



NEWS ROUNDUP

27 May 2024 [07:00am]

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DAILY TRIBUNE

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By: Jonas Reyes

A coal plant company has conducted a forum on climate change and the preservation of mangroves in the province of Bataan.

MANILA BULLETIN

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By: Joseph Pedrajas

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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By: Jong-jin Kim

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By: Roy C. Mabasa

The Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) has lauded the Advisory Opinion issued by the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS), which referenced to the July 2016 South China Sea Arbitration Award as "authoritative."

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By: Acor Rceo

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Will clouds help cool or warm our world in the years ahead? The EarthCARE satellite will soon blast off on a mission to find out, aiming to investigate what role clouds could play in the fight against climate change.

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[Marcos signs law to account for Philippines' natural resources](#)

By: Gaea Katreena Cabico

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. has signed a law establishing a system that will provide the government with an accounting of the country's natural resources.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

DAILY TRIBUNE

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The Climate Change Commission (CCC) emphasized the importance of protecting biodiversity and urged for a collective and inclusive action to address issues detrimental to the health of ecosystems and all life forms in the country.

[Commission, LGUs rush integrating climate change into development plans](#)

The Climate Change Commission (CCC) highlighted the crucial role of the local government units (LGUs) in the localized implementation of national climate change mitigation and adaptation plans during the recently held Eastern Visayas Summit on Climate-Resilient Development.

[PhilDel preps for UNFCCC meeting](#)

The Philippine Delegation (PhilDel) ramped up its series of interagency meetings to further solidify preparations for the 60th Session of Subsidiary Bodies (SB60) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to be held in Bonn, Germany this June.

FILIPINO TIMES

[Responsible journalism needed in addressing climate change—gov't](#)

By: Kristine Erika Agustin

Environmental journalism will help raise awareness among the public and call for sustainable solutions amid the increasing threats of climate change, the Climate Change Commission (CCC) said.

SUNSTAR

[Algo: Blue Economy Bill needs stronger climate lens](#)

By: John Leo C. Algo

For the Philippines to properly address the climate crisis, its laws and policies need to adapt to the present and projected reality.

Information and Knowledge Management Division

DAILY TRIBUNE

[Bataan coal plant conducts forum on mangrove, climate change](#)

By: Jonas Reyes

A coal plant company has conducted a forum on climate change and the preservation of mangroves in the province of Bataan.

Held at the Pulo Integrated School in Sitio Pulo, Barangay Kabalutan, the Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) Environmental Forum on Understanding Climate Change and Mangroves was initiated by the GMPower Mariveles Energy Center Ltd. Co. (GMEC).

According to GMEC AVP for Community Relations Arcel Madrid, the forum is part of the company's initiatives under its 6.8M Mangrove Adoption and Protection Project.

He added that the five-year program aims to develop a five-hectare mangrove expanse in the said area, which is the first of its kind under Bataan's environmental program Project Transform.

Madrid said that the 2024 State of the Coasts of Bataan showed that Bataan's mangrove area decreased from 3.95-sqkm to 1.56 -sqkm between 2012 and 2016.

"This is the reason why GMEC launched the project, as it covers five hectares and planting 12,500 mangrove propagules and seedlings in 2023 alone," he added..

More than 150 stakeholders include students, teachers, school officials, GMEC personnel, and representatives from the Provincial Government Environment and Natural Resources Office (PGENRO) took part in the forum.

The event featured presentations on climate change, mangrove ecology and conservation, the threats to mangrove survival, and the benefits these vital ecosystems provide.

"I hope with this learning event, the students are now more conscious about our environment, especially the changing climate and our mangrove ecosystems. I hope we will all take action for its protection and betterment," PGENRO OIC Raphael de Leon said.

During his speech at the forum, Madrid emphasized the importance of environmental protection and youth engagement in climate change mitigation efforts.

MANILA BULLETIN

[ITLOS' advisory opinion reinforces 2016 arbitral award — Philippines](#)

By: Joseph Pedrajas

The Philippines has welcomed a recent advisory opinion issued by the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS) pertaining to the two concerns raised by a commission of small island states as its response validated the 2016 Arbitral Ruling on the South China Sea.

The Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) on Saturday night said the tribunal's opinion "bolsters and reinforces the legitimacy of the final and binding 2016 Arbitral Award, and its unassailable status as part of the corpus of international law."

"The Philippines therefore takes this opportunity to reiterate its continuing call for full compliance with the Award," DFA added.

On May 21, ITLOS delivered its advisory opinion on the request submitted to the tribunal by the Commission of Small Island States on Climate Change and International Law, with which the Philippines is a member.

