth in regards to the rights of nature.

Another strategy that's been successful is having visibility. We're protected by that. When the world sees what we're going through and is aware of the threats we're facing, the world itself goes into action to protect us.

We also never give up.

SURMA: You faced threats that ultimately forced you into exile in France for a period of time. How did that experience affect you?

MORALES BLANCO: It's no secret that Colombia is one of the most dangerous places for activists working on social justice and the environment, and ironically, it's also one of the most biodiverse areas on the planet.

It's true I suffered threats and displacement, but it's an experience that many people have faced. That's why I feel it's important that Colombian communities have a right to participation, to defend nature and to have protections when fighting against these industries. It's really unjust what's happening in our country and the southern part of the world, that the oil and gas industries continue to move forward despite the cost—the cost of life.

SURMA: Colombia will have presidential elections in May. How concerned are you that fracking could return?

MORALES BLANCO: Voters face two polar opposites in these elections: one that is advocating for total destruction of nature and violation of human rights, and the other that thinks about defending life and humanity.

We will continue to fight no matter what government is in place because we're independent. We will always continue to fight for the rights of nature. I am still in Colombia and still part of the Colombia Free of Fracking Alliance, and we continue to defend life, the community and the territory.

In late April, Colombia is hosting the First Conference on Transitioning Away from Fossil Fuels in Santa Marta. I'd like to make a call to action for people to imagine a future beyond fossil fuels. From there, we hope communities—agricultural, farming, fishing communities—can begin to dream of a world and create a vision of a world beyond fossil fuels. The biggest call to action is to imagine what's possible and then to make it a reality.

SURMA: You are part of the first all-women cohort of Goldman Prize winners. How do you see the role of women in environmental defense, particularly in Colombia?

MORALES BLANCO: We live in the southern region, with all that entails, living in this part of the world. Injustice deepens when you're a woman, and especially when you're a woman of color. This group of winners, all women, is a real call to society regarding the suffering we've had to face because of our leadership. This also shows how women in different parts of the world are fighting for life and to make social justice a right for everyone.

SURMA: What advice would you give your younger self, or to other women like you?

MORALES BLANCO: I think about embracing ourselves, and that might sound trivial, but it's true that when I encounter other women, I feel inspired. I feel the support, and we help one another. The solidarity and tenderness women bring forth is our salvation. A lot of times we're isolated, targeted and marginalized, so when we find one another, we find refuge and courage.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

[Easterlies to bring warm, humid weather across PH](#)

By: Ma. Cristina Arayata

MANILA – The prevailing easterlies will cause warm and humid weather throughout the country, the weather bureau said Tuesday.

"Isolated rain showers and localized thunderstorms are also possible," weather specialist Veronica Torres of the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) said.

No weather disturbance is monitored inside and outside the Philippine Area of Responsibility.

Forecast temperatures could peak at 36°C in Tuguegarao, and 34°C in Metro Manila, Davao, and Zamboanga.

Torres said the heat index, or the temperature felt by the human body when relative humidity combines with actual air temperature, could peak at 43°C in Sanglely Point, Cavite.

The heat index in parts of Metro Manila could reach 38°C to 39°C.

Meanwhile, moderate winds and moderate coastal waters will prevail across the eastern sections of Southern Luzon, the Visayas, and Mindanao.

Elsewhere, winds will be light to moderate with slight to moderate seas, PAGASA said. (PNA)

[PH seeks jobs, climate finance support at G-24 meet](#)

By: Darryl John Esguerra

MANILA – The Philippines called for expanded global support for job creation, financing, and climate resilience during the Intergovernmental Group of Twenty-Four (G-24) Ministers' and Governors' Meeting, as developing economies face mounting pressure from geopolitical tensions and climate-related risks.

Finance Secretary Frederick Go said overlapping global challenges are straining countries' capacity to respond, especially as fiscal space becomes more constrained, according to a press release Sunday.

He emphasized the need for “scaled-up and more flexible financing,” including budget support and emergency funding tools, to help countries absorb external shocks while sustaining social services and development programs.

Go also pushed for stronger mobilization of private capital to boost investments in infrastructure, energy transition, and digital services, sectors seen as key to generating jobs and sustaining economic growth.

At the same time, he underscored the importance of supporting human capital development to ensure that economic reforms translate into quality employment and improved livelihoods.

Go highlighted the urgency of enhancing climate and disaster resilience, particularly for vulnerable countries like the Philippines, through improved access to climate financing and technical assistance.

“Sustaining progress requires collective resolve. We call on countries and development partners to deepen collaboration in responding to both current and emerging crises,” Go said during the G-24 meeting on April 14.

He urged renewed multilateral cooperation to strengthen the global financial system and ensure inclusive and sustainable development.

The G-24 is a coalition of developing countries that coordinates positions on international monetary and development issues, and advocates reforms to promote financial stability and equitable growth. (PNA)

CCC IN THE NEWS:

DAILY GURADIAN

[Philippines, Nepal share climate finance lessons](#)

The Climate Change Commission and the Department of Finance convened a peer-to-peer learning exchange with government representatives from Nepal, creating a platform for both countries to share best practices on climate finance systems, governance and budgeting.

