



NEWS ROUNDUP

22 APRIL 2026 | 08:00 am

- Climate and health: Asia's untapped resilience market
- Hot, humid weather forecast in most parts of PH on Wednesday — Pagasa
- Women as frontline guardians of PH biodiversity
- Climate change action starts in the home
- Slovenia ready to boost PPP, tech sharing on energy with PH

CCC IN THE NEWS:

- CCC, PSA Boost Climate Transparency in Agricultural Sector with GHG Inventory Training
- CCC: PH must build a unified climate system as risks intensify
- [OPINION] The energy crisis we must not waste

ECO BUSINESS

[Climate and health: Asia's untapped resilience market](#)

By: Nicole Ngeow

Asia's climate challenge is being felt in ways that are deeply human: unsafe air, extreme heat, fragile housing, disrupted livelihoods, and growing pressure on health systems. From heat stress among outdoor workers to flood-prone homes and rising cases of infectious and respiratory disease, climate risks are increasingly shaping daily life across the region.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

[Hot, humid weather forecast in most parts of PH on Wednesday — Pagasa](#)

By: Dianne Sampang

Most parts of the country will experience hot and humid weather on Wednesday brought by the easterlies, the state weather bureau said.

[Women as frontline guardians of PH biodiversity](#)

As the Philippines celebrates Earth Month this April, the Haribon Foundation is shining a spotlight on women leading the charge in environmental governance in the Sierra Madre.

PHILIPPINE INFORMATION AGENCY

[Climate change action starts in the home](#)

By: Rudolph Alama

Around 170 residents of Barangay Matina Crossing attended an environment-themed information session titled “Everyday is Earth Day” where invited speakers talked about solid waste management, recycling, urban gardening, native trees planting, and climate change action.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

[Slovenia ready to boost PPP, tech sharing on energy with PH](#)

By: Joyce Ann L. Rocamora

Slovenia is looking to develop its energy cooperation with the Philippines through a framework that helps translate research into cost-effective and resilient energy infrastructure.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

PHILIPPINE INFORMATION AGENCY

[CCC, PSA Boost Climate Transparency in Agricultural Sector with GHG Inventory Training](#)

The Climate Change Commission (CCC), with support from the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), conducted a three-day Training Workshop on the Compilation of the Agriculture Sector Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Inventory to boost climate transparency.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

[CCC: PH must build a unified climate system as risks intensify](#)

By: Marita Moaje

As climate risks become increasingly complex and interconnected, the Philippines must shift from fragmented climate initiatives to a unified, systems-based approach, the Climate Change Commission (CCC) said.

RAPPLER

[\[OPINION\] The energy crisis we must not waste](#)

By: Tony Laviña

Every time conflict breaks out in the Middle East, it finds its way into Filipino homes. Climate Change Commission Executive Director Robert Borje, writing in the Daily Tribune last April 12, put it plainly: “Not through headlines but through higher electricity bills, transport costs and more expensive food. We do not see the conflict but we feel it. We pay for instability we do not control.”

Information and Knowledge Management Division

ECO BUSINESS

[Climate and health: Asia's untapped resilience market](#)

By: Nicole Ngeow

Asia's climate challenge is being felt in ways that are deeply human: unsafe air, extreme heat, fragile housing, disrupted livelihoods, and growing pressure on health systems. From heat stress among outdoor workers to flood-prone homes and rising cases of infectious and respiratory disease, climate risks are increasingly shaping daily life across the region.

Despite the scale and urgency of these impacts, health-focused adaptation is severely underfunded. In a report published by AVPN, in partnership with Prudence Foundation, of the estimated US\$1.1 trillion needed annually for climate mitigation and adaptation in Asia, only around 30 per cent is currently mobilised, and between 2018 and 2019, just 8 per cent of Asia's climate finance was allocated to adaptation, with health receiving only a fraction of that.

The statistics indicate that we need to channel capital more effectively, to safeguard future generations. While providing direct assistance after disasters strike remains key, equally important is a long-term reallocation of capital towards adaptation and resilience solutions that can help communities withstand, recover from, and even thrive in the face of climate stressors.

Innovation exists — but capital does not follow

Across Asia, early-stage solutions addressing health impacts of climate change are emerging, underscoring how climate issues are becoming top of mind for the current generation. These early-stage solutions converge around opportunities that illustrate the diversity of vulnerabilities. Yet early-stage ventures operating in the US\$1 -10 million range remain underserved.

