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By: Marifi S. Jara

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By: Filane Mikee Cervantes

United States President Joe Biden on Monday (Washington, D.C. time) will send a "first of its kind" presidential trade and investment mission to the Philippines in a bid to promote broad-based economic growth.

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RAPPLER

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SUNSTAR

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The Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (Apec) Business Advisory Council (ABAC) endorsed ABAC Philippines' two key initiatives aimed at boosting sustainable development efforts in the region and beyond.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

[Marcos-Biden meet yields clean energy, environmental protection pledges](#)

By: Gaea Katreena Cabico

President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. and United States President Joe Biden committed to enhance the cooperation of Manila and Washington in addressing the climate crisis and investing in the transition to clean energy.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

DENR

[PH, Germany strengthen climate ties](#)

The Philippines and Germany have reaffirmed their commitment to enhance cooperation on climate, energy and biodiversity at the first-ever PH-German Climate Consultation held last April 18 in Makati City.

JOURNAL ONLINE

[3rd ASEZ WAO Environmental Forum Raises Awareness on Climate Change](#)

On April 30, 2023, ASEZ WAO conducted an Environmental Talk Concert with the theme "Are We Doing Well in Responding to Climate Change?" at the Church of God building in Las Pinas City, Metro Manila. The event was attended by about 500 participants, including government officials, office workers, and members of the Church of God.

THE MANILA TIMES

Rehabilitating Caliraya-Lumot watershed

THE National Power Corp. (Napocor) has signed a memorandum of agreement (MoA) with the Climate Change Commission (CCC) for the rehabilitation of some 25 hectares of denuded upland forest within the Caliraya-Lumot Watershed Forest Reserve in Laguna.

Information and Knowledge Management Division

AL ARABIYA

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For all the latest headlines follow our Google News channel online or via the app.

Here is a look at ten countries that are most affected by climate change.

Chad

The landlocked country in central Africa has suffered from repeated droughts, as well as flooding, that has become worse with climate change.

Repeated droughts have had “substantial impacts” on the country’s agricultural production and have affected up to 2.4 million people, according to the World Bank.

“Persistent drought has also aided in the acceleration of desertification in the northern part of the country, causing agro-pastoral areas to decline and livestock grazing areas to shift further south,” the World Bank said.

NASA has also predicted that Lake Chad in the south-west of the country could disappear in 20 years.

As well as being hit by drought, the country has also being hampered by floods.

“Unprecedented torrential rains in Chad since early August 2022 have caused significant damage to houses, key infrastructure and agricultural land in the capital, N’Djamena, and surrounding provinces,” the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent says on its website.

Nearly 750,000 people have been affected by the floods, the NGO said, putting communities at risk of water borne diseases such as cholera.

Bangladesh

The Asian country “continues to face severe and increasing climate risks,” the World Bank said near the end of 2022.

The average tropical cyclone that the country experiences every year costs the country around \$1 billion annually, and by 2050, a third of agricultural GDP could be lost and 13 million people could become internal climate migrants, the World Bank said.

By 2050 some 17 percent of the country could also be submerged by rising sea levels and leave 20 million people homeless, according to UN estimates.

Somalia

Somalia, situated in eastern Africa, is crippled by drought devastating the country's crop production and leading to years of failed harvests.

The country, which is grappling from famine as a result, is now seeing hundreds of thousands attempt to migrate or move to camps or cities or to neighboring Kenya or Ethiopia.

"Human-caused climate change has increased the frequency and severity of droughts, and decades of conflict have significantly eroded the country's ability to respond to crises," the International Rescue Committee said at the end of 2022.

Kenya

The country, like many affected by rising global temperatures, is also suffering from severe droughts.

The east African country is suffering from a loss of livestock while the country's drought management authority has designated 11 areas of the country at an "alarm stage" which means they are suffering the worst kind of drought emergency.

Kenya head of tourism also said that between February and October 2022, the country lost 205 elephants. The country also lost 512 gnus, 381 zebra, 12 giraffes and 51 buffalo.

"The adverse effects of climate change on human societies and the natural environment are unprecedented," the UN said in a blog post in 2023.

Haiti

Haiti is the most vulnerable country in Latin America and the Caribbean to climate change, according to Climate Links – a website set up for climate change information for USAID staff.

More than half of Haiti's population live in densely populated cities on the coast near floodplains and in areas susceptible to landslide. Deforestation in the country has increased the country's vulnerability to hurricanes and flooding, as well as increasing temperatures during Haiti's dry months, Climate Links said.

Increased rainfall variability is leading to more frequent intense flooding and drought, the UN said, adding that one in three Haitians does not have access to safe drinking water.

Kiribati

Kiribati is an island republic in the central Pacific that is made up of 33 atolls and islands that stretch along the equator.

