



## NEWS ROUNDUP

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By: Jed Macapagal

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## **PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY**

### **[\[Opinion\] Artificial Intelligence, innovation and agriculture](#)**

By: Atty. Gilberto Lauengco, J.D.

AI will impact every industry on Earth including agriculture...” - Fei Fei Li. There is a town in Central Luzon where dozens of farmers depend solely on a single irrigation canal for their irrigation needs. The source of the water is the Angat Dam. Unfortunately, El Niño and climate change have severely limited the amount of water that could be released to these farmers. As a result, authorities have resorted to manually rationing the water under a rotation scheme. The limited water supply has forced some of the farmers to delay their planting season and push back their harvest window dangerously close to the rainy and stormy season, which may prove fatal to their crops. What is worse is that the farmers nearer Angat Dam often siphon the water meant for the farms farther from the source, thereby reducing the water available for the said farms. This problem, along with a slew of other difficulties caused by climate change, can be found in many farms in our country.

## **SUNSTAR**

### **[Youth participation key to addressing climate change issues](#)**

ChildFund Philippines supports youth in Infanta, Quezon through a climate action program called Project GREENLIGHT.

## **THE PHILIPPINE STAR**

### **[PAGASA: 30 areas under 'dangerous' heat index classification](#)**

By: Ian Laqui

Thirty areas in the Philippines are expected to experience scorching temperatures of up to 46 °Celsius (°C) on Wednesday, state weather bureau PAGASA reported.

### **['So hot you can't breathe': Extreme heat hits the Philippines](#)**

By: Cecil Morella

Extreme heat scorched the Philippines on Wednesday, forcing schools in some areas to suspend in-person classes and prompting warnings for people to limit the amount of time spent outdoors.

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By: Francis Allan L. Angelo

In a move to position the Philippines at the forefront of global climate action, President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. has established an interagency technical working group to spearhead the country's bid to host the Loss and Damage Fund (LDF) Board.

### **Task force boosts green investments, sustainable growth**

By: Francis Allan L. Angelo

The Inter-Agency Task Force on Sustainable Finance (ITSF), a joint venture co-chaired by the Department of Finance (DOF) and the Climate Change Commission (CCC), is scaling up efforts to propel the Philippines towards a greener economy with the release of the Sustainable Finance Taxonomy Guidelines (SFTG) and the enactment of the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) Code.

### **PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY**

### **CCC calls on public to take tangible action vs. plastic waste**

By: Marita Moaje

The Climate Change Commission (CCC) has urged the public to take action and commit to tangible changes in their everyday lives by reducing the use of single-use plastics and promoting a circular economy by reusing, recycling, and repurposing them.

**Information and Knowledge Management Division**

## ECO BUSINESS

### Perfect storm: How climate change amplifies El Niño fallout

A year of record temperatures and extreme weather - from floods to fires - is due to a deadly cocktail of man-made climate change mixed with cyclical El Niño weather, scientists say.

A spate of recent heatwaves in West Africa, for example, would not have happened without climate change and was made still worse by the El Niño event, scientists from the World Weather Attribution (WWA) group found in a new report.

The scientists say extreme events such as these will become much more common - and more dangerous - without a rapid cut in planet-heating greenhouse gas emissions.

So what is El Niño and how does it interact with climate change?

What is El Niño?

It's what happens when unusually warm surface temperatures in the eastern Pacific Ocean unleash a domino effect on weather patterns right around the globe.

El Niño, which on average happens every 2 to 7 years as part of a natural cycle, lasts 9 to 12 months, a period that began last June and has now ended, according to Australia's Bureau of Meteorology.

This warm spell is followed by a neutral period which could then shift to unusually cold ocean surface temperatures, called La Niña, later this year.

El Niño is a phenomenon distinct from our human-driven climate crisis, said Richard Allan, a climate scientist at the University of Reading, but its impacts will be all the more intense in a warmer atmosphere.

#### **What impacts have El Niño and climate change had?**

The effects of the El Niño depend on the region, with some parts of the world forgoing rain while others flood.

Weather conditions due to El Niño have been the key driver of deadly drought in Zambia, Zimbabwe and other parts of southern Africa, the WWA researchers said in another new report.

