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By: Joel Guinto

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CNN

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By: Emily Blumenthal and Monica Garrett

A nearly 300-year-old settlement once submerged beneath a major dam in the Philippines has reemerged as sweltering heat and drought dry up the reservoir.

DAILY TRIBUNE

[DENR, UN Women partner for environmental protection, climate resilience](#)

By: Jing Villamente

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GMA NEWS

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The Philippines is facing scorching heat fueled by El Niño and worsening climate change. Last Sunday, the heat index was “dangerous” at 43 degrees Celsius in Manila but “extremely dangerous” at 53 degrees Celsius in Iba, Zambales. We are advised by the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical, and Astronomical Services Administration that at these temperatures, heat cramps and heat exhaustion are likely and heat stroke is probable or even imminent. The heat is significantly worse in urban areas because of the heat island effect—the condition where areas characterized by extensive surfaces covered with asphalt, concrete, and tiles absorb and retain heat from the sun, leading to higher temperatures.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

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THE PHILIPPINE STAR

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The Philippines may see up to two tropical cyclones develop or enter its area of responsibility this May, the state weather bureau said on Wednesday as unusually hot weather continues to grip the country.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

BUSINESS MIRROR

[\[Opinion\] Extreme weather](#)

By: Mark Villar

The extreme heat we are experiencing now is a reminder that we can no longer ignore the dangers posed by climate change.

[PHL, Germany bolster climate action with €36.8-M TRANSCEND project](#)

The German Development Cooperation (GIZ) and Climate Change Commission (CCC) will boost local capacities in effecting climate change and biodiversity policies.

GMA NEWS

[PAGASA: More parts of PH to have danger-level heat index in May](#)

More parts of the Philippines may have to endure the blistering heat as state weather bureau PAGASA forecasted the heat index spiking between 45°C and 54.8°C in May.

Information and Knowledge Management Division

BBC

[Philippines: Drought dries up dam to reveal centuries-old town](#)

By: Joel Guinto

The ruins of an almost 300-year-old town have resurfaced as searing temperatures in the Philippines partially dried up a major dam.

Pantabangan town was submerged in the 1970s to build a reservoir.

But it emerges from the water on extremely rare occasions, when the weather is dry and hot.

It comes as almost half the country is experiencing a drought, with temperatures reaching highs in several areas.

This is the longest the town has ever been above water since the dam was constructed, Marlon Paladin, an engineer with the state agency that operates the country's dams, told news agency AFP.

The extreme heat has disrupted the daily lives of millions as schools are shut for days and office workers are advised to work from home.

And it could still get marginally hotter in the coming days, Benison Estareja, a meteorologist at the state-run weather bureau Pagasa, told BBC News.

"The general impact of climate change on the Philippines is warmer temperatures. The heat that we are experiencing, it could steadily increase in the coming days," Mr Estareja said.

The Philippines is in the middle of its warm and dry season, which is exacerbated by El Nino or the unusual warming of surface waters in the Pacific Ocean. The archipelago nation's entire east coast faces the Pacific.

The South East Asian nation is one of the most at risk countries in the world from the effects of climate change. Its wet season can bring about monster storms, like Super Typhoon Haiyan in 2013, one of the most powerful in history.

"We are seeing that our dam levels will drop, including in Pantabangan and other areas," Mr Estareja said.

The water level there has fallen by nearly 50m from its normal high level of 221m, based on official data.

The ruins began to resurface in March as the area had been receiving almost no rain, Mr Paladin told AFP. The re-emergence of the ruins have drawn tourists to the town, some 202km (125 miles) north of the capital, Manila.

Aside from the Philippines, Bangladesh has also enforced class suspensions that have affected 33 million students.

In Thailand, 30 people have died of heatstroke between January and April 17 this year, compared with 37 in the whole of 2023, the health ministry said. Across the border in Myanmar, temperatures have soared above 45C.

CNN

[A 300-year-old settlement resurfaces as severe drought dries up a dam in the Philippines](#)

By: Emily Blumenthal and Monica Garrett

A nearly 300-year-old settlement once submerged beneath a major dam in the Philippines has reemerged as sweltering heat and drought dry up the reservoir.

