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By: Andrew Sheng and Sneha Poddar

The Hindu Kush Himalayan region, encompassing Bhutan, Nepal, and long border stretches of India, China, Pakistan, and other nations, is often referred to as the "Third Pole" because it holds the largest reserve of snow and ice outside the polar regions. This region is crucial to the livelihoods and economies of billions of people, as it is the source of 10 of the largest rivers in Asia. However, climate change is threatening this lifeline, with glaciers retreating, and weather patterns becoming increasingly unpredictable. Scientists have declared that the Hindu Kush Bio-Sphere is on the brink of collapse.

THE MANILA TIMES

['Aghon' to exit PH on Wednesday – Pagasa](#)

By: Arlie O. Calalo

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Information and Knowledge Management Division

ABS CBN

At least 2,000 feared dead in Papua New Guinea landslide. These are some challenges rescuers face

The Papua New Guinea government said more than 2,000 people are believed to have been buried alive in a landslide in the South Pacific island nation, after the side of a mountain came down in the early hours of Friday morning when the village of Yambali was asleep.

The settlement is located in a restive and remote area in the interior of the poor, rural nation off the northern coast of Australia, making search and rescue efforts complicated and hazardous.

The government death toll is roughly triple the U.N. estimate of 670 killed. The remains of only six people had been recovered so far.

In a letter seen by The Associated Press to the United Nations resident coordinator dated Sunday, the acting director of Papua New Guinea's National Disaster Center Lusetia Laso Mana said the landslide “buried more than 2,000 people alive” and caused “major destruction” at Yambali village in the Enga province.

Estimates of the casualties have varied widely since the disaster occurred, and it was not immediately clear how officials arrived the number of people affected

Here's a look at some of the challenges:

DIFFICULT ACCESS, RESTIVE POPULATION

The village of at least 4,000, but believed to be substantially larger, is in a mountainous and forested part of Papua New Guinea's Enga province. It's located alongside a winding highway to the town of Porgera and a mine that has produced billions of dollars of gold but whose security personnel have been accused by rights groups of abuses.

The highway was covered by the landslide, effectively cutting off Porgera and the other villages past Yambali from the provincial capital of Wabag, some 60 kilometers (35 miles) from where the disaster occurred.

Emergency responders have brought aid in from Wabag, but have had to make the final 200 meters (yards) of the journey by foot over the rubble-covered highway.

Debris 6 to 8 meters (20 to 26 feet) deep covering an area the size of three or four football fields was being cleared exclusively by hand with shovels and picks for more than two days, until an excavator donated by a local builder arrived on Sunday.

Survivors have been hesitant to allow heavy machinery to be used, however, because they do not want the bodies of their relatives harmed, said Serhan Aktoprak, the chief of the U.N. migration agency's mission in Papua New Guinea. The donated excavator was driven away Monday morning, though it's not clear whether that was related to locals' objections or for another reason, he said.

Military engineers with additional heavy equipment are being transported to the disaster scene 400 kilometers (250 miles) from the east coast city of Lae and are expected to arrive Tuesday or Wednesday.

DEADLY LOCAL FEUDS ARE COMPLICATING THE RESPONSE

Longtime tribal warfare in Enga province has not relented despite the disaster, meaning that soldiers have had to provide security for the aid convoys heading toward Yambali.

At least 26 men were killed in an ambush in February, and eight more died in a clash between two rival clans on Saturday in a longstanding dispute that's unrelated to the landslide. About 30 homes and five retail businesses were burned down in the fighting, officials said.

Convoys have only been able to travel by daylight due to the security risks, and with a two-hour drive each way, their time on site has been seriously restricted, Aktoprak said in a phone interview from Port Moresby, the country's capital.

Approximately 25 people from the U.N., other agencies and the military have been making the daily journey. On Monday, they reported seeing burning houses and men armed with machetes along the way, Aktoprak said.

Emergency crews also face the threat of an ongoing natural disaster as the earth continues to shift in the disaster zone.