The tribunal made a total of 19 responses, which have basically laid out that state parties have obligations to protect the marine environment within their jurisdiction, to the questions posed by the commission, which are:

What are the specific obligations of State Parties to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) to prevent, reduce and control pollution of the marine environment in relation to the deleterious effects that result from climate change; as well as to protect and preserve the marine environment in relation to climate change impacts?

According to DFA, the Philippines is now "diligently studying the Advisory Opinion and its implications for the Philippines and other States Parties to UNCLOS, particularly on the duty to protect and preserve the marine environment in the context of greenhouse gas emissions, climate change impacts, and ocean acidification."

"The Philippines recognizes that advisory opinions are significant contributions to the clarification and development of international law," it said.

"The Philippines reiterates the rule of law ensures equity in the global commons and a fair, just, and peaceful multilateral world order," it added.

DFA said the Philippines is inviting all states to join in a constructive dialogue as well as thorough study of the tribunal's opinion.

That would be in the spirit of collaboration towards "fully and faithfully enforcing and complying with UNCLOS for a healthy and thriving marine environment."

NASA

[NASA Launches Small Climate Satellite to Study Earth's Poles](#)

The first of a pair of climate satellites designed to study heat emissions at Earth's poles for NASA is in orbit after lifting off atop Rocket Lab's Electron rocket from the company's Launch Complex 1 in Māhia, New Zealand at 7:41 p.m. NZST (3:41 a.m. EDT) on Saturday.

The agency's PREFIRE (Polar Radiant Energy in the Far-InfraRed Experiment) mission consists of two shoebox-size cube satellites, or CubeSats, that will measure the amount of heat Earth radiates into space from two of the coldest, most remote regions on the planet. Data from the PREFIRE mission will help researchers better predict how Earth's ice, seas, and weather will change in a warming world.

"NASA's innovative PREFIRE mission will fill a gap in our understanding of the Earth system – providing our scientists a detailed picture of how Earth's polar regions influence how much energy our planet absorbs and releases," said Karen St. Germain, director of NASA's Earth Science Division in Washington. "This will improve prediction of sea ice loss, ice sheet melt, and sea level rise, creating a better understanding of how our planet's system will change in the coming years — crucial information to farmers tracking changes in weather and water, fishing fleets working in changing seas, and coastal communities building resilience."

Ground controllers successfully established communications with the CubeSat at 8:48 EDT. The second PREFIRE CubeSat will set off on its own Electron rocket from Launch Complex 1 in the coming days. Following a 30-day checkout period during which engineers and scientists will make sure both CubeSats are working normally, the mission is expected to operate for 10 months.

At the heart of the PREFIRE mission is Earth's energy budget – the balance between incoming heat energy from the Sun and the outgoing heat given off by the planet. The difference between the two is what determines the planet's temperature and climate. A lot of the heat radiated from the Arctic and Antarctica is emitted as far-infrared radiation, but there is currently no detailed measurement of this type of energy.

The water vapor content of the atmosphere, along with the presence, structure, and composition of clouds, influences the amount of far-infrared radiation that escapes into space from Earth's poles. Data collected from PREFIRE will give researchers information on where and when far-infrared energy radiates from the Arctic and Antarctic environments into space.

"The PREFIRE CubeSats may be small, but they're going to close a big gap in our knowledge about Earth's energy budget," said Laurie Leshin, director, NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Southern California. "Their observations will help us understand the fundamentals of Earth's heat balance, allowing us to better predict how our ice, seas, and weather will change in the face of global warming."

The mission's CubeSats each carry an instrument called a thermal infrared spectrometer, which use specially shaped mirrors and sensors to measure infrared wavelengths. Miniaturizing the instruments to fit on CubeSats necessitated downsizing some parts while scaling up other components.

"Our planet is changing quickly, and in places like the Arctic, in ways that people have never experienced before," said Tristan L'Ecuyer, PREFIRE's principal investigator, University of Wisconsin, Madison. "NASA's PREFIRE will give us new measurements of the far-infrared wavelengths being emitted from Earth's poles, which we can use to improve climate and

weather models and help people around the world deal with the consequences of climate change.”

NASA’s Launch Services Program, based out of the agency’s Kennedy Space Center in Florida, in partnership with NASA’s Earth System Science Pathfinder Program is providing the launch service as part of the agency’s Venture-class Acquisition of Dedicated and Rideshare (VADR) launch services contract.

The PREFIRE mission was jointly developed by NASA and the University of Wisconsin-Madison. NASA JPL manages the mission for the agency’s Science Mission Directorate and provided the spectrometers. Blue Canyon Technologies built the CubeSats and the University of Wisconsin-Madison will process the data the instruments collect. The launch services provider is Rocket Lab USA Inc. of Long Beach, California.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

[Hidden threat to food security, habitat](#)

By: Jong-jin Kim

In recent months, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and others have pointed to an increase in food insecurity and “hunger hotspots” in various parts of Asia and the Pacific.

