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28 MAY 2024 [08:00 am]

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By: Revin Mikhael D. Ochave

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By: Chandrani Sinha and Shabina Faraz

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By: Secretary Robert E.A. Borje

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MINDANAO TIMES

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Information and Knowledge Management Division

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Philippine companies told to 'bake' ESG into their operations

By: Revin Mikhael D. Ochave

Philippine companies should start adopting environmental, social, and governance (ESG) practices to thrive, according to an IBM Consulting official.

ESG is “no longer a choice but a necessity for Philippine businesses to thrive in today’s environment,” Arun Biswas, IBM Consulting managing partner for Asia-Pacific strategic sales and sustainability consulting, said in an e-mailed reply to questions.

“Prioritizing ESG helps organizations operate in accordance with regulations, identify potential opportunities and risks and act in the best interest of their stakeholders,” he added.

Three-quarters of executives agree that sustainability drives better business results, while 72% view ESG as a revenue enabler, he said, citing an IBM Institute for Business Value study published on Feb. 27.

The study, co-authored by Mr. Biswas, was based on a survey done in the second half of 2023 covering 5,000 C-suite executives across 22 industries and 22 countries, including the Philippines.

Mr. Biswas said IBM Consulting has seen growing interest from Philippine clients on how to use technology to address sustainability issues.

“Though the market data show that more businesses are incorporating sustainability across their organizations, the key is to embed it throughout the business — truly bake it into operations — rather than treat it as an add-on,” he said.

“Sustainability must become a business transformation accelerant versus what it is in so many organizations — a reporting or accounting exercise,” he added.

He said Philippine companies should prioritize ESG because it promotes transparency and trust amid increased scrutiny from stakeholders.

He added that being transparent about business operations could help an organization’s bottom line by promoting a positive company reputation.

“Consumers are paying more attention to sustainability issues and have become more intentional with spending money on products or services that are aligned with their values,” he said.

“Additionally, investors are also demanding for more ESG information to ensure that the companies they invest in are not only sound, but also act responsibly towards pressing issues such as climate change, social development, transparency in business practices, etc.,” he added.

Mr. Biswas said focusing on ESG gives Philippine businesses a better value. It also allows them to comply with regulations and other international standards.

“By having a comprehensive ESG strategy, businesses can demonstrate their commitment to sustainability,” he said. “Reporting the impact of their strategy enables companies to be more transparent to stakeholders about how they are meeting targets, which could better enhance their reputation, attract investment and gain the support of more consumers.”

ECO BUSINESS

Climate change is fuelling turbulence and posing threats to South Asian aviation

By: Chandrani Sinha and Shabina Faraz

Last week, a Singapore Airlines flight experienced severe turbulence, in which one person – who had a heart condition – died, and a number of others were injured. This was only the latest in a series of incidents that have focussed attention on increased air turbulence and its possible link to climate change.

On May 1, 2022, a SpiceJet flight from Mumbai to Kolkata in India experienced similar turbulence, leaving numerous people injured. Months later, one of the passengers died as a result of injuries sustained on that flight.

Hemal Doshi, who was aboard the SpiceJet flight, recalled the harrowing experience, “A sudden jolt threw everyone into a panic. I held onto an elderly woman seated next to me to prevent her from falling off her seat.”

Similarly, on 11 June 2022, an Air Blue flight from Pakistan’s commercial capital of Karachi to Peshawar also encountered unexpected turbulence, sending passengers into a state of terror. Amid the chaos, passengers prayed and held on to each other, said passenger Nasreen Pasha.

“Everything was just fine as we were enjoying the smooth flight and hospitality. But all of a sudden, the flight turned rough and bumpy, shaking incessantly,” Pasha said.

The science and effects of air turbulence

According to Islamabad-based scientist Mohammad Umer Alvi, human-induced environmental degradation is a factor behind unsafe skies. “With the rise in average temperatures and deforestation, the atmosphere in and around big cities in the country has become more unstable. [This] leads to the formation of convective currents that result in unpredictable air turbulence, especially around big airports such as in Karachi and Lahore,” said Alvi.

