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By: Jacque Manabat

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[Marcos calls on developed countries to fulfill commitments to Paris Agreement](#)

By: Anna Felicia Bajo

President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. said Wednesday that ASEAN member states should unite in encouraging developed countries to fulfill their commitments to the Paris Agreement as developing nations are adversely affected by climate change.

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By: Argyll Cyrus Geducos

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PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

[Back int'l law, boost trade, fight climate change: PBBM to ASEAN](#)

By: Ruth Abbey Gita-Carlos

Upholding international law, promoting trade and investments and addressing climate change must be the priorities of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. said on Wednesday.

THE MANILA TIMES

[Upscaling vertical farming in the Philippines](#)

By: William Dar

ONE of the challenges that the agriculture sector faces today is dwindling soil and water resources which should prompt us to find technological solutions to increase food production using less water or no soil at all to grow crops.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

[Climate change raising heat risks for workers, experts warn](#)

Rising global temperatures are increasing the risk of workers dying or becoming disabled from labouring in extreme heat, an international conference has been told.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

[Pangandaman sees immediate need to close infra gap](#)

By: Ruth Abbey Gita-Carlos

Budget Secretary Amenah Pangandaman has emphasized the need to ramp up efforts in addressing the infrastructure investment gap to achieve socio-economic development.

Information and Knowledge Management Division

ABS CBN

DOTr mulls shifting public transportation to electric

By: Jacque Manabat

The Department of Transportation (DOTr) is looking into the possibility of mandating public transportation to shift to electric vehicles (EVs) in an effort to reduce the country's carbon footprint and improve air quality.

Transportation Secretary Jaime Bautista bared the plan during the Makati Business Club forum, stating that the DOTr is working on a roadmap to transition public transportation to EVs.

"We're also asking the operators, instead of operating the Euro 5 or Euro 6 engines, they can go full electric. I think this is very important. We want a green transport system. That's one of the priorities that we are adopting." Bautista said.

Under the PUV Modernization Program, public transport operators are not obliged to shift to electric vehicles. They are only "encouraged" to change to Euro 5 or 6 engines, which emit less air pollution than what is widely used.

The DOTr also considers incentives for transport operators shifting to EVs, such as tax breaks and low-interest loans. However, the department has yet to craft the guidelines.

"Sa ngayon ay mas prayoridad ng DOTR na magconsolidate ang mga transport operators at gumawa ng mga kooperatiba, at next phase na lamang ang pagpapalit ng mga unit basta't tumatakbo pa nang maayos ang mga traditional jeepney," Bautista said.

The Department of Transportation gave the operators until December 31, 2023, to form a group for easier bank loan approval. As of the latest, around 60 percent of operators in the country have consolidated.

The DOTr's plan to mandate public transportation to shift to EVs is in line with the government's goal to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 75 percent by 2030 and to increase the number of electric vehicles to 50 percent by 2040.

The Philippines is one of the countries most vulnerable to the effects of climate change, with rising sea levels and extreme weather events threatening the country's coastal communities. The shift to EVs will significantly reduce the country's carbon footprint and improve air quality, particularly in urban areas where air pollution is a significant health concern.

The DOTr has yet to release a timeline for implementing the plan, but Bautista assured the public that the agency is working on it.

BBC NEWS

Single-use plastic banned in Eurovision fan zone

Single-use plastic has been banned in the fan zone at the Eurovision Song Contest as part of Liverpool's action on climate change, the city council has said.

Liverpool is hosting the competition on behalf of 2022 winners Ukraine on 13 May.

All vendors in the official Eurovision village at Pier Head have signed up to provide recyclable materials only.

Liverpool City Council said it was also monitoring the sustainability of the entire event.

The Eurovision village near to the M&S Bank Arena staging the international song contest is estimated to be hosting events for 15,000 people during the festivities.

The council said visitors to the fan zone would not be allowed to bring food and drink into the site and it was being policed at the entrance, the Local Democracy Reporting Service said.

Water stations have been provided so people can take refillable bottles and the bar will hand out vessels manufactured from plant-based polymer.

All waste will be recycled off site on a daily basis, the city council added.

The grand final of the song contest will be broadcast live on television to millions of viewers around the world, on big screens in cities across the UK and for the first time in cinemas.

The Eurovision Song Contest is being held in Liverpool after last year's UK entrant Sam Ryder finished runner-up to Ukraine's Kalush Orchestra.

As Russia's invasion of Ukraine prevented the winning country from hosting the 2023 contest, organisers instead said the UK would stage the show on their behalf.

BUSINESS WORLD

Gov't seeks \$500-million climate risk loan from WB

By: Luisa Maria Jacinta C. Jocson

THE PHILIPPINE GOVERNMENT is eyeing a \$500-million loan from the World Bank (WB) to strengthen its resilience against climate-related disasters.

The Philippines Disaster Risk Management and Climate Development policy loan, which includes an option for a catastrophe deferred drawdown, is expected to be approved by the World Bank board on Sept. 21.

In a document uploaded on its website, the World Bank said the loan aims to strengthen the capacity of the Philippine government in managing disaster and climate risks in the education and health sectors.

