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The Department of Science and Technology (DOST) and the Philippine Space Agency have teamed up with the European Union for a program that will help in disaster mitigation, climate change adaptation and food security strategies using earth observation satellites.

[PhilSA to utilize EU-funded data sharing program in disaster response, food security projects](#)

By: Luisa K. Cabato

The Philippine Space Agency (PhilSA) said on Monday, April 24, that it will utilize the European Union (EU)-funded satellite data sharing program, Copernicus Capacity

Support Action Programme for the Philippines (CopPhil), to boost the country's disaster response and food security initiatives.

MANILA STANDARD

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By: Vince Lopez

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Monday said his government will seek a review of the treaty agreements signed between the Philippines and its long-time ally, the United States, while seeking more partnerships and enhance current deals on climate change mitigation and adaptation.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

[Climate \(in\)justice \(1\)](#)

By: Rufa Cagoco-Guam

General Santos City—For the past two weeks, this very dry and arid chartered city in South Cotabato once again experienced almost feverish temperatures of 37-38 degrees Celsius. Last Sunday, April 23, was particularly very hot, and the air seemed to be dry as well, with nary a sight of a moving leaf in the few trees surrounding our neighborhood. The heat seemingly pierced through our concrete walls and made us feel like being toasted in a blazing wood-fired oven.

[Earth Day 2023: PH advocates tackle reclamation, plastic waste](#)

By: Cristina Eloisa Baclig

In this year's Earth Day celebration, scientists, environmental defenders, and organizations in the Philippines highlighted two of the country's most prominent environmental issues—ongoing reclamation projects and piling plastic waste.

[El Niño lurks : Time for admin to tackle climate woes with innovative infrastructure — solon](#)

By: Gabriel Pabico Lalu

It is high time for the national government to address the potential problems that would be caused by the El Niño phenomenon and other climate concerns in the country through an infrastructure drive, a lawmaker said.

[Solar farm tapped for cheaper electricity in Eastern Samar](#)

By: Joey Gabieta

A solar farm project broke ground here on Friday, aimed at providing a sustainable power source and reducing the power rates in the province of Eastern Samar, officials said.

RAPPLER

[Eastern Samar's nature lovers mark Earth Day by hauling off beach trash](#)

By: Ricky Bautista

As the sun rose on Saturday morning, April 22, a community of nature lovers and outdoor enthusiasts gathered to pay homage to the environment and mark the 32nd Earth Day at Borongan City's renowned beach Surf City.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

[Marcos to discuss climate change, defense deals with Biden](#)

By: Kaycee Valmonte

Climate change and defense deals will be the center of the talks between President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. and US President Joe Biden next week as they meet to affirm the "special relationship" of the Philippines and the United States.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

MANILA STANDARD

[Indeed, let's make it happen](#)

When President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. urged this week his 114 million countrymen to participate in world efforts to address the negative effects of climate change, he on the nose marked the gravity of the global problem.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

['Influencing for good': GMA artists use 'influencer' platform for the environment](#)

By: Jan Milo Severo

GMA Network and Nestlé Philippines forged a partnership for the planet with the aim to promote proper SWM and engage more Filipinos in building a movement for environmental sustainability through educational content.

Information and Knowledge Management Division

ABS CBN

First in Asia: Philippines, EU launch space cooperation program

By: Raphael Bosano

Filipino scientists will soon be able to make better analysis and provide policy makers with necessary information on climate change, natural disasters and other phenomena.

This after the Philippines entered a space cooperation program with the European Union which will enable authorities to develop systems to utilize data from the EU's earth observation satellites.

The Copernicus Capacity Support Action Program for the Philippines (CopPhil) is the first space cooperation program in the Asian region which aims to provide the country with space data using Copernicus and its different sentinels.

Copernicus is a cornerstone of the EU's efforts to monitor through satellites the earth and its ecosystems to help ensure preparedness for natural or man-made crises and disasters.

Department of Science and Technology (DOST) Secretary Renato Solidum emphasized the importance of data-sharing with the EU through CopPhil not only in the context of disasters and calamities.

"The Philippines is very rich in various natural resources. We also need to make sure economy is protected by making sure that science will actually lead to better decisions making and warning. It will not only save lives but more importantly protect livelihood. This project essentially will enable us to get data as soon as possible as the data infrastructure is being improved by the Philippine Space Agency," he said.

DATA GATHERING

Data from Copernicus are culled from sentinels, a dedicated constellation of satellites and other third-party satellites known as "contributing space missions".

The sentinels have different focus in terms of imaging which includes weather, urban, forest and agricultural land, ocean monitoring, and atmospheric composition monitoring including pollution.

Philippine Space Agency Director-General Dr. Joel Joseph Marciano explained that the partnership with the EU would be helpful in gaining a better understanding of the country's environment and fostering better international cooperation.

“The Philippines is contributing data as well to this repository. Satellite imagery is one thing but we need to validate things on the ground. That is the meaning of this reciprocity. The data has been open to us and we will contribute data as well from our own satellites, the Diwata 2 and other satellites that are found into the fray of the PH,” Marciano said.

Solidum said data from CopPhil would also affect response and recovery efforts.

“We will be making sure that we maximize the assistance provided by the EU. I can now see the enormous volume of data. They saw in us the need to address many concerns like disasters and climate change,” he said.

Marciano noted how data culled from satellite images worked to the benefit of rescue workers during natural disasters, especially in the wake of the 2018 landslide in Naga, Cebu.

“You can also get pre-disaster images of the area. Algorithms are used to detect features of satellite images for example, building footprints. That would prove crucial because before we have the image of the landslide we have over layered the images of the building footprints in the area. And immediately turned this around to responders on the ground who were desperately trying to look for survivors.”