The reason is structural. Climate ventures are often directed towards upstream infrastructure and public goods, like renewable energy. Adaptation-linked health interventions often struggle to attract capital due to perceived complexity, softer return profiles and lack of investability signals.

As a result, the financing gap widens where resilience building, particularly for vulnerable communities, is most needed.

Start-ups building resilience on the ground

Despite these barriers, a growing cohort of start-ups across the region is demonstrating what resilience in practice could look like.

In Indonesia, startups like Nazava address the critical challenge of access to safe drinking water, which affects 4.4 billion people globally.

By providing WHO-tested, gravity-based water filters, Nazava eliminates the need for boiling water, buying plastic bottles, or relying on electricity.

The solution particularly reduces the burden on women and children, who often spend significant time and resources collecting fuel, purifying water, and treating water-borne illnesses. To date, Nazava has improved access to clean water for over one million people across more than 50 countries. The company is a certified B Corp and aligns with the Gold Standard for the Global Goals, contributing directly to Sustainable Development Goals 1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 13, and 15.

Berikan Protein strengthens circular and inclusive food systems by turning low-value fish into Fish Protein Hydrolysate (FPH), a highly bioavailable protein powder. This approach reduces fish waste, eases environmental pressures, and boosts income for small-scale fishermen.

By transforming FPH into affordable, locally sourced nutritious foods, the enterprise improves access to protein while reinforcing community-based food systems. Berikan Protein is also developing Protein Meter, a data-driven tool that tracks nutritional adequacy and informs evidence-based interventions, demonstrating how sustainable innovation can tackle malnutrition while building resilient, scalable food systems.

There are other startups like them in the market. Early-stage ventures across Asia are working on heat-stress mitigation, health-focused early-warning systems, climate-linked financial protection for vulnerable workers, and adaptive infrastructure in flood- and heat-exposed regions. Together, they point to a growing pipeline of solutions that are locally grounded, scalable, sustainable and investable, if the right capital structures and business models are in place.

Partnerships as enabler

Today, philanthropic actors play an instrumental role in early-stage ecosystem building, helping to create the enabling conditions for scale and sustainability.

This includes investing in research and advocacy to strengthen the evidence base, supporting the incubation and validation of early-stage solutions, supporting capacity building or technical assistance, developing shared tools and benchmarks that improve investment readiness, and convening partnerships across finance, innovation, public health and implementation. Ultimately, the objective is to support these innovative solutions to be integrated into a market mechanism that delivers scalable as well as sustainable social impacts.

However, philanthropic actors cannot do this alone. Progress depends on partnerships that unite public, private and philanthropic sectors as well as research and advocacy groups.

Collaborations with organisations such as the World Health Organization, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Climate Centre, AVPN and climate-health research platforms also play a critical role in shifting the narrative from reactive response to anticipatory action. Much of this work is not immediately visible, but it is essential in reducing uncertainty and aligning incentives across fragmented systems.

An opportunity hiding in plain sight

Asia already has what it needs to lead on climate-health resilience: innovation, urgency, and locally grounded solutions. What remains missing is capital that knows how to move first.

Catalytic capital, often enabled by impact investors and philanthropic players, bridges the gap between ideas and scale. It converts uncertainty into evidence, pilots into pipelines, and fragmented efforts into investable markets.

Climate and health resilience is not simply a moral imperative. It is one of Asia's most under-recognised strategic investment opportunities. The challenge is no longer the absence of solutions, but whether policies, institutions, capital and partnerships are aligned to bring them to scale.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

[Hot, humid weather forecast in most parts of PH on Wednesday — Pagasa](#)

By: Dianne Sampang

Most parts of the country will experience hot and humid weather on Wednesday brought by the easterlies, the state weather bureau said.

In the 5 a.m. weather forecast of the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical, and Astronomical Services Administration, weather specialist Chenel Dominguez said that the easterlies, or the warm winds coming from the Pacific Ocean, will prevail over Southern Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao.

Dominguez said that Luzon will see fair weather with low chances of rains while Palawan, Visayas, and Mindanao will experience partly cloudy skies.

She also said that while chances of rain are low within the huge part of the country, isolated rainshowers are possible in the afternoon and evening.

Meanwhile, she said that no gale warning is raised in any seaboard of the country. She added that no low pressure area is monitored inside the Philippine area of responsibility.