While conflicts and climate crises can carry some of the blame, we must acknowledge that the slow but steady erosion of our region’s biodiversity is an equal or even greater threat to our future food security.

FAO’s most recent outlook report on Asia-Pacific’s Forest Sector found that biodiversity and ecosystem resilience in natural forests are declining along with the capacity of these forests to deliver water and soil protection, climate regulation, amenity and cultural values, and wood, foods, and medicines. Reversing this trend must be a priority for all countries in the region now and in the next decade to ensure our survival, especially in the face of dangerous climate change.

While this biodiversity loss is a crisis for Asia and the Pacific in many ways, the impact it can have on our ability to achieve future food security poses a serious threat. We know from FAO’s recent reports that the Asia-Pacific region is home to half of the world’s undernourished people and that nearly 45 percent cannot afford a sustainable and healthy diet.

At the heart of some of these nutrition challenges is a food system that is currently founded on a narrow genetic base of 10-15 crops. We have lost much of the diversity that was, historically, commonplace in our diets, and increasing dietary diversity is a key part of the solution to ending malnutrition.

According to The State of the World’s Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture, published by the FAO Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture Assessments, biodiversity for food and agriculture (BFA) contributes to food security and nutrition in many ways. This includes enabling food to be produced in a wide range of environments, helping to maintain the stability of food supplies throughout the year, and resilience to shocks such as droughts and pest outbreaks, supplying a wide variety of nutritionally diverse foods.

Indeed, wild biodiversity is an important source of food for many people, particularly in poorer parts of our region. It also provides raw materials for crop breeding programs and contributes to the supply of many ecosystem services that support food production.

So we all need to wake up to this urgent need to better protect Asia-Pacific’s biodiversity, for the good of ourselves, our food security and nutritional health, our environment, and to safeguard those of our future generations.

At FAO, we are working to that end in our efforts to help our member nations enhance efforts at biodiversity and sustainability in agriculture, aquaculture, fisheries, and forestry, particularly through our updating of action plans to reach the 2030 biodiversity targets. Ultimately, the goal is to ensure a sustainable food systems transformation across the region, to achieve food security, nutrition, and livelihoods—especially for local communities and indigenous people who rely on the existing biodiversity.

Given the importance and the increased demand for aquatic foods in our region, and worldwide, FAO has committed to a vision for Aquaculture Transformation for Asia and the Pacific. This will enable the sustainable intensification of aquaculture by improving sustainability and reducing the environmental impacts of production. It also aims to harness the rich and diverse cultural foundation of aquaculture in this region, by strengthening its

contribution to food security and improved nutrition, while also securing livelihoods, socioeconomic development, and environmental recovery. Halting deforestation and forest degradation, while enabling forest and landscape restoration, are also vital components of addressing the challenge of biodiversity loss and climate change.

Some 15 years ago, FAO and its partners UNDP and UN Environment launched the REDD+ (reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries) program. As part of these transformative efforts at country and regional levels, it is imperative to promote sustainable natural resources management, as well as protecting critical ecosystems to conserve biodiversity, protect land, soil, and water—while reducing food loss and energy use.

All of these approaches complement FAO 's overarching global framework to help our members achieve better production, better nutrition, better environment, and better life for all—leaving no one behind. I believe that, together with many stakeholders, we can “walk the talk” necessary to achieve this.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

[ITLOS cites 2016 arbitral ruling in advisory opinion on climate change](#)

By Joyce Ann L. Rocamora

The International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS) has issued its long-awaited advisory opinion on climate change and agreed that greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) constitute marine pollution.

The global ocean court on May 21 determined that the 169 states parties to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) have the “specific obligations” to prevent, reduce and control marine pollution from anthropogenic GHG emissions.

In key parts of the advisory opinion, ITLOS cited as authoritative the Arbitral Tribunal’s 2016 ruling on the South China Sea (SCS).

At least 26 states or groups of states also referenced to the award as legal authority in their respective oral and written statements during the ITLOS proceedings.

“This bolsters and reinforces the legitimacy of the final and binding 2016 Arbitration Award, and its unassailable status as part of the corpus of international law. The Philippines therefore takes this opportunity to reiterate its continuing call for full compliance with the Award,” the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) said in a statement dated May 25.

The ITLOS highlighted the obligation of states to conduct environmental impact assessments to ensure activities do not harm the marine environment as it referenced to the South China Sea ruling’s explanation of “general obligation.”