The Philippines ranked first globally for having the highest disaster risks, according to the World Risk Index 2022.

Disasters have killed over 10,000 people, affected around 103 million, and caused as much as P409 million in economic losses for the Philippines between 2010 and 2019, the multilateral lender said.

The World Bank said the policy loan focuses specifically on the education and health sectors due to “their high exposure and vulnerability to disasters, climate change, and public health emergencies, and their essential role in human capital accumulation, economic growth, and poverty reduction.”

The loan will fund projects aimed at improving the resilience of school infrastructure, protect learners against natural hazards, enhance emergency preparedness, and promote learning continuity.

One of the targets is to implement disaster and climate contingency plans for 80% of schools in the Greater Manila Area.

It also aims to build disaster and climate-resilient school infrastructure, noting that around 21,018 schools were destroyed by disasters over the last six years.

The World Bank said the loan will also fund projects strengthening health-related infrastructure.

“The target is the development of a multi-year investment plan by the Health department that integrates disaster, climate, and public health emergency resilience measures in the health facilities with the annual budget submitted to the Department of Budget and Management for endorsement to Congress (2024 to 2026),” it said.

It also seeks to create a more streamlined reporting mechanism for National Government agencies and local government units, with event-based reporting and response initiation reduced from seven days to two days.

“These reforms are vital in ensuring that the country is able to maintain continuity in critical sectors,” it added.

The World Bank was the country’s third-largest source of official development assistance (ODA) as of 2021. World Bank loans and grants represented 24% of total ODA or \$7.66 billion, data from the National Economic and Development Authority showed.

This year, the National Government expects to obtain around \$19.1 billion worth of ODA — \$9.2 billion worth of loans from multilateral development partners and \$9.8 billion in loans from bilateral lenders.

CNN

[Marcos: PH to 'take bold steps' in clean energy shift](#)

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. said Southeast Asian leaders must be “united” in calling on developed countries to fulfill their commitments to a global emissions deal as he stressed the country’s initiative towards clean energy.

“The Philippines will take bold steps to transition to renewable and alternative energy technologies in a secure and sustainable manner,” he said in a speech Wednesday during the opening session of the 42nd Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Summit in Indonesia.

He urged ASEAN to beef up regional cooperation for the industrial metals and minerals value chain.

During his first State of the Nation Address in July 2022, Marcos said the country would increase its use of hydropower, geothermal power, solar, and wind energy sources. He also directed top officials of the environment and public works departments to explore partnerships with the private sector for the development of the needed infrastructure to support this vision.

Marcos’ statement continued to cite developed nations’ commitments to the Paris Agreement, which seek to cut global greenhouse gas emissions and provide financing to developing countries to prepare and cushion the impact of climate change.

He said while the Philippines only accounts for “less than 1%” of global emissions, it continues to be vulnerable to the “devastating impacts” of climate change.

“Developed countries have a moral obligation to support adaptation and mitigation efforts for the most vulnerable countries through technology transfer, capacity-building, and climate financing,” he said.

“This, to address loss and damage and to achieve the necessary breakthroughs for climate action at a global scale,” Marcos added.

A similar call was made by Marcos during his opening remarks at the ASEAN-EU Commemorative Summit in Brussels, Belgium in December.

ASEAN groups Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam.

Marcos calls on developed countries to fulfill commitments to Paris Agreement

By: Anna Felicia Bajo

President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. said Wednesday that ASEAN member states should unite in encouraging developed countries to fulfill their commitments to the Paris Agreement as developing nations are adversely affected by climate change.

"ASEAN must be united in urging developed countries to fulfill their longstanding commitments to the Paris Agreement," Marcos said during the opening of the plenary session.

"Although developing countries such as the Philippines only account for less than 1% of global emissions, our countries bear the brunt of the devastating impacts of climate change," he added.

Marcos said that developed countries have a moral obligation "to support adaptation and mitigation efforts of the most vulnerable countries through technology transfer, capacity building, and climate financing, this to address loss and damage, and to achieve necessary breakthroughs for climate action at a global scale."

He further said the Philippines recognizes that biodiversity can complement and synergize with the ASEAN's initiatives on climate change, which can contribute to efforts towards a more sustainable and resilient future.

"The conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity is also an intergenerational responsibility that the Philippines is proud to support through the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity," he said.

The Paris Agreement is a legally binding international treaty on climate change. It was adopted by 196 parties at the UN Climate Change Conference (COP21) in Paris, France, on December 12, 2015.

Meanwhile, Marcos also urged ASEAN to enhance cooperation towards improving the region's strategic industrial metals and minerals value chain to ensure a "cleaner energy future."

"The Philippines will take bold steps to transition to renewable and alternative energy technologies in a secure and sustainable manner," Marcos said.

“Recognizing that a cleaner energy future is anchored on the supply of critical minerals, ASEAN should now start enhancing regional cooperation towards boosting the region’s strategic industrial metals and minerals value chain,” he said.

[World not ready yet to 'switch off' fossil fuels, COP28 host UAE says](#)

By: Valerie Volcovici and Leah Douglas

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) said on Tuesday that countries should agree to phase out fuel emissions - not the production of oil, gas and coal - at the upcoming UN climate change negotiations that it will host this December.

