



NEWS ROUNDUP

27 APRIL 2023 [08:00 am]

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ABS CBN

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By: Saleemul Huq

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change. Mitigation and adaptation are still prevalent issues, and now we have to deal with loss and damage, too.

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LIFESTYLE INQUIRER

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By: Evan Tan

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MALAYA BUSINESS INSIGHT

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By: Ashzel Hachero

The Philippines may get up to \$284 million from the International Oil Pollution Compensation (IOPC) Funds that can be made available to those affected by the oil spill caused by the sinking of the oil tanker MT Princess Empress off Oriental Mindoro last February, an official of the Department of Justice said yesterday.

MANILA BULLETIN

['What will the weather do?': PH multi-hazard impact forecasting, early warning system unveiled](#)

By: Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz

The Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) officially launched the five-year Multi-Hazard Impact-Based Forecasting and Early Warning System for the Philippines Project or the GCF-IBFPh Project on Wednesday, April 26.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

[Earth Day and the Philippine energy future](#)

Earth Day is the best day to talk about Earth Day, when well-meant intentions for the planet are probably at an all-time high. Part of humanity's efforts in dealing with climate change is in energy, which is relevant to the Philippines since its power sector accounts for 51% of national CO2 emissions, according to the Climate Transparency Report 2020.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

[UN chief sounds alarm on lack of progress on SDGs](#)

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on Tuesday sounded the alarm on the lack of progress on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

THE MANILA TIMES

[\[Opinion\] AI as an aid to cleaning up the oceans](#)

By: Danton Remoto

The pros and cons of artificial intelligence (AI) have been the burning news for the past months. Anything that seems to simulate human reasoning — from Frankenstein's resurrection to the present AI — is bound to cause controversy. John McCarthy invented the term "artificial intelligence" in 1950.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

[Pagasa: El Niño may start in 2 to 3 months](#)

By: Pia Lee-Brago

State weather officials are warning of the possible onset of El Niño within the next two to three months, with stronger typhoons expected as a result of the climate event.

[Climate campaign and actions](#)

Moritz Riedacher sat down at a busy road junction with four other climate activists in southwestern Germany earlier this year, holding up traffic for hours — an action that landed him a jail sentence. But he remains undeterred.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

[PAGASA launches impact forecasting to reduce risks, improve preps](#)

By: Gaea Katreena Cabico

State weather bureau PAGASA on Wednesday officially launched its project on impact-based forecasting, which will help authorities and the public take action even before a hazard occurs.

Information and Knowledge Management Division

ABS CBN

Every day is Earth Day

Earth Day is an annual celebration led by the Earth Day Network that puts the spotlight on issues that are affecting the environment. First held in 1970, Earth Day was the result of a need for a unified response against various environmental problems like pollution and resource depletion. Today, the event is considered one of the biggest environmental movements in the world, with millions joining celebrations every year.

SM Supermalls, in collaboration with its corporate social responsibility arm, SM Cares, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), local government units, and partner schools and organizations joined the rest of the world in celebrating Earth Day at SM malls nationwide on April 22, 2023.

The theme "Invest In Our Planet, Invest In Our Youth" inspired SM Supermalls and SM Cares to lineup various activities that aim to raise awareness among children and their families about the importance of coming together across various sectors to take care of the environment.

SM malls nationwide simultaneously held relevant and impactful celebrations with activities such as Children's Storytelling, Coloring, and Sustainability Tours, gathering 1700 children and 350 employee volunteers. These activities aimed to encourage everyone in the family, particularly the young ones, to protect and respect Mother Earth.

"At SM, every day is Earth Day. However, today we are reminded of our responsibility to protect the planet we live in. We believe that we must all come together and take the necessary steps against this climate crisis and accelerate a greener and more equitable future for everyone," shared Liza Silerio, SM Supermalls Vice President for Corporate Compliance and SM Cares Program Director for the Environment.

SM Supermalls featured the art of multi-awarded Filipino artist, sculptor, and illustrator, Manuel Baldemor. His works depict the rich cultural aspects of the Philippines and can be found in multiple institutions worldwide. His drawings and Earth Day poem inspired the Earth Day program at SM, reflecting a long-time partnership with SM Cares programs for the environment, starting with his design of SM's first eco bags in 2007.

The storytelling activity featured a special Earth Day story based on Baldemor's artworks. The story reflected simple ways children may participate in living sustainably on their own and with their families. Meanwhile, kids and kids-at-heart were welcomed at the coloring activity section. Participants were given art materials and a selection of

Baldemor's drawings to color in. Malls used recycled materials in designing the activity areas.

Finally, to cap off the celebration, a sustainability tour was held wherein everyone participated in a guided tour to one or more of the mall's eco-friendly facilities such as the EV charging stations, water recycling treatment plants, waste segregation bins, Plastic Waste Collection booths, E-waste Collection bins, and various bicycle amenities.

To highlight the role of collaborating with the public sector in driving environmental programs forward, SM City Fairview hosted the DENR Gawad Taga-ilog Awards photo exhibit, which recognized winning local government units that are leading in protecting Metro Manila's waterways.