The 2016 Arbitral Award stated that “the corpus of international law relating to the environment, which informs the content of the general obligation in (UNCLOS) Article 192, requires that States ensure that activities within their jurisdiction and control respect the environment of other States or of areas beyond national control.”.

“Thus, States have a positive ‘duty to prevent, or at least mitigate’ significant harm to the environment when pursuing large-scale construction activities,” it further read.

The DFA said the Philippines will study the ITLOS advisory opinion and its implications for the country and other states parties to UNCLOS, particularly on the duty to protect and preserve the marine environment in the context of greenhouse gas emissions, climate change impacts, and ocean acidification.

“The Philippines recognizes that advisory opinions are significant contributions to the clarification and development of international law,” it said.

“The Philippines reiterates the rule of law ensures equity in the global commons and a fair, just, and peaceful multilateral world order,” it added.

The Philippines, as a State Party to UNCLOS, participated in the proceedings by delivering an oral statement during the public hearing on Sept. 19, 2023.

The case was brought by the Commission of Small Island States on Climate Change and International Law (COSIS) last December 2022, asking the UN court to determine the specific duties of states parties to the UNCLOS in preventing the pollution of the marine environment caused by climate change through the accumulation of anthropogenic GHG.

PHYS ORG

[NASA launches ground-breaking climate change satellite](#)

A tiny NASA satellite was launched Saturday from New Zealand with the mission of improving climate change prediction by measuring heat escaping from Earth's poles for the first time.

"This new information—and we've never had it before—will improve our ability to model what's happening in the poles, what's happening in climate," NASA's earth sciences research director Karen St. Germain told a recent news conference.

The satellite, which is the size of a shoe box, was launched by an Electron rocket, built by a company called Rocket Lab, which lifted off from Mahia in the north of New Zealand. The overall mission is called PREFIRE.

The company is later to launch a similar satellite of its own.

They will serve to take infrared measurements far above the Arctic and Antarctic so as to measure directly the heat that the poles release into space.

"This is critical because it actually helps to balance the excess heat that's received in the tropical regions and really regulate the earth's temperature," said Tristan L'Ecuyer, a mission researcher affiliated with the University of Wisconsin, Madison.

"And the process of getting the heat from the tropical regions to the polar regions is actually what drives all of our weather around the planet," he added.

With PREFIRE, NASA aims to understand how clouds, humidity or the melting of ice into water affects this heat loss from the poles.

Until now the models that climate change scientists used to gauge heat loss were based on theories rather than real observations, said L'Ecuyer.

"Hopefully we'll be able to improve our ability to simulate what sea level rise might look like in the future and also how the polar climate change is going to affect the weather systems around the planet," he added.

Small satellites like this one are a low-cost way to answer very specific scientific questions, said St. Germain.

Larger satellites can be thought of as "generalists" and the small ones as "specialists," she added.

"NASA needs both," said St. Germain.

POLITIKO

[PH Lauds ITLOS Advisory Opinion On Climate Change](#)

By: Roy C. Mabasa

The Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) has lauded the Advisory Opinion issued by the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS), which referenced to the July 2016 South China Sea Arbitration Award as “authoritative.”

This Advisory Opinion was in response to a 2022 request from the Commission of Small Island States on Climate Change and International Law.

“This bolsters and reinforces the legitimacy of the final and binding 2016 Arbitration Award, and its unassailable status as part of the corpus of international law. The Philippines therefore takes this opportunity to reiterate its continuing call for full compliance with the Award,” the DFA said in a statement issued on May 25, 2024.

As a State Party to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), the Philippines actively participated in the ITLOS proceedings, providing an oral statement in September 2023.

The Philippines is currently reviewing the implications of the Advisory Opinion for marine environmental protection in the context of climate change.

In reaffirming its commitment to the rule of law, the Philippines called on all States to engage in dialogue and uphold UNCLOS to ensure a thriving marine environment.

RAPPLER

[Typhoon Aghon further strengthens over Philippine Sea east of Aurora](#)

By: Acor Rceo

Typhoon Aghon (Ewiniar) intensified again over the Philippine Sea early Monday, May 27, with its maximum sustained winds now at 130 kilometers per hour from 120 km/h. Aghon's gustiness, however, eased to 160 km/h from 180 km/h.

In a bulletin issued at 2 am on Monday, the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical, and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) said the typhoon was already 90 kilometers east southeast of Baler, Aurora.

It slowed down a bit, moving north northeast at only 10 km/h from 15 km/h.

PAGASA said Aghon is projected to continue intensifying in the next two days while moving away from Philippine landmass, but it may start weakening mid or late Wednesday, May 29.

Although the typhoon is moving away, moderate to heavy rain may still hit several areas on Monday, particularly the eastern part of Isabela, northern part of Aurora, Polillo Islands, Occidental Mindoro, Calamian Islands, Cuyo Islands, Antique, and Aklan.