Aside from risk mapping, detecting potential hazards and rapid response, CopPhil can also provide data on changes in the environment and aid in the development of strategies to mitigate impacts of climate change.

The program, funded by the EU and implemented by the European Space Agency, is worth 10 million euros or approximately P610 million. Expected to last for at least three years, it will support four different areas including awareness; data infrastructure; uptake of data and information; and skills development.

EU Ambassador to the Philippines Luc Veron said the initiative was a starting point for a larger program on “digital connectivity.”

“In the long term, the European Union is exploring the possibility to create a network of Copernicus partners in the ASEAN region aside from other parts of the world. The uptake of innovative technologies such as Copernicus will trigger growth, jobs, and modernization of digital infrastructure that can be used in many sectors in the Philippines,” Veron said.

BUSINESS WORLD

European Union, 2 Philippine agencies team up for space program

By: PB Mirasol

The European Union (EU) and the Philippines have teamed up to establish a space cooperation program aimed at enhancing the country's disaster mitigation and climate change strategies.

A collaboration between two Philippine agencies—Department of Science and Technology (DoST) and Philippine Space Agency (PhilSA)—and the EU has resulted in the creation of the Copernicus Capacity Support Action Programme for the Philippines, or CopPhil, PhilSA Director-General Joel Joseph S. Marciano, Jr. announced on Monday.

The program, which is also the first in Asia, allows the Philippines to use the EU's earth observation satellite data for disaster mitigation, food security, and climate change adaptation strategies.

Copernicus is an EU program that provides free environment and climate data from a constellation of satellites, known as Sentinels, as well as third-party satellites, known as contributing space missions. Its services also use on-site measurement data to complement its satellite data.

In the Philippines, Copernicus' satellite images have already helped in the monitoring of the situations of communities in the aftermath of natural disasters or accidents like oil spills. This capability has helped authorities plan their disaster preparedness and mitigation programs.

“Open data from Copernicus... has enabled access to suitable data... that is instrumental for decision-making and policy formulation,” PhilSA's Mr. Marciano said

“Data from Sentinel-1, -2, and -5p, have been used in applications in flood, oil spill, ship, and volcanic emission monitoring; (they have also been used in the) mapping of canopy height, crops, land cover, and air and water quality,” he said at the launch.

CopPhil is a three-year program and is worth about P610 million, or €10 million. Its launch was supported by the European Commission's Technical Assistance and Information Exchange Instrument, which promotes peer-to-peer interactions and technical exchanges between the administrations of EU member states as well as their partner countries.

“With the various applications that can be done, we will now have to use the Copernicus data for any major national issue that we would face,” DoST Secretary Renato U. Solidum told reporters.

“We can do that for earthquakes, volcanoes, or any other environmental issue...The real focus is on hazards assessment and information.”

Space data monitoring can also help protect economic development, Mr. Solidum added.

“Inflation is related to the cost of rice, yellow corn, sugar, and dairy, so we need to monitor their production, and the effect of natural hazards like El Niño or La Niña (on them),” he said.

“Science will lead to better decision-making,” Mr. Solidum also said. “We should not only save lives, but more importantly, livelihoods.”

According to Luc Véron, EU ambassador to the Philippines, Copernicus will improve capacities for a “stronger and more shock-resilient” Filipino economy and society.

“There are many reasons for choosing the Philippines,” he said.

“When you build a project on the use of earth observation data, and you have as one of its applications the mitigation of natural disasters...definitely, the Philippines is an obvious candidate,” he noted.

“But I would also say that the preparedness of the Philippines in terms of skills and infrastructure is something that (has allowed) the country to be a pioneer in the region.”

The EU is exploring the possibility of creating a network of Copernicus partners in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations region, Mr. Véron also said.

GMA NEWS

Marcos: Mutual Defense Treaty to be discussed in Biden meeting

By: Anna Felicia Bajo

President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. on Monday underscored the need for the Mutual Defense Treaty (MDT) to "evolve" amid the developing security situations concerning other countries.

Marcos said the MDT and the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA) will be among the topics that he will tackle with United States President Joe Biden during his official working visit to Washington in May.

"Yung VFA natin, 'yung Visiting Forces Agreement and the treaty that we have, the Mutual Defense Treaty that we have with the United States, we have to evolve it. It has to evolve dahil nagi-evolve din, kailangan ina-adjust-adjust natin 'yan dahil may nagbabago sa sitwasyon na hinaharap natin dito sa South China Sea, sa Taiwan, sa North Korea, umiinit 'yung sitwasyon dito sa atin," Marcos said in a radio interview with Erwin Tulfo.

(Our VFA and MDT with the United States must evolve because the situations we are facing in the South China Sea, in Taiwan and North Korea also evolves.)

The MDT is a 70-year-old accord between the Philippines and the US. The accord binds Washington DC to defend Manila from any aggression.

The bilateral meeting between Marcos and Biden will be conducted in light of the expansion of the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA) by adding four more sites as announced by the Philippine government early this month.

It will also happen as the tension between the US and China escalates due to the issue in Taiwan. China claims democratically governed Taiwan as its own territory.

Aside from the treaties, Marcos will also raise the issue of climate change to Biden.

The White House earlier said Biden and Marcos would tackle regional matters and coordinate on efforts that will uphold international law and promote a free and open Indo-Pacific.

The leaders will also review opportunities "to deepen economic cooperation and promote inclusive prosperity, expand our nations' special people-to-people ties, invest in

the clean energy transition and the fight against climate change, and ensure respect for human rights," according to the White House.

MANILA BULLETIN

[DTI backs import tariff removal on electric vehicles](#)

By: Aaron Recuenco

The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) is backing the move to temporarily remove import tariffs for electric vehicles (EVs) for a period of five years in a bid to encourage more Filipinos to use them.

