



NEWS ROUNDUP

28 JUNE 2024 [08:00 am]

- CHR cites green initiative of QCPD for environment protection
- Climate lawsuits against companies on the rise: report
- [Opinion] Southeast Asia's urban heat islands
- Arbor Day – trees, planning, creative thinking
- DSWD helps fund climate-resistant backyard farms in Quezon town
- Baguio presses ban on use of plastic
- CHR lauds Quezon City's green camp project
- How restoration can help coral reefs
- Phinma: New cold storage plants to cut food waste
- Sustainable urban development essential amidst rapid urbanisation and climate change

MANILA BULLETIN

[CHR cites green initiative of QCPD for environment protection](#)

By: Czarina Nicole Ong Ki

The Commission on Human Rights (CHR) has cited the Quezon City Police District (QCPD) for creating the first green camp not only in Metro Manila but in the entire country with its "Project Green Camp Karingal."

MANILA STANDARD

[Climate lawsuits against companies on the rise: report](#)

Companies worldwide have faced mounting legal pressure to reduce their impact on global warming as activists use litigation to fight climate change, according to a new report Thursday.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Southeast Asia's urban heat islands

By: Gideon Lasco

From Suvarnabhumi Airport, getting to the city is a breeze, especially with the robust air-conditioning inside the Airport Rail Link, which takes under 30 minutes to reach the centrally located stations of Makkasan or Phaya Thai.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

Arbor Day – trees, planning, creative thinking

By: Atty. Gilberto Lauengco, J.D.

“The true meaning of life is to plant trees under whose shade you do not expect to sit.” - Nelson Henderson

Last Tuesday was Arbor Day in the Philippines. Though it is celebrated on different dates in other countries, Arbor Day is celebrated every June 25 in the Philippines pursuant to Presidential Proclamation 643 and Republic Act (RA) 10176. Some government agencies and schools celebrated the day by planting seedlings in several locations across the country. Arbor Day was first celebrated in Nebraska in the United States in 1872 by the planting of more than one million trees. Arbor means tree in Latin and Arbor Day is supposed to celebrate the value of trees in our communities. Unfortunately, Arbor Day seems mostly forgotten nowadays and eclipsed by the more famous Earth Day.

DSWD helps fund climate-resistant backyard farms in Quezon town

By: Zen Trinidad

The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) in Calabarzon is in the process of distributing PHP9,400 each to 479 residents of San Narciso town in Quezon province as part of a climate resiliency initiative called Project LAWA (Local Adaptation to Water Access) and BINHI (Breaking Insufficiency through Nutritious Harvest for the Impoverished).

THE MANILA TIMES

[Baguio presses ban on use of plastic](#)

By: Gaby B. Keith

Mayor Benjamin Magalong reiterated his appeal to establishments, residents and visitors in the Summer Capital to seriously heed the city ordinance banning the use of plastic and styrofoam.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

[CHR lauds Quzon City's green camp project](#)

By: Janvic Mateo

The Commission on Human Rights (CHR) yesterday lauded the Quezon City government for partnering with the local police for the development of the first-ever "green camp" in Metro Manila.

[How restoration can help coral reefs](#)

Record-high sea temperatures are bleaching coral reefs worldwide and putting a new focus on attempts to restore these key marine ecosystems.

[Phinma: New cold storage plants to cut food waste](#)

Business leaders, government officials and experts agree on the need to expand the country's cold storage facilities to address the problem of food waste.

UNDP

[Sustainable urban development essential amidst rapid urbanisation and climate change](#)

Experts called for sustainable urban development to create resilient cities capable of withstanding the adverse effects of climate change amidst rapid urbanization. They made this statement on the first day of the two-day "Urban Resilience Forum," which began on 26 July 2024, at the Bangabandhu International Conference Center in the capital.

Information and Knowledge Management Division

MANILA BULLETIN

[CHR cites green initiative of QCPD for environment protection](#)

By: Czarina Nicole Ong Ki

The Commission on Human Rights (CHR) has cited the Quezon City Police District (QCPD) for creating the first green camp not only in Metro Manila but in the entire country with its “Project Green Camp Karingal.”