The agency also further provided 800 tree seedlings to participants and customers through a DENR Community Pan-TREE to encourage at SM Megamall, SM Mall of Asia, SM North EDSA, SM City Fairview, SM City Novaliches, SM City Marikina, SM City East Ortigas, and SM Southmall.

The Quezon City Climate Change and Environmental Sustainability Department also promoted the city's Trash to Cashback program to encourage its citizens to be Eco Warriors and promote recycling.

The Earth Day celebration is just one of the numerous ways that SM is promoting sustainable living among Filipinos, and the company has other programs aimed at helping care for the environment. These are the Trash to Cash Recycling Market held every first Friday and Saturday of the month; daily water recycling systems, and environmental campaigns such as the Green Film Festival, Green Retail Agenda, and the International Coastal Cleanup Drive, just to name a few.

SM Cares is the corporate social responsibility arm of SM Prime Holdings, responsible for initiatives that promote sustainability and the development of the community. SM Cares' advocacies include programs for Women and Breastfeeding Mothers, Persons with Disabilities, Senior Citizens, and Children and Youth, as well as the Bike-Friendly SM initiative, in addition to its programs on the environment.

ASIA NEWS NETWORK

[Time to make climate funds part of mainstream finance](#)

By: Saleemul Huq

The problem of global climate change has already gone through two eras and has now entered the third era. The first was the era of mitigation; the second was the era of adaptation; and now we are in the era of loss and damage from human-induced climate change. Mitigation and adaptation are still prevalent issues, and now we have to deal with loss and damage, too.

How are we going to deal with all these evolving climate issues, and what kind of finance is needed for that?

Over the last two decades, there has been some progress in setting up different funds for dealing with mitigation and adaptation. These funds are already operating, although the scale of funding is still quite inadequate.

The funds that were created under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) so far include the Adaptation Fund, the Special Climate Change Fund, and the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF) – all using the Global Environment Facility (GEF) based in Washington, DC as their secretariat.

Then, later, the UNFCCC created another, bigger fund called the Green Climate Fund (GCF) with its own separate secretariat and board based in Songdo, South Korea.

These funds have received and disbursed tens of billions of US Dollars to developing countries over the last two decades. However, they still have a hard time getting replenished by the developed countries who have promised to provide the funding for all of them. In fact, the developed countries promised in 2015 as part of the Paris Agreement to provide \$100 billion every year from 2020 onwards to tackle mitigation and adaptation.

The COP28 presidency can play a proactive role in pushing the Transitional Committee to ensure a good outcome of funding loss and damage at this year's conference, rather than leave things for COP29 or COP30.

Unfortunately, 2020 has come and gone, but the \$100 billion goal was never reached. The developed countries now promise to deliver it from 2025 onwards. Another anomaly in the proportion of funding that was actually delivered was that over 80 percent of it went to support mitigation while only 20 percent went to support adaptation, whereas the expectation was that the division would be 50-50.

This anomaly was addressed at the 26th annual climate conference (COP26) in Glasgow, Scotland in 2021, where the developed countries promised to double the proportion of funds allocated for adaptation in the most vulnerable developing countries. This promise is also yet to be fulfilled.

Then at COP27 in Egypt last year, there was a breakthrough agreement to set up new funding arrangements to address the loss and damage caused by climate change. A Transitional Committee has been set up to work on the options and present their recommendations at COP28, scheduled to be held in Dubai in December 2023.

Among the issues to be resolved is where the funds could come from, without cannibalising the funds for mitigation and adaptation, which are already inadequate. There are some interesting, innovative options, such as taxing polluters like fossil fuel companies and air and sea transport. I recently co-authored a proposal for an air passenger levy to raise funds based on the successful levy that France introduced, now implemented by 14 developed countries and raising billions of euros, which is donated to the global health fund. Our proposal followed the same principle to be adopted voluntarily by governments and airlines without requiring global agreements under UNFCCC or IATA. Imposing a 10 euro levy on international passengers in the European Union only and a few major airlines, such as Qatar Airways and Emirates, would raise around 10 billion euros a year from COP28 onwards.

The COP28 presidency can play a proactive role in pushing the Transitional Committee to ensure a good outcome of funding loss and damage at this year's conference, rather than leave things for COP29 or COP30.

So far, we have been talking about tens of billions of dollars or euros per year, but even the promised annual fund of \$100 billion (which is yet to be reached) is completely inadequate compared to what is needed in reality – trillions of dollars or euros. Hence, going forward, the very concept of standalone separate climate change funds will need to be replaced with new ways to include the trillions needed into mainstream financial planning both by the national governments and the private sector. Thus, the issue of raising and allocating the funds is the responsibility of finance ministers and chief executive officers (CEOs) of banks and other investment funds, not of the environment ministers who attend the annual COPs. So, the annual meeting of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) held in Washington, DC, which is attended by the finance minister of every country, may become the main platform to discuss and address climate finance as part of global finance.