Structures, including part of a church, tombstones and a municipal hall marker, reappeared in the middle of Pantabangan Dam in Nueva Ecija province in March after months of almost no rain, Marlon Paladin, a supervising engineer for the National Irrigation Administration, told AFP.

The area was deliberately flooded in the 1970s in the dam's construction. But a drought currently affecting about half of the country's provinces has pushed the dam's water levels down, according to AFP.

Figures from the Philippine government's weather agency, PAGASA, show those levels on April 30 were nearly 50 meters (160 feet) lower than normal.

Paladin told AFP that this is the sixth time the settlement has resurfaced since the creation of the reservoir, but "this is the longest time [it was visible] based on my experience."

When water levels drop, the ruins become a popular tourist attraction, according to AFP.

Like much of Southeast Asia, the Philippines has for the past several weeks been hit by scorching heat, leading schools to suspend classes after temperatures hit 42 degrees Celsius (107 degrees Fahrenheit).

Although April and May are normally the hottest months in the Philippines, with temperatures averaging in the mid-30s (high 80s to mid 90s Fahrenheit), much of the country has seen even hotter temperatures.

In the past five days, the heat index in some areas has exceeded 40 degrees (104 degrees Fahrenheit), figures from PAGASA show. Heat index is a calculation of what the human body feels the temperature is like. It takes into account the actual temperature and humidity, which affects the body's ability to cool itself.

The town of Muñoz near the dam has seen heat index over 41 degrees (106 degrees Fahrenheit) the last five days. On Sunday the temperature felt like 47 degrees (117 degrees Fahrenheit) because of other contributing factors. As of the end of March, drought covered much of northern and central Luzon, including Nueva Ecija province where the dam is located, according to PAGASA.

April has remained dry across the country, with portions of central and southern Luzon seeing less than 25% of the rainfall they should receive at this time, according to the US Climate Prediction Center.

This year, the El Niño climate pattern has exacerbated those conditions, according to AFP. This natural fluctuation comes on top of planetary warming caused by human-driven climate change.

In recent years, temperatures in the region — one of the most vulnerable in the world to the effects of climate change — have climbed to unprecedented heights, leaving hundreds of millions suffering in unforgiving heat and humidity, climatologist Maximiliano Herrera told CNN.

Last spring, several countries in Southeast Asia experienced record-breaking heat well over 100 degrees Fahrenheit.

A 2023 report from the World Weather Attribution described that heatwave as a once-in-200-years event that would have been “virtually impossible to have occurred without climate change.”

DAILY TRIBUNE

[DENR, UN Women partner for environmental protection, climate resilience](#)

By: Jing Villamente

Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Maria Antonia Yulo Loyzaga on Monday said she and United Nations Women Philippines Country Programme Coordinator Ma. Rosalyn Mesina has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to strengthen gender equality and increase women's participation in environmental protection and climate resilience.

Loyzaga said the MOU on gender equality and women's participation in environmental protection and climate resilience would be the main agenda of the partnership between the DENR and the UN Women for the "EmPower: Women for Climate-Resilient Societies Programme Phase II".

Mesina, on behalf of Maria Holtsberg, Deputy Regional Director of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, was with Loyzaga at the MOU signing during the 2024 Earth Day celebration in Pasay City on 22 April.

"We do need to invest both in the transdisciplinary understanding of vulnerability, particularly gender-based vulnerability and the multiple roles that women play in order for us to understand how risk may cascade through those roles and address the vulnerability once and for all," Loyzaga said.

The Secretary has also stated that it is crucial to safeguard the rights of women in crafting environmental policies, social development, and decision-making through their inclusion in the national and local level discourse on mining, climate, human security, and the environment.

The EmPower: Women for Climate-Resilient Societies Programme Phase II seeks to increase the role of women and other marginalized groups on gender-responsive climate change adaptation and mitigation, ensure that women and other marginalized groups are represented as key environmental actors in climate and disaster risk reduction (DRR) decision making and that they are engaged in climate resilient livelihood.

The program, which shall also be implemented in Indonesia, shall give people greater gender equality and full enjoyment of their rights, including equal access to a clean,

healthy, and sustainable environment, reducing their vulnerability to the impacts of climate change.