DTI Secretary Alfredo Pascual said the tariff removal on electric vehicles will also help bring down its prices amid calls to reduce carbon emission which is considered as one of the contributors to climate change.

"DTI proposed the temporary removal of tariff on EVs for a period of five years...[the department) believes that the measure will help develop the local EV market and encourage consumers to consider shifting to EVs for a cleaner and greener transportation option," said Pascual.

"The temporary elimination of tariffs is seen to drive down the purchase of electric vehicles, thereby generating increased demand and encouraging investments in electric vehicle charging stations," he added.

The DTI's move, however, was opposed by two vehicle associations which pushed for the exclusion of e-motorcycles during the Tariff Commission's public hearing on May 12 last year.

Several sectors supporting the e-motorcycle and vehicle market saw the move as unjustified, saying motorcycles hold the majority among motorists in the country.

The Philippine government in January released Executive Order No. 12 series of 2023 which modifies the tariff rates for certain EVs and its components to zero percent, with the exclusion of e-motorcycles which is still subject to 30 percent tariff rate.

An increasing clamor for inclusivity in the coverage of EO12 has since followed its issuance.

Think-tank Stratbase ADR Institute President Dindo Manhit believes that EO 12 should be revised to include e-motorcycles in the tax break as it is 'discriminatory' and rich-favored.

On Feb. 21 next year, EO12 shall be subject to review by the National Economic and Development Authority wherein recommendations for possible amendment shall be submitted for approval of the President.

[PH taps EU satellite data to address disaster, climate change](#)

By: Joseph Pedrajas

The Department of Science and Technology (DOST) and the Philippine Space Agency have teamed up with the European Union for a program that will help in disaster mitigation, climate change adaptation and food security strategies using earth observation satellites.

The three bodies led on Monday, April 24, the launching of Copernicus Capacity Support Action Programme—the Western region bloc's initiative—that is worth around P610 million (10 million euros).

According to EU, Copernicus—the first space cooperation program—will help Philippine authorities to develop national systems to make use of EU's earth observation's satellites data in the mentioned areas of concerns.

It will free environment and climate data derived from a constellation of satellites—the Sentinels—that monitor the earth and its many ecosystems 24-hours daily.

"This free information aims to help public authorities, businesses, and international organisations mitigate climate change impacts and build a sustainable future for all," EU said.

In the Philippines, Copernicus' satellite images already helped the Philippines in monitoring the situation of remote communities in the aftermath of typhoons, such as Odette, or accidents like an oil spill to help authorities plan their disaster preparedness plans and mitigation programs.

EU Ambassador to the Philippines Luc Veron said during the launching that Copernicus in the Philippines "is a pioneer initiative in Asia and Asia Pacific and a starting point for a larger program on Digital Connectivity."

"The program will enhance capacities for a stronger and more shock-resilient Filipino economy and society," he said.

"In the long term the European Union is exploring the possibility to create a network of Copernicus partners in the ASEAN region aside from other parts of the world. The uptake of innovative technologies such as Copernicus will trigger growth, jobs and modernisation of digital infrastructures that can be used in many sectors in the Philippines," he added.

[PhilSA to utilize EU-funded data sharing program in disaster response, food security projects](#)

By: Luisa K. Cabato

The Philippine Space Agency (PhilSA) said on Monday, April 24, that it will utilize the European Union (EU)-funded satellite data sharing program, Copernicus Capacity Support Action Programme for the Philippines (CopPhil), to boost the country's disaster response and food security initiatives.

CopPhil, a collaboration among PhilSA, Department of Science and Technology (DOST), and the EU, is a three-year program that will provide near-real-time, free, and accessible environmental and climate data obtained from a constellation of satellites called the Sentinels.

"The Agency welcomes this partnership with the European Union as it strengthens the domestic space value chain, particularly the ability to process and use satellite images and spaceborne data to better manage, and protect our environment and natural resources, and be better prepared in the face of disasters and climate change," said PhilSA Director General Joel Marciano, Jr. during the official launch of the program.

Marciano noted that these satellite data could be accessed by both government and non-government organizations and utilized with various monitoring, protection, search and rescue, assistance distribution, and similar programs during and even before disasters.

He added that CopPhil would also alleviate the country's pre-disaster management efforts and centralize the data sharing system within the country.

CopPhil has an allocated budget of P610 million or €10 million from the EU and is the first-ever space cooperation program in Southeast Asia.

Meanwhile, DOST Secretary Renato Solidum, Jr., said the partnership with the EU will improve "domestic space value chain, particularly the ability to process and use satellite images and spaceborne data to better manage, and protect our environment and natural resources, and be better prepared in the face of disasters and climate change."

What is Copernicus?

Copernicus is an EU program that targets the development of European information services based on satellite Earth observation and in-situ or non-space data.

It provides data that can be used for local and regional needs and is implemented with the European Union Member States, the European Space Agency (ESA), the European Organization for the Exploitation of Meteorological Satellites (EUMETSAT), the European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts (ECMWF), EU Agencies, and Mercator Océan.

MANILA STANDARD

[PH eyes more pacts with US](#)

By: Vince Lopez

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Monday said his government will seek a review of the treaty agreements signed between the Philippines and its long-time ally, the United States, while seeking more partnerships and enhance current deals on climate change mitigation and adaptation.

In an interview with broadcaster and former Social Welfare secretary Erwin Tulfo, the President said he would like to see agreements on climate change.

Mr. Marcos said Manila and Washington will discuss commitments to the Mutual Defense Treaty (MDT), a 70-year-old accord between the two allies.