BBC NEWS

Climate change: Satellite maps warming impact on global glaciers

By: JONATHAN AMOS

Scientists have obtained their best satellite assessment yet of the status of the world's glaciers. Europe's Cryosat satellite tracked the 200,000 or so glaciers on Earth and found they have lost 2,720bn tonnes of ice in 10 years due to climate change.

That's equivalent to losing 2% of their bulk in a decade. Monitoring how quickly glaciers are changing is important because millions of people rely on them for water and farming.

The world's glaciers are distributed across all latitudes, not just at the poles. A few hundred are routinely measured at ground level - the best way to assess them. But for the vast majority, observation from space is the only way to keep an eye on how they are responding to climate change.

It's important that we do that. Like the broader ice sheets, their whiteness reflects sunlight and helps cool the planet.

And in many parts of the globe, glaciers also function as critical water reservoirs. More than 20% of the world's population is thought to be dependent in some way on summer melt waters that flow from glaciers - for drinking, for agriculture and to drive hydropower stations.

Cryosat is a veteran European Space Agency Earth observer.

It carries an instrument called a radar altimeter, which sends down microwave pulses to trace variations in height along the planet's surface - and in particular the changes in elevation of ice fields.

This type of instrument works really well when monitoring the gentle undulations in the interior of Antarctica and Greenland. It finds it more tricky to measure the ice that runs across rugged terrain, such as in steep-sided valleys.

But advances in data processing have enabled scientists to effectively increase the resolution and robustness of Cryosat's vision so that it can now track developments even in those hard-to-see locations.

The study, reported on Wednesday in the journal *Geophysical Research Letters*, has applied this approach to the spacecraft's entire data archive to produce a global glacier assessment.

The satellite's observations indicate the vast majority - 89% - of the ice loss seen between 2010 and 2020 was due to melting in an ever warmer atmosphere.

Only 11% of the loss was the result of glaciers experiencing melting or increased flow because their fronts terminate in warmer ocean or lake waters.

Alaska's glaciers have experienced the greatest losses. They've been losing more than 80bn tonnes a year, which equates to about 5% of the total ice volume in the region during the 10-year study period.

This is very much an effect of warmer air temperatures.

Places where glaciers appear to be eroding and moving faster because their fronts end in warmer waters include the Arctic - at Svalbard, the Norwegian archipelago - and in the Russian sectors of the Barents and Kara seas.

Increasing ice discharge into the ocean accounts for over 50% of mass loss in these areas.

"This is a consequence of what is called the 'Atlantification' of the Arctic," explained Noel Gourmelen from Edinburgh University, UK.

"Usually, the surface waters of the Arctic Ocean are cold and fresh, but increasingly in some of these places the surface waters are becoming more salty and warmer as currents move up from the Atlantic. And this means glaciers are dumping more ice into the ocean," he told BBC News.

This, of course, will add to sea-level rise which already threatens low-lying communities.

Cryosat is an old spacecraft that has worked far beyond its design life. Scientists hope to get a few more years of operation from it but there's a recognition that it could fail any day now.

The European Union is planning a long-term satellite series inspired by Cryosat, given the code name currently of Cristal.

"What we've shown you can do with Cryosat to measure glaciers worldwide augurs well for the Cristal mission," said Edinburgh colleague Livia Jakob.

Ms Jakob, who led the research from her remote sensing company Earthwave, has been discussing its implications in Vienna, Austria, at the European Geosciences Union General Assembly, one of the world's biggest gatherings of Earth scientists.

LIFESTYLE INQUIRER

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By: Evan Tan

A few weeks ago, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), an international organization composed of United Nations and World Meteorological Organization members, released a crucial report synthesizing the research of hundreds of scientists on climate change's physical science, impacts, adaptation, and mitigation.

The IPCC synthesis report stressed that humans are now experiencing an unprecedented climate transformation that we brought upon ourselves and all the other beings on this planet. It predicts a 50% chance that global temperatures will reach or exceed 1.5 degrees C warming levels between 2021 and 2040. Every degree of increase will escalate the occurrence of extreme floods, storms, and droughts; the rise of more diseases such as malaria and Lyme disease; and the likelihood of multiple species disappearing off the face of this earth — including ours.

If all of this sounds grim and disconcerting, wait until you hear that minorities and people from developing countries such as the Philippines stand to suffer the most from the worsening climate. Vulnerable communities will be made even more vulnerable, LGBT+ people included.

One of the lessons we learned when Covid-19 triggered a barrage of lockdowns worldwide was that the systemic vulnerabilities our community faced before Covid came only left us more exposed during the pandemic. Unequal access and the deprioritization of necessary health services (such as HIV testing), the loss of work and livelihood (especially for queer people in precarious situations, like the Golden Gays), and the further stigmatization and discrimination of the LGBT+ community have led to a worsened quality of life.

For some, that even meant death.

And that's only a glimpse of what's about to come should the climate situation devolve into unlivable scenarios. Time and time again, it's always the less privileged and minorities who are made dispensable — the victims and scapegoats of social panic and mass hysteria.

There is also the queer community's uneasy alliance with corporations that fund us with money that our future selves will pay dearly for.