The project, which was done in partnership with the Quezon City government, seeks to promote environment-friendly workspaces among the metro police districts.

The partnership was launched in Camp Karingal in Quezon City, with Mayor Joy Belmonte sharing that the first ever green camp in the Philippines now has 166 “green cops” who pledged to sustain a clean environment and conserve nature.

She also highlighted the shift of the local government towards being a green, resilient, and sustainable city with its “One Million Trees Initiative.” The initiative will have QC partnering with the private sector and various organizations to preserve the environment.

“It must be noted that Camp Karingal has already established urban gardens, maintained a proper waste segregation system, rainwater harvesting system, and also installed solar lights,” the CHR said in a statement.

“The Commission fully supports this partnership between the QC local government and the QCPD as it demonstrates their full commitment towards actively taking an effort to address the climate crisis in the country,” it added.

The CHR highlighted Article II, Section 16 of the Constitution, which provides that “[t]he State shall protect and advance the right of the people to a balanced and healthful ecology in accord with the rhythm and harmony of nature.”

“It is, therefore, incumbent upon the national and local governments to draft relevant policies and campaigns which prioritise the protection and restoration of ecosystems in order to ensure holistic development amongst its citizens,” the Commission stressed.

With “Project Green Camp Karingal” kicking off, the CHR is hopeful that other local police stations, as well as their respective local governments, will take their cue and implement initiatives that will promote sustainability and environmental responsibility.

“It is imperative that we commit to sustainable solutions in addressing climate change as the Philippines continues to bear the brunt of the consequences of this environmental crisis -- especially for the most vulnerable, disadvantaged, and marginalised who are left disproportionately exposed to its effects,” the CHR concluded.

MANILA STANDARD

[Climate lawsuits against companies on the rise: report](#)

Companies worldwide have faced mounting legal pressure to reduce their impact on global warming as activists use litigation to fight climate change, according to a new report Thursday.

Since the 2015 Paris Agreement, 230 “climate-aligned” lawsuits have been launched against corporations and trade associations — more than two thirds of which were filed since 2020, said the report by the Grantham Research Institute at the London School of Economics.

“Cases against companies have traditionally been focused on the fossil fuel sector but they are now being launched across other sectors, including airlines, the food and beverage industry, e-commerce and financial services,” the report said.

The 2021 ruling in the Netherlands against multinational oil giant Shell, which was ordered to reduce its CO2 emissions by 45 percent by 2030, has become a milestone in climate litigation.

Accusations of “climate-washing” or misleading marketing have been among the drivers for more recent cases against corporations.

Last year, British courts banned adverts by Air France, Lufthansa and Etihad over concerns they misled customers, which came months after a similar decision in Vienna against Austrian Airlines.

Other cases are based on the principle that the “polluter pays” or seeks “turning off the taps” to new fossil fuel projects by targeting the flow of financing to extractive industries.

Less than a tenth of the the total 2,666 lawsuits filed to date worldwide were against corporations, said the report using data from the Sabin Center for Climate Change Law at Columbia Law School.

More often, governments are the defendants.

However, in 2023, cases against companies made up a quarter of the 233 lawsuits filed that year alone, the report said.

In September, the state of California took the role of plaintiff, suing five of the world's largest oil companies alleging the firms caused billions of dollars in damages and misled the public by minimising the risks from fossil fuels.

While historically, most lawsuits have been filed in the United States, accounting for 1,745 cases, action has been increasingly launched in other jurisdictions.

Portugal saw its first case filed last year over alleged human rights violations for failing to implement climate change policy, as did Panama over a mining project.

"2023 was an important year for international climate change litigation, with major international courts and tribunals being asked to rule and advise on climate change," the report said.

The Inter-American Court of Human Rights is due to give an advisory opinion this year on a country's duties when "responding to the climate emergency under the framework of international human rights law", following a case brought by Chile and Colombia in January 2023.

