



NEWSROUNDUP

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ABS CBN

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By: Job Manahan

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By: Samuel P. Medenilla

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By: Sofia Abrogar

The state environment bureau aims to reforest at least one million hectares of lands nationwide before President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.'s term ends in 2028, said Secretary Maria Antonia Loyzaga on Tuesday.

THE FINANCIAL TIMES

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By: Attracta Mooney and Kenza Bryan

President Emmanuel Macron's two-day summit in Paris involved 40 world leaders, a concert headlined by Billie Eilish and a plan to overhaul the world's financial system to tackle climate change and poverty — and left plenty of work for a hectic negotiations schedule leading up to the UN COP28 summit in Dubai.

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THE PHILIPPINE STAR

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By: Catherine Talavera

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Information and Knowledge Management Division

ABS CBN

DENR seeks alternative to single-use plastics to address PH's plastics woes

By: Job Manahan

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) on Tuesday sought for alternatives on single-use plastics to address the country's plastic pollution problem.

Asked about the country's role in the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee on Plastic Pollution, Environment Secretary Toni Yulo-Loyzaga said there was a need to push for the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) implementation now that it is in effect.

"This is a complex problem, yung issue if plastics. We do need more research because we tell you, single-use plastics, sinabi ko na ito, as long as there's no substitute for single-use plastic in terms of affordability in terms of functionality, hindi titigil yung paggamit ng single-use plastics," Loyzaga told Palace reporters in a chance interview.

The DENR chief added that the government and stakeholders must focus on long-term solutions and the public's "behavioral change."

"For example, ang ginagamit natin ngayon ay clean-up of the coast, hindi dapat yan gawin. What has to happen is we have to stop the solid-waste into our rivers and streams. So that's one of the biggest pushes," said Loyzaga.

"It is a social change that we need and there must be some kind of economic and financial benefit for those who actually need to be part of the cycle."

A study in 2021 showed that the Philippines is the worst plastic polluter in the oceans, contributing to over a third of the global plastic waste, even surpassing big countries like India and China.

Seven of 10 major polluting rivers were located in the Philippines, with Pasig River identified as the top plastic pollution source.

This could happen in an economy that consumes 48 million plastic bags daily, translating to 17.5 billion pieces a year, a study by the Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives (GAIA) in 2019 showed.

Mismanaged plastics leaked by the country's rivers, on the other hand, is estimated to be at 356,371 metric tons (MT) annually.

A recent Commission on Audit report – citing figures from the Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA) – said the amount of waste in Metro Manila grew by 33.36 percent in 5 years, from 6,499,825.00 cubic meters in 2015 to 22,003,784.58 cubic meters in 2020.

AL JAZEERA

[Canada launches first-ever national climate adaptation strategy](#)

Canada has launched its first-ever national strategy to help communities adapt to increasingly severe weather caused by climate change.

Increased flooding, wildfires and melting permafrost are among the issues the government will seek to address under the strategy, Environment Minister Steven Guilbeault explained in a press conference on Tuesday.

“We see more severe climate impact with each passing year, with each passing season – like this year’s rash of spring wildfires in BC [British Columbia], Alberta, Quebec, Nova Scotia, Saskatchewan and the Northwest Territories,” Guilbeault said.

His comments come as Canada contends with its worst-ever wildfire season on record.

As of Tuesday, 7.8 million hectares (19 million acres) of land have burned this season, with the hottest months of the year still ahead. The fires have resulted in poor air quality in densely-populated areas across North America, with Montreal recording the worst air quality in the world on Sunday.

The fires, Guilbeault said, have not only been more intense but were also occurring “earlier in the year and in almost every province and territory at the same time”.

“This extreme weather is unprecedented,” he said.

The newly-announced strategy will run parallel to efforts to lower greenhouse emissions that exacerbate climate change. The Copernicus Atmosphere Monitoring Service reported on Tuesday that the recent wildfires have already released nearly 600 million tonnes of carbon dioxide — greater than Canada’s total emissions for any year on record.