The debris is getting increasingly waterlogged from three streams covered by the landslide, making it dangerous to work on and increasing the possibility it could slide farther downhill. Communities below have already been evacuated, Aktoprak said.

"We have a situation that is getting worse and worse every moment," he said.

WHAT LIES AHEAD

With the disaster ongoing and the rescue efforts still in their early stages, it's hard to know exactly what comes next.

But with all the small farms and food gardens that sustain the village's subsistence farming population destroyed, as well as much of its livestock, it is clear that the survivors of Yambali will need help for some time.

The village is near a river, but residents had relied on the three streams buried by the landslide for their drinking water.

Justine McMahon, country director of the humanitarian agency CARE International, said moving survivors to more stable ground was an immediate priority along with providing them with food, water and shelter. The military was leading those efforts.

In addition to people who have been evacuated from settlements lower than Yambali, Aktoprak said an estimated 6,000 have been affected by the disaster so far. If survivors end up moving to urban areas, "this will trigger additional economic and social problems."

Porgera and other towns past Yambali on the highway are now cut off and only accessible by helicopter, and it was not immediately clear what assistance people living in those areas may need as well.

The government of Papua New Guinea formally asked Monday for more international help.

The United States and Australia, a near neighbor and Papua New Guinea's most generous provider of foreign aid, are among governments that have publicly stated their readiness to do more.

Papua New Guinea makes up the eastern half of the island of New Guinea, with the western half belonging to Indonesia. It sits in the Pacific Ocean's so-called "Ring of Fire," a belt of active volcanoes and frequent earthquakes.

Its population is officially around 10 million, but the U.N. has said there hasn't been a comprehensive census for years and the actual figure could be closer to 17 million.

Is climate change behind all extreme weather events?

Floods and heat waves across Africa, deluges in southern Brazil, drought in the Amazon and extreme heat across Asia, including India: The news has been full of alarming weather disaster stories this year, and for good reason.

So far, 2024 has been a particularly bad for extreme weather, according to the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), with droughts, extreme heat and floods causing severe damage to health and livelihoods.

"Almost every region in the world saw extreme weather and climate events of different natures," WMO climate expert Alvaro Silva told DW.

The last weekend of May was no exception. In the US there were dozens of fatalities after severe storms and a spate of tornadoes swept across states in the south.

In Papua New Guinea, thousands of people are believed to be buried under soil after a massive landslide — likely caused by multiple factors including heavy rain — occurred in the northern part of the country. A primary school, several businesses, a guesthouse and petrol station have also been buried, according to the International Organization for Migration.

And in the Bay of Bengal, superstorm Remal unleashed winds of up to 135 kilometers per hour (84 miles per hour) as it made landfall on the coasts of Bangladesh and India. Around two million people are in direct line of the storm, according to BRAC, an international development nonprofit organization in Bangladesh.

And while not every individual extreme weather event can be attributed to climate change, they are becoming more likely and increasing in intensity due to the greenhouse emissions coming from burning coal, oil and gas.

Last year, the Northern Hemisphere had its hottest summer in the past 2,000 years, and globally, 2024 is on track to be even hotter.

What's the link between climate change and weather

Climate change increases evaporation and puts more water vapor into the atmosphere. This causes more intense rainfall and flooding in some areas, and more extreme droughts in others. Warmer ocean temperatures intensify climate patterns, while higher overall temperatures lead to more frequent heat waves.

This plays havoc with global weather patterns, resulting in disparate effects across the planet.

"It's not only the frequency and intensity that you usually hear about, but it's also the changes in timing and duration of these extremes," said Silva. "We no longer know what is normal in the climate, because we see an increasing trend of extreme events."

What extreme weather is caused by climate change and what isn't?

The influence of climate change is apparent when looking at long-term weather trends, but determining its role in specific weather events has only recently become possible.

DW looked at three big weather events this year to see if climate change was a decisive factor.

Was there a link between climate change and the heat waves in India?