The comments reflect deep divisions between nations over how to combat global warming ahead of the COP28 talks. Some wealthy Western governments and climate-afflicted island nations have been pushing for a phase out of fossil fuels, while resource-rich countries have campaigned to keep drilling.

UAE Minister of Climate Change and Environment Mariam Almheiri told Reuters in an interview that phasing out fossil fuels would hurt countries that depend on them for revenue or can not easily replace them with renewable sources.

She favored phasing out fossil fuel emissions using capture and storage technologies while ramping up renewable energy, saying this strategy lets countries fight warming while continuing to produce oil, gas, and coal.

"The renewable space is advancing and accelerating extremely fast but we are nowhere near to be able to say that we can switch off fossil fuels and solely depend on clean and renewable energy," Almheiri said on the sidelines of the Agriculture Innovation Mission (AIM) for Climate conference in Washington.

"We are now in a transition and this transition needs to be just and pragmatic because not all countries have the resources," she added.

The UAE is co-hosting the AIM conference with the United States.

At last year's climate summit in Egypt, over 80 countries including the EU and small island nations agreed to include language in the final outcome calling for a phase down of all fossil fuels. Countries including Saudi Arabia and China urged Egypt not to include that language in the final text.

This month, G7 countries agreed to hasten their phaseout of fossil fuel consumption, although they did not set a firm date.

Almheiri pointed to the UAE's example of relying on new carbon capture technology and renewables to decrease the emissions intensity of the OPEC-member's oil and gas operations.

The UAE has a goal to get 50% of its electricity from renewables by 2050 from the current level of 25%, and could strengthen that goal, she said.

Almheiri added that alongside energy, global food supply will be a major focus of COP28 because it accounts for nearly a third of global emissions.

As with energy, technology and innovation can solve food security problems, Almheiri said, noting that it has helped the UAE, with its parched desert landscape, devise a food security strategy.

Tackling inefficiencies of the global food system can also help address problems like malnutrition, food waste and climate change all at once, she said.

"We are making sure that the food systems dialogue is on center stage along with the energy dialogue at COP28," she said.

INTERASKYON

Plastic action or distraction? As climate change bears down, calls to reduce plastic pollution are not wasted

By: Yolanda Lee Waters and Angela Dean

Climate change, pollution and overfishing are just a few problems that need addressing to maintain a healthy blue planet. Everyone must get involved – but it's easy to feel overwhelmed and unsure where to start.

Of course we can start with the obvious – making sure we reduce, reuse and recycle. Yet, given the scale of the challenge, these small, relatively simple steps are not enough. So, how can we encourage people to do more?

There is controversy about the best approach. Some argue focusing on easy actions is distracting and can lead people to overestimate their positive impact, reducing the chance they will do more.

However, our new research found promoting small and relatively easy actions, such as reducing plastic use, can be a useful entry point for engaging in other, potentially more effective actions around climate change.

The plastic distraction debate

Marine plastic pollution is set to quadruple by 2050 and efforts to reduce this have received a lot of attention. In this arena, Australia is making significant progress.

For example, last year scientists discovered the amount of plastic litter found on Australian coasts had reduced by 30% since 2012-13. Seven out of eight Australian states and territories have also committed to ban single-use plastics.

Yet, some scientists are concerned all this fuss about plastic distracts us from addressing the more pressing issue of climate change, which is degrading marine ecosystems at an alarming rate and making oceans hotter than ever before.

For example, without an urgent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, coral reefs could lose more than 90% coral cover within the next decade. This includes our very own Great Barrier Reef.

When it comes to climate action, Australia is behind. Many Australians are also unsure which actions to take. For example, a 2020 study asked more than 4,000 Australians

what actions were needed to help the Great Barrier Reef. The most common response (25.6%) involved reducing plastic pollution. Only 4.1% of people mentioned a specific action to mitigate climate change.

‘Spillover’ behavior

We ran an experiment to test whether we could shift this preference for action on plastic into action on climate change.

Our experiment was based on a theory known as “behavioral spillover”. This theory assumes the actions we take in the present influence the actions we take in future.

For example, deciding to go to the gym in the morning may influence what you decide to eat in the afternoon.

Some experts argue focusing on reducing plastic use – a relatively simple action – can help build momentum and open the door for other environmental actions in the future. This is known as positive spillover.

Conversely, those in the “plastic distraction” camp argue if people reduce their plastic use, they might feel they have done enough and become less likely to engage in additional actions. This is known as negative spillover.

Experimenting with spillover from plastic to climate

To test whether we could encourage spillover behavior in the context of the Great Barrier Reef, we conducted an online experiment with representative sample of 581 Australians.

Participants were randomly allocated to one of three experimental groups or a control group. The first group received information about plastic pollution on the reef along with prompts to remind them of their efforts to tackle the problem in the past week (a “behavior primer”). The second group received the reef plastic information only. The third group received information about the reef and climate change. The control group received general information about World Heritage sites, with no call to action or mention of the Great Barrier Reef.

Participants were then asked whether they would be likely to take a range of climate actions, such as reducing personal greenhouse gas emissions and talking to others about climate change. They also had the opportunity to “click” on a few actions embedded within the survey such as signing an online petition for climate action.