The blazes are the latest natural disasters in Canada believed to be exacerbated by climate change.

Last year’s Hurricane Fiona battered Canada’s Atlantic provinces, becoming the most intense cyclone on record to strike the country. And in 2021, a so-called “atmospheric river” of rain triggered record-breaking floods in British Columbia. Earlier that year in the same province, a heat dome — a weather system that traps hot air — caused hundreds of deaths.

Meanwhile, thawing permafrost, which covers half of Canada, regularly “threatens homes, roads and important cultural sites as well as marine and coastal environments” and disproportionately affects Indigenous groups, according to the Canadian government.

By 2030, average annual losses from climate-change-related disasters are forecast to reach 15.4 billion Canadian dollars (\$11.69bn), according to the federal government.

The Canadian Climate Institute also estimates that climate effects will slow Canada’s economic growth by 23.7 billion Canadian dollars (\$18bn) annually by 2025, equal to 50 percent of projected gross domestic product growth.

“We need to address the real and significant costs of climate change that are already baked into our future,” Jonathan Wilkinson, the minister of natural resources, said at Tuesday’s news conference. “These costs are being held by Canadians and they will only increase as we move forward.”

The federal government outlined a series of goals, including improving health outcomes, protecting nature and biodiversity and building more resilient infrastructure. Since 2015, the Canadian government has pledged more than 10 billion Canadian dollars (\$7.6bn) in “adaptation investment and disaster assistance”, Guilbeault said.

That included 2 billion Canadian dollars (\$1.5bn) in funding commitments since 2022, some of which was earmarked for flood mapping and access to flood insurance.

The broad plan released on Tuesday would be refined based on the specific needs of communities across the country, Guilbeault said.

“How we adapt depends on where we are in the country. So the actions we take will often be at the local and regional levels,” the minister added.

“While this is the first national adaptation strategy, many communities, governments, businesses, nations have already developed their own adaptation plan to prepare for the risks that a changing climate will bring. I commend your leadership and your foresight.”

In a statement, Keith Stewart, a climate and energy campaigner with Greenpeace Canada, said recent events have made Canada’s need to adapt to climate change “brutally clear”.

“The more that all levels of government work together to fully implement this strategy,” he said, “the more lives and livelihoods that will be saved.”

BUSINESS MIRROR

DENR to use geospatial maps for climate mitigation

By: Samuel P. Medenilla

THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) is now eyeing to use its geospatial mapping tool for the government's climate mitigation measures, which includes determining the country's available carbon credits, and locating untapped natural resources.

DENR Secretary Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga said their newly created Geospatial Database Office (GDO) will be able to use software on its acquired satellite imagery for carbon credit computation.

"By using certain software, we can also anticipate how much carbon, for example, can be sequestered given the [tree] species in the different forest cover," Loyzaga said in a press briefing in Malacañang on Tuesday.

She said they will also look at the contribution of the country's mangrove forests and sea grass to absorb carbon dioxide emissions.

In its website, the World Bank said one carbon credit is equivalent to one ton of reduced greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions expressed in tons of carbon dioxide equivalent.

The credits can be sold to parties to help them reach their GHG reduction goals.

Priority areas

The geomaps, Loyzaga said, are also being used to identify forestlands, which will be prioritized for their reforestation and afforestation efforts to help address climate change.

Currently, of the country's 15 million hectares of forestlands, only 7 million still have forest cover.

"In terms of our own targets in DENR, we want to do 2 million hectares as a priority [for reforestation and afforestation]. Of which, 1 million have been mapped adequately and we can actually already show this to local decision-makers as well as private sector, community-based forestry and management groups to say this should be a priority," Loyzaga said.

The GDO is also engaged in identifying areas, which can provide additional water supply, and project areas, which will be affected by an increased or reduced rainfall due to climate change.

“What we are able to do now is [to] design our infrastructure, which will be appropriate to the rainfall change, which are anticipated by scientists,” Loyzaga said.