In April and continuing into May, India, along with many parts of Asia, suffered through a sweltering heat wave.

Parts of India experienced temperatures of 47 degrees Celsius (116 degrees Fahrenheit), leading to deaths and widespread misery. The heat wave has even called into question voter turnout in the world's largest democratic exercise, as India votes in protracted national elections.

Several politicians, election officials and campaign managers have reportedly fallen ill due the heat, including the federal roads minister who collapsed on stage.

More than 900 million voters are standing outside "for hours and hours under the sun," said Leena Rikkila Tamang, Asia director of IDEA, a Sweden-based pro-democracy NGO. "We see a clear dip in voter turnout in comparison to the 2019 elections."

The heat wave in India was 45 times more likely due to climate change and was 0.85 degrees Celsius hotter than it otherwise would have been, according to the World Weather Attribution (WWA). The WWA is an initiative of scientists investigating whether and to what extent human-induced climate change has played a role in recent extreme weather events.

"There is absolutely no doubt that as long as we continue to burn fossil fuels and, therefore, increase the concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, these

heat waves will become more frequent, more severe, and longer in their duration," Friederike Otto, who leads the organization, told DW.

The damage caused by extreme weather depends on the vulnerability of the population. Even a seemingly small temperature increase can cause major harm.

"In countries like India and other parts of South Asia, where lots and lots of people are working outdoors, they are much more exposed and more vulnerable to even relatively small changes in extreme heat," said Otto.

Did climate change play a role in the Brazil floods?

More than 100 people have died so far in severe floods in the southern Brazilian state of Rio Grande do Sul, which has also caused billions of dollars of damage.

Almost 1.5 million people have been displaced, in what is reported to be the biggest case of climate migration in the country. The state government is even considering moving entire cities to avoid future catastrophes.

Some scientists have already pointed to the effects of climate change, on top of ongoing warming from El Nino, to explain the floods.

One study, published by the French group Laboratoire des Sciences du Climat et de l'Environnement (Climate and Environment Sciences Laboratory), found the heavy rainfall that led to flooding could mostly be ascribed to human-driven climate change.

WWA is working on its own study, but Otto said previous floods in the country were clearly linked to climate change.

Vulnerability also plays a highly significant role in the damage caused by floods, with some engineers pointing to a lack of preparedness and infrastructure issues.

Did climate change make the recent glut of tornadoes in the US worse?

The US has been buffeted by an high number of tornadoes this year.

Over a period of four days, more than 100 tornadoes hit the Midwest and the Great Plains, "causing significant damage and loss of life," said officials.

The National Weather Service in Omaha, Nebraska, set a record by issuing 48 tornado warnings in a single day.

But the causes of tornadoes are incredibly hard to pin down, because they are so localized. Climate change attribution studies work best on large-scale events over big areas, such as heat and cold extremes, and droughts.

With the exception of tropical cyclones in the North Atlantic, climate change has not been linked to increased wind speeds, especially over land, according to Otto.

"Given that we don't see changes in other kinds of wind speeds or other kinds of storms, I wouldn't expect to see a huge change, but that might be quite different for tornadoes because they are also a different phenomenon," she said.

Essentially, scientists can't say what kind of role climate change played, or if it did at all.

At least 22 dead in Memorial Day weekend storms that devastated US

Hasn't extreme weather always happened?

History is awash with examples of extreme weather, even before the cogs of the Industrial Revolution began turning and humans started burning the fossil fuels responsible for climate change in earnest. Such events are natural phenomena, but climate change has very clearly made them far more likely and destructive, say experts.

Before the 1990s, about 70 to 150 weather and water-related hazards were reported per year. Since 2000, 300 extreme events have been registered annually. Even with underreporting in the past, "the difference is unquestionable," said WMO's Alvaro Silva.

BUSINESS MIRROR

Semiconductors, renewables to drive PHL growth — Go

By: Beatriz Marie D. Cruz

The Philippine government is banking on the semiconductor and renewable energy (RE) sectors to drive economic growth, according to the Palace's chief investment adviser.