“We have to evolve it. It has to evolve,” the President said, noting the changes in the situation in the South China Sea, events in Taiwan and in North Korea. “The situation is heating up a bit,” he said.

Mr. Marcos said the MDT and the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA) will be among the topics that he will take up with US President Joe Biden during his official working visit to Washington starting May 1.

The Philippines earlier this year identified Camilo Osias Naval Base in Santa Ana, Cagayan; Lal-lo Airport in Lal-lo, Cagayan; Camp Melchor Dela Cruz in Gamu, Isabela; and Balabac Island in Palawan as additional locations that can be accessed by US troops under the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA).

In terms of climate change initiatives, the President said he will be meeting with top US officials to discuss “green bonds,” which are financial instruments linked to climate change solutions and are specific projects to help reduce carbon emissions.

The meeting between Mr. Marcos and Mr. Biden will take place as tension between the US and China escalates due to the issue in Taiwan. China claims democratically governed Taiwan as its own territory.

The White House earlier said Mr. Biden and Mr. Marcos would tackle regional matters and coordinate efforts that will uphold international law and promote a free and open Indo-Pacific.

The leaders will also review opportunities “to deepen economic cooperation and promote inclusive prosperity, expand our nations’ special people-to-people ties, invest in the clean energy transition and the fight against climate change, and ensure respect for human rights,” the White House said.

On Friday, Filipino, American, and Australian special troops conducted resupply bundle drop operations (also known as parachute resupply or airdrops) in the coastal waters of Barangay Punta Baja, Rizal, Palawan as part of this year’s “Balikatan” exercises.

The Western Command (Wescom), in a Facebook post Sunday, said participating units are from the Army 18th Special Forces, Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) Special Operation Group alongside their American and Australian counterparts.

The exercise involved the dropping of resupplies using a Lockheed Martin C-130J “Super Hercules” of the US Air Force flying at low altitude. Participating forces then immediately recovered the materials using indigenous fishing boats.

“This realistic scenario is designed to train the participants in the effective conduct of resupply missions in a denied area,” the Wescom post said.

Wescom said this “Balikatan” exercise is a good opportunity for local and foreign allied forces to share knowledge and skills together toward boosting their capabilities, combat readiness and interoperability.

Meanwhile, Wescom said that its 3rd Marine Brigade and its subordinate units participated in so-called “visit, board, search, and seizure” (VBSS) exercises held at the Joint Maritime Law Enforcement Training Center in Barangay Magarwak, Sta. Lourdes, Puerto Princesa City.

Among the participants were the PCG, 2nd Special Operations Unit of the Philippine National Police Maritime Group, and the US armed forces.

The 10-day event, which started April 12, was facilitated by the US Marine Corps’ Marine Special Operation Command. Some of the actual VBSS training was conducted on board M/V Palawan Coast at the port area of Barangay Liwanag, Puerto Princesa City.

“VBSS is a critical skill set for military personnel, particularly those involved in maritime operations. The ability to quickly and effectively board and search a vessel is crucial in preventing illegal activities at sea and maintaining security in the maritime environment.”

“The exercise, which included scenarios involving boarding of vessels suspected of engaging in illegal activities, was designed to enhance the capabilities of troops in carrying out VBSS operations, which are often conducted in challenging situations,” Wescom said.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Climate (in)justice (1)

By: Rufa Cagoco-Guiam

General Santos City—For the past two weeks, this very dry and arid chartered city in South Cotabato once again experienced almost feverish temperatures of 37-38 degrees Celsius. Last Sunday, April 23, was particularly very hot, and the air seemed to be dry as well, with nary a sight of a moving leaf in the few trees surrounding our neighborhood. The heat seemingly pierced through our concrete walls and made us feel like being toasted in a blazing wood-fired oven.

Experiencing this type of weather here is not new; my family and I started our lives here more than two decades ago, at the onset of a very long dry season in 1998. This does not mean though we have become comfortably adjusted to it: Now, as senior citizens, my husband and I have become weaker and more vulnerable to any extreme rise in environmental temperature.

But thinking about that past and this present urged me once again to write about climate change, but on another aspect—on how the adverse effects of climate change have created more injustice to historically marginalized and excluded populations, both here and abroad.

On its homepage, the Environmental Center of the University of Colorado at Boulder posted this blurb about climate justice: “[It] is fundamentally an issue of human rights and environmental justice that connects the local to the global. With rising temperatures, human lives—particularly in people of color, low-income, and indigenous communities—are affected by compromised health, financial burdens, and social and cultural disruptions. Those who are most affected and have the fewest resources to adapt to climate change are also the least responsible for the greenhouse gas emissions ...”

The tragic experiences of Native Americans and other people of color (African Americans), who had been socially and politically excluded through the years, have triggered the grassroots climate or environmental justice movement. In addition to being socially and politically marginalized, they have also been disproportionately affected by the consequences of several natural calamities compared to their white, more affluent American counterparts.

On Oct. 24-27, 1991, the First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit was held in Washington. Its delegates drafted a historic document, the 17 Principles of Environmental Justice. These principles have since then become the

“defining document for the growing grassroots movement for environmental justice” (Environmental Center, University of Colorado, Boulder).

The preamble of the Declaration of the 17 Principles sums up the group’s assertion of their inherent rights as indigenous peoples of color to renew their spiritual moorings around Mother Earth; to respect and celebrate each of their diverse cultures, languages, and beliefs about their natural world and their capacities for healing themselves, and of ensuring environmental justice. Through this landmark document, the delegates also expressed a strong plea to be freed from more than “500 years of colonization and oppression, resulting in the poisoning of our communities and land and the genocide of our peoples ...”