The European Court of Human Rights in April made a historic ruling against Switzerland, deeming it was not doing enough to tackle climate change — a decision that could force governments to adopt more ambitious climate policies.

"Just five percent of climate cases have been brought before international courts, but many of these cases have significant potential to influence domestic proceedings," the report said.

The report's authors anticipate a rise in "post-disaster" cases in the future, pointing to recent action in hurricane-hit Puerto Rico against the reconstruction of fossil fuel infrastructure.

The concept of "ecocide" and efforts to address environmental crimes could be another ground for lawsuits, as are converging issues such as plastic pollution and the impact on climate change, the report said.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Southeast Asia's urban heat islands

By: Gideon Lasco

From Suvarnabhumi Airport, getting to the city is a breeze, especially with the robust air-conditioning inside the Airport Rail Link, which takes under 30 minutes to reach the centrally located stations of Makkasan or Phaya Thai.

Once you exit the train, however, you begin to feel the high temperatures that Bangkok has been notorious of late, especially during the recent heat wave. Although I still stuck to my plan of taking the 15-minute walk to my hotel, part of me wishes that I just took an additional train ride—or even taking GrabBike: a fast and cheap option to cut through the traffic, albeit reminiscent at times of a roller-coaster ride.

“It was worse in April,” Kritaya Sreesunpagit—my Equity Initiative colleague and a native of Bangkok—told me, recalling the days when the mercury broke past 40 degrees Celsius, and hovered in the high 30s. “But it’s still very hot nowadays, and it feels hotter than before.”

Having grown up in the tropics; having spent a big part of my life in Manila, I know what the noxious combination of heat and humidity feels like. When I was in medical school, I stayed in an old dorm-style house in Malate, which had no air-conditioning. Despite being habituated to tropical heat, however, I think I’m inclined to agree that heat today feels worse, if not in Bangkok, then at least in Manila.

The main suspect, of course, is climate change, and there is strong empirical evidence furnished by scientists not only that our planet has truly warmed, but that this warming is caused by humans. Ominously, the World Weather Attribution group has found that climate change has made heat waves in the region “30 times more likely and much hotter,” and specifically for the Philippines, the heat wave “would have been impossible without human-caused climate change.”

But beyond global warming, the heat in the region’s cities is exacerbated by what scientists have called “urban heat island effect,” or the additional heat from urban surfaces (e.g., concrete) as well as waste heat (ironically, for instance, from air-conditioning). Such is the impact of this phenomenon that a World Bank (WB) report estimates that cities in Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines are up to 6.6 degrees Celsius hotter than surrounding rural areas, further worsening the quality of life among the urban poor, many of whom have no choice but to endure the heat. As temperatures

cool down a bit, it is easy to move on from this concern but we do so at our peril, given the high likelihood of more—and worse—heat waves in the years to come.

To counteract the urban heat island effect and mitigate its consequences, we need to go beyond individual-level actions. These actions—like drinking enough water to avoid dehydration or avoiding the midday sun—are surely warranted, but they place the burden on individuals and do not solve the problem. Some of these actions, too, are not an option for many individuals (how do you avoid the heat if you're a construction worker?), making heat a matter of climate injustice.

One clear precondition to bearable urban life, in this time of climate crisis, is the availability and accessibility of public green spaces. In Bangkok, the numerous elevated walkways can make walking tolerable even in the midday heat, and parks like Lumpini and Benchakitti are recreational oases that allow residents and visitors alike, to have a place for daily exercise. In Manila, there are pockets of greenery but they are mostly in elite subdivisions and universities; even Bonifacio Global City and Makati can be hardly called “green,” and elevated bike lanes and walkways in Edsa remain a pipe dream.

