



## NEWS ROUNDUP

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### [\[Opinion\] Why having the President in charge of agriculture is a good thing](#)

By: Bernardo M. Villegas

After reading the very positive assessment of Philippine economic prospects in the coming five years from my long-term colleague, Jim Walker, I have been reinforced in my belief that Philippine GDP can grow at an annual rate of 6-7%, given existing strong institutions and enlightened economic policies that have been products of more than 30 years of reforms. This 6-7% growth, however, is not enough if we want to make a significant dent in fighting mass poverty, which is still at double-digit levels. We must target at least 8-10% growth. This is where I appreciate getting some constructive criticism from Jim Walker.

## **MALAYA BUSINESS INSIGHT**

### **[A music festival for ocean conservation](#)**

By: Anton de los Reyes

What started off as a simple musical party in France has now become an international event celebrating humanity through music. Fête de la Musique PH, the music festival's Philippine edition has been going strong for nearly three decades now. For this year, the festival aims to highlight the need for ocean conservation.

## **MANILA BULLETIN**

### **[Manila LGU, DENR to conduct 'e-waste collection drive' for World Environment Month](#)**

By: Diann Ivy Calucin

The City of Manila's Department of Public Services (DPS) through the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) will conduct a simultaneous electronic waste (e-waste) collection drive on June 26 to 30, in observance of World Environment Month.

## **MANILA STANDARD**

### **[Vietnam holding climate activist incommunicado](#)**

By: AFP

A prominent Vietnamese climate activist detained for alleged tax evasion is being held incommunicado and has no access to a lawyer, rights groups said on Tuesday.

## **PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER**

### **[Gov't urged to declare child malnutrition, stunting as priority agenda](#)**

The Management Association of the Philippines (MAP) on Monday urged the government to declare child malnutrition and stunting as a priority concern, citing that it should be among the top national priorities due to the huge human and economic costs.

## **RAPPLER**

### **[Nuclear is clean. But can the Philippines handle its risks?](#)**

By: Iya Gozum

With the Philippines' depleting natural gas sources and a looming energy crisis, proponents of nuclear energy are reviving the idea of the mothballed Bataan Nuclear Power Plant (BNPP) sitting atop Napot Point overlooking the South China Sea.

## **THE MANILA TIMES**

### **[Electric vehicle global leader aims to green PH roads](#)**

By: Anjo Perez

BYD, the foremost Asian automaker in electric vehicles (EVs), has solidified its position as the world's number one EV brand, surpassing its competitors with an extraordinary growth rate of 211 percent in 2022, according to a recent report by Visual Capitalist. This achievement has propelled BYD to become the new leader in EV production, surpassing even Tesla on a global scale.

### **[Why 'Environment for Life' Matters: A DENR Ecosystem](#)**

ON the occasion of the global celebration of World Environment Day, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) held an Environment for Life media event that highlighted the DENR's two-pronged blueprint for strategic and effective sustainable development and environmental action in the country. Led by DENR Secretary Toni Yulo-Loyzaga, the presentation was an eye-opener to the promise and possibilities of coherence, convergence, and synergies.

## **THE PHILIPPINE STAR**

### **[UN adopts 'historic' high seas treaty](#)**

By: Amélie Bottollier-Depois

The world's first international treaty to protect the high seas was adopted Monday at the United Nations, creating a landmark environmental accord designed to protect remote ecosystems vital to humanity.

## **CCC IN THE NEWS:**

### **PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY**

#### **[CCC seeks strengthened policies for climate-induced migration](#)**

By: Ruth Abbey Gita-Carlos

The Climate Change Commission (CCC) on Tuesday pushed for strengthened policies to address migration in Asian and Gulf nations, which was driven by climate change.

#### **[PH, G77 chair to advance developing nations' positions in UNFCCC](#)**

By: Ruth Abbey Gita-Carlos

The Philippines and the Group of 77 (G77) through its chair Cuba have committed to work closely and further reinforce coordination to advance the positions of developing nations in all relevant meetings of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

**Information and Knowledge Management Division**

## **BUSINESS WORLD**

### **[\[Opinion\] Why having the President in charge of agriculture is a good thing](#)**

By: Bernardo M. Villegas

After reading the very positive assessment of Philippine economic prospects in the coming five years from my long-term colleague, Jim Walker, I have been reinforced in my belief that Philippine GDP can grow at an annual rate of 6-7%, given existing strong institutions and enlightened economic policies that have been products of more than 30 years of reforms. This 6-7% growth, however, is not enough if we want to make a significant dent in fighting mass poverty, which is still at double-digit levels. We must target at least 8-10% growth. This is where I appreciate getting some constructive criticism from Jim Walker.

He is not happy with the President appointing himself as the Secretary of Agriculture. First, he admits that it is not unusual in Asian politics for the prime minister or president of a country to hold another senior government portfolio. He cites the example of Najib Razak who was not only Prime Minister of Malaysia but also Finance Minister. He uses this example to offer a warning shot to President Ferdinand Marcos, Jr. because of the corruption that resulted in the 1MDB scandal. As the reader may remember, Najib Razak was sent to jail for corruption.

First, let me share with the reader what I told Jim Walker about why I supported the decision of the President to be Secretary of Agriculture, at least for some time at the beginning of his presidency. I have been very much involved in strategizing for the increase in agricultural productivity with some of the leading lights of Philippine agribusiness. We are completely convinced that there is no way we can improve overall agricultural productivity unless we are able to reconsolidate the millions of hectares of farms (especially in the coconut and sugar sectors) that were splintered into small units of two to three hectares each by a failed agrarian reform program. We are convinced that the efforts to reconsolidate these fragmented farms — either through cooperatives and/or the nucleus estate system made famous by the Malaysians in palm oil — at least four departments of the government must be on the same page: the departments of Agriculture, Agrarian Reform, Environment and Natural Resources, and Interior and Local Government (or the DA, DAR, DENR, and DILG respectively).

Unfortunately, in the initial efforts at reconsolidation we have seen so far, some of these departments work at cross purposes. There is the notorious case during the presidency of Rodrigo Duterte when, despite the fact that the CARP (Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program) law already expired in 2014, the then sitting Secretary of Agrarian Reform was still aggressively fragmenting farm units. It is important that President Marcos Jr. ensures that the Agrarian Reform Secretary today is doing everything

possible to get beneficiaries of agrarian reform to go along with efforts of reconsolidation by organizing cooperatives or leasing their lands to large agribusiness companies who will take over the management of the consolidated farms and pay them rent and employ members of their families.