To note, I can't help but feel intensely conflicted that the fossil fuel company Shell is actively supporting the Filipino queer community through advocacy efforts and the support of LGBT+ and HIV organizations (such as LoveYourself) as it makes billions off its destructive business.

(Full disclosure: when I was the advertising manager for the defunct gay magazine TEAM, I oversaw our collaboration for International Coming Out Day.)

The Scientific American reports: "According to the documents, Shell recognized in the 1980s that it played a role in global warming and that the threat from rising temperatures was growing. The research determined that the company generated 4 percent of the world's carbon emissions in 1984, from its production of oil, gas, and coal. In a 1988 internal report, marked 'Confidential,' Shell researchers noted that 'the main cause of increasing CO2 concentrations is considered to be fossil fuel burning.' By 1988, internal deliberations showed that Shell believed the energy industry had a role to play in climate policy."

Despite this, it took years of climate denialism and massive lobbying by Shell and other oil companies until they sheepishly took responsibility for their role in the worsening climate. Even then, their so-called commitments to become net-zero may just be greenwashing PR fodder: leaked internal communications revealed that the company isn't "willing to reduce carbon dioxide emissions to levels that do not make business sense," and that "Shell has no immediate plans to move to a net-zero emissions portfolio over our investment horizon of 10-20 years."

This alarming and meditated negligence from fossil fuel companies that massively profit from our planet's destruction is not only unconscionable – it is abhorrent. In a paper to be published in the Harvard Environmental Law Review, George Washington University law professor Donald Braman and consumer advocacy group Public Citizen director David Arkush believe these companies are culpable of climate homicide.

The paper's authors argue that fossil fuel companies 'have not simply been lying to the public, they have been killing members of the public at an accelerating rate, and prosecutors should bring that crime to the public's attention.'

There is much at stake for the queer community in the battle against climate change. We cannot stand on the sidelines, silently yet begrudgingly accepting the help from Shell and other climate change culprits, knowing that the goodwill they receive from being associated with the LGBT+ movement means they will continue to create harm which will inevitably boomerang back to us.

We can act. As we push back against destructive corporations and industries through civic and collective action (such as protesting and voting), we can also make individual changes to mitigate the climate apocalypse, such as eating a plant-based diet, avoiding long-haul flights, taking public transportation, and switching to sustainable energy sources, among other things. (Take a quiz on the best ways to reduce your carbon footprint.)

We are being led to our slaughter. We have to fight for this planet to survive. We have to speak up — no, we need to scream.

The alternative is a dystopian interpretation of an equal society: a scorched earth with all of us – gay, bi, straight, cisgender, transgender, man, woman, non-binary – equally dead.

MALAYA BUSINESS INSIGHT

Govt looking at \$284M damages for Oriental Mindoro oil spill

By: Ashzel Hachero

The Philippines may get up to \$284 million from the International Oil Pollution Compensation (IOPC) Funds that can be made available to those affected by the oil spill caused by the sinking of the oil tanker MT Princess Empress off Oriental Mindoro last February, an official of the Department of Justice said yesterday.

Justice Undersecretary Raul Vasquez said residents whose livelihoods were affected by the oil spill could get compensated through the IOPC funds.

“The maximum coverage for the oil spill as based on the IOPC would only be up to 203 million Special Drawing Rights, or in US dollars, it would be around \$284 million,” Vasquez told ABS CBN News Channel.

“It would cover all of the areas affected. This would include fisherfolks and even government agencies,” he added.

He said agencies such as the Office of Civil Defense, DENR and the Philippine Coast Guard would evaluate and determine how much of the claim would go to the government.

The IOPC was created by the 1992 Civil Liability Convention and the 1992 Fund Convention. It provides financial compensation caused by oil pollution that occurs in member-states due to oil spills.

The Philippines is one of the member-states of the treaty. As a member-state, the Philippines contributes to the fund and is entitled to compensation.

IOPC Director Gaute Silvertsen visited the areas affected by the oil spill last Tuesday and assured local officials of compensation, particularly the affected residents and fisherfolks.

“We will concentrate on fisherfolk and those who are most in need and then we will offer settlements as soon as possible,” Sivertsen said after attending an interagency meeting on the issue.

WRIT OF KALIKASAN

Justice Secretary Jesus Crispin Remulla said the department may push for a writ of kalikasan against those involved in the oil spill if the concerned parties fail to act to address the problem.

Though he did not mention names, Remulla said “whoever has to account will account through the writ of kalikasan if they did not do anything in the next 10 days.”

A writ of kalikasan is a legal remedy that provides for the protection of one’s right to “a balanced and healthful ecology in accord with the rhythm and harmony of nature,” as provided for in Section 16, Article II of the 1987 Philippine Constitution.

Remulla said government regulatory agencies may be included in the writ.

“You have to look at the regulatory bodies that are involved and make sure that they are doing their job because sometimes it’s failure of governance that’s contributory to the incident that happened. Tamaan na ang tamaan,” he said.

The DOJ has tapped the National Bureau of Investigation to probe the liability of the ship owner and others involved in the sinking.