But throw in climate change and scientists say the impact is exacerbated.

“Studies have shown that many extreme weather events have been driven by a combination of both climate change and El Niño,” said Joyce Kimutai, a researcher at the Grantham Institute at Imperial College London, who worked on the southern Africa report.

For example, the WWA group said climate change was primarily responsible for last year’s exceptional Amazon rainforest drought, but El Niño was a contributor as it suppresses rainfall and often leads to droughts in the region.

Coral reefs have also suffered a fourth global bleaching - stretching from Australia to Mexico - as climate change and El Niño led to record high ocean temperatures, according to the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s (NOAA) Coral Reef Watch.

Will 2024 be as hot as last year?

Climate change and El Niño drove average temperatures 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) above pre-industrial times in the 12 months to February - a worrying world first that scientists fear could be a harbinger of worse to come.

Keeping warming below 1.5°C in the coming decades is seen as crucial to avoiding dangerous tipping points and averting the worst impacts of climate change.

Although the current El Niño has ended, the impacts of the warm ocean on the atmosphere are expected to linger for most of 2024, mirroring the highs of 2023.

The World Meteorological Organization (WMO)’s head of climate monitoring, Omar Baddour, said in March that 2024 was highly likely to set new heat records, as the year after an El Niño event tends to be warmer still.

## EURONEWS

### [Drought, food shortages and deadly heat: El Niño has ended but its impacts are still being felt](#)

By: Rosie Frost

El Niño has been changing global weather patterns with deadly consequences around the world.

Australia's weather bureau has said the El Niño weather event has now ended as temperatures appear to have "cooled substantially" in the last week.

The naturally occurring phenomenon began in June last year bringing warmer waters to the surface of the Pacific Ocean.

March was the tenth month in a row where the world set a new monthly record for heat, according to the EU's Copernicus Climate Change Service.

While climate scientists attribute most of the heat to human-caused climate change, they say the consecutive records aren't exactly surprising given the strong El Niño conditions.

Temperatures over the next few months will indicate just how much recent records are down to global warming. But, bringing marine heatwaves across large parts of the world's oceans, the phenomenon has been changing global weather patterns with deadly consequences.

#### Drought and electricity rationing in South America

El Niño usually causes lower rainfall in South America. Over the last few months, it has brought record temperatures and drought with some countries having to introduce emergency measures.

In Ecuador, droughts linked to El Niño have led to electricity rationing. Hydroelectricity produces around three-quarters of the country's power and with reservoirs running low, supplies are short.

"Each kilowatt and each drop of water that are not consumed will help us face this reality," Ecuador's Ministry of Energy said on Tuesday.

It comes just days after dry weather in Colombia forced water rationing in its capital city Bogotá. Reservoirs have also reached record lows here, threatening supplies of tap water.

The city's Mayor Carlos Fernando Galán said homes which use more than 22 cubic metres of water per month will have to pay additional fees and those wasting water could face fines.

Colombia also relies heavily on hydropower and stopped exporting energy to Ecuador in early April to conserve domestic supplies. Wildfires have been raging around the country's capital during the extended hot, dry spell.

Is El Niño to blame for drought and extreme heat in Africa?

A deadly heatwave swept across West Africa and the Sahel last month with temperatures soaring above 48C in Mali.

New research from World Weather Attribution (WWA) suggests that climate change made temperatures up to 1.5C warmer in Mali and Burkina Faso. During the entire five-day heatwave, temperatures across the Sahel region were up by 1.4C due to global warming, WWA says.

The report adds that, while people in both countries are acclimated to high temperatures, the length and severity of the heatwave made it more difficult for them to cope. Power cuts also compounded its effects.

Though El Niño did have some influence on extreme temperatures, it was small when compared to human-induced climate change.

Earlier this year, low rainfall also caused crop failure in southern Africa. Aid agency Oxfam warned that more than 20 million people were facing hunger, malnutrition and water scarcity because of the drought. Water shortages in Zimbabwe and Zambia led to disastrous outbreaks of cholera.

This drought, experts say, is more likely to have been a result of El Niño. The peak of the weather phenomenon in December reduced rainfall across southern Africa between December and February.