Easy access to green (and blue) spaces outside the city should also be part of our hoped-for inclusive infrastructure. Manila is actually blessed with nearby mountains—including in the Sierra Madre—but they are hard to get to, and require all kinds of registration and guide fees, severely limiting their benefit. Beyond lowering the temperature, such spaces offer so much benefits for physical, mental, and social health, which is why we need more trails, bike lanes, and parks.

Aside from promoting urban greening, the WB report also recommends various steps including cooling city spaces through wind, shade, and urban design, engaging building owners in tackling indoor heat, and protecting heat-exposed workers. At a more fundamental level, of course, this should be part of the broader agenda of improved housing, public transport, educational facilities, and labor environments. Conversely, this “heat crisis” should make action on these realms more urgent.

Thankfully, beyond the oft-invoked model of Singapore, cities like Iloilo, Melaka in Malaysia, and Hue in Vietnam are demonstrating that it is possible to take steps toward greener and more sustainable urban futures. As these cities show, it is not too late to prevent our region from becoming an archipelago of “urban heat islands” where people live in miserable heat—or unsustainable air-conditioned bubbles.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

Arbor Day – trees, planning, creative thinking

By: Atty. Gilberto Lauengco, J.D.

“The true meaning of life is to plant trees under whose shade you do not expect to sit.” -
Nelson Henderson

Last Tuesday was Arbor Day in the Philippines. Though it is celebrated on different dates in other countries, Arbor Day is celebrated every June 25 in the Philippines pursuant to Presidential Proclamation 643 and Republic Act (RA) 10176. Some government agencies and schools celebrated the day by planting seedlings in several locations across the country. Arbor Day was first celebrated in Nebraska in the United States in 1872 by the planting of more than one million trees. Arbor means tree in Latin and Arbor Day is supposed to celebrate the value of trees in our communities. Unfortunately, Arbor Day seems mostly forgotten nowadays and eclipsed by the more famous Earth Day.

Planting more trees should be a no-brainer. Trees provide oxygen, improve air quality, mitigate the effects of climate change, conserve water, preserve the soil, help prevent floods, and support wildlife. As such, there is a call to encourage more people especially the younger generation to increase their participation in tree planting activities. There is even a House Bill recently filed that would mandate graduating students to plant trees before graduation. Other than stressing the importance of trees to our environment, encouraging or mandating students to plant trees can also be a good opportunity to teach our kids some important values and skills.

Protecting what is important

Other than emphasizing the need to plant trees, Arbor Day is also a good way to teach our kids the value of protecting what we already have. In recent news, there have been several stories of trees being cut down to give way to roads and structures. Students must be encouraged to care about the trees we have now. Arbor Day is a good time for teachers to emphasize that planting trees will not help if we keep cutting them down. I once met a teacher who taught kids that trees are like loved ones who give their all for us but end up neglected and abused. Apparently, when concepts are framed in the now famous “relationship goals” mode, our kids seem to understand it better.

Planning ahead (long term planning)

Planting trees properly involve long term planning. Factors such as timing, weather, location, type of trees, and possible conflict with development must be considered before planting trees. In April of this year, a study revealed that 41% of Filipino millennials do not make plans that extend for more than one year. In short, many of our kids lack long term planning skills. With tree planting activities, teachers can use the exercise to encourage students to think long term. When I was working in a city government, I remember a school principal who made her students plant trees along a road that was slated to be expanded by the Department of Public Works and Highways. I had to make them realize that maybe it would be a better idea to plant trees elsewhere. There are also types of trees which do not help the environment or give any practical benefit. As such, kids can be taught the value of end-goal thinking. Kids can be taught to always begin with the end in mind.

Creative thinking

The internet is abuzz with Filipinos reacting to our students' dismal failure in the recent scores of our students on creative thinking. Creative thinking refers to the ability to come up with new solutions to problems and look at issues from different angles. There is a tree in the Anonas, Quezon City area located in the middle of the street. It has never been cut because of stories that ancient beings curse those who try and cut it. In a class I once taught, a student once suggested that people should spread these myths around other old trees to scare people and prevent them from cutting the trees. Now, that is creative thinking that can be learned in connection with protecting trees.