Early this month, Maritime Industry Authority Deputy Administrator Sonia Malaluan said they have found probable cause to file charges against the owner of the sunken oil tanker.

THE Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) has recommended continued fishing bans in municipalities affected by the oil spill in Oriental Mindoro, saying its analysis of food safety for produce caught in the area remained inconclusive.

The agency said fish samples collected and analyzed from select sites in Oriental Mindoro last April 10 showed significant increases in amounts of oil and grease but added they are still within the standard of less than three milligrams per liter of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources’ (DENR) water classification and use.

BFAR added that low-level polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) were detected in all fish samples from Oriental Mindoro collected on April 3 while PAH accumulation was observed in samples collected from the municipalities of Bongabong and San Teodoro.

The agency said further tests will be implemented to confirm if PAH accumulation is taking place in marine organisms collected from the province.

BFAR said PAHs are considered harmful to humans and other living organisms and may accumulate in the flesh of marine organisms over time while seaweeds and other sessile organisms have greater chances of accumulating PAHs due to their immobility.

BFAR also recommended that fishing activities be allowed in select sites in Caluya, Antique, particularly in Sitio Sabang, Barangay Tinogboc, Sitio Sigayan, Sitio Toong, Barangay Semirara, Sitio Liwagao, Barangay Sibolo and adjacent deeper waters.

But the bureau wants shellfish gathering and seaweed harvesting disallowed in affected areas since these organisms may have greater exposure to oil spill contaminants.

Water samples collected from Caluya, Antique last March 28 passed the DENR standard for oil and grease while fish samples collected from the province last April 11 showed no signs of oil tainting through organoleptic analyses.

But signs of oil tainting were observed on shellfish samples and seaweed samples previously subjected to laboratory analysis., BFAR said it has allocated P4.4 million worth of livelihood assistance in the form of post-harvest technology packages that will benefit 10 fisherfolk associations and cooperatives or 689 families.

About P1.5 million was also earmarked for the provision of food assistance to 5,000 affected fisherfolk in Mimaropa while P580,500 was spent to help displaced fishing groups in Western Visayas.

BFAR has also deployed monitoring, control and surveillance vessels, as well as personal protective equipment sets and other materials for clean-up activities, apart from interventions based on rehabilitation proposals from oil spill-hit areas.

MANILA BULLETIN

['What will the weather do?': PH multi-hazard impact forecasting, early warning system unveiled](#)

By: Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz

The Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) officially launched the five-year Multi-Hazard Impact-Based Forecasting and Early Warning System for the Philippines Project or the GCF-IBFPh Project on Wednesday, April 26.

The GCF-IBFPh, which is the country's first Green Climate Fund project, has a total budget of US\$22 million. The GCF Grant Proceeds amount to US\$10 million and PAGASA's co-financing (in-kind) amounts to US\$12 million.

During the project launch at the Crowne Plaza Manila Galleria in Quezon City, PAGASA Deputy Administrator and GCF-IBFPh Project Leader Esperanza Cayanan explained that the project will address the urgent need for a more proactive and inclusive climate risk management in the Philippines, anchored on a people-centered multi-hazard impact-based forecasting and early warning systems for flood, landslide, severe wind, and storm surge.

It will catalyze a paradigm shift from traditional weather forecasts to multi-hazard impact-based forecasting and early warning system, she added.

Moreover, PAGASA Administrator Vicente Malano said the project is focused on the preventive aspects of disaster management by communicating to all stakeholders as to "what the weather will do" rather than "what the weather will be" thus enabling the public to take appropriate actions during the "window of anticipation" or "lead-time" before the hazard event occurs.

"There are many large-scale disasters that we all need to prepare for," Science and Technology Secretary Renato Solidum said.

"By focusing on impacts, disaster management agencies, local government units, and the general public will have a better understanding of the risk, and will be more likely take appropriate actions because now you can imagine the disaster risk that will happen not only to your community but to your family and to you as an individual," he pointed out.

The IBF-PH Project will be undertaken in the vulnerable barangays of Tuguegarao City, Cagayan; Legazpi City Albay; Palo, Leyte; and New Bataan, Davao de Oro.

It will run for five years, from 2022 to 2027.

PAGASA will be the lead executing agency, while the Land Bank of the Philippines will be the direct access entity.

Other implementing partners include the Department of the Interior and Local Government, Office of Civil Defense, Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Mines and Geosciences Bureau, United Nations World Food Programme, and the local government units in Region 2, Region 5, Region 8, and Region 11.

Other collaborators also include the National Economic and Development Authority, Department of Finance, Climate Change Commission, and Philippine Commission on Women.

“Overall, the efforts of these partner-collaborators would contribute to a paradigm shift from a traditional hazard-based to impact-based forecasting and early warning system, which combines the best available science and local knowledge on forecasting and risk assessment,” Malano said.

The major component of the project is the development of timely and actionable warning information to end-users, particularly at-risk communities, to reduce their exposure to climate risks and to strengthen their adaptive capacities to better manage and adjust to impacts brought about by extreme weather events.