Under the MOU, the DENR and UN Women aim to promote gender-responsive and human rights-based climate action that is inclusive in accordance with the central pledge of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to "leave no one behind," and that accelerates progress on the achievement of Sustainable Development (SDG) Goal 5 on Gender Equality, SDG 7 on Affordable and Clean Energy, SDG 13 on Climate Action, and SDG 17 on Partnerships for the Goals.

Both parties have agreed to support the Philippine Development Plan 2023-2028 in its goal to create jobs and reduce poverty through higher economic growth.

This shall result in economic and social transformation for a prosperous, inclusive, and resilient society, in line with the 8-point socioeconomic agenda of President Ferdinand Marcos, Jr. and the achievement of AmBisyon Natin 2040, the country's long-term vision.

The parties will also contribute to the targets of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) for 2024-2028, signed between the UN and the Philippines, across the three outcome areas: outcome 1, human capital development, inclusion and resilience building; outcome 2, sustainable economic development, decent work, and innovation; and outcome 3, climate action, environmental sustainability, and disaster-resilience.

The DENR and UN Women will also contribute to the delivery of UN Women's country program priorities across the thematic areas of women's participation, representation, and leadership in decision-making, gender-responsive humanitarian, DRR and climate action, women's economic empowerment, and ending violence against women.

The EmPower: Women for Climate-Resilient Societies Programme Phase II will be funded by the Governments of Sweden and New Zealand and will run until 2027.

DOST chief: We are still in global warming

By: Vivienne Angeles

Science and Technology chief Dr. Renato Solidum Jr. said that contrary to what the United Nations (UN) said about entering the era of global boiling at present, we are still in global warming, as this is a continuum phenomenon.

"The term global boiling was used by the UN secretary-general to highlight the fact that we are experiencing global warming and to have action and a message to all countries, especially to those who burn carbon, that they must do something to limit greenhouse gases," Solidum explained in a radio interview on Tuesday.

"For scientists, this is a new phase. We do not use this term. We are still experiencing global warming because it is continuous, meaning the world continues to warm. But the UN secretary-general just wants to highlight the urgency of what is happening right now," he added.

According to Solidum, it is high time that the public takes action to prepare for continued warming and reduce it, especially through greenhouse gas emission mitigation.

"Others are taking really dramatic measures to highlight the urgency of the problem, and this is what is really being avoided — that we reach what we call the threshold," he said.

"The first is 1.5 degrees centigrade above what we call industrial-level temperature, and what we are looking at now is 2 degrees to 2.5 degrees because if it gets hotter, we don't know what will happen and there will be many consequences."

"I just want to also give a scientific perspective that in the past, we started in the last glacial age, and since then, the world has been warming due to the natural rotation of the earth around the sun, but because of the burning of fossil fuels, global warming has accelerated, and that is what we are facing now," Solidum added.

Hence, the DOST chief said that the Philippines needs to contribute to mitigating greenhouse gas emissions not just for climate change, but also to avoid possible health consequences brought by pollution.

Moreover, Solidum said that one of the advocacies of the DOST is to prepare for the consequences of the changing temperature and rain distribution.

In June 2023, UN secretary-general António Guterres said that "the era of global warming has ended; the era of global boiling has arrived," following the World Meteorological Organization and the European Commission's Copernicus Climate Change Service report of July 2023 as 'the hottest month ever recorded in human history.'

Red-hot Philippines

The El Niño onslaught persists in the country as an increased 'init factor' is expected in May, according to the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical, and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA).

On Monday, PAGASA weather specialist John Manalo said that based on their data, locations in the country that had a dangerous heat index, which is from 42 degrees Celsius to 51 degrees Celsius, were only around ten to 15 locations in early April.

"But now, around 36 stations or areas are in the danger category, and we expect that to increase," he said, noting that "the magnitude of that heat index will also increase as we approach the first and second weeks of the month of May."

The highest heat index of 53°C was recorded in Iba, Zambales, on Saturday, which is classified as an extremely dangerous heat index.

On the same day, Metro Manila had its hottest temperature in history — 38.8°C, which was recorded at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA) in Pasay City.

This surpassed the previous record of 38.6°C registered on 17 May 1915, in Port Area, Manila.