Space does not allow me to enumerate the 17 Principles, but one of them struck me as something that the indigenous and impoverished communities in our country, in Mindanao and in the Bangsamoro, must also assert. Principle No. 8 says: “Environmental justice affirms the right of all workers to a safe and healthy work environment without being forced to choose between an unsafe livelihood and unemployment. It also affirms the right of those who work at home to be free from environmental hazards.”

Environmental hazards include daily exposure to toxic fumes from the burning of nonbiodegradable garbage and emissions from factories processing fish meal or fish feed products. The latter is true in General Santos, where many businesses in the fishing industry produce fish meal from the extracted entrails of tuna and other fish species caught locally and from as far as Indonesian or Papua New Guinea waters.

Unskilled workers engaged in extractive projects like mining, drilling for natural gas, and harmful agricultural practices like monocrop cultivation of cash crops are the ones who are first victimized by “accidents” arising from these exploitative practices. They are also among the least capable of protecting themselves from the harmful effects of such “accidents.”

[Earth Day 2023: PH advocates tackle reclamation, plastic waste](#)

By: Cristina Eloisa Baclig

In this year's Earth Day celebration, scientists, environmental defenders, and organizations in the Philippines highlighted two of the country's most prominent environmental issues—ongoing reclamation projects and piling plastic waste.

On April 22, billions of people across the world celebrated Earth Day—which, as described by National Geographic, is “an annual celebration that honors the achievements of the environmental movement and raises awareness of the need to protect Earth's natural resources for future generations.”

In line with this year's “Invest in Our Planet” theme for Earth Day, people took to the streets to call on governments and corporations to take action on the worsening “triple planetary crisis” of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution.

In the Philippines, multi-sectoral advocates gathered to protest reclamation, dump-and-fill, and other ongoing destructive activities in Manila Bay and other parts of the country.

According to the nongovernmental organization AGHAM-Advocates of Science and Technology for the People, these activities have “grave ecological and economic consequences.”

“As we celebrate Earth Day today, we continue to remind the Marcos administration, and the DENR (Department of Environment and Nation Resources), that protecting the environment is first and foremost about protecting the people and securing their future,” said Jerwin Baure, public information officer and marine scientist of AGHAM.

“Climate crisis is happening right now, and the people are demanding the government to act fast. Time is ticking, and lives and livelihood are at stake. We demand the government to show its commitment in mitigating the impacts of the climate crisis through stopping ecologically destructive projects such as reclamation,” Baure added.

Reclamation, dump-and-fill projects

AGHAM, fisherfolk, and other environmental organizations urged a stop to the ongoing reclamation and dump-and-fill projects in Manila Bay.

Citing data from the Philippine Reclamation Authority (PRA), AGHAM stressed that at least 50 reclamation projects are at “various stages of development in the country” as of September 2022.

Of those, 24 projects have been approved and issued environmental compliance certificates (ECC) by the DENR, while 26 are still in the application stage. PRA estimated that the total area of reclamation projects in the entire country is at least 11,800 hectares.

Previous data from militant fishermen's group Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (Pamalakaya) showed that at least 30 reclamation projects have been found in Manila Bay. Of those, 21 projects have already been issued ECC.

A separate study by conservation group Oceana found at least 22 reclamation projects on Manila Bay—half of which were already “underway” as of last February 28.

“This number is still an underestimation as other coastal development projects that involve dumping and filling of soil into our coasts are not listed under the PRA,” Baure said, adding the 2,500-hectare Bulacan Aerotropolis project as an example.

Baure stressed that since 2020, the project had caused the destruction of mangrove forests and mudflats and has displaced fishing communities.

He noted that another proposed project not filed under PRA, the Manila Bay Integrated Flood Control, Coastal Defense and Expressway, could impact the mangrove ecosystems in Bataan, Pampanga, and Bulacan.

“This project is especially alarming as it is proposed to be located near a Ramsar site in Sasmuan, Pampanga. The negative impacts of reclamation and other destructive projects far outweigh the promised economic development that these projects would bring,” he explained.

House Bill No. 3148, filed last month, proposes the establishment of that coastal defense system in Manila Bay to “protect the shoreline from future rises in the sea level,” particularly the northern part of the bay, which covers the coastal areas of Bulacan, Pampanga, and Bataan.

Environmental advocates opposed the P399.66 billion project, explaining that it will not address flooding and rising sea levels in the coastal areas at the northern portion of Manila Bay. Instead, it will “decimate coastal communities & ecosystems” in the affected areas.

The plastic problem

According to the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), around 7 billion of the 9.2 billion tonnes of plastic produced from 1950-2017 became plastic waste, ending up in landfills or dumping.

The World Economic Forum estimated that only 16 percent of plastics produced globally are recycled. Most of those that were not sent to recycling plants end up in rivers and oceans—which poses a risk to “animals and plants whose habitats have become aquatic garbage patches.”

In 2021, the online scientific publication website Our World in Data (OWID) published data showing that the Philippines was one of Asia’s most significant contributors to marine plastic pollution.

OWID found that at least 81 percent of the 4.8 to 12.7 million tons of global plastic waste in the oceans came from Asian rivers.

Of the top 10 largest plastic-emitting rivers in Asia, seven were from the Philippines – namely the Pasig River, Tullahan River, Meycauayan River in Bulacan, Libmanan River in Camarines Sur, Rio Grande de Mindanao River, and Agno River in Pangasinan.

This brings the country’s total marine plastic input to at least one-third or 36 percent of the total ocean plastics emitted from Asia.

Greenpeace Philippines pushed for a cap on production, an immediately planned phaseout of single-use plastics, and an urgent transition to zero-waste reuse models to spare the youth and future generations from the dire impacts of plastic pollution and climate emergency.