In the coconut industry, there are efforts to put together tens of thousands of hectares of farmlands in such areas as Eastern Visayas, Bicol, Southern Luzon, and Northern Mindanao. It would be difficult to reach those scales of consolidated farms employing private lands alone. Public lands under the DENR, especially denuded forests, must be added to the potential corporate farms. This would require that the DENR think along the same lines. Furthermore, local government units can put all sorts of obstacles to these efforts of reconsolidation. Governors and mayors must also be convinced about the benefits of large-scale farming. Thus, the DILG Secretary must have a minimum understanding of the requirements of farmland consolidation at the local government level.

It is in this light that I am of the opinion that by occupying the position of Secretary of Agriculture, the President was able to obtain a more comprehensive view of what it takes to improve agricultural productivity and exert every effort at the beginning of his presidency to make sure that these four departments — that are under his leadership as President of the country — will work in the same direction. As Secretary of Agriculture, the President is getting a ground level knowledge of the intricacies involved in attaining food security. He has given a sterling example to the population of the urgent need for every leader or professional to upskill, reskill, and retool himself or herself. I am glad he started it in the field that is directly related to food security, our most urgent economic objective.

In fact, to make matters more complex, the other major strategic directions that must be taken to attain the 2-3% annual growth in agriculture that has already been achieved by our neighboring ASEAN countries like Thailand and Vietnam (fortunately, Philippine agriculture grew at this rate in the first quarter of 2023) are product diversification, digitalization, and industrialization. On product diversification and industrialization (the further processing of our farm produce), there must be very close coordination with the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) to determine what are the markets for such farm products as coffee, cacao, avocado, durian, and other non-traditional exports, as well as manufactured food products both in the domestic and foreign markets. As regards digitalization, there is an obvious role that has to be played by the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT). Here again, during his stint as Secretary of Agriculture, the President was able to have firsthand knowledge of the synergies among the executive departments over which he presides.

I am convinced that it was a very wise move for the President to take over the portfolio of the Secretary of Agriculture in the first months of his presidency. Among other reasons, he has made it a personal responsibility to upskill and retool himself in matters related to agriculture by devoting a lot of time interacting with the most knowledgeable people about agribusiness in the private sector, such as those comprising the Kapatid Angat Lahat Agri Program including Francisco Dizon of Dizon Farms, Ramon Garcia of DFNN, Winston Uy of Universal Leaf Phils., Nando Cojuangco of Central Azucarera de Tarlac, Go Negosyo senior advisor and former Secretary of Agriculture William Dar, James Amparo of Yovel East, Simon Bakker of Kennemer, Carl Benedick Chung of Bounty Fresh, Michael Tan of the LT Group, Go Negosyo founder Joey Concepcion, Christian Moeller of Lionheart Farms, and Ruth Novales of Nestlé. I don't think he would have spent so much time listening to these agribusiness experts if he did not occupy the position of Secretary of Agriculture. Knowing some of the people in this list, I can vouch for the fact that his traveling schedule did not prevent the president from having a very down-to-earth grasp of the intricate problems of the agricultural (or, more accurately, the agribusiness) sector by spending a lot of time listening to these agribusiness experts.

In fact, one of them — Christian Moeller of Lionheart Farms —who was traveling with me in a business road show in Europe, could not complete the road show because he was called by President Marcos Jr. to give him a briefing on ways and means of improving productivity in the coconut sector.

Anyway, I am convinced that we shall have the position of Secretary of Agriculture filled by another person before the end of June. This person — whoever he/she will be — will be able to face the challenge that Jim Walker posed in his article. As he correctly pointed out, the importance of the Agriculture Secretary looks set to grow during the current year.

It is widely expected that by late summer, the region will be in the grip of an El Niño event (this follows three years of supply-supportive La Niña conditions). It is highly probable that this will once again disrupt rice production across Southeast Asia and would require preemptive action to secure imported supplies. We are already facing the need to import sugar and, most probably, pork products soon. I fully agree with Jim's observations that all eyes are on President Marcos as regards the food sector. The target of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas to bring inflation down to 2-4% by the last quarter of 2023 would be seriously endangered if there is another round of steep increases in food prices.

This new Secretary of Agriculture would have the assurance that, with the help of a President who is more knowledgeable about the problems of the agriculture thanks to his stint as Secretary of Agriculture, he will get all the cooperation he needs from the other departments of the Executive branch in carrying out farm consolidation, product

diversification, digitalization and industrialization. The new Secretary of Agriculture will then be the one directly responsible for attaining the 2-3% annual growth in agriculture that is one of the requirements for the Philippine GDP to grow at 8-1% during the rest of the current Administration.



## MALAYA BUSINESS INSIGHT

### [A music festival for ocean conservation](#)

By: Anton de los Reyes

What started off as a simple musical party in France has now become an international event celebrating humanity through music. Fête de la Musique PH, the music festival's Philippine edition has been going strong for nearly three decades now. For this year, the festival aims to highlight the need for ocean conservation.

Titled "MerSea" – a play on mer and merci, the French words for "sea" and "thank you" respectively, this year's festival aims to both express its gratitude for 29 years of Franco-Filipino cultural relations and to contribute to furthering ocean conservation efforts.

"More than just merry-making, we also seek to use our collective voice as Fête de la Musique PH as a platform for causes close to our heart," said Giselle Tomimbang, president of B-Side Productions, co-producer of Fête de la Musique.

Flying in all the way from France, the jazz act Rémi Panossian Trio composed of pianist Rémi Panossian, bassist Maxime Delporte, and drummer Frederic Petitprez, will perform on June 21 at the Long Bar at Raffles Makati, preceded by Happy Hour from 5-7 p.m., and on June 22 at the Alliance Française de Manille.

The Main Stage for Fête de la Musique 2023 will be in Greenbelt, Makati on June 23 with performances by Blaster & the Celestial Klownz, Lola Amour, She's Only Sixteen, Cheats, Ena Mori, and Uncle Bob's Funky Seven Club.

There will also be performances hosted by different music groups across the country. These destination stages will be in Albay, Baguio, Baler, Cebu, El Nido, Laguna, Pampanga, Palawan, Siargao, Tagaytay and Zambales, with all stages simultaneously performing on June 24.

During the week of the festivities, there will be coastal cleanup and tree-planting activities around the country through a partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Philippines and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

There will also be various youth-focused interactive and experiential learning opportunities in close collaboration with the UNDP Youth Programme, DENR advocates, and youth-led civil service organizations.