GMA NEWS

[How did the Philippines do in the just-concluded plastics negotiations in Canada?](#)

By: Lou Albano

The Philippines is among the 170 countries who sent a delegation to the just-concluded fourth round of negotiations for a legally binding plastics treaty in Ottawa Canada.

Having concluded on Tuesday without agreement on a proposal to consider sustainable plastic production limits, Inger Andersen, executive director of the UN Environment Programme, said in a statement, "the work is far from over."

"The plastic pollution crisis continues to engulf the world and we have just a few months left before the end of year deadline agreed upon in 2022," she added.

At the negotiations in Canada, the Philippines took a strong position supporting the global reduction of plastic production, looking to science for guidance.

The country's position, published on the United Nations Environmental Program website, began with, "The Philippines believes that the international legal binding instrument must be guided by science."

It also cited scientific studies including the US national government's Lawrence Berkley laboratory, the Grid Arendal, and inputs of the Scientists' Coalition for an Effective Plastics Treaty that said it will be impossible to achieve the 1.5°C limit set in the Paris Agreement of 2015 "if there are no reductions in primary plastic polymer production."

"The latest study by the US national laboratory shows that about 75% of the greenhouse gas emissions from plastics happen even before the production of polymers," the Philippine statement continued.

Pointing to scientific studies that said reducing plastic production is the most effective scenario to prevent the ballooning of plastic pollution by 2060, the Philippines said, "we believe that a reduction of primary plastic polymers, global aggregate targets, and national phase-down schedules are essential elements for sustainable production and consumption under the international legally binding instrument."

"Let us heed the warnings of the world's scientists," it added.

The Philippine delegation was led by Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) undersecretary Jose Miguel Cuna. He was joined by DENR's chief of climate change service Albert Magalang and chief of legal research and opinion division, Rosette S. Ferrer.

Greenpeace Philippines has lauded the Philippines' position, saying, "We believe that the country is signaling that it is joining the call for an ambitious treaty that will put an end to plastic pollution."

Greenpeace Philippines zero waste campaigner Marian Ledesma added, "Greenpeace commends the government's position on plastic reduction, which calls for 1) the reduction of primary plastic polymers, 2) global aggregate targets, and 3) national phase-down schedules. With this stance, we believe that the country is signaling that it is joining the call for an ambitious treaty that will put an end to plastic pollution."

A recent survey by the non-profit, conducted in 19 countries in February showed the Philippines topping the list of respondents who say the Global Plastics Treaty must ban single-use plastic packaging (88%). It also tied with Indonesian respondents at 97% in saying the treaty should include targets that oblige governments and corporations to transition away from single-use plastic.

At 94%, Filipinos are also the most concerned about health effects of plastics on their loved ones.

While the negotiations ended without agreement on a proposal to consider sustainable plastic production limits, the countries agreed to analyze how to identify hazardous plastic chemicals in products and problematic plastic products, how to re-design plastic packaging and how to finance efforts to tackle plastic pollution.

The fifth and final round of negotiations will take place in Busan, South Korea in November.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

[Recovering our lost greenery](#)

By: Segundo Eclar Romero

The Philippines is facing scorching heat fueled by El Niño and worsening climate change. Last Sunday, the heat index was “dangerous” at 43 degrees Celsius in Manila but “extremely dangerous” at 53 degrees Celsius in Iba, Zambales. We are advised by the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical, and Astronomical Services Administration that at these temperatures, heat cramps and heat exhaustion are likely and heat stroke is probable or even imminent. The heat is significantly worse in urban areas because of the heat island effect—the condition where areas characterized by extensive surfaces covered with asphalt, concrete, and tiles absorb and retain heat from the sun, leading to higher temperatures.

The usual escape tactic of Filipinos is to go to the heat “bomb shelters”—air-conditioned malls, clearly an unsatisfactory palliative solution. One of the critical ways to reverse the degradation of our environment and the larger threats of climate change is to put ourselves in a combat frame of mind. We must win back lost territory space by space, meter by meter. One tangible way of doing this is greening our cities. The best way to do this is to reclaim, expand, protect, and sustain our urban green spaces.