PAGASA expects that in adopting an Impact-Based Forecasting Early Warning System, communicating risk effectively to the people most vulnerable to disasters is one of the desired changes during the project implementation.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Earth Day and the Philippine energy future

Earth Day is the best day to talk about Earth Day, when well-meant intentions for the planet are probably at an all-time high. Part of humanity's efforts in dealing with climate change is in energy, which is relevant to the Philippines since its power sector accounts for 51% of national CO2 emissions, according to the Climate Transparency Report 2020.

As someone who has been in the industry for many years and has a deep passion for the subject matter, I offer my two cents and attempt to explain how, even if that is the case, the country cannot afford an immediate and wholesale shift to a large share of renewable energy (RE) in the energy system.

In economics, the "Law of Unintended Consequences" posits that unintended consequences can actually make some programs more costly to the point that it makes it unwise to pursue regardless if it achieves its intended goal or even if it is well-meant. That is how I view the narrative of how a drastic adoption of renewable energy (RE) and the abandonment of thermal power plants is a necessary and urgent trade-off that must ensue. It is ripe with unintended consequences, especially in the context of a developing country like the Philippines. In an environment where the gap between power supply and demand is thin — which results in relatively higher electricity prices and risks of yellow or red alerts — the intermittency of RE already poses a concern. Moreover, we must consider that building more RE power plants represents opportunity costs in terms of, for example, lost agricultural lands. In that case, there should be a balance between food and energy production because solar farms are also built upon lands that may be good for agriculture.

A holistic approach to the energy transition — one that doesn't trade-off our consumer's spending power and the power grid's stability that is crucial to economic growth — is a strategy that acknowledges how providing reliable, affordable, and sustainable electricity is not a false trichotomy, but more of a balancing act. It is one where solutions are tailor-fitted to a locality's industrial outlook, financial standing, and ecological situation; all calibrated so that one does not significantly disadvantage the needs of the other.

Energy reliability is not negotiable. A sufficient and reliable supply of electricity is crucial in the retention of existing industries and the attraction of new ones, be it local or foreign. The progress of commerce, job growth, higher wages, urban and rural development, and even the production of basic human needs like food and clean water; these are just some of the things that won't happen unless we have, at the very least, reliable

baseload power in the grid. Unfortunately, RE sources like wind and solar power cannot be programmed on demand.

Energy reliability can also affect the fortunes of energy affordability. What is “affordable” is subjective, depending on the spending power of the individual, and that can be improved by increasing the size of the economy he partakes in. According to the World Bank, the Philippines has a gross domestic product (GDP) per capita of \$3,460.50 as of end-2021, which is about one fourth the average global GDP per capita of \$12,236.6. It targets to reach upper middle-income status by 2025, with growth targets ranging from 6-8% from 2023 to 2025. Moreover, even if the country’s gross national income (GNI) per capita improved to \$3,640 in 2021, it still hasn’t touched the lower end of the upper middle-income threshold of \$4,256. Expanding the economic pie — and thereby increasing opportunities for people to earn and/or have higher wages — will surely require reliable and cost-effective electricity.

On energy sustainability, while the Philippines should indeed be vocal in the issue of climate change, given its vulnerabilities to extreme natural events like heavy rain, floods, and droughts, it must be noted that it contributes less than half of one percent to global emissions. Not all countries are on equal footing to deal with the mitigation of CO2 emissions. While dealing with climate change is a worldwide effort, individual responsibility should be shared in proportion to how much a country contributes to global emissions. While full-on RE adoption is suitable for some countries, what is good, appropriate, and timely for the goose may not be so for the gander. Industrialization has already set sail for developed nations, while it has only begun for most of the developing world.

The hard truth is that the country’s current energy mix cannot be abandoned right away, simply because the Philippines needs the reliability and affordability of energy to deliver its fullest economic and human capital potential. Accordingly, the adoption of RE cannot happen right away. It has to be gradually and methodically nurtured, without sacrificing our aspirations for more prosperous lives for more than a hundred million Filipinos. However, do not mistake my arguments as pessimism. A new and better order of the Philippine energy system might just be on the horizon. Attempts have already been made to assess the viability of RE as a baseload source of energy. Evidently, innovations such as energy storage systems and emissions-capturing technology are already gaining ground, with people in the industry brainstorming on how to make these inventions more technically viable, cost-effective, and scalable. The future can be bright, as we not only expect better technology, but hopefully more capable scientists and engineers who will carry the torch.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

UN chief sounds alarm on lack of progress on SDGs

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on Tuesday sounded the alarm on the lack of progress on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

"Halfway to the deadline for the 2030 Agenda, we are leaving more than half the world behind," Guterres told UN member states in a briefing on the special edition of his SDG Progress Report. "Progress on 50 percent is weak and insufficient. Worst of all, we have stalled or gone into reverse on more than 30 percent of the SDGs."

The Covid-19 pandemic and the triple crisis of climate, biodiversity and pollution are having a devastating impact, amplified by the Ukraine crisis, he said.