The group of islands has experienced historical warming of between 0.1°C–0.2°C per decade since 1950.

Kiribati, which is home to around 100,000 people, sits just six feet above sea level and scientists believe that at some point this century these islands may become uninhabitable as ocean levels rise due to climate change, according to Human Rights Watch.

South Sudan

"The effects of climate change in South Sudan have led to unusually intense rains: flood waters have forced people from their homes, leaving them without sufficient food and water," Caroline Sekyewa, the International Rescue Committee (IRC) country director in South Sudan said in a statement on the NGOs website.

Floods in late 2022 and early 2023 affected more than 900,000 people and led to outbreaks of cholera and malaria, the IRC said.

Floods, combined with periods of severe drought in the country, have exacerbated food insecurity for many residents.

Ethiopia

A mixture of severe drought coupled with extreme flooding have increased poverty and food insecurity in the eastern Africa country.

For Ethiopia's pastoral and agro-pastoral communities in drought prone areas, increasing aridity and recurring drought conditions present the most significant climate-hazard, according to the World Bank.

India

India has now overtaken China to have the world's largest population at 1.4 billion and is one of the world's biggest greenhouse gas emitters.

A heat wave lasting for weeks in 2022 caused temperatures to soar above 110 degrees, with some areas hitting 115 degrees, according to the Climate Reality Project. Researchers found that between 2000 to 2004 and 2017 to 2021, India saw a 55 percent increase in deaths due to extreme heat.

The country is also facing widespread drought, as well as flooding, having a significant impact on agriculture and crop production in certain parts.

The Philippines

The Philippines, a set of islands in south-east Asia is "highly vulnerable" to the effects of climate change, according to Climate Links.

Climate risks to the islands include rising sea levels, increased frequency of extreme weather events and rising temperatures.

BUSINESS MIRROR

Batangas, Negros, Davao are next stops for JICA-backed disaster management program

By: Marifi S. Jara

LOCAL governments in the provinces of Batangas and Negros Occidental, and Davao City will be covered by the second phase of a disaster management enhancement program supported by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

In a statement on Tuesday, JICA said it recently met with the Office of Civil Defense (OCD) to start stage 2 of the Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and Management Capacity Enhancement Project.

“Our cooperation with the Philippines aims to elevate disaster resiliency starting from the local government level,” said Yanagiuchi Masanari, senior representative of JICA Philippines.

“While monitoring remains a challenge, the cooperation between OCD and other related agencies in harmonizing guidelines on the formulation of DRR plans is equally important in order to promote proper disaster planning for local government units,” he said.

The first phase of the program intended to boost the Philippines’ disaster resiliency against climate change involved the development of guidelines on using hazard information and risk assessment, and disaster plans based on disaster risk information were developed.

Monitoring and evaluation, and capacity development were rolled out in selected local governments in Laguna and Bohol.

JICA said the cooperation with OCD localizes the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 adopted by United Nations member countries, which highlights the critical role of local governments in disaster management.

“We are already seeing the harsh impact of climate change through the intensity of natural disasters, such as increasing human casualties and economic losses. It’s therefore becoming more important to ensure that local government units are able to incorporate the risks and right information in disaster planning since they are in the frontlines when disasters happen,” Mr. Yanagiuchi said.

Philippine government data show that the country’s economic losses from natural disasters reached P463 billion from 2010-2019.

CNN

[ADB: ASEAN nations need at least \\$184-B infra investments yearly for economic growth](#)

Members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) must invest at least \$184 billion annually in infrastructure to meet their economic goals and respond to climate change, according to the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

In a report released on Tuesday, the ADB said this translates to investments totaling at least \$2.8 trillion from 2023 to 2030.

“Rapid economic development, urbanization, and population growth in the (Asian) region have resulted in an ever-widening gap between current spending and finances required to meet the increasing demand for infrastructure,” the regional bank said.

“Closing the infrastructure gap is critical for ASEAN plus the People’s Republic of China, Japan, and the Republic of Korea (ASEAN+3) to fulfill their commitments toward Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), improve competitiveness, and address environmental challenges,” its report also read.

The ADB noted that its estimates do not yet cover extra expenditures linked to disasters and extreme weather events that increasingly affect existing infrastructure in the Philippines and the rest of Southeast Asia.

Meanwhile, for the Asia and Pacific region, the bank said an investment of \$13.8 trillion or \$1.7 trillion yearly is needed until 2030 to meet its social infrastructure requirements over the next 15 years.

According to the ADB, private sector participation is key in narrowing the financing gap, as it noted that constrained public finances due to higher energy costs and reallocation of funds have further cut government spending on infrastructure development.

The bank added that innovative financing mechanisms can help in injecting much-needed capital.