Natural capital accounting system

The DENR chief said they are also coordinating with the Department of Finance (DOF) and the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) to come up with the country’s natural capital accounting system.

She said this will allow the country to use its natural resources to generate economic and social benefits.

“There is a move globally to take stock of natural resources of a country and actually to consider that as what they call ‘natural capital’ which can generate both economic and of course financial benefits, and eventually of course the social benefit of having that actual compensation or income from the use of the natural resources,” Loyzaga said.

To help develop the system, she said they will be pushing to expand the capacity of the GDO through coordination with the Philippine Space Agency and securing additional budget so it can secure additional software for its data processing.

BUSINESS WORLD

[Aboitiz firm and Canada-based research institute to develop AI solutions for energy sector](#)

By: Ashley Erika O. Jose

ABOITIZ Data Innovation Pte. Ltd. (ADI) has partnered with a research community in Canada to build artificial intelligence (AI) solutions for the energy sector.

“This partnership brings many new possibilities to the AI scene in the Philippines and the [Asia-Pacific] region,” ADI said in a media release on Wednesday.

The tie-up is with Mila – Quebec Artificial Intelligence Institute, which is headquartered in Montreal and engaged in developing solutions to fight climate change. The institute is said to be committed to pursuing “ethically valuable collaborations” through AI.

ADI said the partnership “aims to pave the way for other sectors and institutions to follow in adopting AI systems to transform businesses and advance communities by delivering sustainability outcomes.”

It quoted Yoshua Bengio, founder of Mila, as saying: “As an organization, few areas get us as excited as advancing Science that impacts our resilience facing climate change.

The focus in doing so via a decarbonized future is very high on that list.”

Mr. Bengio said Mila’s partnership with ADI will focus on providing a “climate-resilient” energy system for the country.

According to its website, Mila is mainly engaged in research areas like health, environment, climate change, and AI ethics.

Through the partnership, ADI will explore AI capabilities to advance research and further develop solutions to address the impact of climate change.

“Both parties hope to help the Philippines reach net zero and to implement more AI-backed climate change solutions in the Asia-Pacific region,” ADI said.

Luis F. Gonzalez, chief operating officer of ADI, said: “The Philippines encompasses a unique combination of challenges prevalent in the energy industry, including significant climate change impact, ambitious decarbonization goals, rapid [growth domestic product] growth, and naturally distributed power grids.”

Mr. Gonzales said these factors are an ideal opportunity for developing solutions tailored for the Philippines, which is considered to be among the most vulnerable countries to be hit by climate change.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources said the Philippines had committed to an estimated greenhouse gas emissions reduction and avoidance of 75%, of which 2.71% is unconditional, for the period 2020 to 2030 for these sectors: agriculture, wastes, industry, transport, and energy.

GMA NEWS

Drought expected in Camarines Norte, Southern Leyte due to El Niño — PAGASA

By: Joviland Rita

Camarines Norte and Southern Leyte are forecast to experience drought during the July-December period due to the impact of the El Niño phenomenon, state weather bureau PAGASA said Tuesday.

At a public briefing, PAGASA senior weather specialist Rusy Abastillas said this is based on the latest rainfall forecast of the bureau for the said period.

“Yung dalawa probinsiya pala na maaaring...for drought, sa dalawang probinsiya na yun, which is Camarines Norte at saka yung Southern Leyte sa Visayas,” he said.

(The two provinces that may experience drought are Camarines Norte and Southern Leyte.)

According to PAGASA, drought means three consecutive months of way below normal rainfall conditions with over 60% reduction from the average rainfall. It could also be five consecutive months of below normal rainfall conditions with 21% to 60% reduction from the average rainfall.

Aside from drought, Abastillas said dry spells may be experienced in 36 provinces in the country, mostly in Luzon areas.

Dry spell is three consecutive months of below normal rainfall condition 21% to 60% reduction from the average rainfall conditions or two consecutive months of way below normal rainfall condition with more than 60% reduction from the average, according to PAGASA.

Meanwhile, dry conditions are also expected in 28 provinces, mostly in Mindanao.