Temperature forecast in the following areas:

- Laoag, Ilocos Norte: 25°C to 33°C
- Baguio: 17°C to 24°C
- Metro Manila: 24°C to 34°C
- Tagaytay: 23°C to 33°C
- Tuguegarao: 25°C to 36°C
- Legazpi: 25°C to 33°C
- Kalayaan Islands: 26°C to 33°C
- Puerto Princesa: 25°C to 33°C
- Iloilo: 26°C to 32°C
- Cebu: 26°C to 32°C
- Tacloban: 25°C to 32°C
- Cagayan de Oro: 25°C to 32°C
- Davao: 25°C to 34°C
- Zamboanga: 24°C to 34°C

Women as frontline guardians of PH biodiversity

As the Philippines celebrates Earth Month this April, the Haribon Foundation is shining a spotlight on women leading the charge in environmental governance in the Sierra Madre.

Building on the momentum of the Women's Forum 2026 held last March 26 at the Park Inn in Quezon City, Haribon continues to advocate for a "seat at the table" for women in every environmental decision-making process. The forum, hosted by the Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB) and supported by BIOFIN, gathered 111 participants to discuss the intersection of gender equity and biodiversity.

A technical highlight of the event was the presentation of the GEDSI (Gender Equality, Disability, and Social Inclusion) Toolkit by Haribon's Noel A. Resurreccion. This toolkit is designed to ensure that no one is left behind in the mission to protect the natural world, emphasizing that inclusive governance leads to more sustainable conservation outcomes.

Deeply personal

At the heart of this movement are the women of Haribon's WePhili (Women in Environmental Governance) project, with support by Greenseed.

For the women leaders of the KALIPI Real Federation in Northern Quezon, the commitment to conservation is deeply personal. They still carry the memories of 2004's Typhoon "Winnie," which devastated their communities with floating logs and destroyed infrastructure.

Today, these women are no longer just survivors; they are leaders.

"Let's value the next generation, because we have children, we have grandchildren. Teach them about our environment, and that they too must value it," shared Beatriz Leynes of KALIPI Capalong.

This passion for restoration was echoed by Helen Siat of KALIPI Kiloloron, who noted: "When we do our work with passion, we will not get tired even when it is difficult. We will not grow weary, instead we experience hope and joy".

Call to action

Despite their critical role, women remain underrepresented in formal environmental leadership, with only 15 percent of government environmental agencies led by women globally.

To bridge this gap, Haribon Chair Marianne Quebral concluded the Women's Forum with a powerful reminder that "the path to a biodiverse future must be paved with social equity".

To sustain this momentum, Haribon invites the public and policy-makers to support women through three key actions: invest in Biodiversity-Friendly Enterprises (BDFEs) to ensure

protecting nature is a viable way of life; fund technical capacity-building so more women can scale their restoration and monitoring work; and

support their inclusion in formal governance, ensuring they have a permanent seat where environmental decisions are made.

As Rhea Castillo of KALIPI Ungos put it: “This is the start of a seed of hope that grows and flourishes for other women out there.”

PHILIPPINE INFORMATION AGENCY

[Climate change action starts in the home](#)

By: Rudolph Alama

Around 170 residents of Barangay Matina Crossing attended an environment-themed information session titled “Everyday is Earth Day” where invited speakers talked about solid waste management, recycling, urban gardening, native trees planting, and climate change action.

For Karen Jimenez Santos, the lead event organizer of “Everyday is Earth Day”, the information session brings environmental topics to the household, which she says can sustain projects and programs like solid waste management.

“You might say, it is just a single household, but if you multiply it by so many households, the impact is greater. You might influence your neighbor, and that neighbor will also influence another; it’s a ripple effect,” Santos said.

The activity held on April 18 at the Lanzona Covered Court in Barangay Matina Crossing, Davao City, was spearheaded by the Davao City Maharlika Lions Club 301-E, where Santos is the Committee Head for the Environment.

They had partnered with the Barangay Matina Crossing, the City Environment and Natural Resources Office (CENRO) of the local government of Davao City, where they discussed household solid waste management.

Other environmental advocates were also present, including Dabawenya beauty queen Katriana Batu, representing Lunaw Davao Group, which advocates for the planting of native trees. Renowned cheesemaker and bio-circular sustainability advocate Olive Puentespina, the CEO of Davao Thermo Biotech, a company specializing in biodegradable waste management. Also gracing the event was Engineer Winchester Lemen, whose company Envirotech Waste Recycling collects plastic waste and turns it into usable furniture like school desks.

Santos says the waste management problem is a big concern for the community and the city, and through the event and its speakers, they could show the audience that managing garbage in the household is possible and doable.