A global study, whose results were published in 2019 by the Department of Meteorology at the University of Reading had already highlighted the impact of climate change in exacerbating clear-air turbulence (CAT). This type of severe turbulence occurs in cloudless regions and causes violent oscillation of aircraft, but because of a lack of clouds, it is hard to predict.

The study also noted that warmer air caused by carbon dioxide emissions increases wind shear in the jet streams, strengthening clear air turbulence globally. As a consequence, turbulence is rising over busy airspaces like the North Atlantic, where the annual duration of severe turbulence had increased by 55 per cent from 1979 to 2020.

Sarfaraz Khan, a senior official at the Pakistan Meteorological Department said, “The forecast [for air turbulence] is made on the basis of upper atmosphere [85 km to 600 km above sea level] wind data that you get from an instrument called a radiosonde, which is released with a 100 gm balloon in the atmosphere. Usually a jet stream, with very strong winds at a level above 30,000 ft, causes turbulence.”

He added, “The problem with [clear-air] turbulence is that it’s just moving air. And air is transparent to ultra high frequency radio waves used in radar. Without anything to reflect the signal back to the radar, there’s no echo and no warning.”

The link with climate change

Scientists, such as Raghu Murtugudde, a climate studies professor at IIT Bombay and emeritus professor at University of Maryland, are drawing the linkages between climate change and increasing turbulence.

“With global warming, [there is a change in] vertical temperature [decrease in temperature with increasing altitude] and wind profiles [relationship between the wind speeds at different heights] since the earth is trying to get rid of the additional energy that is being trapped by increased greenhouse gases. Sharp upward and downward motions in the atmosphere and temperature fronts also increase [as a result], creating clear-air turbulence.”

Jayanarayana Kuttippurath, a climate expert and atmospheric chemist from IIT Kharagpur, told Dialogue Earth,

“Global warming induced by anthropogenic activities causes a rise in surface air temperature across the globe. As a result, extreme weather events also become frequent and devastating. It is expected that with every 1°C rise in global surface air temperature, moderate CAT events will be enhanced by about 9 per cent in spring and winter and by 14 per cent in autumn and summer in the northern hemisphere. If warming becomes intense in the future, the number of CAT events will rise significantly.”

He stressed the need for improving early warnings and to equip aircraft with detection instrumentation to anticipate and respond to such turbulence effectively. Research on these subjects is ongoing at IIT Bombay.

Madhavan Nair Rajeevan, former secretary at India's Ministry of Earth Sciences said passengers have to be alert, "The increase in turbulence and its related dangers, such as severe weather occurrences, highlights the necessity for passengers to be more attentive. While the aviation sector's role in climate change is accepted, the joint effort to tackle these issues is crucial. The financial cost of flight cancellations also underscores the need for proactive steps to lessen the effects of climate change on air travel."

Pakistani climate scientist Muhammad Ayub Khan pointed out that said climate change is impacting the air industry in multiple ways. "Extreme heat can keep planes grounded, while shifting jet streams can bring more turbulence, subsequently [adding] hazards for airport workers' health and damage to airport infrastructure."

Growth and risks for South Asia's air transport industry

All of this is happening at a time that the air travel industry is seeing significant growth, particularly in South Asia. According to an International Air Transport Association (IATA) report the air transport industry is estimated to support USD 2 billion of GDP in Pakistan. "Spending by foreign tourists adds a further USD 1.3 billion to the country's GDP, totalling USD 3.3 billion," the report said.

The report also forecast air transport in Pakistan to grow by 184 per cent in the next 20 years under the "current trends" scenario. This would result in an additional 22.8 million passenger departures by 2038. If met, this increased demand would prop up the GDP by approximately USD 9.3 billion and add around 786,300 jobs for the country.

In India, IATA forecasts 262 per cent growth in the next 20 years, which would result in an additional 370.3 million passenger journeys by 2037. If met, this increased demand would support approximately USD 126.7 billion of GDP and add almost 9.1 million jobs.