Compared to the control group, those provided with information about plastic pollution were more willing to engage with climate actions, particularly when they were reminded of positive past behaviors. Whereas those provided with information about climate change showed no significant difference.

Plastic messages also had a stronger positive effect on climate action for those who were politically conservative, compared to those more politically progressive.

But the approach didn't work for everyone. We repeated the experiment with 572 self-identified ocean advocates, many of whom already engaged with marine conservation issues. For this audience, talking about plastic and their past efforts made them less likely to engage with climate action compared to the control group.

So what does all this mean?

Our results suggest it's possible to motivate climate action for the reef without slipping back into conversations about plastic. Here are four ways to help achieve this:

Remind people of the small actions they already take: reminding people of their positive contributions and making them feel like they are capable of doing more can open the gateway to further action.

Connect the dots between plastic and climate: plastics are primarily derived from fossil fuels and production alone accounts for billions of tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions each year. Making it clear that a fight against fossil fuels is a fight against both plastic and climate can help guide people towards those extra climate actions.

Provide clear calls to (climate) action: research shows most people are unable to identify climate actions on their own. As a result, they tend to get stuck on common behaviours such as recycling. Giving people clear advice on how they can contribute to mitigating climate change is crucial.

Know your audience: spillover from plastic to climate is more likely in a general audience. If your network is full of ocean advocates, it might be better to skip the plastic conversation and dive straight into conversations about climate change actions.

It's important to remember that people's first steps don't have to be their only steps. Sometimes, they just need a little guidance for the journey ahead.

MALAYA BUSINESS INSIGHT

Building sustainable, resilient homes

Holcim Philippines Inc. and climate-resilient-housing organization Build Change have strengthened their partnership to improve access of Filipinos to climate-resilient housing renovations.

The parties will collaborate on a pilot project that aims to expand funding access to vulnerable, low-income families through a scalable, sustainable, and appropriate microloans to strengthen houses using low-carbon Holcim products and through Build Change's partner microfinance institution (MFI) Alalay sa Kaunlaran Inc. (ASKI).

The project aims to strengthen an initial 28 houses in Baler, Aurora against extreme weather, create 100 jobs and train 1,500 people on climate-resilient building.

Holcim Philippines will provide grant funding complementary to the loans taken by clients for the strengthening of select houses in Aurora. It will share technical guidance on the proper use of its products and help promote the program.

Build Change, meanwhile, will provide technical assistance to incrementally strengthen houses through the use of its developed tools and resources, and coordinate with ASKI for the project implementation in Nueva Ecija and Aurora.

"We are proud and excited to move to this next stage of our partnership with Build Change that will make a significant contribution in protecting the most vulnerable Filipino families from the devastating effects of climate change. This initiative enables them to make the needed improvements in the right manner to raise the performance of homes against typhoons and earthquakes that regularly hit the country. We look forward to its success that highlights our commitment to build greener, smarter and for all," said Zoe Sibala, Holcim chief sustainability officer.

Girlye Lopez, Build Change country program manager, said: "In our work with MFIs, Build Change has proven that families are willing to take out loans to strengthen their houses, if adequate financing and technical assistance options are available for people without access to conventional credit. In collaboration with Holcim Philippines, Build Change will continue to work with MFIs and homeowners to take these lessons and financial products to the next level of scale. We are excited for this partnership and confident it will make a difference in improving the lives of Filipinos."

In 2022, Holcim Philippines and Build Change formalized their cooperation to work on disaster-resilient housing projects in highly vulnerable areas in the country.

Build Change has worked in the Philippines since Typhoon Yolanda in 2013. During this period, it has supported both post-disaster reconstruction and work to prevent housing loss against future disasters. Among its accomplishments are the construction of over 2,000 safer buildings for 40,000 people, training of over 4,700 individuals in safe construction practices, creation of 560 jobs, and expansion of its network of partners in the local government, business sector for greater impact.

ASKI was started in 1986 by Christian business leaders in Nueva Ecija to support the community's development by providing microfinancing access to small entrepreneurs and other members of society not served by bigger funding institutions. It has grown to serve not just rural communities but also overseas Filipino workers with a portfolio of Php1.7 billion with 98 branches in Regions 1, 2 and 3 serving more than 100,000 clients and insuring more than 800,000 members and their families.

MANILA BULLETIN

[Marcos bats for climate change mitigation, elders' welfare, Timor Leste's ASEAN membership](#)

By: Argyll Cyrus Geducos

In order to harness the potential of the region, President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. has urged the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to double its efforts in priority areas, including addressing its aging population, climate action, and expanding the bloc's reach.

Marcos said this during the opening ceremony of the 42nd ASEAN Summit at the Merourah Komodo here on Wednesday, May 10.

In his remarks, the President recognized a report by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) that one in every four people in the Asia-Pacific will be over the age of 60 by 2050, making the region's aging population a cause for concern.

"It is time that ASEAN starts discussing the concerns of an aging population, consistent with the Asian tradition of valuing our elders. We must view this both as an opportunity and a challenge, especially in terms of adequate social benefits and social empowerment," he said.