Guterres pointed out that the number of people living in extreme poverty today is higher than it was four years ago, adding that on current trends, only 30 percent of all countries will achieve SDG 1 (no poverty) by 2030.

He said hunger has also increased and is back at the levels in 2005, while gender equality is some 300 years away and inequalities are at a record high and are growing.

Humanity's war on nature is accelerating as emissions continue to rise and concentrations of carbon dioxide are at their highest level in 2 million years, he said.

The extinction risk has increased by 3 percent since 2015 and now more than one species in five is threatened with extinction, Guterres noted.

The SDG Progress Report includes five important recommendations.

First, it calls on all UN member states to recommit to action to achieve the SDGs at national and international levels between now and 2030, by strengthening the social contract and re-orienting their economies toward low-carbon, resilient pathways aligned with the Paris Agreement.

Second, it urges governments to set and deliver on ambitious national benchmarks to reduce poverty and inequality by 2027 and by 2030.

Third, it calls for a commitment from all countries to end the war on nature.

Fourth, it calls on governments to strengthen national institutions and accountability.

Fifth, it calls for greater multilateral support for the UN development system and decisive action at the 2024 Summit of the Future.

"The road ahead is steep. Today's report shows us just how steep. But it is one we can and must travel -- together -- for the people we serve," Guterres said.

THE MANILA TIMES

[\[Opinion\] AI as an aid to cleaning up the oceans](#)

By: Danton Remoto

The pros and cons of artificial intelligence (AI) have been the burning news for the past months. Anything that seems to simulate human reasoning — from Frankenstein's resurrection to the present AI — is bound to cause controversy. John McCarthy invented the term "artificial intelligence" in 1950.

He said: "Every aspect of learning or any other feature of intelligence can in principle be so precisely described that a machine can be made to simulate it. An attempt will be made to find how to make machines use language, form abstractions, and concepts, solve the kinds of problems now reserved for humans, and improve themselves."

What are the advantages of AI?

One, it reduces human error, since decisions are done from previously gathered information applying a certain set of algorithms. So, errors are reduced and the chance of reaching accuracy with a greater degree of precision is a possibility.

Two, it takes risks instead of human beings. We can overcome risks by developing an AI robot which can do the dangerous things for us. Examples include defusing a bomb, exploring the deepest oceans, and mining for coal and oil.

Three, they are available 24/7. People work for four, six hours a day, excluding the breaks. Outside of that time-frame, they need to rest, refresh themselves, and take a nap. They also don't get bored, which Jean-Paul Sartre said is one of the worst things we can inflict on a human being.

Four, they help doing repetitive jobs. These include sending a thank you mail or ensuring that documents are free of errors. AI can automate these boring tasks, leaving us with more creative things to do. and can even remove "boring" tasks for humans and free them up to be increasingly creative.

Five, they can provide digital assistance, which saves the need for human resources. They also lead to faster decisions.

Using AI can make machines take decisions faster than a human being and carry out actions quicker. In making a decision, a human will analyze many factors, both

emotionally and practically, but an AI-powered machine works on what it is programmed and deliver the results in a faster way.

And lastly, AI is also powering many inventions which will help humans solve the majority of complex problems.

What is the dark side of the moon?

First, the high cost of creation, since it needs to be constantly updated. Second, it will make human beings lazier than they already are. This can then lead to unemployment, since the AI is replacing many repetitive tasks and other works with robots.

Moreover, AI works without emotions. There is no human connection that cements relationships in a team. It also lacks creativity, since it will never think outside the box.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

Pagasa: El Niño may start in 2 to 3 months

By: Pia Lee-Brago

State weather officials are warning of the possible onset of El Niño within the next two to three months, with stronger typhoons expected as a result of the climate event.

“There is a big possibility that the El Niño will start within two or three months,” Ana Solis, chief of the Climate Monitoring and Predictions Section of the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA), said in a radio interview yesterday.

But apart from the long dry spell associated with El Niño, Solis said that the typhoons affecting the country during this time could also be stronger.

“Historically, the southwest monsoon season is enhanced by the onset of the El Niño,” she said, adding that extreme rainfall events can also be expected in the western section of Luzon.

On the other hand, there are places in the country that will experience the opposite. “Below normal rains will be experienced in the Visayas and Mindanao. The dry spell will be severe in these areas,” Solis said.

She also warned of possible grass fires in the country during the long dry spell.

“Here, it is usually grass fires although other countries like Indonesia are prone to forest fires,” Solis said.

She recalled how El Niño in Indonesia caused such a big forest fire that the haze reached other Southeast Asian countries, including the Philippines.

Solis warned that the climate event could bring the water in the dams to critical levels, particularly in the last quarter of 2023 until the first half of 2024.

“In case there will be prolonged El Niño, the effect on the dams will be felt until the first quarter of the following year. As early as now, the water levels of the dams are already dropping,” she said.

As of 6 a.m. yesterday, the water level of Angat Dam dropped to 196.18 meters from its previous level of 196.40 m or a reduction of 22 centimeters.

The level of Angat Dam is still 9.25 m above its minimum rule curve elevation of 186.93 m, the level at which the dam is able to fulfill its functions.