Fête de la Musique Philippines also launched 1,000 NFT art pieces by photographers Chino Neri, Mike Eijansantos, Lancer Salva, Camille Robiou du Pont, Terence Ver Angsioco, Kat Jack, A Decade, Ganden Medved Po, Adam and Archie Geotina. Each piece is priced at P3,000 and can be purchased at [scarletbox.io](https://scarletbox.io)

Part of the proceeds from this NFT collaboration will support the ocean conservation efforts of Lamave (Large Marine Vertebrates Research Institute Philippines), a Filipino non-government organization dedicated to the conservation of marine megafauna.

## MANILA BULLETIN

### Manila LGU, DENR to conduct 'e-waste collection drive' for World Environment Month

By: Diann Ivy Calucin

The City of Manila's Department of Public Services (DPS) through the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) will conduct a simultaneous electronic waste (e-waste) collection drive on June 26 to 30, in observance of World Environment Month.

All forms of e-waste from households in the city will be collected in Ortega Covered Court, Mataas na Lupa, Barangay 737, Malate, Manila

According to Manila DPS, e-waste or Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) comprises any "broken, spent, obsolete, and unwanted electronic and electrical products" that require disposal.

It noted that improper dismantling, burning, and disposal of e-waste can release harmful chemicals into the environment, including Polybrominated Diphenyl Ether (PBDE).

"You can bring all worn-out or used electronic gadgets that run on electricity like chargers, cellular phones, laptops, computer equipment, CRT monitors and TVs, electric fans, etc except for busted lamps and batteries," Manila DPS said.

The latest data released by DENR showed e-waste as the world's fastest-growing domestic waste stream due to the advent of modern technology, higher consumption rates of equipment, short life cycles, and few options for repair.

United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) said Philippines ranked as one of Southeast Asia's top e-waste generators for yielding 3.9 kilograms of e-waste per capita in 2019.

The e-waste collection program aims to address the continuous challenge of disposing and managing the increasing amount of e-waste.

It is under the Safe Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCB) and E-Waste Management Project of DENR Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) and the EcoWaste Coalition of UNIDO.

## MANILA STANDARD

### Vietnam holding climate activist incommunicado

By: AFP

A prominent Vietnamese climate activist detained for alleged tax evasion is being held incommunicado and has no access to a lawyer, rights groups said on Tuesday.

Hoang Thi Minh Hong—the founder of now-defunct NGO CHANGE, which advocated for action on climate change and wildlife protection—is the latest environmentalist to be accused of tax evasion by Vietnam’s authoritarian government.

Hong had been widely recognised for her work, joining the Obama Foundation Scholars programme at Columbia University in New York in 2018.

On Tuesday, more than 60 environmental and human rights groups, including Amnesty International, Greenpeace UK and Friends of the Earth US, published an open letter urging former US president Barack Obama to demand her release.

“The government is preparing to prosecute Hong on a false charge of tax evasion,” they wrote.

“She faces up to seven years behind bars and if found guilty, she may be subjected to a prison system that is known for torture and wilful neglect.”

No one has been able to speak to Hong since her arrest on June 1 in Ho Chi Minh City, they said.

The United Nations, the United States and Britain have expressed concerns over the arrest.

Hong founded CHANGE in 2013, focusing on mobilising Vietnamese, particularly young people, to take action against pressing environmental issues including climate change, the illegal wildlife trade and pollution.

She was listed by Forbes among the 50 most influential Vietnamese women in 2019.

But she announced last year that CHANGE would close after Vietnam’s communist government handed down prison terms for tax evasion to four environmental human rights defenders, Nguy Thi Khanh, Mai Phan Loi,

Bach Hung Duong and Dang Dinh Bach.

Vietnamese authorities have not publicly confirmed Hong's arrest.

The government has committed to reaching net-zero carbon emissions by 2050, and a group of rich nations last year pledged to raise at least \$15.5 billion to help get the country off fossil fuels.

## PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

### [Gov't urged to declare child malnutrition, stunting as priority agenda](#)

The Management Association of the Philippines (MAP) on Monday urged the government to declare child malnutrition and stunting as a priority concern, citing that it should be among the top national priorities due to the huge human and economic costs.

The MAP said these child health issues should be treated with urgency, together with other concerns such as poverty, climate change, and national security.

“The government’s declaration of malnutrition and child stunting as a priority agenda will ensure that concrete measures will be taken, sufficient funds will be earmarked, and actions will be cascaded from the national all the way to the community level,” the business management group said in a statement.

It said that severe malnutrition has remained a serious problem for nearly 30 years, with one in every three Filipino children below 5 years old suffering from stunting, according to a World Bank (WB) study.

The MAP also highlighted in the report that the Philippines ranks fifth among countries in the East Asia and the Pacific region with the highest prevalence of child stunting.

Stunting: ‘Silent pandemic’ stalks Filipino children

It noted that rural areas have more stunted children, at 30 percent, while the rate in urban areas is at 26 percent, adding that it was in direct proportion to the poverty levels in the provinces like Western and Southern Mindanao, Mindoro, Negros, Palawan, Samar, and the far north of Luzon.

Stunting rates were found to be the highest in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) at 45 percent and the lowest in Manila and Central Luzon, at 23 percent, cited the MAP.

Earlier in May, the MAP convened a multisectoral meeting on the rising case of child malnutrition in the country, paving the way for a unified collaboration between the government, non-government organizations, and business groups towards addressing the problem.

MAP campaign against malnutrition and child stunting

At the conference, 41 organizations have agreed to become part of the Campaign Against Malnutrition and Child Stunting (CAMACS) movement, which is meant to address these child nutrition issues in the Philippines.

## Businessmen join drive vs child malnutrition

The MAP said they will support the government's Philippine Multi-sectoral Nutrition Project (PMNP), calling for the judicious use of the P10-billion loan it secured from the World Bank.

## PH borrows P10 billion for malnutrition reduction program

Further, it recommended an active pursuit of tripartite partnerships between the business sector, the government, and the community for a whole-of-society approach in fighting malnutrition and child stunting.

## RAPPLER

### Nuclear is clean. But can the Philippines handle its risks?

By: Iya Gozum

With the Philippines' depleting natural gas sources and a looming energy crisis, proponents of nuclear energy are reviving the idea of the mothballed Bataan Nuclear Power Plant (BNPP) sitting atop Napot Point overlooking the South China Sea.

The BNPP is called by many names – sleeping giant, white elephant, monster of Morong – all pointing to its sheer size and the wasted potential of a power plant that dented Philippine coffers by \$2.2 billion. Until now, its maintenance of P40 million to P50 million is being paid for by Filipinos every year.