“A large chunk of our garbage in our household is biodegradable waste. If people can see what we are doing, even if it is inconvenient, that is one of our hurdles. It is inconvenient, but we show it that it can be done,” Santos says. Through her advocacy, she has been practicing composting in her home garden, turning biodegradable wastes into fertilizer.

Davao City is generating 700 to 800 tons of garbage daily, overwhelming the lone sanitary landfill in New Carmen. Around 40% of the city's garbage is food waste, mostly vegetable and fruit residues.

Santos hopes the event can spur collective action starting in the barangay. "Coming together, that is the operative word, we can solve our garbage problem with united action," Santos said.

She says the Lions Club will be planning more environmental-themed information sessions in other barangays in Davao City.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

[Slovenia ready to boost PPP, tech sharing on energy with PH](#)

By: Joyce Ann L. Rocamora

Slovenia is looking to develop its energy cooperation with the Philippines through a framework that helps translate research into cost-effective and resilient energy infrastructure.

Under its 2030 strategy for scientific research, Slovenia seeks to accelerate cooperation with states through knowledge transfer and innovation by introducing the “science-to-business” model.

Speaking at a forum in Makati on Tuesday, Slovenian Ambassador to the Philippines Smiljana Knez said Ljubljana aims to push for increased science-focused investments and “better connection between academia and private business,” citing energy efficiency as a national security priority.

“Slovenia stands ready to cooperate closely with the Philippines through technology sharing, academic collaboration, and public-private partnerships (PPP),” she said.

At the same forum, Slovenia’s Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation, Igor Papič, shared how they invest in science and research with the belief that energy resilience “in the face of geopolitical disruption is a crucial aspect of our security and sustainable development.”

“The transfer of this knowledge into practice, especially into the economy, is essential for the development and prosperity of our country. This government is fully aware of that. That is why we have made significant investment in both knowledge and its application,” he said.

Science and Technology Secretary Renato Solidum, for his part, echoed the call for deeper collaboration, noting it was now “more urgent than ever” to diversify and strengthen the country’s energy needs to ensure national security.

Since 2011, he said, the Department of Science and Technology has supported 71 projects worth PHP652 million to advance solar, wind, ocean and waste-to-energy technologies.

“Reinforcing our resilience to climate and disaster threats is no longer optional. It is a necessity. We anticipate collaboration and solutions for both countries to prosper,” he said.

The conference was organized by the Stratbase Institute in partnership with the Slovenian Embassy in the Philippines.

In his remarks, Stratbase chief operating officer Rupert Paul Manhit said Slovenia’s cooperation framework could provide huge opportunity for the Philippines as it positions itself as a hub for green metals and renewable energy.

“We are entering this period with important advantages. We have in place the right policy direction, with stronger support for renewable energy, infrastructure development and digital transformation,” he said.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

PHILIPPINE INFORMATION AGENCY

[CCC, PSA Boost Climate Transparency in Agricultural Sector with GHG Inventory Training](#)

The Climate Change Commission (CCC), with support from the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), conducted a three-day Training Workshop on the Compilation of the Agriculture Sector Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Inventory to boost climate transparency.

The workshop brought together targeted participants from the Department of Agriculture (DA) and its attached agencies. Participants deepened their technical proficiency in key areas of GHG inventory compilation, including the use of activity data, emission factors, and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) guidelines.

Beyond technical modules, the training underscored the critical importance of robust institutional arrangements and streamlined interagency data sharing. Hands-on exercises allowed attendees to work through actual inventory estimates for major agricultural sub-sectors.

A landmark outcome of the activity was the DA's expressed commitment to establish its inter-bureau GHG Inventory Team. This dedicated unit is expected to institutionalize inventory compilation within the agriculture sector and strengthen direct linkages with the implementation of the country's Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC).

"We commend the DA for its proactive step toward an institutionalized inventory system, which will significantly bolster our collective NDC implementation," said CCC Vice Chairperson and Executive Director Robert E.A. Borje

The CCC reaffirmed its commitment to working closely with the DA, PSA, and other stakeholders to ensure that the Philippines maintains a transparent and responsive climate reporting system.

For more information on the CCC's climate mainstreaming activities, visit www.climate.gov.ph and www.facebook.com/CCCPhl.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

[CCC: PH must build a unified climate system as risks intensify](#)

By: Marita Moaje

As climate risks become increasingly complex and interconnected, the Philippines must shift from fragmented climate initiatives to a unified, systems-based approach, the Climate Change Commission (CCC) said.