"[Some of our priority sectors are] semiconductors, electronics, simply because that is our largest export now in the country. So that's the sector that we really want to grow," Secretary Frederick D. Go, who heads the Office of the Special Assistant to the President for Investment and Economic Affairs, told reporters on the sidelines of the Philippine Economic Briefing late on Monday.

Mr. Go cited the potential growth of the electronics sector if the country increases capacity in the assembly, testing and packaging of semiconductors and other electronics.

He said the RE sector is also seen to be a major contributor to overall growth. This comes after the country allowed full foreign ownership of RE projects in 2023.

"Renewable energy now comprises of about a majority, maybe 70% of all the applicants in the green lane for strategic investments," Mr. Go said.

As of April 1, 51 RE projects worth P1.57 trillion have been approved to go through the "green lane" in all government agencies to fast-track its approval and registration.

"It really tells you that the interest of global foreign direct investors is in that field," Mr. Go said.

At present, renewables account for 22% of the country's energy mix. The Philippines is aiming to increase the share of RE to 35% by 2030 and 50% by 2040.

"The main binding constraints to expanded foreign investments in the country remain to be red tape and corruption," Terry L. Ridon, a public investment analyst and convenor of think tank InfraWatch PH, said in a Viber message.

Leonardo A. Lanzona, who teaches economics at the Ateneo de Manila University, said the semiconductor industry is profitable but still stuck in low value-added production.

“It is necessary to move to a higher value chain that utilizes more domestic resources especially labor. For this, a comprehensive and strategic industrial policy is necessary, especially one that incorporates all the experiences accumulated from the existing semiconductor industry,” he said in a Facebook Messenger chat.

In the first quarter, electronics remained the country’s top export with \$10.47 billion, up 13.43% from \$9.23 billion in the same period a year ago.

Semiconductor exports rose by 15.3% to \$8.14 billion in the January-to-March period from \$7.06 billion last year.

The Philippines is seeking to benefit from the United States’ CHIPS (Creating Helpful Incentives to Produce Semiconductors) and Science Act, which seeks to allocate \$52.7 billion in federal subsidies to support chip manufacturing in several countries.

Meanwhile, Jose M. Layug, Jr., president of the Developers of Renewable Energy for Advancement, Inc., said that simplifying permits for energy projects, including renewables, will shorten the construction period to less than a year.

“The greatest hurdle in developing any power plant in the Philippines, including renewables, is the number of permits/signatures that need to be secured by the developer and the long period required to get approvals,” Mr. Layug said in a Viber message.

Government agencies must streamline their requirements and consolidate them under the Department of Energy’s energy virtual one-stop shop, he added.

“If we fast-track all these permits, we can easily build renewable energy plants which have shorter construction periods (solar can be built in nine months; wind can be built in 18 months; biomass/hydro can be built in 24 months) compared to the conventional power plants,” Mr. Layug said.

MANILA BULLETIN

[\[Opinion\] Climate shock](#)

By: Dr. Jun Ynares

As we wrote this column, the country was watching the exit of Typhoon Aghon from the Philippine Areas of Responsibility while national government agencies and local governments in various parts of the country assessed the extent of the damage that the unexpected howler brought about.

Many expected Aghon to simply bring about a “rainy” weekend. Earlier, netizens were predicting that Aghon would bring about a much-awaited “cuddle weather in May.” We thought that Aghon would be an “insignificant weather event,” just a low-pressure area bringing relief to the extreme heat we were experiencing before it poured rains in torrential proportion, in the eastern side of the country. We were “shocked” as it transformed from an LPA to a full-blown typhoon within hours, causing damage and claiming lives.

Aghon served as an added reminder that weather conditions in the world have changed and had raised the vulnerability of local communities to the impact of such changes.

We are not alone in this plight.

We have been watching newscasts from the United States for some time now and have seen how extreme weather conditions have been battering several parts of the country on a sustained basis. Many months ago, we were surprised to learn that heavy rains and major flooding had hit several areas in Los Angeles County – a place that used to be seldom visited by heavy downpour.