“Innovative financing mechanisms are needed to attract private and institutional capital — along with public funds — to fund critical infrastructure that will create jobs and generate revenue for local economies,” ADB Managing Director General Woonchong Um said.

“A conducive policy and regulatory framework must be built to reduce risk, offer credit enhancements and de-risking facilities, and provide investment opportunities for all stakeholders to collaborate,” he added.

GMA NEWS

Marcos, Biden vow to expand collaboration on renewable energy production

By: Anna Felicia Bajo

President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. and United States President Joe Biden reaffirmed their commitment to undertake urgent action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions as the two leaders commit to expand collaboration on renewable energy production.

This as the two leaders recognized that the climate crisis poses an existential threat to the world, noting that the Philippines is vulnerable to the effects of climate change.

"They resolve to expand collaboration on renewable energy production to accelerate the clean energy transition while bringing down energy costs and expanding energy access for families," the joint statement of the two leaders read.

"The leaders hail progress in negotiating a US-Philippines civil nuclear cooperation agreement ("123 agreement"). The United States and the Philippines will also pursue an ambitious program of cooperation on wind, solar, and geothermal energy, while enhancing cooperation on reducing greenhouse gas emissions from the waste, road, and shipping sectors," it added.

Marcos and Biden met at the White House and had a bilateral meeting aimed at improving ties between the two countries.

They further resolved "to expand cooperation on environmental protections, including enhanced domain awareness, marine conservation, and protecting coastal areas from environmental degradation."

They also pledged to promote increased cooperation and knowledge sharing between Manila and Washington through the Science and Technology Agreement (STA), and the leaders also welcomed US plans to establish an Open-RAN Interoperability Lab in Manila.

MANILA BULLETIN

[CHR supports DepEd's blended, alternative learning modes to protect students](#)

By: Czarina Nicole Ong Ki

The Commission on Human Rights (CHR) has expressed full support to the Department of Education (DepEd) which gave schools the option to apply blended and alternative delivery modes (ADM) of learning to protect students from natural disasters and extreme climate conditions.

It cited DepEd's Order No. 037 -- the Guidelines on the Cancellation or Suspension of Classes and Work in Schools in the Event of Natural Disasters, Power Outages/Power Interruptions, and Other Calamities -- issued last April 26 which emphasized to school heads and directors that extremely high temperatures fall within the parameters of immediately canceling classes or transitioning to ADM.

It expressed full support as it cited a study conducted by the International Labor Organization in 2019 that extreme temperatures due to climate change have become a safety hazard for those living in climate change-vulnerable countries.

It noted that DepEd has already endorsed the return to face-to-face classes for both public and private schools, with it being optional for private schools, since there are educational and socio-emotional benefits when children have direct interactions with fellow students and their teachers.

But given the extreme heat being experienced all throughout the country this summer, DepEd took action and gave schools the option to apply blended and ADM of learning, it said.

The CHR said that DepEd displayed "commendable responsiveness and adaptiveness" especially after there were reports of students who experienced heat-related health issues.

There was even a case in Laguna during the last week of March when dozens of students fainted due to heat exhaustion as they stayed outdoors for their school's fire and earthquake drills, it said.

"As the country's independent national human rights institution, CHR supports DepEd's decision to pursue blended and ADM learning to promote a safe learning environment for children pursuant to the Convention on the Rights of a Child, and a safe working environment for faculty and staff in line with international labor standards, such as the Occupational Safety and Health Convention of 1981," it also said.

"Further, CHR appreciates how DepEd left this decision at the discretion of school heads, acknowledging that each school may have different experiences and capacities in dealing with the dry season heat," it added.

However, the CHR reminded DepEd that there still are "persisting gaps" in the distance learning component of blended learning that should be addressed. Poor students are at a disadvantage when blended learning is applied since they do not have access to decent-performing gadgets, stable internet, and other resources, it said.

"Their home environments were barely conducive for attending online classes and accomplishing school work. And in working to make ends meet, their family members could not afford to supervise and provide supplementary guidance and lessons in remote learning setups," it noted.

The CHR called on DepEd and its development partners to strengthen their assistance and programs for low-income families and marginalized groups in order to prevent the widening of social inequalities.

In doing so, the CHR said DepEd can focus next on long-term solutions to the impacts of climate change.

Some teachers' organizations have already suggested the construction of climate-resilient classrooms and the improvement of classroom-learner and teacher-student ratios to create better learning and working environments for all people engaging in face-to-face learning sessions, it added.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

[Biden to Marcos: I can't think of a better partner to have than you](#)

By: Daphne Galvez

Amid the challenges being faced in the current times, US President Joe Biden said he could not think of a better partner to have than President Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr.