Rainfall from Aghon previously reached intense to torrential levels, causing floods.

There are also no more areas under Signal No. 3 as of 2 am on Monday. But tropical cyclone wind signals are still in effect for the following areas:

Signal No. 2

Gale-force winds (62 to 88 km/h), minor to moderate threat to life and property

- Aurora
- northern part of Quezon (Infanta, General Nakar) including Polillo Islands

Signal No. 1

Strong winds (39 to 61 km/h), minimal to minor threat to life and property

- eastern part of Isabela (Divilacan, San Mariano, San Guillermo, Jones, Echague, San Agustin, Ilagan City, Benito Soliven, Cauayan City, Maconacon, Angadanan, Naguilian, Palanan, Dinapigue)
- eastern part of Quirino (Maddela, Nagtipunan, Aglipay)
- eastern part of Nueva Vizcaya (Alfonso Castañeda, Dupax del Sur, Dupax del Norte)
- eastern part of Nueva Ecija (General Tinio, Gabaldon, Bongabon, Pantabangan, Rizal, General Mamerto Natividad, Laur, Palayan City, Peñaranda, San Leonardo, Gapan City, Cabanatuan City, Santa Rosa, Llanera)
- Bulacan
- Metro Manila
- Rizal
- Cavite
- Laguna
- central part of Quezon (Pitogo, Buenavista, Lucena City, Calauag, Pagbilao, Tiaong, Lopez, Guinayangan, Unisan, General Luna, Plaridel, Quezon, San Antonio, Alabat,

Candelaria, Lucban, Sampaloc, Padre Burgos, Sariaya, Tayabas City, Macalelon, Mauban, Dolores, Perez, Agdangan, Gumaca, Atimonan, Real, Tagkawayan)

- Camarines Norte
- northwestern part of Camarines Sur (Sipocot, Ragay, Del Gallego, Lupi, Siruma)

In a new storm surge warning at 2 am on Monday, PAGASA said there is still a “minimal to moderate risk” of storm surges over the “exposed and low-lying coastal areas” of Cagayan, Isabela, Aurora, Quezon, Marinduque, and Camarines Norte within 24 hours.

The coastal waters of Aurora, Quezon, and Marinduque, as well as the southern coastal waters of Batangas and the northern coastal waters of Camarines Norte, remain under a gale warning, too. PAGASA said travel is risky for small vessels, “including all motorbancas of any type of tonnage.”

Outside those areas under the gale warning, Aghon will still cause moderate to rough seas in the northern and eastern seaboard of Luzon and the seaboard of Bicol. Waves are 1.5 to 3.5 meters high, so small boats must take precautionary measures, or if possible, avoid sailing altogether.

Aghon made landfall in the Philippines nine times:

Friday, May 24 (as a tropical depression)

- Homonhon Island, Guiuan, Eastern Samar – 11:20 pm

Saturday, May 25 (as a tropical depression)

- Giporlos, Eastern Samar – 12:40 am
- Basiao Island, Catbalogan City, Samar – 4 am
- Cagduyong Island, Catbalogan City, Samar – 5 am
- Batuan, Ticao Island, Masbate – 10:20 am
- Masbate City, Masbate – 10:40 am
- Torrijos, Marinduque – 10 pm

Sunday, May 26

- Lucena City, Quezon – 4:30 am (as a tropical storm)
- Patnanungan, Quezon – 6:50 pm (as a severe tropical storm)

Aghon is expected to exit the Philippine Area of Responsibility (PAR) on Wednesday afternoon or evening.

It is the country’s first tropical cyclone for 2024.

PAGASA previously estimated that one or two tropical cyclones could form within or enter PAR in May.

THE MANILA TIMES

[EarthCARE satellite to probe how clouds affect climate](#)

Will clouds help cool or warm our world in the years ahead? The EarthCARE satellite will soon blast off on a mission to find out, aiming to investigate what role clouds could play in the fight against climate change.

The collaboration between the European Space Agency and Japan's JAXA space agency is scheduled to launch Tuesday on a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket from California's Vandenberg base.

The two-tonne satellite will orbit nearly 400 kilometers (250 miles) above Earth for three years, building a complete profile of those fluffy clouds over our heads.

"They are one of the main contributors to how the climate changes — and one of the least understood," Dominique Gillieron, head of the ESA's Earth observation projects department, told Agence France-Presse.

Clouds — from cumulus and cirrus to cumulonimbus — are a varied and complicated phenomenon.

Their composition depends on where they are located in the troposphere, Earth's lowest layer of atmosphere, Gillieron explained.