Urban green spaces are the lungs of our cities. Traditionally, parks, playgrounds, gardens, and public green areas were the mainstays of urban green spaces. Now, the definition embraces everything from street trees and bioswales (meaning, planted medians that filter rainwater) to green roofs and vertical gardens. Even vacant lots can be transformed into community gardens.

The key weapon in reclaiming lost greenery is innovation. The first task is innovation in acquisition. Cities are getting creative with land acquisition. Public-private partnerships and land banking strategies help secure spaces, while innovative financing mechanisms like green bonds raise funds for green infrastructure.

The second task is innovation in design. Multifunctional green spaces are the trend. Parks with community gardens, rainwater harvesting features, and dog parks cater to diverse needs. Pocket parks in underutilized areas maximize green space in dense neighborhoods.

The third task is innovation in maintenance. Low-maintenance native plants (like the “designer” street trees of Marikina) and community involvement in upkeep reduce costs and foster a sense of ownership.

Retrofitting urban green spaces is second best to designing urban green spaces into master plans. Urban green spaces should no longer be afterthoughts. They should be incorporated into master plans from the get-go, ensuring a well-connected network of green corridors throughout the city.

An important niche for urban green spaces is transit-oriented development. Green spaces should be integrated with public transport hubs, encouraging walking and cycling, creating a healthier and more vibrant urban environment. Lately, there has been a surge in the construction of new highways and skyways in Metro Manila. Couldn't all this concrete been designed to incorporate green space features?

Recovering our lost greenery

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An important niche for urban green spaces is transit-oriented development. Green spaces should be integrated with public transport hubs, encouraging walking and cycling, creating a healthier and more vibrant urban environment. Lately, there has been a surge in the construction of new highways and skyways in Metro Manila. Couldn't all this concrete been designed to incorporate green space features?

Now that the Pasig River Expressway project has been abandoned, could that space now be transformed into an urban green corridor, an esplanade similar to the Iloilo River Esplanade or the Marikina River Park? Also, the huge reclamation projects in Manila Bay and the construction of the new Manila International Airport in Bulacan present potential opportunities and challenges for creating new urban green spaces.

It is not enough that we grow urban green spaces. We must ensure they are inclusive. First, this means creating green spaces in underserved communities and prioritizing projects with high social impact. Oftentimes, the best we can do is pocket parks, but small as they are, they can be an oasis in the desert.

Second, program diverse uses for green spaces like fitness classes, farmers markets, and cultural events make green spaces vibrant community hubs. The same green space can be stretched to serve an unbelievable number and types of people—

playgrounds with rubberized surfaces to delight children, while quiet paths lined with benches cater to those seeking solace.

City authorities often prioritize issues with tangible consequences, like floods and waste management. Heat, however, receives less attention. The public often fails to connect the urban heat island effect, intensified by concrete jungles, to the loss of green spaces. Philippine cities can transform from heat traps into thriving urban oases. The scorching heat may be top of mind during extreme weather events, but proactive planning and a collective effort can ensure a cooler, more livable future for all Filipinos.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

[G7 reaches deal to shut down coal plants by 2035](#)

The Group of Seven energy ministers on Monday pledged to close their coal plants by 2035 at the latest, potentially setting a global example for fighting the climate crisis, media outlets reported.

“We do have an agreement to phase out coal in the first half of the 2030s,” Andrew Bowie, a UK minister at the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, told Italy’s Class CNBC television in Turin where they are meeting.

“This is, by the way a historic agreement, something that we weren’t able to achieve at COP28 in Dubai last year,” he added, referring to the UN climate change conference.

“So, to have the G7 nations come around the table to send that signal to the world -- that we, the advanced economies of the world are committed to phasing out coal by the early 2030s -- is quite incredible,” he added.

The ministers attending are expected to finalize the agreement on Tuesday, according to Italian Energy Minister Gilberto Pichetto Fratin.

The US State Department declined to discuss the reported agreement.

The Biden administration last week unveiled landmark regulations aimed at reducing harmful emissions from power plants, requiring coal and new natural gas facilities to capture or cut 90 percent of their climate pollutants by 2032.

The rules are forecast to slash carbon dioxide emissions from the sector by 75 percent compared to 2005 levels.