“This year’s Earth Day theme, ‘Invest in our Planet,’ couldn’t be more timely. It’s indeed time for countries, especially corporations, to invest in genuine zero-waste solutions that will safeguard people and give the youth a plastic-free future they deserve. Young people have the most to gain if we act on the plastics issue—and the most to lose if we don’t,” said Greenpeace Philippines campaigner Marian Ledesma.

“We need a strong and ambitious Global Plastics Treaty that won’t just drastically reduce plastic production and turn off the plastic tap, but also drive industries and nations to invest in sustainable and socially equitable solutions to protect future generations from plastic pollution.”

PH children bear brunt of climate change

A previous report by Unicef found that heatwaves, or prolonged periods of extreme high temperatures, are becoming longer, stronger, more widespread, and more frequent due to the climate crisis—and this causes a devastating impact on children worldwide.

“Heatwaves are a global phenomenon. As extreme high temperatures increase and the longevity, duration, and severity of heatwaves accelerate, children are increasingly exposed to health-related vulnerabilities,” the report stated.

Globally, 559 million children are currently suffering from the impacts of high heatwave frequency. By 2050, over 2 billion children are forecast to face more frequent heatwaves or one of three other high heat events—high heatwave duration, high heatwave severity, or extreme high temperatures.

Unicef found that in 2020, an estimated 1.1 million children in the Philippines had already been exposed to high heat frequency—or 4.5 or more heatwaves per year, while around 1.9 million children in the country were affected by high heatwave duration or prolonged heatwave, which usually lasts 4.7 days or longer.

In 2050 under the low emission scenario, the number of Filipino children who will suffer the effects of having five or more heatwaves rises to 33.5 million, or 99 percent of all children living in the country that year.

At least 26.3 million Filipino children—77 percent of the estimated total children in the country in 2050—will experience high heatwave duration.

Under the very high emission scenario in 2025, 33 million children in the Philippines (99 percent) will experience high heatwave frequency, while 30.6 million (92 percent) will bear brunt of the impacts of the days-long heatwaves.

Last year, a preprint study by The Lancet investigated climate anxiety or “eco-anxiety”—characterized by a wide range of painful and complex emotions like worry, fear, anger, grief, despair, guilt, shame, and hope linked to the climate crisis—in children and young people globally.

The study—the largest of its kind—surveyed 15,543 children aged 16-25 years old from 10 countries, including the Philippines, United Kingdom (UK), Finland, France, United States (US), Australia, Portugal, Brazil, India, and Nigeria.

Results showed that the highest number of respondents who felt “very worried” and “extremely worried” about the impacts of climate change were from the Philippines (84 percent: 49 extremely worried, 35 very worried).

“These images capture the future that we dream of—a world where our environment is teeming with life, a world with a thriving biodiversity, a world free from plastics,” said BFFP Youth Ambassador Christian Derafera during this year’s Earth Day celebration.

“We must not let future generations inherit a degraded planet, but rather, nurture a home where it’s safe for them to live and dream. Investing in our planet is investing in the youth’s future,” he added.

[El Niño lurks : Time for admin to tackle climate woes with innovative infrastructure — solon](#)

By: Gabriel Pabico Lalu

It is high time for the national government to address the potential problems that would be caused by the El Niño phenomenon and other climate concerns in the country through an infrastructure drive, a lawmaker said.

According to Surigao del Sur 1st District Rep. Romeo Momo Sr., President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.'s administration should prioritize building critical infrastructure that would mitigate the impact of weather phenomena and provide solutions to its possible effects.

Momo, chair of the House of Representatives Committee on public works and Highways, noted, however, that the infrastructure should be constructed with “comprehensive engineering solutions” in mind so that it would last for generations.

“It is high time that an administration prioritizes the construction of critical infrastructure that would provide solutions to not only the effects of El Niño but other weather disturbances and climate change as well,” Momo said in a statement on Sunday.

“It is the right move forward. This is not new to the Philippines. Time and again, we had seen how our communities had suffered because we were never prepared enough when the dry and wet seasons came. Today, we have an administration willing to face that painful truth. We should give it our full support,” he added.

Momo, a former Department of Public Works and Highways undersecretary, said the infrastructure that could be built by the government includes dams, catch basins, warning systems, levees, and seawalls.

While El Niño is not officially underway, the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) last March 24 elevated its monitoring to an El Niño Watch, meaning there is a 55 percent chance of El Niño being declared between July to September 2023.

Just this last Tuesday, Pagasa said that the probability of an El Niño between June to September is now at 80 percent.

With the risks associated with El Niño, or hot sea surface temperatures in the central and eastern equatorial Pacific Ocean causing dry spells and droughts, several

lawmakers, like Batangas 6th District Rep. Ralph Recto, have urged the current administration to revive and refresh the roadmap for El Niño.

Last Wednesday, President Marcos ordered creating a team tasked to mitigate El Niño's impact.

"It is commendable that the President has put forth clear instructions and plans on how we will deal with the impact of El Niño because this team would be able to give our problems with depleting water resources the attention it needs," Momo said.

Solar farm tapped for cheaper electricity in Eastern Samar

By: Joey Gabieta

A solar farm project broke ground here on Friday, aimed at providing a sustainable power source and reducing the power rates in the province of Eastern Samar, officials said.

Benjie Picardo, the president and CEO of the Taft Solar Energy project, said the company has earmarked P250 million for this project, which is expected to be operational by September this year.

The solar farm, located in Barangay San Rafael of this town, has a capacity of 20 megawatts (MW), almost enough to supply the current needs of the entire province, which stand at 23 MW.

Picardo said they were looking forward to the completion of the project, which is being undertaken in response to the national government's goal to harness renewable energy sources as a way to help reduce carbon emissions and mitigate effects of climate change.

Model

Energy Undersecretary Sharon Garin, who attended the event, said she was happy that the province would now have its own source of power, saying this could be a model for other localities in the country.