Recently, various parts of the US Midwest and its eastern and southern states have been hit by hundreds of tornadoes, destroying communities and displacing thousands of families from their homes.

Given our experience with Aghon and what is happening to the rest of the world, we will now have to get used to understanding and appreciating two concepts: “extreme weather” and “climate shock.”

The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) defines “extreme weather” as a rare weather event happening at a particular place and time of the year. In such situations, the weather would display unusual characteristics in terms of magnitude, location, timing, or extent.

Recently, just before Aghon, heat indexes in various parts of the country hovered in the high 30s to the 40s. These had not often happened in the past. We may have experienced an example of what the WMO says are extreme weather conditions.

The regular occurrence of extreme weather conditions has given birth to a relatively new term: “climate shock.” The United Nations Development Report of 2008 gave the term a clear definition. “Climate shock” happens when people and communities come to a “realization that highly unexpected events can cause welfare losses.” “Climate shocks” are weather occurrences that pose risks and cause damage that go beyond our capacity to cope with.

Are we ready for potential “climate shocks?”

Two years ago, we came across a report by the World Bank that assessed our country’s preparedness to cope with the impact of extreme weather conditions. The report examined the steps our government is taking to adapt to climate change and help the world reduce the impact of these developments on our planet.

According to the report, adaptation to the risks of climate change is “critical” for the Philippines.

It warned that “inaction would impose substantial economic and human costs, especially for the poor.” It added that our ability to take action may not necessarily eliminate the costs of climate change but “can substantially reduce them.”

“Climate shocks, whether in the form of extreme weather events or slow-onset trends of temperature increases, changing rainfall patterns, and rising sea levels, will hamper economic activities, damage infrastructure, and induce deep social disruptions,” the World Bank report underscored.

The report, however, pointed out two outstanding facts. First, that the Philippines is in a position to help address climate shock. Second, that the Philippines has actually taken steps to mitigate it.

The World Bank reports explained that the root cause of the erratic climate behavior in the world today is the so-called greenhouse emissions. These are gases in the earth’s atmosphere that trap heat and which warms the earth’s surface. This alters our planet’s climate and causes changes in snow and rainfall patterns. It also causes a rise in average temperatures and triggers extreme climate events, including floods and heat waves.

According to the report, the Philippines “is a relatively low emitter of greenhouse gas.” “It can contribute to global mitigation efforts through an energy transition, including a shift away from coal,” the report added.

It is heartening to note that our government and its private sector partners have taken steps in the right direction.

Among them are the emphasis on renewable energy and rail-based transportation systems. Generating power through wind technology such as what we see in Pililla, Rizal has almost zero greenhouse gas emissions. As the report said, power generation using traditional technologies is one of the biggest contributors to greenhouse emissions.

The government’s focus on developing a rail-based transportation system has also been cited by the World Bank report as an important contribution to the mitigation of climate shock. It is good to know that our future high-speed trains will be run by electricity and no longer on diesel fuel as it has been in the past.

We must continue looking for ways to help mitigate the damage caused by greenhouse gas emissions if we are to protect the next generation from climate shock.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Lessons from Ladakh's climate leadership

By: Andrew Sheng and Sneha Poddar

The Hindu Kush Himalayan region, encompassing Bhutan, Nepal, and long border stretches of India, China, Pakistan, and other nations, is often referred to as the “Third Pole” because it holds the largest reserve of snow and ice outside the polar regions. This region is crucial to the livelihoods and economies of billions of people, as it is the source of 10 of the largest rivers in Asia. However, climate change is threatening this lifeline, with glaciers retreating, and weather patterns becoming increasingly unpredictable. Scientists have declared that the Hindu Kush Bio-Sphere is on the brink of collapse.