Heat triggers state of emergency and school closures in Southeast Asia  
Searing heat has also been causing problems across Southeast Asia.

Earlier this month, Vietnam declared a state of emergency due to high temperatures. In the Philippines, hundreds of schools closed as parts of the country reached 42C. Thailand has been suffering from unusually high temperatures, breaking records for 13 months straight.

The death of a toddler in Malaysia during a heatwave has highlighted the health risks of climate change.

Meteorologists have attributed much of the unusually long dry spells and heat to El Niño but our warming world is also playing a part. Natural meteorological events are likely being exacerbated by higher temperatures.

In Singapore, experts have said high heat is expected to continue into 2024 with the lingering effects of the climate phenomenon.

“Since the warmest annual temperatures from any El Niño events typically occur the year after an El Niño forms both for Singapore and globally, 2024 could be an even warmer year,” the Meteorological Service Singapore said in its annual climate assessment report.

## MALAYA BUSINESS INSIGHT

### [DENR, Jollibee Group partners for mangroves, sustainability efforts](#)

By: Jed Macapagal

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) signed a memorandum of understanding with the Jollibee Foods Corp. (JFC) and the Jollibee Group Foundation (JGF) Inc. for the reforestation of mangrove areas and promotion of sustainability in various communities where the fast food chain is located.

The DENR said the partnership signed last week is a key initiative under the Transdisciplinary Approach for Resilience and Environmental Sustainability program and JFC's Joy for Tomorrow that also promotes reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in the Philippines.

"The partnership will strengthen collaborations for a decarbonized and regenerative future, promote science-based risk assessment, sustain climate-smart leadership and governance, and scale up community initiatives on mangrove protection and management," said DENR Secretary Maria Antonia Yulo Loyzaga, in a statement.

Under the agreement, JFC and JGF will mobilize volunteer employees to work with DENR's regional offices in implementing community-based mangrove protection and reforestation initiatives as well as for possible additional sustainable efforts.

"This is meaningful to us at JFC because we understand our bigger role beyond doing business. We've always believed in the power of making a positive impact not just for our company and people, but also for the world we live in," said Ernesto Tanmantiong, JFC president and chief executive officer.

Jollibee is the largest fast food chain brand in the Philippines, operating a network of more than 1,500 stores in 17 countries.

## PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

### [Opinion] Artificial Intelligence, innovation and agriculture

By: Atty. Gilberto Lauengco, J.D.

AI will impact every industry on Earth including agriculture...” - Fei Fei Li. There is a town in Central Luzon where dozens of farmers depend solely on a single irrigation canal for their irrigation needs. The source of the water is the Angat Dam. Unfortunately, El Niño and climate change have severely limited the amount of water that could be released to these farmers. As a result, authorities have resorted to manually rationing the water under a rotation scheme. The limited water supply has forced some of the farmers to delay their planting season and push back their harvest window dangerously close to the rainy and stormy season, which may prove fatal to their crops. What is worse is that the farmers nearer Angat Dam often siphon the water meant for the farms farther from the source, thereby reducing the water available for the said farms. This problem, along with a slew of other difficulties caused by climate change, can be found in many farms in our country.

Last month, it was reported in the Philippine Development Report (PDR) that the government has set plans to adopt digital technologies, including artificial intelligence (AI), to modernize the country’s agriculture sector. Initially, the use of AI will be mainly the use of tons of data to provide farmers with optimum methods for various aspects of farming.

The use of AI for agriculture purposes has grown by leaps and bounds this year. For irrigation problems like the ones we are having, some countries have turned to AI-driven smart irrigation systems that apply the right amount of water to plants at the right time, thus, conserving water and maximizing planting rotations. The system uses predictive analytics for weather conditions and water requirements. They have also started using AI-driven sprinkler systems that apply the bare minimum water directly to the plants and a system that does drip irrigation that delivers water directly to roots.

In India, tech-savvy farmers are now using drones, smart devices for precision farming and pest identification to ensure maximizing yield. The drones are used to spray biofertilizers on fields in a precise and time-efficient manner. Indian farms also use special moisture sensors that can check the moisture level around the primary root zone of plants. Apparently, while the surface might look dry, the sensors can measure underground data and measure if the plants still have sufficient moisture levels. As such, farmers need not apply water as much as before. According to Indian authorities, AI-driven smart irrigation tools have helped India conserve “80 billion liters of water.”