Planting and protecting trees can teach our kids many life lessons. Let us teach our kids to plant trees. This is about their future.

This is my oblique observation.

DSWD helps fund climate-resistant backyard farms in Quezon town

By: Zen Trinidad

The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) in Calabarzon is in the process of distributing PHP9,400 each to 479 residents of San Narciso town in Quezon province as part of a climate resiliency initiative called Project LAWA (Local Adaptation to Water Access) and BINHI (Breaking Insufficiency through Nutritious Harvest for the Impoverished).

In a phone interview on Thursday, Joseph Arceo, DSWD-Calabarzon's information officer, said the amount is intended for the beneficiaries to invest towards building their own climate change-resistant backyard farms or gardens.

He emphasized that the financial assistance was approved for distribution “only after the participating residents of Barangay San Juan successfully took part in a 20-day cash-for-training program.”

During the training period, participants engaged in a structured program that included three days of training on disaster preparedness and climate change mitigation, followed by 15 days of hands-on work on water harvesting systems and communal gardens.

The program concluded with two days dedicated to project evaluation and assessment of participants' output conducted by government botanical experts.

"Funding for the cash-for-training aspect came from DSWD, complemented by support from the local government of San Narciso, which provided essential equipment such as pumps, pipes for water systems, and seedlings for community gardens," Arceo said.

DSWD's Project LAWA and BINHI aims to empower residents of poor communities to actively participate in disaster risk mitigation and climate change adaptation projects, providing vital skills and a temporary income source for their families.

THE MANILA TIMES

[Baguio presses ban on use of plastic](#)

By: Gaby B. Keith

Mayor Benjamin Magalong reiterated his appeal to establishments, residents and visitors in the Summer Capital to seriously heed the city ordinance banning the use of plastic and styrofoam.

The City of Baguio passed Ordinance 35-17 (Plastic and Styrofoam-Free Baguio) after a recent finding that the prevalence of "microplastics" have drastically increased in Asia and other parts of the world.

The mayor cited an article published in the Environmental Science and Technology website which warned that microplastics (MPs) or plastic particles smaller than five millimeters, are now a growing environmental and public health issue, detected pervasively in freshwater and marine environments, ingested by organisms, and then enter the human body.

The report stated that MPs are emerging environmental pollutants that can spread to air, water and soil systems, infiltrate the ecosystem and contaminate food sources.

The report disclosed that in Asian, African and American countries, airborne and dietary MP uptake increased over six-fold from 1990 to 2018.

Governments in developing and industrialized countries are advised to incentivize the removal of free plastic debris from freshwater and saltwater environments through advanced water treatment and effective solid waste management practices.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

[CHR lauds Quzon City's green camp project](#)

By: Janvic Mateo

The Commission on Human Rights (CHR) yesterday lauded the Quezon City government for partnering with the local police for the development of the first-ever “green camp” in Metro Manila.

Dubbed “Project Green Camp Karingal,” the initiative aims to promote environment-friendly workspaces at the Quezon City Police District (QCPD), through the creation of urban gardens and installation of waste segregation bins, rainwater catchers as well as solar lights.

The QCPD designated 166 “green cops” who pledged to sustain a clean environment.

The project is part of the city government’s “One Million Trees Initiative,” which is in line with its overall goal of shifting toward a green, resilient and sustainable city.

“The commission supports this partnership between the city government and the QCPD as it demonstrates their full commitment to address the climate crisis,” the CHR said in a statement.

The commission cited Article II, Section 16 of the Constitution, which mandates the state to “protect and advance the right of the people to a balanced and healthful ecology, in accord with the rhythm and harmony of nature.”

The CHR said it is incumbent upon the national and local governments to draft relevant policies and campaigns that would prioritize the protection and restoration of ecosystems to ensure holistic development of the people.

“CHR is hopeful that the ‘Project Green Camp Karingal’ will kick-start more initiatives across various localities, which promote sustainability and environmental responsibility among duty-bearers,” the commission said.