In this critical situation, Ladakh's proactive approach toward climate change becomes a source of inspiration. Ladakh is an Indian union territory with the highest high-altitude plateau that is mostly desert. Despite its stark landscape, Ladakh is a place where the principles of “dharma”—a concept encompassing duty, righteousness, and moral order—take precedence over material gain. The quarter-million people of Ladakh have an intrinsic understanding that true wealth lies in the health of their environment and the continuation of their cultural heritage, not just in immediate financial benefits.

Over the years, Ladakh's response to climate change has been multifaceted: from innovative water conservation measures to investment in renewable energy, protection of biodiversity, promotion of sustainable agriculture, focus on climate education, and integration of sustainability into governance. These initiatives have fostered a resilient community, capable of adapting traditional wisdom to contemporary challenges. Such strategies are underpinned by an ethos that values sacrifice and stewardship, viewing the preservation of the ecosystem as a sacred duty rather than an economic trade-off.

Their commitment is exemplified in the pioneering work of the educational institution, Students' Educational and Cultural Movement of Ladakh. This movement seeks to engage local communities in sustainable practices by empowering young Ladakhis, providing education that harmonizes with the region's environmental and cultural ethos. This model of local involvement, alongside water conservation through ingenious methods like “ice stupas,” solar passive mud buildings, widespread use of solar power for water heaters, responsible tourism, and traditional compost toilets, encapsulates a comprehensive approach to climate resilience.

A poignant embodiment of their commitment is the ongoing “Climate Fast” undertaken by the people of Ladakh, fasting in chilling Himalayan temperatures to spotlight the

urgency of climate action. Led by global innovator, educator, and engineer Sonam Wangchuk, their fasting is a profound expression of dharma toward the Earth and future generations. It underscores a collective vision for the future—one where the integrity of our ecosystems is regarded as sacred and indispensable.

This steadfast vision and dedicated action come with huge sacrifices. Ladakhis have forgone certain development opportunities that conflict with their ecological and cultural values. Instead, through their daily lives, they demonstrate how to carve out a development path that is sustainable, one that respects the fragile balance of their high-altitude ecosystem.

In Ladakh, this is not a new-fangled trend but a time-honored tradition. By prioritizing their dharma over short-term economic gain, they have maintained the purity of their rivers, the sanctity of their mountains, and the vibrancy of their culture.

The fast in the freezing cold is a dramatic assertion that the people of Ladakh are ready to bear hardships for the greater good. It is a clarion call for humanity to adopt a similar ethos of selflessness and sacrifice by choosing to live simply.

The message emanating from Ladakh's austere landscapes is clear: the well-being of our environment is nonnegotiable. It carries a stark warning: While economic development can be postponed, the irreversible loss of glaciers—a critical source of water and life—cannot.

Simply put, Ladakh's "Climate Fast" and the teachings it embodies are seminal to charting a course for the Hindu Kush Himalayas and beyond. The dharma (personal mission) of environmental stewardship, as embraced by the Ladakhis, is a testament to the profound wisdom that when we protect our earth, we protect ourselves. In the stillness of Ladakh's cold, the warmth of this understanding beckons us to a future where economy and ecology walk hand in hand, guided by the immutable principles of dharma.

THE MANILA TIMES

'Aghon' to exit PH on Wednesday – Pagasa

By: Arlie O. Calalo

Generally moving northeastward over the Philippine Sea, Typhoon "Aghon" is forecast to exit the Philippine Area of Responsibility by Wednesday afternoon, the state-run weather agency said on Tuesday.

In its past 5 p.m. bulletin, the Philippine Atmospheric Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) said Aghon would likely maintain its strength until Wednesday although it may intensify in the next 12 hours. "Aghon will start entering a period of weakening by Wednesday as it begins to interact with the mid-latitude environment and undergo post-tropical transition," the state weather bureau said.

However, an earlier weakening trend is not ruled out, it added.

Moving northeastward at 30 kilometers per hour (kph), Aghon's eye was estimated some 535 kilometers east of Basco, Batanes.

It has maximum sustained winds of 130kph near the center and gustiness of up to 160kph, the latest bulletin said.