In our country, an automated crop irrigation system that is linked to predictive analytics for weather and with the ability to detect leaks and waste can really help conserve and maximize our water resources.

Admittedly, the cost of AI-driven agricultural tools is still high. Increased yield and profits, however, can make it worthwhile for private enterprises to form partnerships with farmer cooperatives in running AI-driven farms. Academic institutions can also center their research efforts on these programs to provide needed data. Combined with AI-related initiatives from the government, a multi-sectoral approach could be the way to jumpstart Philippine agriculture to the next level.

The prospect of robots, in various forms, planting, monitoring, and harvesting crops and plants may be nearer to reality than we think. We must make efforts not to get left behind. For me, I'm just excited to finally see customized robots that look like Cylons or R2D2 toiling on our farms.

This is my oblique observation.

## SUNSTAR

### Youth participation key to addressing climate change issues

ChildFund Philippines supports youth in Infanta, Quezon through a climate action program called Project GREENLIGHT.

This initiative aims to help address climate change issues and mitigate climate-induced disaster risks, underscoring the central role of youth in driving climate action within their community.

ChildFund Philippines gathered its partners from ReINa Federations of Parents Associations, Inc. and community members of Infanta, Quezon for a tree growing activity in one of the Project Greenlight areas.

Project GREENLIGHT, in partnership with the municipal government of Infanta and ReINa Federations of Parents Associations, Inc., integrates Ecosystem-Based Adaptation (EbA) and Nature-Based Solutions (NbS) into the Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (DRRM) program of Infanta, Quezon.

Project GREENLIGHT represents a comprehensive approach to climate action, acknowledging that climate change is a complex and interconnected issue. "It integrates education, community engagement, and sustainable livelihood development to help the next generation of local eco-leaders combat climate change, especially since the Philippines is prone to various climate hazards and risks due to its geographical location and human activities," said Erwin Peter Galido, Program Specialist - Disaster Risk Management of ChildFund Philippines. "Our ultimate goal for this project is to eventually make this a national program and support more Filipino youth taking action to mitigate climate change impacts," he added.

The initiative employs a classroom-to-forest approach to support the youth in taking an active role in environmental protection and conservation, efficient energy consumption, waste management, awareness raising, local policy advocacy, and climate action. It involves taking students out of traditional classroom settings and into natural environments, such as forests, wetlands, or parks, to learn about environmental concepts, ecological systems, and conservation practices firsthand.

"We believe in the power of these young individuals to make a meaningful difference in their communities and beyond. With Project GREENLIGHT, we aim to work hand-in-hand with them to actively contribute as catalysts for climate action, particularly in

communities vulnerable to the impacts of disasters, and for a more sustainable and eco-friendly world,” said Anand Vishwakarma, CEO & Country Director of ChildFund Philippines.

Youth leaders and advocates in the program, called Eco-scouts, highlight the importance of youth engagement in creating sustainable solutions to address climate change.

Project GREENLIGHT Eco-scouts Lu By Ron Broto and Ramiline Resplanador stressed the importance of youth participation in climate action during their training on production of quality planting materials and nursery establishment in Infanta, Quezon.

“This immersive approach gives us a better understanding of why we need to combat climate change now more than ever,” said Ramiline Resplanador, one of the Eco-scouts. “Throughout the implementation, we are learning the impacts of deforestation and degradation on our community, and so we encourage other children to become better stewards of our planet,” she added.

Lu By Ron Broto, another Eco-Scout, shared, “I apply what I learn from the project by encouraging my family to switch to more sustainable ways of living, including waste segregation, plant growing, and efficient energy consumption.” He added that the project also enhanced his leadership skills to educate more members of the community about climate change, helping them make conscious choices that have a positive impact on the environment.

The project’s approaches and tools will enable individuals and communities to adapt to the challenges of climate change while simultaneously promoting sustainable development. This includes the promotion of climate-smart agricultural practices, green jobs and livelihoods (e.g., zero waste stores), and renewable energy, among others.