The troposphere starts at around eight kilometers (five miles) above the polar regions, but near the equator it begins at around 18 kilometers (11 miles) up.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

Marcos signs law to account for Philippines' natural resources

By: Gaea Katreena Cabico

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. has signed a law establishing a system that will provide the government with an accounting of the country's natural resources.

Republic Act 11995, also known as the Philippine Ecosystem and Natural Capital Accounting System (PENCAS) Act, establishes a government-wide accounting framework to support economic and environmental policymaking, value ecosystem services, and develop measures for ecosystem protection, conservation and restoration.

Marcos signed the law last May 22 on the celebration of the International Day for Biological Diversity.

Environment Secretary Maria Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga earlier said that PENCAS will not only determine the economic value of ecosystems, but will also result in better management of natural resources and improved climate and disaster resilience.

PENCAS framework

Natural capital refers to plants, animals, air, water, soils, ores and minerals that provide ecosystem services such as air and water filtration, flood protection, carbon sequestration, pollination of crops and habitats for wildlife.

The PENCAS framework will include, among others, a list of the officially designated statistics on the depletion, degradation and restoration of natural capital, environmental protection expenditures, pollution and quality of land, air and water, environmental damages and adjusted net savings.

The Philippine Statistics Board (PSA) will oversee the implementation of PENCAS, developing and maintaining the compilation of natural capital accounts as well as the environmental and ecosystem accounts.

PSA will create an Environment, Natural Resources and Ecosystem Account Services (ENREAS).

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), meanwhile, will provide national capital accounting data to PSA.

In its Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) system, the DENR will ensure that the natural environment, ecosystem services, and natural capital are framed as opportunities, benefits or assets that may be put at risk.

The National Economic and Development Authority, Department of Agriculture, Department of the Interior and Local Government, Department of Education, Commission on Higher Education, Technical Education and Skills Development Authority, Professional Regulation Commission, Department of Finance, Department of Energy and Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development will also be tapped to implement the law.

Measuring nature

Last week, a toolkit called "Sukat ng Kalikasan" (measurement of nature) was launched.

Developed by the United States Agency for International Development-Sustainable Interventions for Biodiversity, Oceans and Landscapes (USAID-SIBOL) and the DENR, Sukat ng Kalikasan provides a standardized practical guide for planning, monitoring and addressing threats in protected or conservation areas.

Sukat ng Kalikasan identifies six categories divided into two classifications. The first focuses on species and their habitats at the ecosystem, landscape and seascape level. The second classification is related to regulation and maintenance of ecosystem services and the social, economic, and cultural values of an area.

“Customized for the Philippine context, its objective is to appreciate the values that our ecosystems provide, so that we are in a more resilient position to manage our natural resources sustainably while achieving our development goals,” DENR Undersecretary Ernesto Adobo Jr. said during the launch last week.

Adobo said the signing of PENCAS will institutionalize the use of Sukat ng Kalikasan. This, he said, will lead to more effective natural resource management to reduce biodiversity loss, increase private sector engagement and investment, and make more resilient communities and economy.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

DAILY TRIBUNE

[CCC urges collective action to protect ecosystems](#)

The Climate Change Commission (CCC) emphasized the importance of protecting biodiversity and urged for a collective and inclusive action to address issues detrimental to the health of ecosystems and all life forms in the country.

“Biodiversity is crucial for ecosystem balance and our well-being, and it’s increasingly threatened by climate change. We must work together to protect natural habitats, adopt sustainable practices, and support strong environmental policies. By acting now and by being part of the plan, we can ensure a resilient world for future generations,” said CCC vice chairperson and executive director Robert E.A. Borje.

The CCC explained the vital functions that ecosystems in the country perform. Biodiversity-rich ecosystems act as natural carbon sinks, absorbing large amounts of heat and carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and oceans, thereby helping to regulate temperature and climate.

The Philippines is one of the 18 mega-biodiverse countries in the world. Its ecosystems, ranging from wetlands, tree forests, mangrove forests, and coral reefs, house between 70 and 80 percent of the world’s plant and animal species, making the country a hotspot for biodiversity conservation.

Currently, drivers of habitat and biodiversity loss in the country include illegal logging and fishing, mining, pollution, sea and land-use conversion, animal trafficking and poaching, and climate change.

In the Philippines’ draft National Adaptation Plan, ecosystems and biodiversity are identified as one of the eight key sector outcomes, making Philippine biodiversity and ecosystems a priority area for adaptation efforts.

The 2023 to 2028 Philippine Development Plan also emphasizes strategies to improve and protect the country’s biodiversity, primarily through intensified monitoring, protection, management and rehabilitation.