Green aviation

The aviation industry has for years been criticised for its large environmental footprint, particularly its climate-warming carbon emissions. But a new study by Bernd Kärcher, an academic researcher from the German Aerospace Center, suggests that another byproduct of airplanes — the white contrails they paint across the sky — has an even bigger warming effect, one that is set to triple by 2050.

The study said, "Planes create their mesmerising contrails as they soar high in the thin, cold air. Water vapour quickly condenses around soot from the plane's exhaust and freezes to form cirrus clouds, which can last for minutes or hours. These high-flying clouds are too thin to reflect much sunlight, but ice crystals inside them can trap heat.

Unlike low-level clouds that have a net cooling effect, these contrail-formed clouds warm the climate.”

Some aviation experts are experimenting with green technology to reduce emissions – a result, if achieved, could impact CAT, which is worsened by carbon emissions.

Sarah Qureshi, a Pakistani pilot and an aeronautical engineer aims to reduce contrails and make the aviation industry green.

Qureshi, who holds a doctorate in aerospace engineering from Canfield University in the UK, has launched a company Aero Engine Craft to make environmentally friendly airplane engines. The engine is designed to cool water vapour in the airplane exhaust.

Mohammad Haider Haroon, an aviation expert from Pakistan, said, “The production of sustainable aviation fuels must scale up. Hydrogen and battery/electricity powered aircrafts can make global aviation more efficient starting in the late 2030s. Fuel efficient aircrafts should be inducted by airlines with the latest technology globally”

According to Haroon, upgraded engines, enhanced aerodynamics, light composite materials and bio-based sustainable aviation fuel is one of the solutions for a green aviation industry.

“When we look into the sky, there’s only one industry operating there,” Qureshi said. Unfortunately, she added, “We do not focus much on what is happening a kilometre above us. It’s like a blanket gradually covering the surface of the earth, contributing to global warming.”

FINANCIAL TIMES

[UN climate summit in Baku risks being again co-opted by fossil fuels, US lawmakers say](#)

By: Attracta Mooney

The key UN climate summit hosted by Azerbaijan this year risked being “co-opted” by the fossil fuel industry that was the key driver of climate change, a group of leading US Democrats said in a letter to White House officials.

The 26 signatories, including senators Jeff Merkley, Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren, as well as congresswomen Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Jan Schakowsky, said they were “deeply concerned by the appointment of Mukhtar Babayev” as the president-designate of the UN COP29 summit.

Babayev, the minister of ecology in Azerbaijan, spent more than two decades at the state-owned oil and gas company Socar before becoming a member of the cabinet of President Aliyev.

The letter, addressed to US secretary of state Antony Blinken and Biden climate envoy John Podesta, stopped short of pushing for Babayev’s removal, but urged the UN to update its conflict of interest guidelines to “ensure this situation does not happen again.”

It echoes the call by more than 100 US lawmakers and members of European parliament last year for the withdrawal of Sultan al-Jaber, the head of state-owned oil company Adnoc, as president-designate of COP28.

“When Mr Babayev is elected, it will be the second year in a row that COP is headed by a fossil fuel executive,” the politicians wrote. “Given these conflicts of interest, we risk the process being co-opted by the same fossil fuel industry that is the greatest driver of our climate crisis.”

The UN climate change arm introduced rules last year requiring summit delegates to disclose their affiliations. At least 2,456 fossil fuel lobbyists were registered at COP28 in Dubai, or fourfold the attendance at COP27 in Sharm el-Sheikh, after the United Arab Emirates hosts widened access.

The UN aims to have smaller gatherings after peak attendance of more than 65,000 in Dubai. The COP30 summit in 2025 is to be held in Brazil.

“Time is running out, and this international process is too important for the United States to stand by as yet another negotiation is captured by fossil fuel interests,” the letter said.

COP29 declined to comment. But President Aliyev last month defended Azerbaijan's fossil fuel-based economy, saying that its "god-given" gas would be needed for decades to come.