At the launch of the Capacity-Building Initiative for Transparency (CBIT) Philippines project in Pasig City on Monday, CCC Vice Chairperson and Executive Director Robert E.A. Borje emphasized the urgency of strengthening governance systems that can anticipate and manage climate risks, rather than respond to disasters after they strike.

“Everybody knows that our climate risks are no longer linear, cascading across sectors and then compounding over time,” he said.

Borje stressed that the country is now being tested to see whether its systems can anticipate risks and deliver timely, precise, and sustained responses to these challenges.

He said the CBIT Philippines project is designed to strengthen the country’s measurement, reporting, and verification (MRV) framework by integrating data systems, institutional processes, and analytical tools into a single decision-making platform.

He underscored that the country’s focus now must shift from recovery to prevention, and from reacting to risk to managing it.

“What we are launching is not simply another project. It is part of a broader effort to build a system where climate information shapes decisions and where those decisions lead to real, measurable results, allowing us to situate where we are very clearly,” he said.

Borje said the initiative will align data architecture, clarify institutional roles, and improve analytical capacity so that climate information feeds directly into policy choices, investment planning, and performance tracking, emphasizing the need to move beyond compliance-driven reporting.

The effort builds on the Philippines’ first Biennial Transparency Report submitted in 2025 under the Paris Agreement’s Enhanced Transparency Framework, which demonstrated the country’s commitment to accountability but also revealed persistent capacity gaps.

“The challenge has never been willingness. It has always been capacity,” Borje said.

He also called for stronger coordination across government agencies and partners, warning that siloed approaches could undermine progress.

“We need to work very, very closely together. The work should not stay within silos. It has to function as one. A system where information moves with discipline, where decisions are based on evidence, and where results are tracked and improved over time,” he said.

He added that stronger transparency systems would not only improve policymaking and adaptation efforts but also help mobilize climate finance, noting that “transparency builds confidence.”

“Ultimately, transparency is not just about visibility. It is about being able to steer, to make decisions with confidence, and to adjust when things are not working. And then to do so before problems become more difficult or more costly,” he said.

The CBIT Philippines project is a multi-year initiative supported by partners including the Manila Observatory, Oscar M. Lopez Center for Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Management Foundation, Conservation International, Japan International Cooperation Agency, and Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit.

Borje noted that while systems are critical, their effectiveness ultimately depends on people and institutions working together.

RAPPLER

[\[OPINION\] The energy crisis we must not waste](#)

By: Tony Laviña

Every time conflict breaks out in the Middle East, it finds its way into Filipino homes. Climate Change Commission Executive Director Robert Borje, writing in the Daily Tribune last April 12, put it plainly: “Not through headlines but through higher electricity bills, transport costs and more expensive food. We do not see the conflict but we feel it. We pay for instability we do not control.”

He is right. The Philippines imports 95-98% of its oil from the Middle East, and that dependence has produced a cascading emergency: diesel prices exceeding P130 per liter, hundreds of filling stations forced to close, airlines suspending routes, and tens of thousands of overseas Filipino workers stranded. We have been here before. And that is precisely the problem.

Borje captured the danger of the moment with unusual candor for a sitting Cabinet secretary: “Crises do not always push us forward. Sometimes, they pull us back. In moments like this, the instinct is to secure supply quickly and lean on the familiar — imported fuel, existing coal, short-term fixes that keep everything running. That is understandable. But it is also how dependence deepens.” That cannot be the story this time.

The cost of our transportation paralysis

What this crisis reveals is not just oil dependence, but a troubling pattern of governance. The Philippines continues to absorb external shocks in largely the same way: waiting for disruption, responding with partial measures, and framing the outcome as unforeseen. The escape route has been visible for years. We chose not to take it.

The Public Utility Vehicle Modernization Program has electrified only 5% of the country’s 220,000 jeepneys, despite years of implementation and explicit policy mandates. Five percent. That is the measure of our institutional resolve. Meanwhile, Energy Secretary Sharon Garin herself told the Senate that China is “less affected” by the current disruption because its fleet is already electric. China made a choice. We deferred ours, and now we are paying for it in diesel lines and grounded planes.

The reasons for this failure are self-inflicted. A modern jeepney costs approximately P2.8 million per unit, making it 1,766% more expensive than a traditional jeepney, while the government subsidy covers no more than 5.7% of that cost. We designed a modernization program for the poor and priced out the poor. The answer is not to abandon it but to fix it urgently: zero-interest financing for e-fleets, charging infrastructure, route-based subsidies, and massively scaled e-tricycle deployment.