The CCC remains steadfast in its commitment to protect and preserve Philippine biodiversity. Recognizing the ecological services that biodiversity-rich ecosystems provide, the CCC actively seeks further ways to establish mechanisms that effectively aid the protection, conservation, and preservation of our biodiversity and ecosystems.

The International Day for Biological Diversity is celebrated annually on 22 May to emphasize the importance of public education and awareness about biological diversity. The UN designated this date during the General Assembly and Convention on Biological Diversity on 8 February 2001. This year, the theme “Be part of the Plan,” encompasses the need for a whole-of-society approach in protecting biodiversity.

Commission, LGUs rush integrating climate change into development plans

The Climate Change Commission (CCC) highlighted the crucial role of the local government units (LGUs) in the localized implementation of national climate change mitigation and adaptation plans during the recently held Eastern Visayas Summit on Climate-Resilient Development.

Secretary Robert E.A. Borje, CCC vice chairperson and executive director, emphasized the different national climate change frameworks that were drafted to serve as the nation's guides in building climate resiliency and smartness. This includes the National Framework Strategy on Climate Change, National Climate Change Action Plan, National Climate Risks Management Framework, the Philippine Development Plan, National Adaptation Plan, and Nationally Determined Contribution Implementation Plan.

During his opening speech, Borje stressed the urgent need for swift action to address the increasing loss and damage caused by climate-induced disasters in the country.

"Gone are the times when government agencies simply came up with policies and frameworks for the stakeholders to understand. The responsibility of agencies, such as the Climate Change Commission, is not just to formulate and coordinate policies but also to ensure that policies are fully understood and ultimately implemented," Borje said.

The CCC is tasked to provide technical assistance and support to LGUs in developing their Local Climate Change Action Plans (LCCAP), to ensure that they are aligned with international and national climate change frameworks.

As of March 2024, LCCAP submission rates are at 87.23 percent, accounting for 1,496 LGUs around the country. This indicates that more LGUs are ramping up their efforts to integrate climate change into their development plans.

Borje also discussed government efforts to assist LGUs in accessing and making full use of international and national climate financing mechanisms such as the People's Survival Fund, Green Climate Fund, Loss and Damage Fund, and the Global Shield Against Climate Risk.

PhilDel preps for UNFCCC meeting

The Philippine Delegation (PhilDel) ramped up its series of interagency meetings to further solidify preparations for the 60th Session of Subsidiary Bodies (SB60) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to be held in Bonn, Germany this June.

The SB60 helps and negotiates with the conference of the parties to assist on the technological, methodological and scientific matters related to assessing global climate change.

Drawing from experiences and challenges during previous conferences, the PhilDel to the SB60, composed of representatives from different national agencies, continued a series of preparatory interagency meetings. These meetings are aimed at discussing ways forward for the upcoming negotiations, as well as evaluate and assess outcomes of previous UNFCCC sessions.

During the meetings, Secretary Robert E.A. Borje, CCC vice chairperson and executive director, and head of delegation, led key discussions, particularly in developing and strengthening various approaches and strategies to address possible challenges as well as build consensus.

Borje emphasized the importance of constant internal and external communication and coordination to help the delegates effectively navigate the complexities of the negotiations.

As a member of the G77, a coalition of developing nations in the United Nations, the Philippines can harness valuable support, solidarity, and resources to navigate the negotiations within the UNFCCC process and advance its interests in addressing climate change.

FILIPINO TIMES

Responsible journalism needed in addressing climate change—gov't

By: Kristine Erika Agustin

Environmental journalism will help raise awareness among the public and call for sustainable solutions amid the increasing threats of climate change, the Climate Change Commission (CCC) said.

The media should use their platform to amplify the challenges posed by the ongoing crisis, the Vice Chairman and Executive Director of the CCC, Robert Borje said.

“Malaking malaki ang role ng journalists para maintindihan, maunawaan at mapagbago ang dapat na gawin ng mga tao, mga institutions at organizations lalong-lalo na sa climate change,” Borje said in a televised briefing.

Borje cited significant effects of the climate crisis, including increasing temperatures, drought, and the effects of tropical cyclones.

Borje called on journalists to frame their stories in a way that the public would have a better understanding of the effects of the crisis, as well as the actions they could undertake to help ease the negative effects and prepare for what is to come.

“Kailangan din ang ating mga media para malaman ng ating mga kababayan kung anong pwede nilang magawa,” Borje said, adding that journalists could discuss topics, such as the rainwater catchments, adaptive agriculture, early warning signals.

Borje also emphasized that journalists are essential in explaining the technicalities and the science behind climate change.

“Dito sa Climate Change Commission under President Bongbong Marcos Jr., we’re making sure that we strengthen our strategic communications through increased and improved partnerships with the media,” Borje said.