She said the Department of Energy has committed to help Taft Solar Project accomplish its project in Eastern Samar.

"I am glad that the company is into harnessing renewable energy sources," said Garin, as it would "ensure energy security in the province."

House Minority Floor Leader and 4Ps party-list Rep. Marcelino Libanan said they were looking forward to having their energy needs provided by Taft Solar.

"Once the solar farm project starts to operate, it would help the province have a sustained power supply and achieve a lower power rate," he said.

At present, the power rate in the province stands at P19 per kilowatt hour (kWh).

Libanan encouraged Eastern Samar Electric Cooperative (Esamelco) to procure its energy supply from Taft Solar Project, which currently gets its power needs from GN Corp., which is based in Bataan.

Taft Solar Project has projected to sell its energy at just P5.07 per kWh. Esamelco, on the other hand, buys its power needs at about P9 per kWh from GN Corp.

RAPPLER

[Eastern Samar's nature lovers mark Earth Day by hauling off beach trash](#)

By: Ricky Bautista

As the sun rose on Saturday morning, April 22, a community of nature lovers and outdoor enthusiasts gathered to pay homage to the environment and mark the 32nd Earth Day at Borongan City's renowned beach Surf City.

As the day began, more than a hundred people showed up, braving the heat in the morning hours to collect and haul off piles of trash along a 1.5-kilometer shoreline stretch.

This was just one of their activities which, they said, was what they knew best to give back to nature in Borongan, known as the "City of the Golden Sunrise" and "King City of the East." Borongan is a component city and the capital of Eastern Samar, with a population of 71,961 based on the official 2020 census.

"Nalilipay ako nga basta para ha kagurangan nagkakaurusa kami didi ha Este, ngan unta maging regular na ine nga activity (I am happy that when it comes to the environment, we are united here in Eastern Samar. I wish that this will become a regular activity)," said Benjie Panaguitan of the Borongan Awareness Nature and Outdoor Group (Banog).

He said sacks of garbage were collected and properly disposed of by organized cycling, mountaineering, surfing enthusiasts, and other beach lovers.

After the beach clean-up, organizers gave lessons on basic outdoor ethics, kayaking, and surfing. Eleazar Labtic of the Huplag Adventure, the group behind the famous Andoyan Cliff Challenge at Ando Island in Borongan, conducted a lecture and workshop on rope techniques and rappelling.

The local government has been encouraging communities to take the initiative of cleaning their surroundings, and has been organizing regular coastal clean-up activities, the last of which was during the March 25 Earth Hour.

By sundown, people pitched their colorful tents and hammocks under the trees at the beach in the village of Baybay.

Food stall owners saw the event as an opportunity and were enthusiastic. They said the Earth Day activities meant increased sales for them.

“It rarely happens that a crowd this size converges here, and so we’re happy. At least it helped our little businesses,” said 55-year-old Mana Edita.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

Marcos to discuss climate change, defense deals with Biden

By: Kaycee Valmonte

Climate change and defense deals will be the center of the talks between President Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr. and US President Joe Biden next week as they meet to affirm the "special relationship" of the Philippines and the United States.

Marcos Jr. will be on an official working visit to the US from April 30 to May 4, just days after the annual military exercises between Philippine and US troops wrap up and weeks after the countries’ respective foreign affairs and defense officials met for the 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue.

"Climate change is a big deal and we will be asking for help on what else we can do and what other strategy we can use," Marcos Jr. said.

He added that they also plan to revisit the Visiting Forces Agreement and the Mutual Defense Treaty, saying “we have to evolve it” taking into consideration the developments in the region.

The chief executive also stressed that the Philippine delegation will also seek more projects and partnerships to pursue with the US.

Marcos Jr. and Biden met for the first time in September last year at the sidelines of the UN General Assembly. They discussed then the alliance between Manila and Washington, South China Sea tensions, Russia’s invasion of Ukraine and other topics.

10th official foreign trip

This will be Marcos Jr.’s 10th official foreign trip as the Philippine president since taking office last year. He has fended off criticism of his frequent travel, saying the Philippines needs to court investors.

He was also criticized for flying to Singapore in October just days after Typhoon Karding hit the country, affecting millions of individuals and damaged agriculture worth billions. Marcos Jr. concurrently sits as the country’s agriculture chief.

In September last year, he went on a state visit to Indonesia and Singapore, before heading to the US for the United Nations General Assembly weeks after. He also went

on working visits to Cambodia for the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Summit, Thailand for the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Summit, Belgium for the ASEAN-European Union Commemorative Summit, Switzerland for the World Economic Forum, and Japan.

His first foreign trip this year was a state visit to China in early January.

Marcos Jr. previously said he wanted to introduce himself to the international community because he was the "new kid on the block" and wanted to improve the visibility of the Philippines in the international arena to woo potential investors.

"We're cutting our travels for the rest of the year now because we want to take inventory of what we started with while attending the ASEAN Summit, APEC, even the work we did with the EU in Brussels, as well as the trip to Davos," Marcos Jr. said in Filipino during an interview with news anchors in January.

"We need to take into account what we had agreed upon and take stock of the discussions and decide which ones to prioritize, none of which we've done yet because we keep going out of the country."

After the United States, Marcos Jr. will be heading to the United Kingdom to attend the coronation of Charles III. He will also be attending the 42nd ASEAN Summit, which will be held in Indonesia from May 9 to 11.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

MANILA STANDARD

[Indeed, let's make it happen](#)

When President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. urged this week his 114 million countrymen to participate in world efforts to address the negative effects of climate change, he on the nose marked the gravity of the global problem.