He issued the remark in his opening statement before the two leaders held a bilateral meeting in the White House.

“You know, when we met in New York last year, you told me that — that a strong alliance has to continue, quote — I’m using your phrase — “to evolve as we face the challenges of this new century.” And we are facing new challenges. And I can’t think of any better partner to have than you,” Biden told Marcos.

Biden said among areas of cooperation that the US and the Philippines have are climate change, clean energy, and shared democratic values, workers’ rights and the rule of law.

“Together, we’re deepening our economic cooperation, which is going to continue to deepen and I think is mutually beneficial,” he said.

The US President said he will send a “first-of-its-kind” presidential trade and investment mission to the Philippines.

Biden also reaffirmed the US’ “ironclad” commitment to the defense of the Philippines, including the South China Sea.

He added that the US will continue to support the Philippines’ military modernization goals.

“Our countries not only share a strong partnership, we share a deep friendship — one that has been enriched by millions of Filipino Americans in the communities all across the United States of America,” the US President said.

El Niño Watch: Alert raised; Pagasa predicts hotter days from June to August

By: Jean Mngaluz

The weather bureau raised an El Niño Alert Tuesday, forecasting dry conditions in the Philippines from June to August until early 2024, upgrading from its prior El Niño Watch.

“Recent conditions and model forecasts indicate that El Niño may emerge in the coming season (June-July-August) at 80% probability and may persist until the first quarter of 2024. With this development, the Pagasa El Niño Southern Oscillation (Enso) Alert and Warning System is now raised to El Niño alert,” said the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical, and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) state meteorologists.

According to Pagasa’s website, it’s just one level below the actual El Niño.

“El Niño increases the likelihood of below-normal rainfall conditions, which could have negative impacts (such as dry spells and droughts) in some areas of the country,” said Pagasa.

The El Niño Phenomenon is the warm phase of Enso, and it is defined by sea surface temperatures warmer than average in the central and eastern equatorial Pacific, explained Pagasa.

“All concerned government agencies and the general public are encouraged to keep monitoring and take precautionary measures against the impending impacts of El Niño,” said the state weather bureau.

Different parts of the country have already experienced high heat indexes, with the hottest index measured since March is 49 degrees Celsius in Guiuan, Eastern Samar, on April 16.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

[Biden to send 'first of its kind' presid'l trade mission to PH](#)

By: Filane Mikee Cervantes

United States President Joe Biden on Monday (Washington, D.C. time) will send a "first of its kind" presidential trade and investment mission to the Philippines in a bid to promote broad-based economic growth.

Biden announced this initiative following the bilateral meeting with President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. in Washington, D.C.

The mission is expected to enhance US companies' investment in the Philippines' innovation economy, clean energy transition and critical minerals sector. It would also feature the highest caliber of US business leaders.

Biden underscored the "strong partnership" and "deep friendship" between the Philippines and the US that has been "enriched by millions of Filipino-Americans and the communities all across the United States."

Biden also committed to step up America's support in a wide range of issues, including climate change mitigation and economy.

"We're tackling climate change, we're accelerating our countries' chances... and we're standing up for our shared democratic values and workers' rights... and together we're deepening our economic cooperation," Biden told Marcos.

Both leaders have agreed to deepen collaboration to fight climate change, expand clean energy production and protect the environment.

In a joint statement, Marcos and Biden particularly reaffirmed to undertake urgent action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, as well as expand renewable energy production to accelerate the clean energy transition while bringing down energy costs and expanding energy access for families.

Marcos thanked Biden for America's assistance and sought to strengthen "alliances and partnership in the face of the new economy that we are facing post-pandemic."

During Monday's Oval Office meeting, the two leaders reviewed opportunities to deepen economic cooperation and promote inclusive prosperity, expand both nations' special people-to-people ties, invest in the clean energy transition and address the climate crisis and ensure respect for human rights.

The leaders also discussed regional matters and coordinate efforts to uphold international law and promote a free and open Indo-Pacific.

Philippine Cabinet officials and their US counterparts also held a meeting with Marcos and Biden in an expanded bilateral meeting in the White House.

Among the Philippine officials who attended the expanded bilateral meeting include National Security Adviser Eduardo Año; Defense Secretary Carlito Galvez Jr.; Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Antonia Yulo Loyzaga; Trade and Industry Secretary Alfredo Pascual; Department of Information and Communications Technology Secretary Ivan John Uy; Justice Secretary Jesus Crispin Remulla; Migrant Workers Department Secretary Maria Susana “Toots” Ople and Foreign Affairs Secretary Enrique Manalo.

Marcos is also set to visit the Pentagon and meet Cabinet executives and business leaders during his stay in Washington.