Oil and natural gas brings in about 90 per cent of its export revenues, and finances about 60 per cent of its budget, according to International Energy Agency figures.

The US politicians also raised concerns about human rights issues around COP29 in Baku, to be held in November, on the grounds that it had suppressed climate protests last year.

Its leadership has also faced criticism for the recent military takeover of the breakaway region of Nagorno-Karabakh, which Armenia says led to 100,000 Karabakh Armenians fleeing, and subsequent detentions.

"[We] find it deeply troubling that countries like Azerbaijan that persistently flout international human rights law are selected as conference hosts," the Democrats said.

The upcoming UN climate talks in Bonn in June, a precursor to the main COP event, would be the "key first test of Azerbaijan's leadership", said Tom Evans, climate diplomacy lead at consultancy group E3G.

"Every country must submit a new climate transition plan to the UN in the next year," he noted. "To lead by example, they can prioritise climate above oil and gas interests by publishing their own plan to keep warming to 1.5C and transition away from fossil fuels, as the world agreed to do at COP28."

PHILIPPINE INFORMATION AGENCY

[DENR highlights youths' role in ocean, marine conservation](#)

By: Jan Albert Araña

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources in Region 10 (DENR-10) underscores the vital role of Filipino youth in ocean protection as the country observes Ocean Month.

May is declared 'The Month of the Ocean' by Proclamation No. 57, which emphasizes the preservation, safeguarding, and sustainable management of the coastal and ocean resources of the Philippines.

In light of this, the DENR and the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) lead activities and events to promote sustainable fishing practices and ocean conservation.

"It is time for the youth to take an active role in protecting the environment. They must be involved," said Mercedita Barbarona, chief of Coastal Resource and Foreshore Management and Deputy Chief of the Conservation and Development Division of DENR-10.

She said one major issue the region faces is ocean-bound garbage, and the youth can help address this problem through ocean conservation, coastal clean-ups, and developing innovative ways to prevent garbage from reaching the ocean.

Barbarona said that in 2023, coastal and underwater clean-ups in the region collected a total of 1.03 million tons of garbage, with projections to increase to 1.05 million tons in 2024 and 1.07 million tons in 2025.

DENR-10 records showed that Cagayan de Oro City generates the most waste at 0.65 million tons, followed by Iligan City at 0.29 million tons, Valencia City at 0.18 million tons, Malaybalay at 0.16 million tons, and Ozamis City at 0.12 million tons.

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To address this, the DENR promotes strict implementation of the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000, urging local governments to practice the 3Rs (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle).

Jan Chryzza Marquez, one of the youth environment advocates, argues that regular waste segregation can significantly reduce the amount of garbage reaching the ocean.

"It is not only the government's duty to protect the environment and the ocean for future generations. Everyone has a role to play. Ocean conservation is a shared task," Marquez said.

To support this shared responsibility, the DENR urges the public to participate in community activities and practice proper waste disposal to protect the ocean and the environment.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

Parts of Luzon under Signal No. 1 as Aghon moves away from PH landmass

By: Ma. Cristina Arayata

Some areas in Luzon remained under Tropical Cyclone Wind Signal (TCWS) No. 1 as Typhoon Aghon moved away from the Philippine landmass, the weather bureau said Monday afternoon.

In its 5 p.m. bulletin, the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) said Aghon was last tracked 155 km east of Casiguran, Aurora, moving east northeastward at 10 kph.

Aghon packed maximum sustained winds of 140 kph near the center and gustiness of up to 170 kph.

TCWS No. 1 is still up over Quirino (Maddela, Nagtipunan, Aglipay), Nueva Vizcaya (Alfonso Castaneda, Dupax del Sur, Dupax del Norte), Isabela (Divilacan, San Mariano, San Guillermo, Jones, Echague, San Agustin, Ilagan City, Benito Soliven, City of Cauayan, Maconacon, Angadanan, Naguilian, Palanan, Dinapigue), Aurora, Quezon (General Nakar, Infanta, Real) including Polillo Islands, and Camarines Norte (Vinzons, Paracale, Jose Panganiban, Capalonga).