“It is imperative that we commit to sustainable solutions in addressing climate change as the Philippines continues to bear the brunt of the consequences of this environmental crisis, especially for the most vulnerable, disadvantaged and marginalized who are left disproportionately exposed from its effects,” the CHR added.

How restoration can help coral reefs

Record-high sea temperatures are bleaching coral reefs worldwide and putting a new focus on attempts to restore these key marine ecosystems.

Here is an overview of how coral restoration is being done around the world:

How is coral sourced?

Restoration begins with obtaining coral, sometimes by breaking it off from a healthy reef. These pieces can be broken into smaller bits in a process called microfragmentation.

Each piece can become a new coral.

Another option involves collecting "fragments of opportunity" -- coral pieces broken off by natural causes such as storms.

Conservationists can also propagate from egg bundles collected during reef spawning, though this is perhaps the most difficult approach.

Spawning is brief, generally happening just once a year, and is affected by many factors, including the lunar phase and water temperature.

What happens next?

Coral microfragments generally go into a "nursery" until they grow sturdy enough to be transplanted to an existing reef or an artificial structure.

Fragments of opportunity are treated similarly. If big enough, they can be transplanted directly to natural or artificial reefs.

Bundles of coral eggs and sperm collected during spawning will develop into larvae that can then be settled onto reefs or, more commonly, grown on artificial foundations before being transplanted to their final homes.

What else is involved?

Other techniques are used to bolster coral restoration, including mineral accretion technology.

This involves sending a low-voltage electrical current through seawater to encourage minerals to dissolve and crystallise on artificial reef structures, speeding up coral growth.

The technique has had mixed results, with some studies reporting better growth and more resilient corals, but others finding no significant benefits.

Other interventions include substrate stabilisation, which shores up reef foundations, and algae removal.

What corals are used?

Restoration projects heavily favour quick-growing branching corals.

The delicate branches of these corals are more susceptible to becoming fragments of opportunity, and are also easier to microfragment than massive or encrusting corals.

Their fast-growing nature gives restoration projects quicker results, though focusing on only one type of coral can reduce ecosystem diversity.

Does it work?

Coral restoration projects report survival rates of around 60-70 percent, according to a study published in 2020.

But around half the projects in the study failed to properly measure whether they achieved the goals stated at the outset, including reef function.

Monitoring was also often brief, at a median of just one year, far less than the time needed for a reef to form, according to the authors.

Still, the projects can produce real benefits.

A 2024 study of artificial reefs in Indonesia found that within four years the structures had a coral carbonate budget -- a measure of reef wellbeing -- that was nearly equal to nearby healthy natural reef.

What are other considerations?

Some experts worry that coral restoration is too often presented as panacea for reviving reefs, and point out that transplants will only survive if the surrounding conditions are right.

That means first addressing climate change, which causes the warm temperatures that lead to coral bleaching.

"Well-designed and managed restoration projects have an important role to play, but there is only so much they can do if radical action on the climate is not taken almost immediately," warned Lisa Bostrom-Einarsson, the marine ecologist who led the 2020 study.

And other stressors, from blast fishing to sedimentation, must also be tackled for reefs to have a future.

Reef restoration also rarely offers a one-for-one replacement of destroyed ecosystems.

The Indonesia reefs examined in the 2024 study are still largely made up of transplanted corals, with little sign yet that "natural recruits" are taking root and building reef diversity.

Building reefs through microfragmentation also limits genetic diversity and can put reefs at risk if disease takes hold.

Still, well-done restoration offers considerable benefits, including coastal protection and boosting marine life.

That also helps local communities dependent on fishing or tourism.

"Restoration will not save corals at the current rate we're losing them," said Gavin Miller, a marine scientist with the Global Reef organisation in Thailand.

"It's more about these localised impacts and the scale and the awareness that you can raise from there."

Phinma: New cold storage plants to cut food waste

Business leaders, government officials and experts agree on the need to expand the country's cold storage facilities to address the problem of food waste.