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. has expressed interest in nuclear energy; now could be the opportune time to flaunt nuclear as the better alternative to coal-fired power plants.

Currently, the Philippines is still heavily reliant on fossil fuels, considered the primary contributor to climate change. Renewables make up only 29.5% of the country's energy mix, according to a report from the Department of Energy.

As an answer to the worsening climate crisis and the mounting pressure all over the world, governments are strategizing a shift from fossil fuels to cleaner sources of energy. Nuclear is promoted as one such source.

One of nuclear's staunch proponents, House committee on nuclear energy chairperson Mark Cojuangco, hoped the power plant would be ready for commission within five years. He is advocating for the passage of a bill creating a comprehensive nuclear regulatory framework.

The Pangasinan lawmaker wished that the President "overcomes politics" and that things would move more swiftly under his administration.

However, Marcos himself recognized during his first State of the Nation Address that strict observance of regulations is critical if the country ever decides to develop nuclear energy.

"We will comply, of course, with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) regulations for nuclear power plants as they have been strengthened after Fukushima. In the area of nuclear power, there have been new technologies developed that allow smaller scale modular nuclear plants and other derivations thereof," Marcos said in July 2022.



It's still a long road to get the BNPP to operate, one lined with so many questions, concerns, and the inevitable protests of environmental groups, Bataan residents, and concerned government officials.

The better alternative?

Nuclear plants have one of the lowest contributions to greenhouse gas emissions among other sources.

The IAEA, an intergovernmental organization for peaceful uses of nuclear, reported that only 5.1 to 6.4 grams of greenhouse gas emissions are emitted per kilowatt hour of nuclear electricity generation, which is 100 times lower than coal-fired power plants.

But some high rewards come with high risks.

“Consistent policy and regulation, both over time and across countries, are especially important given the relatively long lifetime and high upfront cost of nuclear compared to other energy technologies,” the IAEA said in the report.

Because of the high level of technology and the corresponding hazards and strict regulations, most nuclear power plants are located in industrialized nations.

When Cojuangco toured the media around the nuclear village – around 17 kilometers away from the BNPP – and inside the BNPP, he sounded so sure of the power plant's safety.

The 620-megawatt power plant stands on a 300-hectare property in Morong. What one hears first upon entry is the soundlessness of dormant apparatus. Pipes are rusting and paint is peeling off from the equipment. Dull light from the ceiling casts shadows over everyone's faces. Reviving the power plant would cost around \$1 billion – a ballpark estimate by the Korea Electric Power Corporation in 2017.

Cojuangco guided the media inside and pointed at seismic bracings overhead. Redundancy is the hallmark of safe nuclear facility design, said Cojuangco.

“If one fails, they need to shut down the plant even if the other one is running,” the congressman said as he led reporters to another motor control center identical to the previous room.

In the control room, where telephones and analog keyboards are yellowing from age, Cojuangco said the BNPP remains at par with other power plants abroad like in South Korea and Slovenia.

Analog equipment – not digital – is still what’s widely used in nuclear plants in other countries, according to Cojuangco. Even a consultation with American company Westinghouse Electrical Corporation – the company that built the power plant four decades ago – assured Cojuangco of this matter.

“Kausap ko si Westinghouse a month ago over Zoom, okay sa kanila ‘tong analog,” said Cojuangco. (I’ve talked to Westinghouse a month ago over Zoom. They said they are okay with analog.)

Later on, Cojuangco would pull out an image of the control room of Watts Bar, a nuclear plant in Tennessee in the United States that was constructed around the same time the late dictator Ferdinand E. Marcos announced the decision to build the BNPP. Watts Bar started operating only recently in 2016, with its control room looking similar to the control room of the BNPP.

Before it can be ready for commission, the BNPP is required to act on 19 infrastructure issues set by the IAEA.

The checklist ensures that a nuclear power plant has a radioactive waste management system in place, that there are enough legal safeguards, and that the right people are highly trained to manage and operate the power plant.

“The order in which these 19 infrastructure issues are presented does not imply relative importance,” the IAEA said. “All of them require appropriate attention.”

However, former Russian ambassador to the Philippines Igor Khovaev said in a 2018 CNN Philippines report that the BNPP was already beyond revival.

The president at the time, Rodrigo Duterte, was also keen on developing nuclear energy in the country. In 2019, Duterte signed business deals with Russia, including exploring prospects of constructing nuclear power plants.

New technologies are also expanding options for countries who want to go nuclear.

Marcos has expressed openness to exploring small modular reactors (SMR) or advanced nuclear reactors that can be factory-assembled and are smaller than traditional large reactors. They can also be moved by land or deployed at sea.

During his visit to the United States earlier in 2023, Marcos met with American company NuScale Power Corporation for plans to install SMR sites in the country.

NuScale’s investment project is pegged to cost around \$6.5 billion to \$7.5 billion and would provide 430 megawatts of power by 2030.

## Importing fuel, storing waste

If the BNPP ever becomes ready to operate, there is still the question of where the Philippines would get its uranium.

Uranium is the fuel used to produce nuclear energy. The atoms of uranium are split inside a reactor, causing other atoms to break apart to create heat. This fission produces steam that, in turn, causes turbines to drive generators, creating electricity.

But the Philippines does not have uranium mines. Retired geologist Rolly Reyes said in a study that possible locations could be Northern Palawan and Camarines Norte.

Since the country doesn't have the raw materials, the Philippines would have to import uranium from countries with mining sites accredited by the IAEA.

"Only big, continental countries have good quality uranium deposits, including Russia," Vallerie Samson, deputy director of the Philippine Nuclear Research Institute (PNRI), told Rappler. PNRI advocates for the revival of the power plant, and no less than its chief, Carlo Arcilla, has guaranteed its safety.

Samson said that in the case of the BNPP, the country would just have to import around 28,395 manufactured fuel rods as these are "cheaper economically." These should be enough for two years.

But the Philippines also lacks the facilities for the back end of nuclear electricity generation. A recent study released by the Philippine Institute for Development Studies said nuclear energy demands a long-term commitment, around 100 years, starting from the construction of the power plant up to waste disposal.

Operating a nuclear power plant creates radioactive waste – a type of waste that can be harmful to the environment and people's health.

Experts around the world agree that an underground geological facility is the best option for storing high-level radioactive waste. An ideal place should have stable geological conditions and be isolated from humans and the environment.