Trade mission to boost economy

Speaker Ferdinand Martin G. Romualdez described the historic meeting between Marcos and Biden as a picture of a brighter and stronger future for US-Philippines relations, which raises new hope for the country’s economic growth.

“We have found a wellspring of new hope for the Filipino people as President Biden and President Marcos Jr. discuss plans for a brighter future together. With a first-ever presidential trade and investment mission on the horizon, the Philippines can expect job creation and economic growth,” Romualdez said in a statement.

“It is a promising partnership for progress and prosperity. What will follow is renewed confidence in the Philippines when it comes to investments, not only from the United States but from the rest of the world as well. This is a powerful message, seeing the two leaders discuss prosperity for our people,” he added.

The House leader’s optimism was due to the positive outcome of the bilateral meeting between Marcos and Biden at the White House to reaffirm and further bolster the enduring relations between the two countries.

“This high-level trade and investment mission from the US will add more momentum to sustain our country’s economic growth and help establish the Philippines as a hub for investments and as a regional supply chain hub,” Romualdez noted.

“Such bilateral economic engagement with the US will not only generate more jobs and business opportunities for our people but, more importantly, it would focus on sectors critical to ensuring a resilient supply chain to avert the recurrence of serious disruptions that wreaked havoc in the economies of many countries in the past few years,” he added.

As for the House of Representatives, Romualdez said they will do everything to pass legislation that will allow and encourage the free facilitation of the trade investments that will result from the US presidential trade mission.

“This is our mandate and promise to the Filipino people: we will make sure that whatever investments we shall obtain from this mission shall find fertile ground in our economy. We will ensure that these will benefit millions of Filipino citizens,” he said.

Breaching climate goals could be 'disastrous', UN chief warns

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on Tuesday called on governments to keep their pledge and act against climate change.

"The International Panel on Climate Change tells us that breaching 1.5 degrees, even temporarily, could be disastrous," he told the Petersberg Climate Dialogue meeting via video link.

Guterres warned that the temperatures are set to rise 2.8 degrees by the end of the century if countries maintain their present policies.

He called for closer cooperation to end dependence on fossil fuel, and underlined that industrialized nations should deliver on their promises and provide financial support to less developed countries to invest in clean energy.

"The climate crisis demands honesty. We can only solve problems if we name them and look them squarely in the eye," Guterres said.

"The truth is, on climate, we know what to do, when to do it, and why. But for too long, we have looked the other way," he added.

Germany is hosting the two-day climate conference, which brings representatives from around 40 countries, to discuss concrete steps toward overcoming the climate crisis.

The conference aims at preparing the ground for successful negotiations at the COP28 Climate Change Conference in the United Arab Emirates later this year.

RAPPLER

[World Bank launches more robust, transparent business climate rankings](#)

The World Bank on Monday, May 1, unveiled new methodology and improved safeguards for assessing the business climate in up to 180 countries after embarrassing revelations of data irregularities and favoritism toward China forced it to cancel its flagship rankings two years ago.

The bank scrapped its “Doing Business” rankings in September 2021, citing internal audits and an independent probe that found senior World Bank leaders had pressured staff to alter data to favor China. It cited data irregularities that also boosted rankings of other countries, including Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Azerbaijan.

A pilot edition of the new replacement annual series called “Business Ready” will be published in the spring of 2024, covering an initial group of 54 economies in Asia, Latin America, Europe, the Middle East, and Sub-Saharan Africa, the bank said.

More countries will be added in the next two years as the bank refines its methodology and ramps up the new project, which aims to help countries attract investment and boost jobs and productivity to accelerate development.

“Business Ready’...reflects a more balanced and transparent approach toward evaluating a country’s business and investment climate,” the bank said in a statement.

World Bank Chief Economist Indermit Gill said the new approach enabled “a fuller and sharper measure of the investment climate of countries,” something he said was badly needed in a global economy in the midst of a generalized slowdown.

“Business Ready” was shaped by recommendations from World Bank experts, governments, the private sector, and civil society groups, and includes for the first time worker rights, as defined by the International Labour Organization, while acknowledging that regulation can also have positive aspects.

“The main thing that went wrong was the data integrity of ‘Doing Business’ was compromised,” Norman Loayza, director of the World Bank’s Indicators Group, which leads the project, told Reuters. “The main point for us is that we need to ensure data integrity and we have a very comprehensive approach to do that.”

Data transparency

To ensure full transparency, Loayza said the bank would publish all collected data – raw data, scores, and the calculations used to obtain the scores – from private sector contributors, as well as from surveys of entrepreneurs, company owners, and managers.

The bank will also make available the tools needed by outsiders to replicate the results of the data assessments.

But World Bank officials were still debating whether to revive the business climate rankings that were at the heart of the “Doing Business” controversy or produce an overall index, Loayza said, with a decision expected prior to the first report.