Four other dams also suffered further reduction in water level: Ipo Dam in Bulacan at 98.86 m compared to its previous level of 98.87 m (1 cm less); La Mesa Dam in Quezon City, at 77.13 m, down by 2 cm from previous 77.15 m; San Roque Dam in Pangasinan, at 235.09 m, from its previous level of 235.36 m or 27 cm less and Caliraya Dam in Laguna, at 286.75 m, lower by 27 cm from its previous level of 287.02 m.

Meanwhile, the highest heat index last Tuesday was recorded in Dipolog City, Zamboanga del Norte at 43 degrees Celsius.

Davao City, Legazpi City and Zamboanga City all recorded a heat index of 42 degrees Celsius, while Maasin, Southern Leyte felt the heat at 41 degrees Celsius.

Rice buffer

As Filipinos brace for the ill effects of El Niño, Sen. Risa Hontiveros called on the government to ensure that programs to support and protect families at risk of losing livelihoods and experiencing hunger during the dry spell are in place.

Hontiveros recalled that El Niño in 2016 was one of the factors in the violence that happened in Kidapawan City in Mindanao that left two farmers dead and dozens wounded.

“Maybe the economic managers should more rigorously justify why raising the stock of rice in National Food Authority (NFA) warehouses makes more sense than other programs that could protect families that might experience loss of livelihoods and hunger,” Hontiveros said.

“We must first make sure that there is dedicated aid for our poor countrymen. During the El Niño of 2016, the NFA warehouses were full, but the problem was that the poor had nothing to buy. The violence that happened in Kidapawan should not be repeated because the warehouses do not want to be opened for the hungry,” she added.

The senator said there are reports that sanitary and phytosanitary clearances have already been issued for more than three million metric tons of rice to be imported by the private sector and nearly one-third of this has arrived.

Climate campaign and actions

Moritz Riedacher sat down at a busy road junction with four other climate activists in southwestern Germany earlier this year, holding up traffic for hours — an action that landed him a jail sentence. But he remains undeterred.

This week, the 26-year-old journalism student again halted traffic, this time in Berlin where fellow activists in the group Letzte Generation (Last Generation) launched a campaign demanding stronger climate protection policies.

Riedacher, who has not yet been imprisoned pending appeals, is among the first in Germany to land a jail conviction over such protests.

"I find it really, really hard to process the verdict," he told AFP, calling the four-month sentence handed to him this month over the Heilbronn protest "disproportionate".

"It is definitely urgent" for the government to do more for climate protection, he said, pointing to the 2021 deadly flooding in southern Germany.

"We can't say let's just go on as normal. Rather, we need to cause disruptions," said Riedacher.

The controversial tactics of Letzte Generation, from hunger strikes to throwing mashed potato on paintings in museums, has resulted in the group being described by some German politicians as "climate terrorists".

CCC IN THE NEWS:

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

[PAGASA launches impact forecasting to reduce risks, improve preps](#)

By: Gaea Katreena Cabico

State weather bureau PAGASA on Wednesday officially launched its project on impact-based forecasting, which will help authorities and the public take action even before a hazard occurs.

The P1.2-billion impact-based forecasting for flood, landslide, severe wind and storm surge, and early warning system project translates meteorological and hydrological hazards into sector- and location-specific impacts.

Impact-based forecasting focuses on the preventive aspects of disaster management by communicating "what the weather will do" instead of "what the weather will be."

This paradigm shift is vital to save lives and livelihoods as the economic and human impacts of extreme weather events and climate change increase.

The Philippines is one of the countries most at risk from the impacts of climate change such as strong cyclones and floods, with poor and rural communities bearing the brunt of disasters.

"By focusing on impacts, disaster management agencies, local government units, and the general public will have a better understanding of risks, will likely take appropriate actions because you can now imagine the disasters that will happen," Department of Science and Technology Secretary Renato Solidum Jr. said.

The project also aims to increase the generation of climate information in decision-making, to strengthen adaptive capacity and reduced exposure to climate risks, and to strengthen institutional and regulatory systems for climate-responsive planning and development.

Five-year project

The multi-hazard impact-based forecasting project is the first Green Climate Fund program in the Philippines. The GCF is a fund established within the framework of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change as an operating entity of the

Financial Mechanism to assist developing countries in adaptation and mitigation practices to counter climate change.

The project will be undertaken in Tuguegarao City in Cagayan, Legazpi City in Albay, Palo in Leyte, and New Bataan in Davao de Oro. These sites are vulnerable to hazards such as strong wind, flood, storm surge and landslide.

The project will run for five years, from 2022 to 2027.

PAGASA will be the lead executing entity and the Land Bank of the Philippines is the direct access entity.

The Department of Interior and Local Government, Office of Civil Defense, Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Mines and Geosciences Bureau, the United Nations' World Food Programme, and local government units in Cagayan Valley, Bicol region, Eastern Visayas, and Davao region.

Other collaborators include the National Economic and Development Authority, Department of Finance, Climate Change Commission, and Philippine Commission on Women.

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