The world, which now has 8 billion people, celebrated Earth Day on April 22 – but this should be in the awareness of the people every day for 365 days of the year.

“This Earth Day, we urge the public and our fellow public servants to join the global action against climate change,” President Marcos said in a post on Twitter.

The Philippines has been cited as among the most vulnerable countries to climate change with an average of 20 typhoons visiting it annually.

The President is aware of the figures, chiding that with “Our administration remains fully supportive of environmental programs and policies.”

Unquestionably, there are government initiatives to combat climate change, which are clear on the social media sites of the Climate Change Commission, the lead policy-making body which the President chairs.

The CCC ensures mainstreaming climate change in national, local and sectoral development plans towards a climate-resilient and climate-smart Philippines.

At the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation CEO Summit in Bangkok, Thailand in November last year, the President highlighted that climate change was “the most pressing existential challenge of our time” that indelibly impacts the global economy.

He underscored how the Philippines was at great risk from the climate crisis, as it stood to lose over six percent of gross domestic product annually by 2100, citing a study by the Manila-based Asian Development Bank.

Indeed, Filipinos should rally behind the President and recognize the importance of our planet for the sake of our health and that of the succeeding generations.

Research has shown that 66,230 died in the Philippines in 2019 from the negative effects of air pollution alone, of which 64,920 deaths were estimated to be adults and 1,310 children.

This is significantly higher than previous estimates made for the country, aligning the impact with the most recent literature.

They are among more than 13 million deaths round the world, caused by avoidable environmental factors, based on analysis by the Geneva-based World Health Organization.

This figure takes into account the accelerating climate crisis, which is the single biggest health threat facing humanity, but also includes air pollution, inadequate sanitation and clean water, exposure to chemicals and radiation, and unsafe urban environments.

Indubitably, our environment provides the fundamental requirements for life: clean air and water, safe food, and shelter.

But, as the WHO says, nature is both the origin of infectious and vector-borne diseases and the source of medicines, including many antibiotics, stressing human impact on the environment is increasing the risk of emerging infectious diseases in humans, over 60 percent of which originate from animals, mainly from wildlife.

We are inspired by experts' recommendation to adopt a One Health policy recognizing the inter-connection of human, animal and environmental health and tackle environmental issues to set societies on the right track for future generations.

We join advocates in not only imagining a #HealthierTomorrow – let's make it happen.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

'Influencing for good': GMA artists use 'influencer' platform for the environment

By: Jan Milo Severo

GMA Network and Nestlé Philippines forged a partnership for the planet with the aim to promote proper SWM and engage more Filipinos in building a movement for environmental sustainability through educational content.

One of its highlights is the launch of the Kalikasanovela series starring Sparkle artists.

Through four 30-second videos, GMA and Nestlé PH tapped on the Filipinos' love of entertainment and storytelling to communicate the importance of the 3Rs — reducing, reusing and recycling plastic waste — and inspire consumers to embrace their role as stewards for the planet.

“Today marks a milestone as we launch Kalikasanovela, a fusion of our love for storytelling with our love for the environment. It is our belief in GMA that we need a concerted and cooperative effort to save our Earth and keep it livable. This is why our partnership with Nestle is very significant for us. With our complementary strengths and the same vision, we hope to encourage as many Filipinos to be more responsible in their everyday living and be kinder to our environment,” said Angel Javier Cruz, Vice President and Head of Corporate Affairs and Communications of GMA Network.

At the recent press conference held in Quezon City, Sparkle artists Bianca Umali, Ruru Madrid, and Sofia Pablo, who starred in Kalikasanovela episodes "Katok," "Ibaon," and "Sirena," respectively talked about their experiences and learnings from participating in the project.

“As artists, it’s our responsibility to use our platforms influence for good, especially when it comes to matters concerning the environment. Being part of the Kalikasanovela series is my way of doing this — by helping spread awareness about the plastic waste problem in the Philippines,” Bianca said.

For Ruru Madrid, it’s not enough to just talk about these advocacies, you also have to practice what yo preach.

“Understanding that if all of us will do small acts to reduce, reuse, and recycle can have a big positive impact on the environment. I know we can do it. We just have to start now.”

“Instead of using single-use plastics when I eat out or shop, I bring reusable items to reduce my consumption,” Sofia shared.

“There are many alternatives to single-use plastics that are readily available in the market from water bottles and utensils to shopping bags. It’s up to us to make that choice to help our planet in our own little ways.”

Other Sparkle artists who starred in the series include Sanya Lopez for "Paalam," and Allen Ansay for "Sirena." You can watch all Kalikasanovela episodes on GMA 7 and the digital platforms of GMA and Nestlé Philippines.

Each Kalikasanovela episode makes use of a well-loved Filipino movie and TV series genre to tell a short story about plastic waste. It also shows Nestlé PH’s initiatives and milestones in addressing the plastic waste crisis, including upcycling sachets into school chairs, reducing plastic in their product packaging, collecting and diverting over 60 million kilos of plastic waste from the environment, and educating its employees to reduce, reuse, and recycle plastics in their homes.

“We thank GMA Network for sharing our vision of a waste-free future. Our goal for the Kalikasanovela series and this partnership as a whole is to inspire more Filipinos to be part of the solution in addressing the plastic waste problem even in ways as simple as reusing, reducing and recycling plastic waste. We have to remember, tayo ang bida sa ating kwentong pangkalikasan. Together, we have what it takes to create a better world and shape a waste-free future for our children and for generations to come,” said Jose Uy III, SVP & Head of Corporate Affairs of Nestlé Philippines.

Last year, 400 GMA employees, including Sparkle artists, joined sustainability workshops, and volunteered in coastal cleanup and tree growing activities together with Nestlé PH employees and other partners such as the Climate Change Commission (CCC) and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

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