ReINa Federation and the government of Infanta, Quezon have been integral partners in the pilot implementation of the program, demonstrating a commitment to building climate resilience in Infanta, Quezon which is prone to natural disasters because of its diverse landscape.

The government of Infanta emphasizes that climate awareness should lead to action. “It is imperative to get commitments on the ground and to act with more urgency. By thinking globally and acting locally to adapt to our community’s needs, we can effectively utilize our resources to mitigate climate change impacts,” said Ron Pallugna

Crisostomo, Municipal Government Department Head I - Local Disaster Risk Reduction Management Officer of Infanta, Quezon.

ChildFund Philippines encourages more multi-sectoral collaborations with corporate institutions, non-government organizations, and other stakeholders to expand Project GREENLIGHT's implementation to other communities across other parts of the country.

## THE PHILIPPINE STAR

### PAGASA: 30 areas under 'dangerous' heat index classification

By: Ian Laqui

Thirty areas in the Philippines are expected to experience scorching temperatures of up to 46 °Celsius (°C) on Wednesday, state weather bureau PAGASA reported.

According to the latest heat index bulletin of the weather agency, 30 areas are forecast to fall under the "danger" heat index classification due to temperatures ranging from 42°C to 46°C.

CBSUA-Pili in Camarines Sur may experience a heat index as high as 46°C.

The following areas are expected to experience a "dangerous" heat index classification on Wednesday:

- NAIA, Pasay City, Metro Manila: 44°C
- Science Garden, Quezon City: 43°C
- Dagupan City, Pangasinan: 45°C
- Aparri, Cagayan: 45°C
- Tugegarao City, Cagayan: 44°C
- ISU Echague, Isabela: 42°C
- Iba, Zambales: 42°C
- CLSU Munoz, Nueva Ecija: 43°C
- Baler (Radar), Aurora: 42°C
- Casiguran, Aurora: 42°C
- Sangley Point, Cavite: 43°C
- Ambulong, Tanauan, Batangas: 42°C
- Alabat, Quezon: 42°C
- Coron, Palawan: 43°C
- San Jose, Occidental Mindoro: 45°C
- Puerto Princesa City, Palawan: 45°C
- Aborlan, Palawan: 45°C
- Daet, Camarines Norte: 42°C
- Legazpi City, Albay: 43°C
- Virac (Synop), Catanduanes: 43°C
- Masbate City, Masbate: 43°C
- CBSUA-Pili, Camarines Sur: 46°C
- Roxas City, Capiz: 43°C

- Iloilo City, Iloilo: 43°C
- Dumangas, Iloilo: 42°C
- La Granja, La Carlota, Negros Occidental: 42°C
- Catarman, Northern Samar: 42°C
- Catbalogan, Samar: 42°C
- Tacloban City, Leyte: 42°C
- Guiuan, Eastern Samar: 44°C

Meanwhile, most parts of the country are under the “extreme caution” classification, with temperatures ranging from 33°C to 41°C.

The heat index, also referred to as the apparent temperature, factors in both relative humidity and the actual air temperature, providing a measure of how hot it feels.

PAGASA has issued a warning under the "danger" classification as temperatures soar between 42°C to 51°C.

It warned that individuals are at risk of heat-related ailments such as heat cramps or heat exhaustion under the scorching heat.

To avoid potential complications from the extreme heat, the state weather bureau advised the public to limit outdoor activities, stay hydrated, and schedule daily activities during cooler times later in the day.

On Tuesday, PAGASA recorded the highest heat index recorded at 48 °C in Aparri, Cagayan.

## 'So hot you can't breathe': Extreme heat hits the Philippines

By: Cecil Morella

Extreme heat scorched the Philippines on Wednesday, forcing schools in some areas to suspend in-person classes and prompting warnings for people to limit the amount of time spent outdoors.

The months of March, April and May are typically the hottest and driest in the archipelago nation, but conditions this year have been exacerbated by the El Nino weather phenomenon.

"It's so hot you can't breathe," said Erlin Tumaron, 60, who works at a seaside resort in Cavite province, south of Manila, where the heat index reached 47 degrees Celsius on Tuesday.

"It's surprising our pools are still empty. You would expect people to come and take a swim, but it seems they're reluctant to leave their homes because of the heat."