Depending on their level of toxicity, dealing with radioactive waste can take a few days up to thousands of years. There are no such waste management facilities in the Philippines yet; Samson said this would be part of the process of preparing the BNPP for commission.

## A history of corruption

Aside from safety, proper management of the power plant remains a huge point of concern.

However, the BNPP is already marred by its history of corruption linked to the Marcos dictatorship.

Herminio Disini, a known Marcos crony, brokered the power plant deal with Westinghouse Electrical Corporation in 1974. Disini was suspected of using his close ties with the dictator to receive a P50-million payout from the deal.

Even after his death in 2014, Disini owed the Filipino people P1 billion for corruption allegations surrounding the BNPP deal. (READ: SC awards over P1 billion to government for Marcos crony power plant mess)

During its construction in the '80s, many people opposed the power plant and mounted protests over safety and corruption concerns. The construction was completed in 1984, but the BNPP never got to operate until Marcos was overthrown in a popular uprising in 1986.

In the same year, the Chernobyl disaster in Kyiv, Ukraine, happened. At least 30 died in the accident caused by a flawed reactor design and inept personnel. The World Health Organization also reported 5,000 cases of thyroid cancer among children and adolescents at the time of the disaster, followed by an excess of 9,000 cancer deaths among evacuees and people who worked in the aftermath.

The disaster was rated Level 7 – the highest level in terms of impact on people and the environment – on the International Nuclear Event Scale.

The Chernobyl disaster sounded the alarm on the dangers of nuclear plants. Less than seven months after the accident, then-president Corazon Aquino decided that the Philippine government would not operate the BNPP for “reasons of safety and economy.” The power plant has since remained dormant and has not produced a single watt of electricity.

Tanked promises

And it should remain deactivated, say many environmental advocates and residents of Bataan, where the power plant is located. For them, the promise of nuclear energy has already tanked before it could even be fulfilled.

For one, the possibility of job generation doesn't particularly seem alluring anymore.

Derek Cabe, coordinator of the Nuclear-Free Bataan Movement (NFBM), questioned the kinds of jobs that would be given to the community if the power plant is allowed to operate. NFBM is a network of groups and individuals demanding the shift away from dirty energy and into renewables.

“Kapag nag-operate na ‘yan, hindi naman matatanggap diyan ‘yung mga hindi scientists, or experts, or highly skilled,” said Cabe. “Anong skills noong mga tao sa munisipyo? Wala namang nuclear scientists sa municipality.... Ang madami doon ay mga magsasaka, mangingisda.”

(If it operates, they won’t accept people who are not scientists, experts, or highly skilled professionals. What are the skills of the members of the community? There are no nuclear scientists in the municipality. Most of them are farmers and fisherfolk.)

In the past, it started as a campaign to oppose the construction of the power plant during the Marcos dictatorship. Since then, the movement has evolved into an environmental organization that now finds itself in the surreal position of opposing the same plant’s possible revival under another Marcos.

“After 40 years, parang hindi akalain na babalik tayo ulit sa usapin na ‘to,” said Cabe. “[B]abalik tayo ulit sa usapin ng mga Marcoses. Akala natin tapos na ‘yun.” (After 40 years, we didn’t think we would go back to this conversation – the conversation about the Marcoses. We thought that was over.)

The promise of power generation doesn’t encourage enthusiasm, too, as they are already inundated by the many power plants built in Bataan, said Cabe. She said Bataan continues to “make sacrifices” for people who make use of the energy generated in their province.

Meanwhile, Greenpeace Philippines energy transition campaigner Khevin Yu said the nuclear industry is only posturing as a transition energy, similar to what the fossil fuel industry is doing.

At the heart of energy transition, Yu said, is climate action. The climate time bomb is ticking, and the need to fast-track the transition to green energy has become a matter of justice. As one of the more vulnerable countries to climate change, the Philippines is in no position to dilly-dally on just energy transition.

Despite nuclear’s rosy promises of a green future, Yu said what’s making people vigilant is the Philippine government’s history of ineptitude in handling critical technologies, emergencies, and disasters. “We have the PNRI. We have the BNPP. But we don’t have the experience,” he added.

## THE MANILA TIMES

### Electric vehicle global leader aims to green PH roads

By: Anjo Perez

BYD, the foremost Asian automaker in electric vehicles (EVs), has solidified its position as the world's number one EV brand, surpassing its competitors with an extraordinary growth rate of 211 percent in 2022, according to a recent report by Visual Capitalist. This achievement has propelled BYD to become the new leader in EV production, surpassing even Tesla on a global scale.

With ambitious expansion plans in Europe and Southeast Asia, BYD is projected to be the first automaker to produce over 2 million EVs in a single year. This remarkable milestone is a testament to BYD's exceptional quality, groundbreaking designs and unwavering commitment to revolutionizing the automotive industry worldwide.

As BYD takes the lead in EVs globally, car buyers in the Philippines can anticipate an exceptional full-electric driving experience. BYD's unparalleled features, remarkable benefits, and unwavering dedication to zero-emission sustainability are set to revolutionize the Philippine automotive landscape and create an exciting future for EV enthusiasts.

BYD's authorized local distributor, Solar Transport and Automotive Resources Corp., a pioneering force in EV distribution in the Philippines since 2013, takes great pride in introducing BYD's expertise and industry-leading EVs to the local market. Following a highly successful campaign at the recent 2023 Manila International Auto Show (MIAS), where it showcased a full line up of BYD powerhouses including the Dolphin, Han and Tang EVs, Solar Transport is fully committed to delivering unmatched customer satisfaction and driving widespread adoption of sustainable transportation solutions across the country.

Investing in a BYD EV means investing in the environment and a sustainable future. "By choosing a BYD, owners become part of a movement towards a cleaner, greener future. They contribute to reducing air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, fostering healthier cities and a more sustainable planet for future generations. Together, we can drive positive change and create a brighter future for all," said Mark Andrew Tieng, Solar Transport president and chief executive officer.

BYD captivates Asian consumers with its strong focus on cutting-edge technology, relentless innovation, passion for eco-sustainability and commercial accessibility. In Thailand, Southeast Asia's second-largest car market, BYD has accelerated its presence by importing 5,000 cars under a tax incentive arrangement with the government, making BYD the official leader in pure EV sales, with the ATTO 3 model

topping the charts with 1,040 vehicles sold, according to a report by CarNewsChina.com. BYD's success in the Thai market is further evidenced by the large-scale export of ATTO 3, with over 10,000 vehicles shipped to date.