These areas may experience minimal to minor impacts from strong winds.

The typhoon is forecast to exit the Philippine Area of Responsibility on Wednesday.

PAGASA said Aghon is less likely to directly bring a significant amount of rainfall in the next three days. However, it could enhance the southwesterly windflow which could cause moderate to heavy rains over Western Visayas and portions of Mimaropa in the next two days.

Meanwhile, a gale warning was hoisted over the coastal waters of Cagayan (southern portion), Isabela, Aurora, and the northern coastal waters of Quezon including Polillo Islands.

Sea travel was deemed risky for small seacraft, including all motor bancas of any type of tonnage, according to PAGASA.

Aghon continued to cause moderate to rough seas over the eastern coastal waters of Cagayan and the northern coastal waters of Bicol Region.

PAGASA advised mariners of motor bancas and similarly-sized vessels to take precautionary measures.

PTV

[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 “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 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 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 September 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 state parties to the UNCLOS in preventing pollution of the marine environment caused by climate change through the accumulation of anthropogenic GHG.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

DAILY TRIBUNE

[Life in balance: The vital role of biodiversity](#)

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Biodiversity is more important than most people realize. It supports ecological processes that sustain all life on Earth. Without the Earth's vast reserve of animals, plants, and microorganisms, we would not have the healthy ecosystems we heavily rely on for the air we breathe and the food we eat. Beyond this, biodiversity serves us in another way that is often overlooked and unappreciated by most — it helps us in the fight against climate change.

Land and marine ecosystems like our oceans and forests absorb half of the carbon dioxide (CO₂) that we emit. By capturing greenhouse gasses, our peatlands, wetlands, soils, forests, and oceans directly limit the rise of global temperature, thereby aiding in the mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions and reduction of climate change effects. However, with the rapid acceleration of climate change effects coupled with unsustainable and ecologically damaging human activities, Earth's biodiversity is being pushed to the edge.

According to the Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, 75 percent of our land and 66 percent of our marine systems have been significantly altered by human activities. This makes them unsuitable habitats for millions of animal and plant species. Over a million animal species globally are now threatened with extinction, and if we don't do something, more will be added to the list. The report cites climate change, pollution, changes in land and sea use, direct exploitation of animals, and invasive alien species as among the top reasons for global biodiversity and habitat loss.

Despite being one of the 18 mega-biodiverse countries in the world, the Philippines has over 700 threatened species, making the country a top global conservation area. The latest list of threatened Philippine animal species includes more than 60 animal species. Critically endangered species are those facing extremely high risk of extinction in the wild in the immediate future, according to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. Meanwhile, over 61 species have been listed as endangered, meaning they are likely to become critically endangered in the near future if habitat loss continues without intervention.

The majority of habitat loss and endangerment of biodiversity in the Philippines is due to unsustainable and often illegal human activities, including illegal logging, mining,

pollution, unmonitored sea and land-use conversion, and animal trafficking and poaching. Climate change-induced natural disasters also contribute much to the degradation of Philippine ecosystems, displacing and even killing many plants and animals.

As a tropical country, the Philippines relies greatly on biodiversity to sustain lives and livelihoods. Much of the water we consume comes from our rivers, coastal basins, and fresh-water lakes. Likewise, our staple foods, which consist mostly of crops and fish, are directly dependent on the state of our ecosystems. Current data suggests that our food and water security is dangerously impacted by the aggressive increase in temperature, sea level rise, sea acidity levels, and pollution.

Beyond food and water, the country relies heavily on its wilderness for pharmaceutical development. Currently, 83 species of plants and a wide variety of fungi are used to directly treat or formulate drugs for common illnesses such as cough, pain, and renal stones.