"ASEAN goals and work plans should ensure health for our elders, a safe and dignified, and productive life," he added.

Climate change

Marcos called on his fellow ASEAN leaders to be united in urging developed countries to "fulfill their long-standing commitments to the Paris Agreement," saying the developing countries suffered the most.

"Developing countries like the Philippines only account for less than one percent of global emissions; our countries bear the brunt of the devastating impacts of climate change," he said.

"Developed countries have a moral obligation to support adaptation and mitigation efforts for the most vulnerable countries through technology transfer, capacity-building, and climate financing. This, to address loss and damage and to achieve the necessary breakthroughs for climate action at a global scale," he added.

In line with this, the President said The Philippines would take bold steps to transition to renewable and alternative energy technologies securely and sustainably.

Recognizing that a clean energy future is anchored on the supply of critical minerals, Marcos added that ASEAN should now start enhancing regional cooperation toward boosting the region's strategic industrial metals and minerals value chain.

Timor Leste's membership

President Marcos likewise urged his counterparts to provide "whole-of-community support" to Timor Leste as it continues its journey towards full ASEAN membership.

"Its membership can only strengthen our ASEAN community as it expands the reach of ASEAN's united front to face the challenges of the 21st Century," he said.

"Let us renew our collective faith in the organization by consolidating our community-building efforts towards an ASEAN that truly matters," he added.

At the 40th and 41st ASEAN Summits in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, in November 2022, Timor-Leste was admitted, in principle, as the 11th Member of ASEAN.

Human trafficking

According to the President, ASEAN must uphold international law and the international rules-based system that has underpinned the region's peace, security, stability, and prosperity.

In particular, Marcos said the Philippines welcomes Indonesia's ASEAN chairmanship priority of strengthening regional cooperation to address cross-border crimes, particularly trafficking in persons caused by the misuse of technology, and to mainstream the protection of migrant workers and their families in crisis situations.

Free trade

Marcos said ASEAN should demonstrate its commitment to free trade and the multilateral trading system. In line with this, the President said the Philippines had deposited its instrument of ratification to the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) Agreement.

"We are optimistic that the RCEP will serve as an engine of growth that will help build more resilient supply chains and support the integration of our micro-, medium-, and small-scale establishments into the global economy," he said.

The RCEP is a free trade agreement (FTA) between the 10 member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and its five FTA partners: Australia, China, Japan, New Zealand, and the Republic of Korea.

Food security

President Marcos said ASEAN must ensure that food and security systems are resilient in the face of supply and price fluctuations triggered by geopolitical instability and conflicts, pandemics, climate change, logistic chain disruptions, and fuel shortages.

"The Philippines aims to strengthen food security and production efficiency via the use of new agricultural technologies, upgrading technical and vocational education and training, and adopting climate- and disaster-resilient technologies," he said.

Digital economy

Meanwhile, Marcos highlighted the importance of capacitating people with digital skills so that everyone can be part of the digital transformation.

"We must forge a vibrant digital economy and ensure that our people are equipped with the digital skills for the future so that no one is left behind in the midst of our world's digital transformation," he said.

PBBM: Filipino youth leading climate change initiatives

By: Argyll Cyrus Geducos

President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. has highlighted the Filipino youth's initiative on climate change and disaster resiliency before the 42nd Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Summits and Related Summits here on Wednesday, May 9.

In his intervention during the ASEAN Leaders' Interface with Representatives of ASEAN Youth, Marcos said the efforts of the Filipino youth should be replicated throughout all of ASEAN.

He said one of the initiatives is leading the declaration of the annual ASEAN Youth in Climate Action and Disaster Resilience Day held on November 25 to promote awareness and provoke positive action among the youth to address climate change and galvanize disaster risk reduction efforts.

"Since 2018, the Philippines, with the support of various partners and stakeholders, has ensured the conduct of annual celebrations and involvement of youth leaders from all ASEAN Member States in the activities," Marcos said.

The President said Southeast Asia would remain the "epicentrum of growth" if it continues to empower its young people. He emphasized the region's future lies in its ability to develop its young population.

"It is clear again that the future of ASEAN lies in our ability to support the youth in attaining their full potential. And this we must do by providing the skills and motivation to be ready for this future," Marcos said.

"We must always put front and center all the issues that we face or that our young people face and that our country faces the consequence of time," he added.

According to the President, the region has to be future-ready to make it competitive globally, highlighting the exponential growth of the digital realm, the world's increasing dependence on digital tools, and the rising global demand for innovative products and services.

Marcos also pointed out that ASEAN must take immediate action to prepare its youth to seize opportunities in the digital and creative economies.

"We must ensure that they are well equipped to not only compete globally, but also to develop expertise, forge linkages, and establish leadership in these fields ...

strengthening youth people-to-people exchanges to facilitate the free flow of ideas and the transfer of skills is critical," he said.

At the same time, the President said the youth could address other pressing challenges such as climate change, environment and biodiversity, peace and security, education, and traditional and social media.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

[Back int'l law, boost trade, fight climate change: PBBM to ASEAN](#)

By: Ruth Abbey Gita-Carlos

Upholding international law, promoting trade and investments and addressing climate change must be the priorities of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. said on Wednesday.