At the 44th Bangkok Motor Show in March 2023, BYD announced the delivery of 12,000 units of its electric SUVs to the Thai market. With the upcoming opening of its production hub in Rayong, Thailand, BYD aims to produce 150,000 units in 2024. Powered by the ultra-safe Blade battery and designed with the e-Platform 3.0, BYD is ready to make significant strides in the Philippine market, offering the same level of excellence that has propelled the brand to the forefront of the global EV market.

Choosing a BYD EV offers substantial financial advantages, with remarkable mileage and significant fuel savings compared to traditional gasoline-powered cars. With an average cost of P12 per kilowatt-hour (kWh) for electricity compared to P65 per liter for gasoline, BYD EV owners can experience savings of up to 60 percent on their overall fuel expenditure.

BYD EVs require less maintenance over time, thanks to the patented Blade battery and e-Platform 3.0. Over a five-year period, owners can save up to P500,000 (P100,000 annually) in maintenance costs compared to internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles.

As the government accelerates the commercial sale rollout of EVs under the Comprehensive Roadmap for the Electric Vehicle Industry, coupled with incentives such as tax breaks, subsidies and reduced registration fees, owning an EV becomes an increasingly attractive investment and proposition for Filipino motorists.

Opting for a BYD EV empowers consumers to make a significant impact on environmental preservation. EVs produce no tailpipe emissions, resulting in significantly reduced air pollution and improved urban air quality. Driving an EV generates zero greenhouse gas emissions and reduces harmful particulate matter, contributing to healthier cities.

By choosing a BYD EV, owners also contribute to a substantial reduction in carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions compared to conventional gasoline-powered vehicles. Over their lifespan, EVs emit approximately 40-percent less CO<sub>2</sub>, helping mitigate climate change and supporting the Philippines' commitment to reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Solar Transport ensures that each BYD EV has access to exceptional after-sales service and support, including an extensive warranty coverage of eight years or 150,000 kilometers (industry standard). The company's trained mechanics are dedicated to providing reliable customer service, and with aggressive global expansion efforts and

government-backed incentives, BYD owners in the Philippines can expect peace of mind, continuous assistance and a seamless ownership experience.



## Why 'Environment for Life' Matters: A DENR Ecosystem

ON the occasion of the global celebration of World Environment Day, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) held an Environment for Life media event that highlighted the DENR's two-pronged blueprint for strategic and effective sustainable development and environmental action in the country. Led by DENR Secretary Toni Yulo-Loyzaga, the presentation was an eye-opener to the promise and possibilities of coherence, convergence, and synergies.

The key to these initiatives is to put in place comprehensive, whole-of-government, and whole-of-society plans that are coupled with finding strategic partners in the form of LGUs (Local Government Units) and/or the private sector. For the purposes of the media event, several of these partners were brought forward to demonstrate the diverse ways in which this can be accomplished.

Marubeni Philippines, a major integrated trading and investment business conglomerate from Japan, Holcim Philippines, a Swiss-based global building materials and aggregates company, the Razon-led Prime Infrastructure Capital Inc., SM Supermalls of SMIC, San Miguel Corp., DMCI Mining Corp., HOPE/Century Pacific Food Inc., Makilala Mining Company Inc., and Basic Environmental Systems and Technologies Inc. (BEST), shared the stage with the DENR Secretary, and presented their respective efforts in the name of coherent, convergent, and synergized environmental action.

A recurring theme with all the reports from these strategic partners was how their initiatives embodied the DENR mantra regarding natural resources - to Protect, Rehabilitate, Restore, and Regenerate. And when it came to treating plastic waste, it was about Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle.

Marubeni highlighted their carbon credit program through reforestation; a joint undertaking of Marubeni, DENR, Dacon Corp., and the University of the Philippines Los Banos. The initial site covers 10,000 hectares in Negros Occidental, and aims to restore biodiversity, create employment in local communities, and establish the carbon credit program.

Holcim Philippines decarbonized its operations and reduced carbon emissions per ton of cement by 7 percent. In partnership with the DENR, it will be deploying a 100 percent solar powered catamaran, the Circular Explorer, operated by One Earth One Ocean, to clean up coastal areas from plastic waste in Manila Bay. There is a new project in Northern Mindanao to support coral and coastal ecosystems via a 'marine bio-active concrete'.

With Prime Infra, there's a reforestation project, partnered with the DENR, of a 1,800 hectare area within the Upper Marikina River Basin Protected Landscape. This project integrates water security, watershed protection, with forest carbon and biodiversity management. The MoU signed can be seen as a blueprint for the wider implementation of nature-based solutions programs.

SM Supermalls embraces sustainability through initiatives on energy conservation, solid waste reduction, and water conservation. Their adoption of green and resilient designs in their buildings promote disaster mitigation and prevention measures, along with solid waste management. Initiatives such as Trash to Cash Recycling, the EV charging stations, regular coastal clean-ups, incentives for bicycle riders, and the use of recycled water for cooling systems are all part of the SM Supermalls commitment to environmental action.

For this event, San Miguel Corp. concentrated on showcasing their dredging and river widening work in rehabilitating the Pasig River and its tributaries. It's been effective in reducing floods and overspill in several strategic localities along the river's course that has historically been notorious for flooding. Photos of the progress of these operations that showed the depth and width of these riverways were very impressive. SMC partners with the DENR, DILG, MMDA, and concerned LGUs in these initiatives.

The DMCI Mining Corp. shared how they've been an integral part in cleaning up the recent MT Princess Empress tanker accident, and the resulting oil spill. The report spoke of the ongoing efforts and how while contained, there was still work to be done, and that DMCI deeply appreciated the opportunity to play a critical role in the cleanup of the coastal areas of Caluya, Antique.

In the case of HOPE Foundation/Century Food Inc., a highly developed CSR sustainable program that's centered on coconut growing for their Vita Coco beverage has led to livelihood opportunities for several targeted barangays and communities. It's a holistic approach that's circular in nature, as it lends itself to the requirements of Vita Coco, so there's a guaranteed market for the farmers' output. They've also joined the Plastic Exchange Program (PCX), which is taking on the challenge of reducing plastic waste and is contributing to the implementation of the Extended Producer Responsibility Act (EPR).

The Makilala Mining Company presentation was an enlightening one, as it offered a framework for the future of responsible mining. The planned equity participation for the Balatoc indigenous community that owns the land is reminiscent of what happens in Australia and New Zealand with the traditional custodians of ancestral lands. It's regenerative sustainability in the mining sector. As represented by the women in their senior management team, Makilala is a model for inclusion and diversity.