The heat index was expected to reach the "danger" level of 42C or higher in at least 30 cities and municipalities on Wednesday, the state weather forecaster said.

The heat index measures what a temperature feels like, taking into account humidity.

There was a 50 percent chance of the heat intensifying in the coming days, said Ana Solis, chief climatologist at the state weather forecaster.

"We need to limit the time we spend outdoors, drink plenty of water, bring umbrellas and hats when going outdoors," Solis told AFP.

Solis said El Nino was the reason for the "extreme heat" affecting swathes of the country.

Around half the country's provinces are officially in drought.

The northern municipality of Aparri endured a heat index of 48C on Tuesday, the highest in the country, and was expected to hit 45C on Wednesday.

The actual maximum air temperature was 36.4C on Tuesday, with 35C forecast for Wednesday.

"It's really hot here," Eric Vista of the municipal disaster agency told AFP.

Vista said a shower of rain on Tuesday night offered some temporary relief, but it was "back to being super hot" on Wednesday.

Sweltering temperatures in the capital Manila forced many schools to switch to remote learning. The heat index reached 45C on Tuesday and was expected to hit 44C on Wednesday.

Tuesday's actual high in the city was 37.1C.

In Dagupan city, north of Manila, university employee Edz Alteros said she and her colleagues no longer went out for lunch because of the heat.

The heat index there reached 47C on Tuesday.

"We get somebody to buy food and we eat inside the office," Alteros, 27, said.

"The air conditioning is set at 14-18C during the hottest part of the day, but we ease up at other times to prevent the aircon breaking down."

Global temperatures hit record highs last year, and the United Nation's weather and climate agency said Tuesday that Asia was warming at a particularly rapid pace.

The Philippines ranks among the countries most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.

## UN NEWS

### [WMO report: Asia hit hardest by climate change and extreme weather](#)

Following close on the heels of the study of climate change in Europe, published by WMO on Monday, the State of the Climate in Asia 2023 report highlighted the accelerating rate of climate change across several indicators such as surface temperature, glacier retreat, sea level rise and more.

“The report's conclusions are sobering. Many countries in the region experienced their hottest year on record in 2023, along with a barrage of extreme conditions, from droughts and heatwaves to floods and storms,” said Celeste Saulo, WMO Secretary-General.

Climate change has exacerbated the frequency and severity of such events that profoundly impact societies, economies, and, most importantly, human lives, she underscored.

#### Faster than average

With the warming trend almost doubling since the period from 1960–1990, Asia is heating up faster than the global average, with increased casualties and economic losses from floods, storms, and more severe heatwaves.

In 2023, sea-surface temperatures in the northwest Pacific Ocean were the highest on record. Even the Arctic Ocean suffered a marine heatwave. In many areas of the region, including the Arabian Sea, the southern Kara Sea, and the southeastern Laptev Sea, the sea surface is warming more than three times faster than globally. The Barents Sea was identified by the report as a “climate change hotspot”.

Driven by thermal expansion and the melting of glaciers, ice caps and ice sheets, sea level continued to rise globally. However, in Asia, rates were higher than the global mean over 1993–2023.

Last year, the continent (just to vary the language) saw 79 water hazard-related disasters, with over 80 per cent linked to floods and storms, resulting in over 2,000 fatalities and affecting nine million people directly, according to the Emergency Events Database.

Temperatures up, precipitation down

Many parts of the region experienced extreme heat in 2023. Asia's annual mean near-surface temperature ranked as the second highest on record with 0.91 °C above the 1991–2020 average. Particularly high temperatures were observed from western Siberia to central Asia, and from eastern China to Japan. Japan and Kazakhstan experienced a record warm year.

Meanwhile, the level of precipitation was below normal in large parts of the Turan Lowland (Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan), the Hindu Kush (Afghanistan, Pakistan) and the Himalayas, as well as around the Ganges and lower course of the Brahmaputra Rivers (India and Bangladesh).

The Arakan Mountains in Myanmar and the lower course of the Mekong River areas have also seen less rainfall than usual, while Southwest China suffered from a drought, with below-normal precipitation levels nearly every month of 2023.