Pagasa said the typhoon would unlikely bring a significant amount of rainfall within the next three days.

Another weather system - southwesterly wind flow - will bring moderate to heavy rains over Western Visayas and the western section of Luzon over the next three days, Pagasa said.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

[Philippines deploys river rangers in battle against plastic](#)

By: Cecil Morella

Using a long-handled net, Ronnel Narvas scoops up discarded plastic soft drink bottles, shopping bags and palm-sized sachets as he wades through a foul-smelling tributary in the Philippine capital Manila.

Narvas, 30, is one of more than a thousand rangers employed by the government to clean up the city's waterways, where tons of rubbish end up every year.

"It's disappointing, because no matter how diligent we are at cleaning up, the garbage does not run out," Narvas told AFP of the never-ending battle against trash.

"But we need to persevere... at least we are managing to reduce it instead of letting it pile up more."

Inadequate garbage collection services, lack of disposal and recycling facilities, and grinding poverty have been blamed for the growing problem of plastic waste across the country.

The Philippines produces about 61,000 tons of trash every day, up to 24% of it plastic, figures from the environment department show.

The country is the world's top source of plastic that ends up in the oceans, a 2021 study by Dutch non-profit The Ocean Cleanup found.

It said the Pasig river, which flows through the capital and into Manila Bay, is the "most polluted" in the world.

'Swimming' in plastic

Sachets and other single-use plastics are a huge part of the problem.

"When the rains come, we are literally swimming (in) them," Environment Secretary Maria Antonia Loyzaga said last month.

"But on a daily basis, we consume plastics in the fish caught in our seas, through the substandard water bottles we use and in the very air we breathe," Loyzaga added.

Nieves Denso, a 63-year-old widow, sells small packets of powdered chocolate, coffee, milk, shampoo and detergent from her tiny shop in a riverside slum in Manila.

Sachets are popular in the Philippines, where many people cannot afford to buy household products in large quantities.

Denso collects the empty sachets and every few days she pays children 10 pesos (17 US cents) to take the garbage to a nearby road where she hopes it will be collected.

But she admitted she has no idea if her trash ends up there, or if the children throw it in the river or on vacant land where many of her neighbours discard their waste.

"I put everything in one container and that's it," Denso said when asked if she separates plastic from other waste.

"It's the government's responsibility to make people comply."

'It's disheartening'

Emma Gillego, who lives in a stilt shanty overlooking the Paranaque river, has not seen a garbage truck in her neighbourhood since her family moved there 20 years ago.

Plastic litters the ground even though city sanitation workers visit several times a year to teach residents about waste segregation.

"We don't tell off our neighbours who throw garbage into the water because we don't want to meddle with their lives," Gillego, 58, said.

Lawmakers have enacted a series of environmental measures in recent years, covering everything from rolling out recycling centres to compelling companies to take responsibility for their plastic waste.

"The Philippines has made really commendable efforts in pushing all these legislation efforts together," senior World Bank environmental specialist Junu Shrestha told AFP.

While the legislation gave the Philippines a "road map" in dealing with the waste management problem, implementing it was "another challenge", Shrestha said.

In Manila, where more than 14 million people live, only 60% of rubbish is collected, sorted and recycled daily, according to a 2022 World Bank report.

Loyzaga told AFP that the country was in the "infancy stage" of waste segregation and recycling, and she did not see an end to the use of single-use plastic.

"It performs a certain function at the moment for a certain income group in our economy," she said.

While it was unpleasant standing in putrid water for hours on end, river ranger Narvas believed his efforts were helping to reduce flooding in areas along the waterway.

He just wished the community would stop throwing their rubbish in the water.

"It's disheartening," Narvas said.

"But this is our job and we're used to that. We just keep on going."

CCC IN THE NEWS:

PAGEONE

[CCC, LGUs Ramp Up Efforts To Implement National 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.

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 100 percent utilization rate of the PHP1 billion fund and consequently initiating its supposed annual replenishment.

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.
(PNA)

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