They made the statement in a forum on "Achieving Food Security: Advancing Investments for Agricultural Sustainability," co-organized by PHINMA Corp., Stratbase ADR Institute and Makati Business Club, which took place in Makati on Monday.

PHINMA Construction Materials Group executive vice president and PHINMA Corp. director Eduardo Sahagun opened the discussion by highlighting the urgent need for food security in the Philippines amid climate change, rising food and nutrition demands and logistical challenges.

He recalled Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr.'s earlier pronouncement that 30 percent of the country's agricultural produce is wasted due to a poor logistics system, while 51 million Filipinos face moderate or severe food insecurity, the highest in Southeast Asia, according to the United Nations.

Danielle del Rosario, chief operating officer of the Union Insulated Panel Corp., a unit of PHINMA, said improved agricultural infrastructure enhances food security by stabilizing and increasing the food supply.

"Investments in modern irrigation systems, cold storage facilities and cold chain logistics networks reduce post-harvest losses, increase crop yields and ensure that fresh produce reaches markets efficiently. This not only stabilizes food prices but also makes nutritious food more accessible to all Filipinos, combating hunger and malnutrition," Del Rosario said.

Stratbase president Victor Manhit said President Marcos declared food security as a top priority on the Philippine agenda and emphasized the importance of investing in infrastructure and logistics to ensure nutritious food reaches people efficiently, similar to a large-scale farm-to-table approach.

"We need to ensure a food-secure Philippines," Manhit said.

The Department of Agriculture, for its part, said developing the logistics system is one of the agency's courses of action, on top of improving agri-fishery areas, modernizing and mechanizing the farming system and enhancing the post-harvest system, and expanding the local and international market.

UNDP

Sustainable urban development essential amidst rapid urbanisation and climate change

Experts called for sustainable urban development to create resilient cities capable of withstanding the adverse effects of climate change amidst rapid urbanization. They made this statement on the first day of the two-day "Urban Resilience Forum," which began on 26 July 2024, at the Bangabandhu International Conference Center in the capital.

The conference, part of the 'Livelihoods Improvement of Urban Poor Communities Project (LIUPCP)' by the Local Government Division, the UK Government, and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), will address emerging challenges that require collective action. Over the two days, it aims to generate insights contributing to a sustainable urban policy consensus, with the goal of building sustainable cities and communities.

Addressing the opening session as chief guest, Md. Tazul Islam, MP, Minister of the Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development & Cooperatives, said that The government prepared the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) and Bangladesh Delta Plan to build a resilient Bangladesh and finalise the National Urban Policy to ensure climate-friendly development.

"To make resilient cities and towns, the government now prioritises resilient infrastructure, integrated water resource management, community-based adaptation, afforestation and ecosystem restoration, and social protection programs" he said.

UNDP Resident Representative, Stefan Liller highlighted several key issues, including the importance of affordable housing and addressing the issue of climate-induced displacement. He stressed the significance of a bottom-up approach in achieving these goals, stating, "A robust national urban policy is essential for planned development and achieving a climate-smart, sustainable urban development vision for Bangladesh. UNDP is committed to continuing technical cooperation to promote sustainable growth."

Sarah Cooke, the British High Commissioner to Bangladesh, praised the country's achievements in reducing extreme poverty over the past three decades amidst rapid urbanization, while noting that cities are still struggling to cope. "The Urban Resilience Forum is a concrete demonstration of the Bangladeshi Government and Development

partners' commitment and interest to support inclusive and climate-smart urban development," she said.

Local Government Division Secretary Abu Hena Morshed Zaman chaired the session, while Local Government Division Joint Secretary Md Masum Patwary delivered the welcome speech.

Earlier, Jahangirnagar University's Urban and Regional Planning professor Akter Mahmud presented the keynote paper.

Key local, regional, and national stakeholders from the Government of Bangladesh, academia, civil society, and development partners will engage during the two-day conference.

=END=