"In order to harness the potential of our region, I believe that ASEAN must now double its efforts, especially in these following priority areas," Marcos said during the 42nd ASEAN Summit Plenary Session at the Meruorah Komodo Convention Center in Labuan Bajo, Indonesia.

"Against the backdrop of complex geopolitical challenges and macroeconomic fragilities, an ASEAN Community that plays a central role in shaping the evolving regional architecture, an ASEAN Community that is dynamic, innovative and integrated for the global economy, and an ASEAN Community that can realize the full potential for its peoples is the indispensable bedrock for a peaceful, stable, and resilient region," he added.

Marcos called on his fellow ASEAN leaders to uphold international law and the international-rules based system to ensure "peace, security, stability and prosperity of our region."

Marcos said the Philippines, as a staunch advocate of the protection of the rights and welfare of migrants, welcomes Indonesia's ASEAN chairmanship priority of strengthening regional cooperation to address cross-border crimes.

He lauded Indonesia's efforts to intensify the fight against trafficking in persons caused by the misuse of technology, as well as to mainstream the protection of migrant workers and their families in crises.

Promoting trade

Marcos also urged his fellow ASEAN leaders to boost trade and economic cooperation in the region.

"ASEAN should demonstrate its commitment to the principle of free trade and to the multilateral trading system," he said, noting that the Philippines has already deposited its instrument of ratification of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP).

RCEP negotiations were formally launched by ASEAN and its six free trade agreement (FTA) partners— Australia, China, India, Japan, South Korea, and New Zealand — in Cambodia in November 2012 and signed in 2020.

The Philippine Senate ratified the deal in February 2023, making the country the last signatory aside from Myanmar to complete the agreement.

The agreement will enter into force in the Philippines on June 2.

Marcos expressed optimism that RCEP will serve as an "engine of growth" that will help build more resilient supply chains and support the integration of our micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) into the global economy.

'Vibrant digital economy'

Marcos likewise asked his counterparts from the ASEAN to forge a "vibrant digital economy," ensuring that the region is "equipped with the digital skills for the future so that no one is left behind in the midst of our world's digital transformation."

He also pushed for the strengthening of cross-border connectivity and the interoperability of digital frameworks.

He made the call, as he depicted ASEAN as a "hub for global economic growth."

Food, energy security

Marcos also stressed the need to ensure that food and energy systems in the region are "resilient," in the face of the supply and price fluctuations triggered by geopolitical instability and conflict, pandemic, climate change, logistic chain disruptions and fuel shortages.

The Philippines, he said, is stepping up its efforts to attain food security in the country.

"The Philippines aims to strengthen food security and production efficiency via the use of new agricultural technologies, upgrading technical and vocational education and training, and adopting climate- and disaster-resilient technologies," Marcos said.

The President added that his administration would also take "bold" steps to transition to renewable and alternative energy technologies "in a secure and sustainable manner."

"Recognizing that a cleaner energy future is anchored on the supply of critical minerals, ASEAN should now start enhancing regional cooperation towards boosting the region's strategic industrial metals and minerals value chain," he said.

Addressing climate change

Marcos also called on his fellow ASEAN leaders to take a united stand in urging developed countries to fulfill their long-standing commitments to the Paris Agreement, a legally binding international treaty on climate change.

He lamented that developing nations like the Philippines, which only account for less than 1 percent of global emissions, have to "bear the brunt of the devastating impacts of climate change."

"Developed countries have a moral obligation to support adaptation and mitigation efforts for the most vulnerable countries through technology transfer, capacity-building, and climate financing. This, to address loss and damage and to achieve the necessary breakthroughs for climate action at a global scale," Marcos said.

The Philippines also supports the ASEAN Center for Biodiversity for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

"The Philippine recognizes that biodiversity can complement and synergize with ASEAN's initiatives in climate change, contributing to our efforts towards a more sustainable and resilient future," he said.

Aside from the Philippines and Indonesia, other members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations are Brunei, Cambodia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

THE MANILA TIMES

Upscaling vertical farming in the Philippines

By: William Dar

ONE of the challenges that the agriculture sector faces today is dwindling soil and water resources which should prompt us to find technological solutions to increase food production using less water or no soil at all to grow crops.

Among the solutions that is gaining popularity globally is vertical farming, which if combined with hydroponics, aquaponics and aeroponics can yield more harvest per square meter compared to open-field farming.

Vertical farming can also greatly benefit from the technologies from Fourth Industrial Revolution and Agriculture 4.0, like artificial intelligence, the Internet of Things, drones, among others.

However, there is also a need for those pushing vertical farming to develop systems for traditional food crops like rice, corn and sorghum in anticipation of less and less land, and water to grow such crops in the future. I see that trend taking root in the next few years as climate change will make it harder to grow staple crops outdoors under the traditional system.

At present, most of the crops grown through vertical farms are leafy greens and vegetables mostly done indoors. This provides the advantage of protecting the crops grown from the effects of the climate and weather, and pests. This, in turn, makes it possible to produce crops all-year round without the need for pesticides.

Vertical farming combined with hydroponics, aquaponics and aeroponics, however, can be technologically intensive as the irrigation system needs to have computerized controls to make sure water is circulated efficiently for the crops.