They would go into effect if Biden wins reelection this fall. If his rival, Donald Trump, wins a return to the Oval Office, the former president has vowed to end programs to fight global warming, which he has called a “hoax.”

SUNSTAR

[Senator lauds women eco warriors fighting climate change](#)

Filipino women play vital roles in the fight against climate change and building resilient communities.

Throughout history, women have been at the forefront of ecological protection and sustainability, Senate President Pro Tempore Loren Legarda said during her keynote speech at the “Filipina Changemakers: Champion for Climate Resilience Forum” at the Senate building in Pasay City on Monday.

“From grassroots activists to policymakers, women have played pivotal roles in championing sustainable practices and policies that promote climate resilience,” Legarda said. “Any climate adaptation plan should recognize that while women are uniquely attuned to the needs of their communities, they are also the most vulnerable to climate disasters.”

She cited the achievements of farmers Nida Collado San Vicente, Palawan and Mila Bongalbal of Tiwi, Albay.

They won in last year’s Philippine Resilience Awards for their works in sustainable forest management and resilient food systems, respectively.

Collado is the president of the Macatumbalen Community Based Forest and Coastal Management Association while Bongalbal heads the Joroan Farmers and Fisherfolks Association.

“Both are proof that gender is not a barrier to leadership and that women have a unique perspective to offer,” Legarda said. “From farmers implementing sustainable practices to activists advocating for clean energy, Filipina changemakers are driving innovation and inspiring change.”

Thus, Legarda said women must be empowered as climate actors and given access to education and resources to ensure that they are heard and their contributions valued.

“Let us reaffirm our commitment to creating a world where women and girls are given the chance to realize their potential. If we do this, together, we can build a more sustainable and resilient future for all,” Legarda said.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

[PAGASA: Up to two cyclones likely in Philippines this May](#)

By: Gaea Katreena Cabico

The Philippines may see up to two tropical cyclones develop or enter its area of responsibility this May, the state weather bureau said on Wednesday as unusually hot weather continues to grip the country.

“One or two cyclones are possible to form or enter the Philippine Area of Responsibility this month,” PAGASA weather specialist Rhea Torres said.

The weather agency forecasts two possible cyclone tracks. One possible typhoon track could see a storm approach the Philippine landmass before moving away.

If a cyclone is formed in the eastern section of Mindanao, it may traverse Eastern Visayas, Bicol region, MIMAROPA, and CALABARZON before exiting into the West Philippine Sea, and recurve away from the land.

Torres, however, noted that there are no cyclones expected to affect the Philippines until next week.

Extreme heat exacerbated by the El Niño phenomenon and climate change has forced schools in the Philippines to suspend in-person classes. PAGASA earlier said that the exceptionally hot weather is expected to persist until mid-May.

Global temperatures hit record highs last year, with the World Meteorological Organization highlighting a particularly rapid warming trend across Asia.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

BUSINESS MIRROR

[\[Opinion\] Extreme weather](#)

By: Mark Villar

The extreme heat we are experiencing now is a reminder that we can no longer ignore the dangers posed by climate change.

We may not yet be in a situation to declare the adage that desperate times call for desperate measures, but we should, perhaps, start treating the extreme weather phenomenon more seriously before it completely alters our way of life.

The hot weather has already affected the schooling of our children. Schools in several areas in the country have suspended in-person classes because of the searing heat outdoor. Manila Mayor Honey Lacuna-Pangan, for instance, announced the suspension of face-to-face classes on all levels in public and private schools in Manila on April 25 to April 26.

The El Niño phenomenon has exacerbated the dry weather at this time of the year. And it may get worse. Per Ana Solis, a chief climatologist at the state weather forecaster, there's a 50 percent chance of the heat intensifying in the coming days because of El Niño, adding that around half of the country's provinces are officially in drought.

The hot weather and the prolonged dry spell will come to an end around late June. The onset of the rainy season in July will bring relief to every Filipino, including our farmers who have struggled against the hot weather.

The rainy season, however, will bring new problems in the form of floods and other disasters that will challenge state resources. Fortunately, the administration of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. and the private sectors are aware of the situation by agreeing to work together to address the problems caused by climate change.