The exchange was organized by the United Nations Development Programme through the Climate Finance Network under the UK-funded Climate Action for Resilient Asia Programme.

The activity aimed to facilitate knowledge sharing on climate finance strategies, institutional frameworks and tools that support climate action.

The Philippines, through the CCC, presented its current national frameworks, including the National Adaptation Plan of the Philippines 2023–2050 and the Nationally Determined Contribution Implementation Plan 2020–2030.

The Climate Change Expenditure Tagging system was also presented during the exchange.

The CCET system institutionalizes the tagging and tracking of climate-related programs, activities and projects across government.

Aimee Evangelista of the CCC's Implementation Oversight Division said, "climate budget tagging is not only about tracking expenditures, but about ensuring that public resources are aligned with national climate priorities."

The exchange also highlighted the Philippines' People's Survival Fund as a key domestic adaptation finance mechanism.

The PSF supports local government units and communities in implementing climate adaptation projects.

Under the current setup, the DOF serves as the Secretariat of the PSF, while the CCC is one of the members of the PSF Board.

The discussions also gave both countries an opportunity to tackle shared challenges in climate finance.

Among the issues raised were mobilizing private sector investment, improving data systems and reporting mechanisms, and enhancing access to international climate finance.

CCC Vice Chairperson and Executive Director Robert E.A. Borje emphasized the need for sustained collaboration and knowledge exchange in strengthening climate finance systems.

He also highlighted the role of peer learning in advancing transparent, accountable and evidence-based climate action across countries.

Director John Narag of the DOF's Climate Finance Policy Group welcomed the Nepal delegation and underscored the importance of peer learning in strengthening climate finance systems.

Narag said the exchange was particularly relevant as the Philippines continues to advance regional cooperation as ASEAN Chair.

He also highlighted the Philippines' institutional setup, where the DOF coordinates with the Department of Budget and Management and interagency bodies, including the Development Budget Coordination Committee, to align fiscal policy and budgeting.

Narag also cited ongoing efforts to strengthen climate finance tracking through initiatives such as a climate finance dashboard.

Nepal, for its part, shared its experience in implementing Climate Budget Tagging.

Nepal introduced its Climate Budget Tagging system in 2012, making it one of the first systems globally to track climate-related public expenditures.

Representatives from Nepal's Ministry of Finance said the system supports planning, monitoring and reporting of climate investments across national and subnational levels.

Participating agencies from Nepal included the Ministry of Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation, the Alternative Energy Promotion Center, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Forests and Environment, and the Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs.

The exchange underscored how both countries are working to embed climate finance more deeply into national planning and budgeting systems.

For the Philippines, the discussions also reinforced the government's push to strengthen climate governance by improving coordination among agencies and sharpening the use of public funds for adaptation and mitigation.

Both the Philippines and Nepal reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening collaboration and sustaining knowledge exchange.

The two countries recognized peer learning as a key mechanism for institutionalizing climate finance in national planning and budgeting, while supporting long-term resilience and sustainable development.

MANILA STANDARD

[Urban heat risks escalating—CCC](#)

Densely populated urban centers are the most vulnerable to extreme heat, which poses serious health risks and strains power and water systems.

The Climate Change Commission raised the alarm over escalating urban heat risks and urged local government units (LGUs) to speed up climate actions to better protect communities.

CCC officials said extreme heat is no longer a future threat but a present danger, especially in densely populated cities. The agency issued the warning last week during the Urban Heat and Drought Summit 2026 organized by the Quezon City government and CityNet.

Based on records, in Quezon City alone, the heat index levels reached as high as 46°C in 2024 and 2025, disrupting daily activities.

“This dry season, we continue to experience intense heat, which highlights the need for urgent and coordinated action. Through NAP (National Adaptation Plan 2023–2050) localization, we provide a science-based roadmap that will guide the country in addressing heat risks while protecting key sectors and human health,” said CCC vice chairperson and executive director Robert E.A. Borje.

He said localizing the NAP provides a “science-based roadmap” that enables LGUs to directly address heat risks and safeguard vulnerable sectors.

“The NAP is a tailored-fit adaptation strategy for each locality, ensuring that interventions respond directly to their unique climate risks and conditions,” he said.

The CCC said the effectiveness of the national plan hinges on its implementation at the community level, where climate impacts are most acutely felt.

Arnold Grant Belver of the CCC’s Policy Research and Development Division stressed the need for stronger coordination between national and local governments to ensure that the NAP translates into concrete, inclusive and climate-resilient actions for every community.

QC Mayor Joy Belmonte, meanwhile, said climate change impacts are most visible at the local level, where communities directly experience rising temperatures.

“But climate change does not announce itself in global averages, it is felt by our people, most especially in specific places,” she said.

The NAP, developed under the leadership of Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr., serves as the country’s long-term roadmap to boost climate resilience and adaptive capacity through 2050.

The summit brought together national agencies, academe, private sector, development partners and key stakeholders to strengthen collaboration and accelerate solutions to combat urban heat and drought.

The CCC said it will continue pushing for localized climate action as rising temperatures increasingly threaten public health and urban systems.

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