Like the rest of the world, the Philippines also rely greatly on biodiversity for the sequestration of carbon in the atmosphere. Home to 311,400 hectares of mangrove forests, 693,821 hectares of tree forests, 26,000 square kilometers of coral reef forests, and 314 accounted wetlands, the Philippines sequesters a great amount of greenhouse gas emissions through its ecosystems. The continuous decline in biodiversity does not just mean losing a great deal of our plant and animal species; it also means losing our capacity to absorb excess heat and carbon.

Recognizing the heavy implications of biodiversity loss, the Philippine government has included ecosystems and biodiversity as one of the eight key sector outcomes in its draft National Adaptation Plan (NAP). This makes Philippine biodiversity a priority area for adaptation efforts. The NAP identifies key strategies aimed at restoring, protecting, and preserving Philippine biodiversity through research and development, monitoring, policy implementation, and community involvement.

Furthermore, in the 2023 to 2028 Philippine Development Plan, biodiversity is given utmost importance. The plan includes strategies to improve and protect Philippine biodiversity through intensified ecosystem protection, rehabilitation, and management, as mandated by several pieces of legislation, including the Sustainable Forest Management Act, the Land Administration Reform Act, and the Integrated Coastal Management Act.

More than government intervention, the protection of our biodiversity is a responsibility that rests on all of us. Every individual, regardless of their age, status, or background, can make a lasting impact by adopting sustainable practices, supporting conservation

efforts, and spreading awareness about the vitality of preserving our planet's tapestry of life. Whether it's through reducing waste, planting native species, managing our waste properly, or simply educating others, every action, no matter how insignificant it may seem, counts. Let us all commit to doing our part in protecting our biodiversity, ensuring a healthy and vibrant ecosystem for future generations.

MANILA STANDARD

Gov't pushing climate-resilient agriculture

The government is boosting efforts to promote sustainable and climate-resilient agriculture in the Philippines to ensure sufficient supply and lower prices.

The Climate Change Commission stressed the urgency of supporting the development of sustainable agriculture across the archipelago through research, development, investments, policies and projects.

Agriculture Secretary Francisco P. Tiu Laurel Jr., meanwhile, cited the role of agriculture stakeholders in economic development, job creation and in ensuring stable food supply and prices.

Speaking last week during the opening ceremony of the Farmers and Fisherfolk Month, Tiu Laurel said the government should adopt modern and sustainable farming practices, improve competitiveness and profitability, and mechanize farm operations to increase yield and lower production cost.

Agriculture accounts for one in every four jobs while food has a major contribution in the consumer price basket that determines the inflation rate—a key metric that the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas looks at in determining interest rates.

“We need to ensure that future generations can rely on this sector by making agriculture sustainable through the promotion of environmental stewardship, enhancement of biodiversity, and mitigation of climate change impacts,” Tiu Laurel said.

“We must continue supporting and empowering our food producers, processors, and other agri-fishery stakeholders by modernizing and mechanizing Philippine agriculture,” he added.

DA Undersecretary for operations Roger Navarro said the month-long celebration recognizes the contribution of farmers and fisherfolk in driving progress the countryside and ensuring national food security.

“The work that Filipino farmers and fisherfolk accomplish day-in and day-out, from sunrise to sunset, puts food on our tables, drives the national economy, and preserves our way of life,” Navarro said. “We are determined to foster an environment in which all farm and fishery enterprises can grow and thrive,” he added.

The CCC echoed President Ferdinand Marcos Jr's call to boost sustainable and climate-resilient agriculture in the country during the inauguration program of the Calamansi Processing Center (CPC) and Provincial Agriculture Center (PAC) of Oriental Mindoro.

"Many Filipinos work in the agriculture sector. One in every four Filipinos, or over 10 million people, depend entirely on agriculture to support themselves and their families," said CCC vice chairperson and executive director Robert E.A. Borje in his message of support.

"Climate change-induced disasters such as extreme droughts and tropical cyclones, threaten their livelihoods. In the first quarter of this year alone, agricultural losses have already doubled our initial farmer support funds of P10 billion. This underscores the critical importance of the agricultural sector," he said.

President Marcos, in his last official visit to the United States in May 2023, committed boost climate-smart agriculture in the Philippines.