Loayza said that while the rankings were criticized for encouraging political pressure to try to lift country scores, they also helped spur nearly 4,000 regulatory reforms in developing and developed economies over the past two decades.

He said the new project focuses on 10 topics covering the life cycle of a firm, including business entry, utility services, labor, dispute resolution, market competition, taxation, and insolvency – another move aimed at addressing criticism of the earlier product.

“We take into account not only the perspective of the private entrepreneur, but also the perspective of workers, consumers, and other market participants,” he said, citing the inclusion of factors such as worker safety, environmental sustainability, and market competition.

To lay out the new approach, the bank published two key documents: a Business Ready Manual and Guide, specifying detailed protocols and safeguards, including how the bank interacts with governments and lines of approval, as well as a methodology handbook on its indicators and scoring methodology.

SUNSTAR

[ABAC Philippines gains support on pathways toward low carbon economies](#)

The Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (Apec) Business Advisory Council (ABAC) endorsed ABAC Philippines' two key initiatives aimed at boosting sustainable development efforts in the region and beyond.

During the second ABAC meeting in Brunei Darussalam from April 27 to 30, Aboitiz's Chief Reputation and Sustainability Officer Ginggay Hontiveros, representing ABAC Philippine and Aboitiz Group CEO Sabin Aboitiz, presented two work plans focused on developing a free and accessible climate risk data and analysis platform, and exploring the viability of nuclear energy through small modular reactors (SMR) and emerging technology as a zero-carbon energy source.

"These plans reflect our commitment to enabling the transition to low-carbon economies and combating the damaging effects of climate change. Through these initiatives, we aim to develop sustainable and equitable energy solutions within the Asia-Pacific region and beyond," Aboitiz Group President and Chief Executive Officer Sabin M. Aboitiz said.

Aboitiz, a member of ABAC Philippines, is vice-chair of the ABAC Sustainable Growth Working Group (SGWG), focused on promoting effective climate change response, advancing the low-carbon energy transition, and addressing sustainable processes in the food value chain.

As part of its role in decarbonization, the ABAC SGWG recognizes the potential of nuclear energy as a driver of the energy transition based on its high return on investment and weather independence. SMRs are advanced compact nuclear reactors that have a fraction of the generating power capacity of traditional nuclear reactors. They can be scaled up or down to help meet energy demands and address energy security. In this regard, ABAC Philippines, together with ABAC Canada will convene an experts roundtable in June to scope the prospects for nuclear, including other use cases such as medical technology and life sciences.

"It will require all available technologies as we embark on this energy transition pathway in the Philippines. Promising technologies such as SMRs can be a viable power source for an equitable and sustainable energy system," Aboitiz added.

The working group also seeks to develop a climate risk information database and platform, which will help economies to assess the gaps, enhance climate risk assessment capabilities and strengthen climate resilience. Improving availability and

accessibility of climate information also enables SMEs to be more integrated into the environmental, social and governance (ESG) framework.

ABAC Philippines is working towards building a cooperative network with other APEC economies and strengthening collaboration with the APEC Energy Working Group. The group recommended establishing a multi-year work program on nuclear energy and integrating climate risk information into the planning process of APEC economies. These plans also garnered support from seven Asean members in APEC during the ABAC-Asean Caucus held on April 28 at the sidelines of ABAC II.

Focusing on the theme "Equity, Sustainability, and Opportunity," ABAC Philippines will host the third meeting or ABAC III at the Nustar Convention Center in Cebu City that is expected to gather over 200 senior business executives and guests from the 21 APEC economies.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

[Marcos-Biden meet yields clean energy, environmental protection pledges](#)

By: Gaea Katreena Cabico

President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. and United States President Joe Biden committed to enhance the cooperation of Manila and Washington in addressing the climate crisis and investing in the transition to clean energy.

Marcos met with Biden at the White House Monday to deepen the Philippines' relationship with the US, its traditional ally.

Aside from reaffirming their decades-old security alliance, the two countries also agreed to expand their collaboration on clean energy transition and environmental protection.

"The United States and the Philippines are deepening collaboration to fight climate change, expand clean energy production, and protect the environment," a release from the White House read.

Here are the agreements of Manila and Washington on clean energy and environmental protection, according to the White House:

Partnership on critical minerals

USAID will invest an additional \$5 million (P277.1 million) to support the increased production of processed minerals and expand downstream mineral industries in the Philippines such as the production of electric vehicle components and information and communications technologies (ICT) equipment, while improving governance standards in the mining industry.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources and the US Department of the Interior plan to partner on the identification of mineral commodity resources, and capacity-building on minerals governance.

The US Department of State will establish a technical cooperation with the Philippines to develop the country's nickel and copper resources "in a manner that promotes sustained economic growth and social benefit."