Also, since this is an indoor system, there is a need to employ artificial sunlight and a climate-control system to maintain ambient temperature indoors conducive to growing crops.

Besides water, hydroponic systems can utilize inert medium such as perlite, peat moss, vermicast or coco peat that can be made abundant in the Philippines. Utilizing vermicast has an advantage as that is among the best types of organic fertilizer. The four inert mediums also have excellent water-holding capabilities.

Taking it a step further, hydroponics can be combined with growing fish, though not all types of fish, through a system called aquaponics.

The advantage of aquaponics is the fish wastes can also be used to enrich the water mixture or formulation, giving the crops more natural nutrients. Just think of an aquaponics set up as a hydroponics system that has large aquariums attached to it for growing fish and making the water more nutrient-dense for the crops.

Aeroponics, on the other hand, can also be employed in vertical farming. Under this system, the roots of the plants are suspended and sprayed with fertilizers, assuring efficient water use. The challenge of aeroponics is it is more technology-intensive as the spraying system needs sprayers, more water pumps and robotics.

A growing business

According to Emergen Research ([emergenresearch.com](https://www.emergenresearch.com)), vertical farming done indoors is a booming business globally, with the market size projected to reach \$11.71 billion in 2027.

"The global vertical farming market size is expected to reach \$11.71 billion in 2027 and register a robust revenue CAGR (compound annual growth rate) of 20.1 percent during the forecast period, according to the latest analysis by Emergen Research," it said.

"Factors such as increasing adoption of hydroponic systems, increasing environmental concerns such as depletion of soil, high usage of chemical-based solutions and increasing efforts to minimize the environmental impact of agriculture. Other factors such as high yield with vertical farming compared to conventional farming, easy crop monitoring, balanced energy utilization and maximum crop yield in vertical space are expected to drive revenue growth of the market in the coming years," Emergen Research said.

However, like Emergen Research, I see challenges for developing countries like the Philippines to upscale vertical farming, especially with systems that are technologically intensive.

If a formal survey would be conducted on how big vertical farming is contributing to national crop production, my best guess or hypothesis is it would amount to less than 0.001 percent. This is expected as the country still has vast lands to cultivate crops, and most farmers are hesitant to transition to technology-intensive farming systems because of high investment requirements.

"However, many people in developing countries might face difficulties in deploying advanced vertical farming systems as setting up vertical farms with automated equipment, cameras, sensors, and hydroponic and aeroponic systems require high initial investments," Emergen Research said.

Taking the lead

So, who should take the initiative for vertical farming to be mainstreamed in the Philippines? I believe that it should be the government through the Department of Agriculture and its research institutes that should start plotting the road map for the wider adoption of vertical farming in the Philippines.

Also, state colleges and universities can take the lead in developing vertical farming technologies that can be easily adopted and scaled up by smallholders.

For their part, the private sector can upscale or expand their own vertical farming projects and businesses, and commercialize their technologies for agribusiness entities and agricultural cooperatives to also adopt.

A good example of the companies that have ventured into vertical farming are Urban Greens and Planters Products Inc.

And lastly, the Department of Trade and Industry should make vertical farming part of its investment priorities by granting incentives to companies that widely adopt it.

A lot still needs to be done in our country to create an environment where vertical farming can be upscaled. But with the country's water and arable land getting scarcer because of various factors including climate change, we should no longer think twice of upscaling or mainstreaming vertical farming in the Philippines.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

[Climate change raising heat risks for workers, experts warn](#)

Rising global temperatures are increasing the risk of workers dying or becoming disabled from labouring in extreme heat, an international conference has been told.

The conference, held in Qatar as spring temperatures raced towards 40 degrees Celsius (104 Fahrenheit), heard that tens of thousands of workers around the world have died from chronic kidney disease and other illnesses linked with extreme heat over recent decades.

"Science tells us that all countries can do more," the International Labour Organisation's regional chief for Arab countries, Ruba Jaradat, told the Occupational Heat Stress conference, which focused on climate change and how rising temperatures threaten workers' health.

Last year's World Cup in Qatar drew attention to workers toiling in temperatures that can top 50 degrees Celsius (122 Fahrenheit) during the summer peak in countries across the Gulf.

Since 2021, Qatar has banned outdoor working between 10:00 am and 3.30 pm from June 1 to September 15.

Its reforms have been praised by the UN labour agency, though some experts say more can be done.

There is no international standard for temperatures for outdoor working, but climate change has forced new scrutiny.

The US administration promised new rules in 2021 after a deadly heatwave and the White House said that "heat is the nation's leading weather-related killer". Nothing has been produced yet, however.

Europe has also seen devastating heatwaves. But apart from Qatar, Cyprus is one of the rare countries to have restricted working hours, ordering extra breaks and heat protective clothing when temperatures rise above 35 degrees Celsius (95 Fahrenheit).

Extreme heat and sun radiation unleash heatstroke, kidney, heart and lung diseases and raise cancer rates, according to researchers.

Justin Glaser, head of La Isla Network, an occupational health group, said more than 20,000 sugar workers in Central America had died in a single decade from chronic kidney disease. He pointed to about 25,000 deaths from kidney disease in Sri Lanka.