BEST highlighted their Trash to Cashback program, and how it's centered on a five step program of Segregate, Exchange, Redeem, Collect, and Recycle. BEST recognizes that to jumpstart this circularity, there is a need to input incentivizing. To depend solely on the general public's awareness of sustainable action would be premature at this time, and yet the pressing need for collecting used plastic has to be acted upon. Their Balik PET Bottle Program is partnered with Coca-Cola Far East Limited and the Philippine Association of Stores and Carinderia Owners.

All in all, it was an effective showcase for how the DENR is developing new ways of work across several fronts to make the protection, preservation and regeneration of our natural resources part of a comprehensive ENR plan for resource development; and seeing that through this DENR ecosystem, a sustainable future can be safeguarded for all.

## THE PHILIPPINE STAR

### [UN adopts 'historic' high seas treaty](#)

By: Amélie Bottollier-Depois

The world's first international treaty to protect the high seas was adopted Monday at the United Nations, creating a landmark environmental accord designed to protect remote ecosystems vital to humanity.

Secretary-General Antonio Guterres hailed as a "historic achievement" the treaty that will establish a legal framework to extend swathes of environmental protections to international waters, which make up more than 60 percent of the world's oceans.

"The ocean is the lifeblood of our planet and today you have pumped new life and hope to give the ocean a fighting chance," he told delegates.

Following more than 15 years of discussions, including four years of formal negotiations, UN member states finally agreed on the text for the treaty in March after a flurry of final, marathon talks.

The text, since frozen, has been pored over by the UN's lawyers and translators to make sure it matches in the body's six official languages.

"Countries must now ratify it as quickly as possible to bring it into force so that we can protect our ocean, build our resilience to climate change and safeguard the lives and livelihoods of billions of people," said Rebecca Hubbard of the High Seas Alliance.

Scientists have increasingly come to realize the importance of oceans, which produce most of the oxygen we breathe, limit climate change by absorbing CO<sub>2</sub>, and host rich areas of biodiversity, often at the microscopic level.

But with so much of the world's oceans lying outside of individual countries' exclusive economic zones, and thus the jurisdiction of any single state, providing protection for the so-called "high seas" requires international cooperation.

The result is that they've been long ignored in many environmental fights, as the spotlight has been on coastal areas and a few emblematic species.

A key tool in the treaty will be the ability to create protected marine areas in international waters.

Currently, only about one percent of the high seas are protected by any sort of conservation measures.

The treaty is seen as crucial to countries protecting 30 percent of the world's oceans and lands by 2030, as agreed by world governments in a separate historic accord reached in Montreal in December.

With it, "We are giving ourselves the means to achieve" the 30 percent target, said the French Secretary of State for the Sea, Herve Berville.

'Miracle molecules'

He called for a "sprint" towards ratification so that the accord enters into force by the next UN Ocean Conference in Nice, France in June 2025.

The treaty, officially known as the treaty on "Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction" or BBNJ, also introduces requirements to carry out environmental impact studies for proposed activities to be carried out in international waters.

Such activities, while not listed in the text, would include anything from fishing and maritime transport to more controversial pursuits, like deep-sea mining or even geo-engineering programs aimed at fighting global warming.

The treaty also establishes principles for sharing the benefits of "marine genetic resources" (MGR) collected by scientific research in international waters -- a sticking point that almost derailed last-minute negotiations in March.

Developing countries, which often don't have the money to finance such expeditions, fought for benefit-sharing rights, hoping to not get left behind by what many see as a huge future market in the commercialization of MGR, especially by pharmaceutical and cosmetic companies searching for "miracle molecules."

The treaty will open for signatures on September 20, when dozens of heads of state will be in New York for the UN General Assembly.

It remains to be seen how many countries will decide to come on board.

Russia itself from the treaty as soon as it was adopted, declaring some elements of the text "categorically unacceptable".

NGOs believe that the threshold of 60 ratifications required for it to enter into force should be reachable since the High Ambition Coalition for the BBNJ -- which pushed for

the treaty -- counts some 50 or so countries as members, including those of the European Union, as well as Chile, Mexico, India and Japan.

But 60 is far from the universal adoption -- the UN has 193 member states -- that defenders of the ocean are pushing for.

"Let's carry this momentum forward. Let's continue working to protect our oceans, our planet, and all the people on it," said UN General Assembly President Csaba Korosi.

## CCC IN THE NEWS:

### PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

#### [CCC seeks strengthened policies for climate-induced migration](#)

By: Ruth Abbey Gita-Carlos

The Climate Change Commission (CCC) on Tuesday pushed for strengthened policies to address migration in Asian and Gulf nations, which was driven by climate change.

During the dialogue session of the Asia-Gulf Cooperation Council's (GCC) senior officials, CCC Commissioner Rachel Anne Herrera underscored the need for stronger regional cooperation to find a solution to the pressing threat of climate change and its profound impact on human mobility.

"It's not just about being forced to evacuate or move during times of calamities and distress; it's also the element of choice – it's choosing to evacuate, choosing to move, choosing to relocate, while others choose to stay behind. It's this element of choice that brings people from danger to safety, from doubts to certainty, from risk to resilience," Herrera said.

"As climate change impacts continue to significantly drive migration and forced displacements, government policies and programs must be able to respond to the complex issues that surround or arise from these movements – issues, such as loss of livelihoods, armed conflict, gender-based violence, lack of access to appropriate health care services, and so on."

She said a comprehensive approach is needed to address the challenges faced by displaced individuals, including employment, health care, and security.

Herrera also acknowledged the importance of international support in integrating human mobility into national climate policies and programs.

She likewise emphasized the crucial role of local government units (LGUs) in addressing climate risks and developing local climate change action plans.

Herrera recommended the collaboration on climate risk and loss and damage assessments; enhancement of climate targets and Nationally Determined Contributions; formulation of science-based National Adaptation Plans; and providing support for local governments' risk-based adaptation interventions.

She made the proposals to strengthen the implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration for the Asia-GCC.

“For millions of people exposed to climate hazards now and in the future, I believe it is our obligation, as leaders in our governments and as members of the Asia-GCC, to open real opportunities for them to choose and live a better life,” Herrera said.

Prof. Saleemul Huq OBE, director of the International Centre for Climate Change and Development (ICCCAD), backed Herrera’s statement, acknowledging that migration is also a viable adaptation strategy.

“Migration is not just a problem but is actually a solution. We need to think of helping migrants, provide support for those who are forced to leave their homes, and of course, address the underlying causes of climate change,” Huq said.