The Philippines is rich in minerals used in clean energy technologies such as chromium, cobalt, copper, nickel and silver. The extraction of minerals needed for renewable

energy technologies drives deforestation and the climate crisis, threatens water sources, and displaces people.

The Legal Rights and Natural Resources Center earlier said the Philippines needs a law on the management of minerals needed in the clean energy transition, and social and environmental justice should be the priority of that measure.

Green energy auctions

USAID will partner with the Department of Energy to conduct the Philippines' second round of green energy auctions—bidding out a combined 11.6 gigawatts of solar, onshore wind, biomass and waste-to-energy (WTE) capacity to be installed from 2024 to 2026.

Green groups such as the Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives (GAIA) Asia Pacific oppose WTE, saying incinerators emit planet-warming greenhouse gases and harmful pollutants, and displace waste pickers.

Partnership on nuclear energy

Manila and Washington earlier agreed to pursue negotiations for a potential US-Philippines Civil Nuclear Cooperation Agreement—or 123 Agreement.

The White House said the US will provide capacity-building support through Foundational Infrastructure for Responsible Use of Small Modular Reactor Technology (FIRST) program. This seeks to help the Philippines develop a national civil nuclear engineering workforce.

The US will also arrange a study tour for Philippine lawmakers and government officials to explore the potential of nuclear energy.

Greenpeace Philippines campaigner Khevin Yu said small modular reactors are “still untested and unproven, and there is currently no way to safely store nuclear waste.” He however pointed out that nuclear energy is an “expensive and risky investment.”

Environmental protection

The DENR and the UN Environmental Protection Agency committed to collaborate to address the serious health and environmental risks associated with climate change and environmental degradation.

The Philippines is one of the most vulnerable countries to the impacts of climate change.

“This partnership will apply best practices and cutting-edge technologies to address challenges like methane reduction, food waste, marine plastic litter, water quality, and environmental justice,” the White House said.

The US interior department also plans to partner with the DENR to protect shorelines and ecosystems through “ridge-to-reef” conservation and research efforts. The ridge-to-reef approach aims to provide a holistic intervention for protection the coastal area by targeting environmental degradation in the uplands that impact coastal ecosystems, and by restoring and protecting marine ecosystems.

Water security

USAID will mobilize \$100 million (P5.5 billion) over the next five years to increase access to safe drinking water for 1.22 million Filipinos and provide sanitation services to 710,000 people.

This also aims to strengthen water management institutions in the Philippines, increase access to climate-resilient water supply, improve water resources management, and address water financing gaps.

Disaster risk reduction

USAID will provide an additional \$5.3 million (P293.7 million) for disaster risk reduction and resilience programming in the Philippines.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

DENR

[PH, Germany strengthen climate ties](#)

The Philippines and Germany have reaffirmed their commitment to enhance cooperation on climate, energy and biodiversity at the first-ever PH-German Climate Consultation held last April 18 in Makati City.

Organized by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), the event marked the first high-level consultation between the Philippines and Germany aimed at strengthening their bilateral partnership for accelerating climate agenda.

The two countries committed to working closely together to step up action on climate, energy and biodiversity by sharing knowledge and technical expertise to build capacity for climate adaptation and resilience.

DENR Secretary Antonia Loyzaga and Germany's State Secretary and Special Envoy for International Climate Action Jennifer Lee Morgan led the Philippine and German delegations, respectively.

"We acknowledge the importance of climate consultations and dialogues with developed countries like Germany that would be instrumental in helping us effectively implement our climate actions," Loyzaga said.

Loyzaga expressed hope the partnership will continue beyond project timelines and scopes, stressing that international cooperation "encompasses our environment, our biodiversity, our natural resources, our consumption and production, and our sustainable development goals."

"We express support for sustained partnership for both of our governments in accelerating our climate actions," she added.

For her part, Morgan said the climate consultations with the Philippines "enable me to listen, learn and discuss how we can deepen our bilateral collaboration and to help those who are hit hardest by the climate crisis."

"We want to work with the Philippines to develop a resilient, alternative development pathway that brings prosperity and a better life for all citizens, and to strive for a successful COP28 that drives ambition by the major emitters to keep the 1.5 degrees

limit within sight, and show solidarity with the most vulnerable people on Earth,” she pointed out.

The consultation culminated in the signing of a Joint Declaration of Intent on Interdepartmental Consultations between Germany and the Philippines for Bilateral Technical Cooperation Projects in the Fields of Climate, Energy and Biodiversity.

Under the declaration—signed by Morgan and Philippine Department of Finance Undersecretary for the International Finance Group Mark Joven—the parties agreed to hold regular interdepartmental consultations about ongoing and pipeline bilateral technical cooperation projects.