SUNSTAR

Algo: Blue Economy Bill needs stronger climate lens

By: John Leo C. Algo

For the Philippines to properly address the climate crisis, its laws and policies need to adapt to the present and projected reality.

In recent years, Congress has been pushing for bills that are relevant to enhancing climate resilience. For example, the Senate is currently deliberating on SB 2450, or the "Blue Economy Bill." If passed, this would formalize a national framework for the sustainable development of marine and coastal resources and strengthening coordination among different sectors in their governance and management.

While the enactment of this proposed legislation would help strengthen mitigation and adaptation in the Philippines, it is missing key climate-relevant terms and principles that would hinder its enforcement and, consequently, the country's pursuit of development.

What is in the bill?

SB 2450 would institutionalize a "blue economy framework," a development model that would ultimately create a diversified, sustainable economy concerning oceans, seas, and freshwater resources in the Philippines. It would cover all activities and industries involving these areas, from fisheries and aquaculture to renewable energy, from eco-tourism to maritime transport.

A key feature of the bill is the establishment of the Integrated Marine and Coastal Area Management (IMCAM) Framework, which would respond to human impacts on marine and coastal biodiversity. Under this framework are provisions for capacity-building for stakeholders, strengthening research and valuation activities for coastal and marine ecosystems and resources, and protecting these environments from threats such as pollution to habitat destruction.

Several new plans would also be created under this proposed legislation. This includes a nationwide marine spatial planning to better identify and support activities within the territorial waters in aid of sustainable development. This would be complemented by development plans for each ocean-related industry, and corresponding marine spatial plans in local government units.

Other measures under SB 2450 would enable provisions of blue financing, such as bonds and credit issuances aligned with existing national and Asean standards, and improving marine science and ocean literacy through scientific research and integration of relevant topics into school curricula.

All of these would be supervised under a Blue Economy Council, which consists solely of national government agencies. It would be led by the Executive Secretary, with the Secretary of Environment and Natural Resources and the Secretary of Socio-Economic Planning as co-vice chairpersons.

What is missing?

While addressing climate change is recognized throughout the bill, it is puzzling that the Climate Change Commission (CCC), the mandated lead advisory policymaking body on this issue in the Philippines, is not a member of the Blue Economy Council.

While the current secretary of Environment and Natural Resources is also the chairperson-designate for said agency, there is no guarantee that this representation would continue, considering the secretary of Finance held said position during the previous

administration. If passed into law, the Blue Economy Bill would help address long-term issues linked to the climate crisis, which necessitates the CCC's permanent membership in the proposed council.

As of this writing, there is also a glaring lack of any mention of a National Adaptation Plan (NAP) as a climate strategy that would be integrated with the blue economy framework. Considering adaptation is often touted by legislators and the executive branch as the country's anchor strategy against the climate crisis, this plan needs to be included in addressing oceans-related issues, especially with regards to biodiversity, ecosystems, livelihoods, and resource management.

The alignment of SB 2450 with international policy agreements and frameworks should also be directly recognized, given the potential impacts of transboundary actions on oceans, climate, and biodiversity. Legislators must include the Paris Agreement and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework as among such instruments with which it would be coherent.

While the proposed legislation states value creation, inclusivity, and sustainability as its guiding principles, it must explicitly recognize just transition as another. This is extremely relevant in the climate and development discourse, as acknowledged in key national policies such as the Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC).

The establishment of a blue economy framework would require a massive multi-stakeholder undertaking that would impact economic, environmental, and social systems for years to decades. It must be able to anticipate potential changes in coastal, marine, and freshwater ecosystems, many of which would be triggered by the changing climate.

For instance, shifts in patterns of fish habitats and movements can be caused by warmer waters. These would lead to a loss or relocation of many livelihoods, such as fisheries. Policymakers must be able to provide timely and appropriate interventions for affected workers and communities, which is essentially the point of just transition.

It is ironic that inclusivity, which is one of the listed guiding principles, is actually limited under this bill. There are no specific details as to how non-government stakeholders, especially those most vulnerable to the climate crisis, would be meaningfully involved in decision-making processes; this is despite the fact that fisherfolk communities, indigenous peoples, and other marginalized groups would be among those with the highest stakes in the event of its enactment.

If legislators are serious about a "whole-of-society" approach, clear spaces and platforms for non-government stakeholders in blue economy governance must be added to SB2450. The most important of these is allotted slots for membership in the Blue Economy Council for civil society groups, along with businesses and the academe.

All of these key provisions need to be added into the Blue Economy Bill before being passed in the Senate; this would enhance policy coherence and eventual implementation for climate action, biodiversity and ecosystems protection, and sustainable development. Nonetheless, as with any other that came before, a law is only as good as its implementation.

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