Climate Change Commission Secretary Robert Borje stressed the effects of climate change in the country and the increased intensity of typhoons, which cost the Philippines P673.30 billion from 2011 to 2021.

"Climate change intersects with various social, economic, and ecosystem challenges, exacerbating issues such as poverty, inequality, and biodiversity loss. Businesses face

disruptions in operations, supply chains, and increased costs due to disasters, ultimately leading to economic instability and job loss,” says Borje.

I will leave the task of dealing with climate change and extreme weather to the experts and the ICC. I trust their expertise in finding solutions to this worldwide dilemma.

But on a personal note, I believe sustainable infrastructure will help the Philippines in dealing with climate change. I share the sentiment of UN General Assembly President Dennis Francis, who stressed the critical need for resilient infrastructure to meet the challenge of extreme weather.

“Quality, reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure—including regional and transborder infrastructure—is important to sustain trade and commerce, facilitate effective transportation, connect us to virtual grids, maintain energy flows and make populations safer against natural hazards,” he said.

Mr. Francis cited shocking failures such as the collapse of the Francis Scott Key Bridge in Baltimore, Maryland. He pointed out the extensive economic impact of such disasters, affecting national and global supply chains.

Transport infrastructure should withstand both human-induced and natural disasters exacerbated by climate change, he added.

On the local front, the government is taking small but sure steps in the battle against climate change. I am referring to the Edsa Greenways Project that will encourage walking, while promoting the use of public transportation.

The \$140-million Edsa Greenways Project is a five-kilometer covered elevated walkway along Edsa at the MRT-3 Balintawak, Cubao, Guadalupe and Taft stations.

Per the Asian Development Bank, the project aims to improve the pedestrian environment along the four rail stations, noting that existing pedestrian facilities on Edsa are poorly designed, uncomfortable and unsafe.

Elevators will be attached to the elevated walkways to address the needs of the elderly, women, persons with disabilities, and people traveling with small children, according to Department of Transportation Undersecretary Timothy John Batan.

The project will also focus on achieving travel time savings of at least 45 seconds for each pedestrian, expanding the number of pedestrians, removal of conflicts of pedestrians and traffic at grade level, and reduction of pedestrian accidents and injuries.

The simple act of walking towards these safe rail stations promotes zero emission transport. Initiatives like the EDSA Greenways Project are baby steps but they are part and parcel of the fight against climate change and extreme weather.

[PHL, Germany bolster climate action with €36.8-M TRANSCEND project](#)

The German Development Cooperation (GIZ) and Climate Change Commission (CCC) will boost local capacities in effecting climate change and biodiversity policies.

Both announced on April 15 the soft launch of the €36.8-million (P2.35 billion) Transformative Actions for Climate and Ecological Protection and Development (TRANSCEND) project.

The foreign-assisted project aims to ensure transparent, integrated and accountable implementation of climate projects across all levels of society in the Philippines, while soliciting and mediating coordination among involved entities.

According to GIZ's indicative timeline, the TRANSCEND project main launch is set in August this year, following the signing of the project's Implementation agreement.

“Germany and the Philippines are partners who share the same values, and work hand-in-hand to strengthen the rule base of the national order in Europe, in Southeast Asia, and everywhere in the world where [danger exists],” said Dr. Andreas Pfaffernoschke, who is Germany's ambassador to the Philippines. “We have a lot in common: We are reliable partners, and today's soft launching event is another milestone in our partnership.”

“Climate change poses many challenges, and has differentiated impacts on sectors and disproportionate effects on others,” CCC vice chair and executive director Robert Borje in his welcome remarks at the recent soft launch. “Working with Germany on the TRANSCEND project, we can focus on maximizing and optimizing collaboration and cooperation between and among government agencies, CSOs and the private sector in pushing for a climate-smart and climate-resilient Philippines. This is the call of our time: a truly whole of society and whole of world approach to address climate change and its impacts.”

Outlined to support the Philippines in achieving its “National Adaptation Plan” and “Nationally Distributed Contributions Implementation Plan,” TRANSCEND is calibrated to work and assist in key climate intervention areas as identified in the two framework documents.