Meanwhile, the government procures almost half a million new vehicles with internal combustion engines every year. Replacing these with electric vehicles would dramatically reduce our need

to import oil. Government fleet electrification is the single most immediately actionable step available to this administration. Every P130-per-liter diesel price is a reminder of what continued delay actually costs.

We must also electrify private transportation. We are so far behind our neighbors on this matter.

The coal moratorium must not be lifted

Secretary Arsenio Balisacan argued that “it doesn’t seem to me a bad idea at all to also think about delaying a bit our transition,” citing how Japan, Germany, and Italy are revisiting their renewable energy timelines. This framing is misleading. Those countries are managing overcorrections shaped by their own specific contexts. Importing their hesitations wholesale is not prudent planning.

The Philippines relies on imports for 70% of its coal supply, 97% of which comes from Indonesia. Coal is not a pathway to energy security. It is a detour through a different import dependency. If oil from the Middle East makes us vulnerable, coal from Indonesia exposes us to a different set of geopolitical pressures, as we learned when Indonesia briefly banned coal exports in 2022.

Bishop Gerardo Alminaza, president of Caritas Philippines, stated this plainly in the organization’s April 14 press release: “Coal is not a neutral energy source. It pollutes our air, devastates ecosystems, and accelerates the climate crisis. In Atimonan, Quezon, residents face constant threats to their livelihoods; in Zambales, families suffer from health risks and economic displacement. These are not distant projections; they are the daily lived experiences of our people.”

His warning about temporary measures must be heard in every Senate hearing room and Cabinet meeting: “We are deeply concerned that measures framed as ‘short-term responses’ will lock the country into a cycle of dependence on harmful energy. Energy policy must not sacrifice the poor and the planet for the illusion of immediate relief.”

Coal still generated 62.5% of Philippine power in 2024. The bottleneck is not baseload supply. It is execution: transmission development has become a major constraint, delays in grid expansion are already stranding new renewable assets, and weak implementation of electricity-market reforms has kept competition incomplete. We do not need more coal. We need a government that can build the grid to carry the renewables we have already committed to. An energy transition that pauses every time there is a crisis is not a transition. It is a performance.

The Ahunan problem: Green label, unjust reality

A just transition demands honesty even about projects that carry the renewable energy label. The Ahunan pumped-storage hydropower project in Pakil, Laguna is a case in point. The proposed 1,400-MW facility by Enrique Razon’s Prime Metro Power Holdings Corp. would cover

over 299 hectares across four barangays on the east bank of Laguna de Bay. Its proponents frame it as clean energy.

The communities of Pakil tell a different story. Protesters have cited the eviction of residents from Pinagkampohan, a village cleared for construction, and the barring of farmers and fisherfolk from their lands and fishing grounds around Laguna Lake.

The facility's environmental impacts include killing fish, spreading invasive species, damaging wetland ecosystems, and obstructing the movement of aquatic species. As local farmer Ka Jun Asin said: "Itong lugar na ito, sa ilang taon pa siguro, ay hindi na mapapakinabangan pa ng mga magsasaka at ng susunod na mga henerasyon." (In just a few more years maybe, farmers and the next generation can no longer benefit from this place.)

A renewable energy label does not automatically confer justice. Projects that displace communities, destroy watersheds, and proceed without genuine free, prior, and informed consent are not part of a just transition, regardless of what they are called.

The Ahunan project, as currently constituted, violates the very principles a credible energy transition must be built on. The communities of Pakil deserve the same protection that any just transition framework promises to the poor. Their resistance is not an obstacle to the energy transition. It is a reminder of what that transition is supposed to be for.

The choice before us

Secretary Borje ended his article with a challenge: "We can keep paying for a system we do not control or begin shaping one that works better for us. That choice is not made once. It is made in the habits we keep and the policies we advance long after the lights come back on."

He is right. And the choices being made right now, on coal, on electrification, on transport modernization, on the rights of communities like Pakil, are exactly those policies. They will determine whether this crisis becomes the turning point we needed, or merely another entry in a long ledger of missed opportunities.

The Middle East will stabilize. Oil will flow again. Prices will ease. And when they do, the instinct will be to return to normal. We must refuse that instinct. Because what we have been calling normal is exactly what made us this vulnerable. The crisis is real. The opportunity it opens is also real. Whether we take it is a choice we must make right now.

=END=