Despite overall lower precipitation, several extreme events occurred, such as heavy rainfall in Myanmar in May; floods and storms across India, Pakistan, and Nepal in June and July, and record hourly rainfall in Hong Kong in September, to name a few.

#### Retreating glaciers and receding permafrost

Home to the largest volume of ice outside of the polar regions, the High-Mountain Asia region with the Tibetan Plateau at its centre, has approximately 100,000 square kilometres of glaciers. Over the last several decades, most of those have been retreating, and at an accelerating rate. Twenty out of 22 observed glaciers continued losing mass, yielding to record-breaking high temperatures and dry conditions.

Permafrost – soil that continuously remains below 0 °C for two or more years – is also surrendering territories to the increasing air temperatures in the Arctic. The most rapid thawing of permafrost in Asia is observed in the Polar Urals and the western regions of Western Siberia.

Severe dust storms, lightning and thunders, waves of extreme cold and thick smog were also among extreme events that affected lives of millions across Asia.

#### Early warning for all

The report shows that from 1970 to 2021, there were 3,612 disasters attributed to weather, climate and water extremes, with 984,263 deaths and \$1.4 trillion in economic

losses. The region accounted for 47 per cent of all reported deaths caused by natural disasters worldwide, with tropical cyclones as the leading cause of reported deaths. To mitigate these impacts, the WMO and its partners advocate for a strong early warning and disaster risk reduction system to save lives and prevent future economic crises exacerbated by climate change.

“Early warning and better preparedness saved thousands of lives,” said Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana, Executive Secretary of the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), which partnered in producing the report.

“ESCAP and WMO, working in partnership, will continue to invest in raising climate ambition and accelerating the implementation of sound policy, including bringing an early warning to all in the region so that no one is left behind as our climate change crisis continues to evolve,” she assured.

## CCC IN THE NEWS:

### DAILY GUARDIAN

#### [PH eyes leadership role in global climate finance](#)

By: Francis Allan L. Angelo

In a move to position the Philippines at the forefront of global climate action, President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. has established an interagency technical working group to spearhead the country's bid to host the Loss and Damage Fund (LDF) Board.

The LDF serves as a pivotal global financial mechanism aimed at supporting nations disproportionately affected by climate change, according to a statement from the Department of Finance.

The President's initiative reflects a commitment to accelerating the Philippines' access to crucial climate financing and expanding opportunities for international cooperation on climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Hosting the LDF Board will not only provide the Philippines with greater visibility among developed nations and potential development partners but also serve as a platform for international collaboration on climate-related initiatives and showcase the country's proactive climate strategies.

Under Marcos, Jr.'s leadership, the Philippine government has advanced strategic investment and financing frameworks that prioritize climate and development-positive actions, including the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) and the Nationally Determined Contributions Implementation Plan (NDC IP) with its Financial Strategy.

Finance Secretary Ralph G. Recto reaffirmed the nation's readiness. "The DOF will lead the country's bid to host the Loss and Damage Fund. We have already begun thorough preparations on this matter, and we believe that the Philippines is more than ready to take on this important role," Recto said.

The Department of Finance (DOF), heading the technical working group, is joined by the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), the Department of Budget and Management (DBM), and the Climate Change Commission (CCC) in strategic discussions to prepare for the country's hosting bid.

Chief-of-Staff and Undersecretary Maria Luwalhati C. Dorotan Tiuseco, who chaired the first TWG meeting, underscored the challenging yet rewarding pursuit. “Preparing to win the Philippines’ bid to host the LDF Board won’t be easy, but it is a lofty and worthwhile endeavor,” Tiuseco stated.

The Philippines’ candidacy is bolstered by its status as a significant international hub and home to numerous regional and international organizations. Coupled with its robust climate finance and disaster risk resilience framework, the nation stands as an exemplary host for the LDF Board.

Moreover, the country already has active access to major international climate funds, such as the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and the Global Environment Fund (GEF), and is actively seeking access to the Adaptation Fund, signaling its dedication to and capacity for leading global efforts in climate finance.