CCC vice chairperson and executive director Robert Borje said the commission is committed to advancing climate action and collaboration with stakeholders by leveraging expertise and insights on the complex relationship between climate change and migration.

“Addressing issues related to migration and forced displacements directly translates to saving lives, livelihoods, and future of population and communities,” Borje said. “In the long run, this intervention does not only address loss and damage but likewise contribute to the larger scope of climate change adaptation and mitigation.”

Climate hazards drive involuntary global migration and displacement, with weather-related extremes displacing more than 20 million people annually since 2008, according to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

The International Organization for Migration projects that up to 113 million people could internally migrate by 2050 due to water stress, crop failure, sea level rise, and other slow-onset climate impacts.

The dialogue session serves as a platform for labor migration officials from Bahrain, Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Kuwait, Nepal, Oman, Pakistan, the Philippines, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, and the United Arab Emirates to discuss issues of common interest, which affect labor mobility, including climate change.

The dialogue was hosted by the Department of Migrant Workers of the Philippines, in cooperation with the Department of Foreign Affairs of the Philippines and the City of Taguig.



The event has the support of the United Nations Network on Migration, the International Organization for Migration, the International Labor Organization, and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

#### Greenhouse gas emissions reduction

Meanwhile, the CCC led a community-level greenhouse gas inventory (GHGI) training in Nueva Ecija and Nueva Vizcaya, in partnership with First Gen Corp., to support the LGUs' initiatives toward reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

LGU representatives from Pantabangan, Ma. Aurora, and Carranglan in Nueva Ecija, and Alfonso Castañeda in Nueva Vizcaya participated in the pre-orientation training, which aimed to equip LGUs with the necessary knowledge and skills for conducting community-level GHGI, the CCC said in a separate statement.

Borje said the initiative is part of the collaborative efforts of the CCC and First Gen under the "Create for the Climate" program to support LGUs in First Gen's host communities in formulating and updating their enhanced Local Climate Change Action Plans (eLCCAP).

The GHGI is one of the modules included in the LCCAP.

"We are providing support for our LGUs to identify and prioritize climate actions that are appropriate and relevant to their respective communities and contribute to the country's overall climate change mitigation efforts," Borje said.

The LCCAP outlines the LGUs' vulnerabilities and risks related to climate hazards, along with the corresponding adaptation and mitigation actions to be undertaken.

The CCC and First Gen have expressed their commitment to supporting LGUs in their climate change adaptation and mitigation efforts.

Collaborative initiatives like the GHGI pre-orientation training aim to enhance local capacities and promote sustainable development for a climate-resilient future.

## [PH, G77 chair to advance developing nations' positions in UNFCCC](#)

By: Ruth Abbey Gita-Carlos

The Philippines and the Group of 77 (G77) through its chair Cuba have committed to work closely and further reinforce coordination to advance the positions of developing nations in all relevant meetings of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

Meeting on the sidelines of the recent 58th Session of the Subsidiary Bodies (SB58) of UNFCCC here, Climate Change Commission (CCC) Secretary Robert E.A. Borje and Group of 77 Chair Ambassador Pedro L. Pedroso Cuesta emphasized the need to align climate action agenda towards result-oriented SB and Conference of the Parties (COP).

Borje and Cuesta renewed the commitment of both delegations to work closely together and further reinforce coordination in the lead-up to the 28th COP28 to the UNFCCC in the United Arab Emirates in November 2023.

They said COP28 is a valuable opportunity to build on the gains of G77 and COP27 in Sharm-El-Sheikh in Egypt on Nov. 6-18, 2022.

Both officials discussed the need to further strengthen the positions of developing nations in loss and damage as well as in scaling and speeding up the delivery of commitments of industrialized nations to developing nations in terms of capacity building, technology development and transfer, as well as climate finance.

“Developing nations need to work even more closely under the ambit of the G77 to better articulate principled positions on climate change and make even more resonant our message on living up to commitments under the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement,” Borje, head of the Philippine delegation, said.

“The Philippines appreciates the work of Cuba as Chair of G77 and we will ensure we are a constructive partner to the Chair and to the G77 in advancing our shared objectives,” he added.

Cuesta is also head of the Cuba delegation to SB58 held from June 5 to 15 in Bonn, Germany.

Ecosystem stewards

Borje and Monsignor John Kallarackal, head of delegation of the Holy See, also met on the sidelines of the SB58, underscoring the importance of cooperation in ramping

education programs on both climate change and of human stewardship to better protect and manage ecosystems and natural resources.

They also agreed to explore ways by which stewardship could be pushed in appropriate fora within and outside the United Nations system.

“Education plays a crucial role in addressing climate change. We need to empower our youth and adults through education on intergenerational responsibility in order to change what is now a story of devastation into a story of transformation. We need to start them young,” Borje said.

Kallarackal, for his part, said promoting education was one of the efforts of the Holy See at the 27th COP27.

“The Holy See recognizes the importance of education in the fight against climate change, thus, promoted education, lifestyle and behavioral change, as well as lobbied for net-zero, in COP27,” he said.

They agreed that loss and damage funding (LDF) is vital to helping vulnerable countries to climate change, such as the Philippines, to recover quickly.

Borje emphasized that “expeditious, stable and predictable disbursement of LDF is key to helping developing countries to recover from the loss and damage resulting from the impacts of climate change.”

Both Borje and Kallarackal also recalled with great reflection Typhoon Yolanda and its impacts on the Philippines, underscoring the need to learn from lessons and continuing education to further increase awareness and capacities to address and respond to such severe extreme climate events.

Borje and UNFCCC Executive Secretary Simon Stiell also emphasized the need to continue working together “in a constructive manner” to ensure that the SB58 meetings and the COP28 would deliver outcomes and results, particularly for vulnerable developing nations.

Borje acknowledged the work of the UNFCCC Secretariat in providing a platform defined by “an enabling environment for discussion and cooperation,” with an emphasis on universal participation and inclusivity.

“The Philippines appreciates the work of the UNFCCC Secretariat and will continue to support all efforts that ensure that all relevant UNFCCC meetings are supported accordingly, both in terms of substance and operations,” Borje said.

Stiell, on the other hand, reassured that the UNFCCC Secretariat remained fully committed to the UNFCCC processes and was at the full disposal of Parties.

Both officials looked forward to continue coordinating in the leadup to COP28 in Dubai, United Arab Emirates towards success, and support all efforts for meaningful and transformative outcomes of UNFCCC meetings.

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