'People are dying'

Around one billion farm workers and tens of millions in construction and other outdoor industries are in the frontline, the conference was told. But swimming pool lifeguards, gardeners and postal delivery workers also face heat dangers.

Construction workers can be exposed to enough ultraviolet rays over 30 to 40 years to more than double the risk of non-melanoma skin cancer.

Taiwanese researchers warned in a 2020 study that kidney disease from extreme heat "may represent one of the first epidemics due to global warming".

According to ILO forecasts, South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa will suffer most from lost working hours due to extreme heat in coming years.

India, Bangladesh and their neighbours have huge agricultural populations and large numbers working in informal sectors with no health insurance.

Vidhya Venugopal, an occupational health professor at the Sri Ramachandra Institute in Chennai, highlighted the case of hundreds of thousands of salt farmers in India working in desert-like conditions who suffer high rates of kidney and other diseases.

"They have no cover and they are stood in salt all day long," Venugopal told AFP. In the summer months, about 80 percent suffer some kind of heat illness.

But millions of workers in India's industrial north are at risk, she said.

India and other poorer countries cannot wait for international standards to be enforced. "People are dying, people are getting disease. We need to adapt all the practices used by others and tailor it to our own culture."

Health experts say rest, water and shade are needed to ease the deadly risks.

"Owners say no, no, no, we don't want our workers to rest because we will lose productivity. But that has to change," Venugopal said.

Glaser of La Isla Network worked with sugar companies in Central America to improve conditions. Workers on a nine-hour shift cut 4.75 tonnes of sugar cane a day. With better breaks, shade and water, they cut 6.2 tonnes in four hours, he said.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

[Pangandaman sees immediate need to close infra gap](#)

By: Ruth Abbey Gita-Carlos

Budget Secretary Amenah Pangandaman has emphasized the need to ramp up efforts in addressing the infrastructure investment gap to achieve socio-economic development.

Pangandaman lamented that the Philippines, according to reports, is “two to three decades behind on infrastructure despite the increase in public expenditure.”

“I wholeheartedly believe that developing countries like ours need to ramp up its infrastructure to meet its economic and social goals,” she said in a May 10 column published in the local newspaper Manila Bulletin. “And so we need to act fast. No more delays. Now is the best time to close that infrastructure gap.”

Pangandaman said fast-tracking the completion of the needed infrastructure is not just vital to the country's economic recovery but also plays a crucial role in addressing climate change.

“Climate change, on the other hand, plays a big role in infrastructure planning and development. Everything is interconnected,” she said.

Citing the Asian Development Bank (ADB) report, Pangandaman said the estimated total infrastructure investment threshold of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is at USD2.8 trillion baseline and USD3.1 trillion climate-adjusted, placing the annual investment need at USD184 billion and USD210 billion, respectively.

Pangandaman, however, said the infrastructure gap figures exclude the additional expenditures associated with climate change “that increasingly impact existing infrastructure in Southeast Asia.”

She noted that based on the long-term climate risk index for 2000–2019, the Philippines is among the 10 countries “most affected by weather-related loss events and are most vulnerable to climate-linked risks.”

Addressing infrastructure and climate change financing gaps is “possible,” Pangandaman said, adding that private sector participation is a “key player” since narrowing the deficits is not the sole job of the government.

She said several financing options include ADB facilities, local or international markets, private sector investments, and climate-related financing innovations.

“I've always believed that it will take a whole-of-nation approach to slow down the risks and effects of climate change. With the continuous help and support of every Filipino, we can work toward climate resiliency to safeguard a sustainable future for our country,” she said.

“Beyond budget, financing programs supporting environmentally-sound businesses are imperative. It takes an entire ecosystem that begins with sustainable financing policies to private sector partnerships to realize the emergence of a progressive and resilient future-ready Philippines.”

Partnership with local government

Meanwhile, the Climate Change Commission (CCC) strengthened its partnership with the local government of Paete, Laguna to ensure the implementation of plans and programs that are aligned with the national framework and international commitments on climate resilience.

In a separate news release, the CCC said Paete, Laguna Mayor Ronald Cosico had already submitted the local government's Local Climate Change Action Plan (LCCAP) for 2021-2026 and Annual Investment Program (AIP) for 2023.

The LCCAP outlines the local government units' (LGUs) strategies and actions to address climate change impacts on their community, infrastructure, and economy, while the AIP contains their programs, activities, and projects on climate action.

The CCC said it would connect Paete with relevant development partners to further boost its local climate change initiatives.

It said it would also work with the local government to create a “climate-resilient, climate-smart, and sustainable community” in Paete, which could serve as a model for other LGUs in the country.

Paete is one of the LGUs in the Philippines that is regularly affected by climate change impacts, such as typhoons, flooding, and landslides.

After the submission of its LCCAP to the CCC, Paete's local government is now eligible for various technical and financial assistance, including access to the People's Survival Fund (PSF).

The PSF is a domestic funding mechanism that supports the implementation of climate resilience and adaptation programs of local communities in various areas, such as agriculture, water resource management, and disaster risk reduction and management.

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