## [Task force boosts green investments, sustainable growth](#)

By: Francis Allan L. Angelo

The Inter-Agency Task Force on Sustainable Finance (ITSF), a joint venture co-chaired by the Department of Finance (DOF) and the Climate Change Commission (CCC), is scaling up efforts to propel the Philippines towards a greener economy with the release of the Sustainable Finance Taxonomy Guidelines (SFTG) and the enactment of the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) Code.

In a press statement, Finance Secretary Ralph G. Recto stressed the strategic importance of these initiatives.

“The Department of Finance has been working hard to come up with innovative financing strategies for the Philippines to position itself as a global leader in the climate adaptation and mitigation front. We will set an example for other countries to follow—showing them that real and lasting change is possible through strong commitment and leadership,” Recto said.

Endorsed by the Monetary Board on February 14, 2024, the SFTG serves as a pivotal classification tool for businesses, especially micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), to discern environmentally and socially sustainable economic activities.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) will observe an adaptation period through the end of 2024 to facilitate banks’ implementation of the SFTG principles.

Complementing the SFTG, the PPP Code aims to create a reliable and predictable milieu for public and private sectors to bridge the infrastructure financing divide. Its implementing rules and regulations, signed on March 21, 2024, incorporate investors’ feedback and align the nation’s PPP framework with international best practices.

Additionally, the PPP Governing Board’s Resolution No. 2018-12-02 provides safeguards to mitigate negative environmental and societal impacts of PPP projects.

In concert with these frameworks, the CCC revealed forthcoming key policies: the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) and Nationally Determined Contribution Implementation Plan (NDC IP), expected to be published and localized for implementation in April and June 2024, respectively.

The NAP will bolster effective adaptation planning, while the NDC IP will detail actions and arrangements for the Philippines to fulfill its climate commitments.

Undersecretary Maria Luwalhati C. Dorotan Tiuseco, who chaired the ITSF meeting on March 15, 2024, underscored the direction of the task force's roadmap.

"We are currently preparing the ITSF roadmap for climate finance to focus on adaptation efforts with mitigation co-benefits, which entails developing a sustainable pipeline of projects and policies for project design, implementation, and monitoring for 2025 onwards," she elaborated.

The Undersecretary called upon member agencies to contribute their expertise and insights for a collaborative approach towards a comprehensive climate finance roadmap.

With updates on carbon pricing instruments and access to climate finance provided by the DOF, member agencies are optimistic that these integrative policies will drive public and private investments aligning with the country's climate objectives.

Key representatives from various government institutions including BCDA, BSP, CCC, DA, DBM, DENR, DILG, DOE, DOST, DOTr, IC, NEDA, MinDA, and PPP Center participated in the strategic meeting, marking a unified effort to usher in a sustainable fiscal landscape for the nation.

## PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

### CCC calls on public to take tangible action vs. plastic waste

By: Marita Moaje

The Climate Change Commission (CCC) has urged the public to take action and commit to tangible changes in their everyday lives by reducing the use of single-use plastics and promoting a circular economy by reusing, recycling, and repurposing them.

In commemoration of Earth Month this April and celebration of Earth Day, CCC Vice Chairperson and Executive Director Robert E.A. Borje said this year's theme, which focuses on "Planet vs Plastics", aims to raise public awareness, drive action, and promote community engagement on the critical issue of plastic waste.

The CCC's social media campaign #PledgeForPlanetEarth encourages the public to share their actions aligned with their pledges by posting them in their social media accounts "stories" and "my day highlight".

It also urges social media users to use the #PledgeforPlanetEarth templates at <https://tinyurl.com/PledgeForPlanetEarth> to show support.

A study by the United Nations reveals that over 400 million tons of plastic are produced globally every year, with 17 million barrels of petroleum used for plastic production.

Around 13 million tons of plastic end up in the ocean annually making up 85 percent of total marine wastes, killing up to 1 million seabirds, 100,000 sea mammals, marine turtles, and countless fish each year.

In the Philippines, approximately 2.7 million tons of plastics are produced annually, according to the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and World Bank Statistics.

The CCC said the impact of plastic waste goes beyond pollution as it contributes to greenhouse gas emissions at every stage of its lifecycle.

If this continues, plastics production could account for 15 percent of greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

The CCC urged everyone to embrace the 5Rs: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Refuse, and Repurpose to help cut down on plastic waste and reduce carbon footprint.

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