Months following the visit, President Marcos directed the DA to urgently modernize agriculture and ensure food security for Filipinos through science-based agri practices.

He welcomed welcomed former United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon, president of the assembly and chair of the Council of Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI) in February, when he reinforced GGGI financial and technical interventions toward building climate resiliency in the country.

GGGI's area of work in the country includes boosting climate-smart agriculture and food production which fueled the establishment of the newly opened PAC and CPC of Oriental Mindoro.

Food security amid climate change is included as one of the sectoral outcomes in the draft National Adaptation Plan of the Philippines. It entails mechanisms that ensure the climate-proofing of the Philippine agriculture sector by empowering farmers to use climate information and services and climate-benign technologies to enable sustainable food production.

MINDANAO TIMES

[CCC calls for collective action to protect biodiversity](#)

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.

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.

Recognizing the value of biodiversity in addressing climate change and its effects, CCC vice chairperson and executive director Robert E.A. Borje urged collective action to protect the country's biodiverse ecosystems.

"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 Borje.

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 2023-2028 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 May 22 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 February 8, 2001. This year, the theme “Be part of the Plan,” encompasses the need for a whole-of-society approach in protecting biodiversity.

PHILIPPINE INFORMATION AGENCY

[CCC, LGUs ramp up efforts to implement national climate plans, strategies](#)

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 underscored the government's commitment to effectively implement national climate frameworks and strategies. He 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," said Borje.

The CCC is tasked to provide technical assistance and support to LGUs in developing their Local Climate Change Action Plans, ensuring high-quality plans that are aligned with international and national climate change frameworks.

As of March 2024, LCCAP submission rates are at 87.23%, 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 (PSF), Green Climate Fund, Loss and Damage Fund, and the Global Shield Against Climate Risk.

During the recent PSF Board meeting, six new projects from various LGUs were approved, bringing the utilization rate of the 1 billion peso fund to 100% and consequently initiating its supposed annual replenishment.

Borje urged the LGUs to challenge the commission and the PSF board to maintain 100% utilization annually by submitting cohesive, feasible, and tangible pro-climate initiatives and programs.

Recognizing the capacity of LGUs to effectively tailor and execute climate actions, ensuring that national climate objectives are met through practical, on-the-ground efforts, the CCC remains active in working closely with LGUs across the country.

By supporting LGUs in local climate policy development, project implementation, community engagement, and collaborations, the Commission aims to bridge the gap between national climate frameworks and local implementation.

The Eastern Visayas Summit on Climate-Resilient Development, organized by the Institute for Climate and Sustainable Cities (ICSC), was held in Tacloban City from May 14-15.

The two-day event convened stakeholders from across the region to develop community-focused strategies and actionable plans for fostering inclusive, sustainable, and climate-resilient solutions.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

CCC, LGUs ramp up efforts to implement nat'l climate plans

The Climate Change Commission (CCC) highlighted the crucial role local government units (LGUs) in the 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, cited the different national climate change frameworks serving as the nation's guides in building climate resiliency and smartness.

These include the National Framework Strategy on Climate Change, National Climate Change Action Plan, National Climate Risks Management Framework, 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 told the participants of the summit in Tacloban City on May 14 and 15.

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

As of March, LCCAP submission rates hit 87.23 percent, accounting for 1,496 LGUs around the country.

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Borje urged the LGUs to challenge the commission and the PSF board to maintain 100 percent utilization annually by submitting cohesive, feasible, and tangible pro-climate initiatives and programs.

Recognizing the capacity of LGUs to effectively tailor and execute climate actions, ensuring that national climate objectives are met through practical, on-the-ground efforts, the CCC continues to work closely with LGUs across the country.

By supporting LGUs in local climate policy development, project implementation, community engagement, and collaborations, the Commission aims to bridge the gap between national climate frameworks and local implementation.

The Institute for Climate and Sustainable Cities organized the summit attended by stakeholders from across the region to develop community-focused strategies and actionable plans for fostering inclusive, sustainable, and climate-resilient solutions.

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