This includes the protection, conservation and rehabilitation of biodiversity as well as natural carbon sinks, securing of investments to leverage on private-sector funds and jumpstart transition to a low-carbon economy and create green jobs, synergizing of

adaptation and mitigation strategies for effective carbon reduction, avoidance and sequestration of carbon emissions, and establishment of multi-stakeholder decision-support systems at all levels of government to enhance transparency and accelerate transformative evidence-based policies.

“This project allows us to coherently synergize our efforts toward a low-carbon and biodiversity-friendly future through improved coordination, fortified partnerships, and maximum impact of our resources.” said Environment Secretary Ma. Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga who was represented by Assistant Secretary Noralene Uy.

TRANSCEND, according to the secretary, will catalyze positive change, promoting “integrated, transparent, and accountable” efforts to safeguard the environment for present and future generations.

For Borje, the national government must continue to collaborate with partners, particularly with Germany: “While the work ahead of us is still long and still requires...hard work, there is a sense of hope, and there is a sense of renewal.”

He added that, “pondered upon, it’s going to power the partnership that we currently have from 70 years to beyond.”

CCC continues to actively seek effective and robust local and global linkages as part of its commitment to enhance the country’s capacity to mitigate and adapt to the changing climate, and to usher in a new era of national climate resiliency.

The TRANSCEND project is deeply aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG 13 (Climate Action), SDG 15 (Life on Land), and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) by focusing on enhancing climate resilience, biodiversity conservation, and fostering ties for effective implementation.

The initiative holds much significance for both the Philippine and German governments, as it marks another chapter of the Philippine-German diplomatic relationship since its inception 70 years ago.

GMA NEWS

PAGASA: More parts of PH to have danger-level heat index in May

More parts of the Philippines may have to endure the blistering heat as state weather bureau PAGASA forecasted the heat index spiking between 45°C and 54.8°C in May.

According to a "24 Oras" report by Maki Pulido on Tuesday, several areas in the country will experience an additional 1°C to 14°C rise in temperature depending on the relative humidity, while temperatures in Metro Manila may also reach up to 52.3°C.

Based on PAGASA's heat index forecast, the number of areas under danger level may increase within the next week.

Extreme Temperature Forecasts for May also predicted that the whole country will have temperatures higher than 31°C.

"Expect na yung magnitude and or dami ng stations na nasa danger category [ay] madadagdagan pa, and yung temperature or yung heat index na may values ay maari ring magdagdagaan," said PAGASA Weather Specialist John Manalo.

(Expect that the magnitude or number of stations under the danger category [will] increase, and the temperature or heat index with values may also rise.)

Meanwhile, the Center for Energy Ecology and Development said that the extreme forecast should be treated as an "emergency situation."

"Emergency situation na to. Parang kung nasusunog bahay mo, hindi lang umiinit bahay mo, nasusunog na bahay mo... Ibig sabihin, extra-ordinary measures na dapat ang pantugon dito. Hindi na uubra yung mga band aid solutions, lalo na kung business as usual parin ang solusyon mo," said Gerry Arances, the groups, executive director..

(This is an emergency situation already. It's like a house on fire, it's not only hot, but burning. It means, extra-ordinary measures should be in place a response to this. Band aid solutions won't work any longer, especially if your solution is business as usual)

"Nagbibigay ng senyales ang ating mundo na something has to be done, and very alarming nga ito," added Climate Change Commission vice chair and executive director Robert Borje.

(Our world is sending signs that something has to be done, and this is very alarming)

Following the effects of the El Niño, PAGASA said that the country will also experience La Niña.

At least 14 typhoons are expected to enter the country starting June until October.

“Mas malaki chances na mag landfall siya during La Niña, pero yung lakas ng bagyo ay relatively weaker compared to those that have formed during El Niño,” said Manalo.

(There’s a bigger chance that it will landfall during La Niña, but the typhoons are relatively weaker compared to those that have formed during El Niño)

Heat index is the measure of the temperature that a person feels, which is different from the actual air temperature. It is computed by factoring in the humidity and the air temperature.

According to PAGASA, heat cramps and heat exhaustion are likely in areas experiencing a danger level heat index, which is from 42 to 51°C. Heat stroke is also possible with continued exposure.

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