During the consultation, both countries presented their plans, projects and activities aimed at addressing the climate crisis at the local and international levels.

These include operationalizing the loss and damage agenda and building more resilience against the consequences of the climate crisis, which will be integrated in their commitment for the 28th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to be held in the United Arab Emirates in November this year.

The two nations also discussed ways to accelerate the implementation of German-funded environmental and climate programs aligned with the Philippine Development Plan, particularly the Philippines’ commitment to the Paris Agreement on Climate Change through the Nationally Determined Contribution, which is to attain an emission reduction or avoidance in its greenhouse gas by 75 percent.

The Philippines and Germany have a long-standing partnership. The Philippines has been participating in collaborative project undertakings with Germany, such as the Transformative Actions for Climate and Ecological Protection and Development or TRANSCEND Project, which aims to support the Philippines in its programs and policies focused on biodiversity, ecosystem-based approach, and energy and transport.

The Philippines is also one of the focus countries of Germany’s International Climate Initiative projects, which is a funding program for climate action and biodiversity conservation established in 2018.

Officials from DENR, Department of Energy, Department of Agriculture, Department of Foreign Affairs, Department of Science and Technology, Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development, Department of Social Welfare and Development, Office of Civil Defense, German Agency for International Cooperation, and Embassy of

the Federal Republic of Germany Manila shared their interventions during the consultation.

JOURNAL ONLINE

[3rd ASEZ WAO Environmental Forum Raises Awareness on Climate Change](#)

On April 30, 2023, ASEZ WAO conducted an Environmental Talk Concert with the theme “Are We Doing Well in Responding to Climate Change?” at the Church of God building in Las Pinas City, Metro Manila. The event was attended by about 500 participants, including government officials, office workers, and members of the Church of God.

The talk concert aimed to raise awareness about the importance of environmental protection, particularly in response to the growing concern of climate change.

The event was graced by Senator Cynthia Villar, who shared her insights on the importance of environmental protection, especially in agriculture, as well as the ways to prevent, halt, and reverse the loss of nature. Additionally, Mr. Ludwig Federigan, Head of Information and Knowledge Management Division from Climate Change Commission, Office of the President, together with Mr. Brian Delos Santos, provided a detailed presentation on the current state of climate change in the country and how the young generation can participate in the programs of the agency. Ms. April Joy Laban of City Environment & Natural Resources Office (CENRO) – Climate Change Division, has also shared about “Climate Change Challenges & CENRO Initiatives”. Ms. Pauline Barcenal, ASEZ WAO Team Leader, and Mr. Shin Jun Ho, International Worker Bible Academy (IWBA) Team Leader, have introduced one of ASEZ WAO’s initiatives – The Green Workplace Project. This is a campaign that encourages young adult workers to take the lead in saving water and electricity and practicing frugality at workplaces against climate change.

ASEZ WAO (Save the Earth from A to Z, We Are One), initiated this awareness-raising campaign in response to the growing concern of climate change, as it poses a significant threat to the environment and humanity. The organization strongly believes that every working member of the country can take the lead in this action and contribute to the betterment of the environment.

“We are grateful to all the attendees who participated in this environmental talk concert. Through this event, we were able to promote environmental awareness and sustainable practices, which are crucial in addressing climate change. We are also thankful to Senator Cynthia Villar and Mr. Ludwig Federigan for sharing their insights on this matter,” said an ASEZ WAO representative.

ASEZ WAO is committed to creating a sustainable future for the environment, and they will continue to organize activities that promote environmental protection and sustainability. For more information, visit their website at www.asezwao.org.

THE MANILA TIMES

Rehabilitating Caliraya-Lumot watershed

THE National Power Corp. (Napocor) has signed a memorandum of agreement (MoA) with the Climate Change Commission (CCC) for the rehabilitation of some 25 hectares of denuded upland forest within the Caliraya-Lumot Watershed Forest Reserve in Laguna.

Fernando Martin Roxas, president and chief executive officer of Napocor, said the partnership will help them hasten the rehabilitation of the Caliraya-Lumot watershed, a critical water resource for Caliraya and Kalayaan hydroelectric power plants.

"Restoring these open areas will also enhance water conservation, erosion control and biodiversity conservation in the area," Roxas also said.

Napocor said the MoA will utilize a comprehensive and integrated approach in implementing the reforestation activities including site assessment and planning, reforestation and tree planting, and capacity-building of people's organizations and raising awareness in the communities.

Robert Borje, vice chairman and executive director of CCC, expressed his gratitude to Napocor for allowing them to take part in the former's watershed rehabilitation efforts that would eventually help them offset their carbon footprint and change and transform the lives, livelihood and future of the people who will be impacted by the project.

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