Dry condition means two consecutive months of below normal rainfall condition with 21% to 60% reduction from the average rainfall, PAGASA said.

Due to the Habagat season, Abastillas said rainfall is still expected from July to August.

Below normal rainfall conditions are expected to start by October, according to Abastillas.

The impact of El Niño is expected to affect agriculture, water supply, and health of the people, Abastilla said.

MANILA BULLETIN

[ELEVENTH HOUR — The impacts of the climate crisis to Philippine heritage](#)

By: Climate Reality Project

Aside from its hospitable and beautiful people, the Philippines is also blessed with rich, diverse, and multifaceted natural, cultural, and built heritage.

We are known for over 100 ethnolinguistic groups spread across the archipelago. Each group has distinct and unique traditions, languages, music, dance, clothing, dishes, craftsmanship, rituals, poetry, and oral histories that have existed for hundreds or thousands of years.

We are known for our colorful, vibrant, and crowd-drawing festivals celebrated in almost every corner of our community, even in geographically isolated areas. These festivals celebrate various aspects of local culture and history that often date back to prehistoric times and are strongly connected to the spiritual and natural world.

We have UNESCO World Heritage sites, such as the Vigan City colonial-era houses, Baroque Churches of the Philippines, Banaue Rice Terraces, and Tubbataha Natural Reef, among others.

Our rich heritage, however, is facing various risks due to neglect and decay, rapid urbanization, infrastructure development, and land-use changes, and lack of awareness and education on their importance.

To address these risks, Republic Act No. 10066, also known as the National Cultural Heritage Act of 2009, was passed into law to protect, preserve, conserve, and promote the nation's cultural heritage, its properties, and histories. The law also aims "to strengthen people's awareness of Filipino heritage, to instill pride in our Filipino identity, and to stimulate cultural consciousness, appreciation, and pride."

However, the discourse on heritage conservation is now compelled to also recognize the emerging risks posed by the global climate crisis to Philippine cultural heritage sites and their associated ecosystems.

We experienced the past several years the regular occurrence of extreme weather events such as floods, droughts, tropical storms, and wildfires, which might cause significant damage to our historic structures, including buildings, monuments, biodiversity, and archeological sites.

The changes in temperature, precipitation patterns, and sea level rise due to climate change are also projected to result in the loss of cultural landscapes, such as coastlines, wetlands, and agricultural landscapes. The long-term effects could be the irreversible disappearance of traditional land use practices, cultural traditions, and indigenous knowledge.

The loss of biodiversity due to the climate crisis also impacts cultural practices and traditional ecological knowledge. This will eventually lead to the loss of species and habitats, which are culturally significant because they relate and connect us to the natural world.

Communities are displaced in a deepening climate crisis since they are affected by rising sea levels, floods, and droughts. This will lead to communities disconnected from their sacred place, pride of place, communities, and ancestral lands.

The economic impacts of the climate crisis and its destruction of our natural and cultural heritage are bleeding billions. Once ignored or left unnoticed, the significant economic effects on heritage sites, lost tourism revenue, and increased maintenance and preservation costs will continue until we can no longer afford to preserve them.

We cannot monetize the contribution and benefit of our connections to the past. Our heritage contributes to the identity and sense of community and instills pride of place among our people. Once they are gone, they are gone forever and this can have profound socio-economic and cultural implications for our communities and future generations.

Preserving heritage, therefore, entails deploying climate change adaptation (resilience building) and mitigation (emissions reduction) solutions to our communities. This requires the crucial participation of ethnic and indigenous communities, who are also at the forefront of intensifying climate change impacts.

We cannot afford to lose our heritage because detachment from our pride of place is the biggest catastrophe.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Cotabato town placed under state of calamity due to flooding

By: Williamor Magbanua

The local government has placed Kabacan town in Cotabato province under a state of calamity as 10 of its 24 villages were flooded after the Kabacan river swelled due to torrential rains last week.

Vice Mayor Herlo Guzman, who presided over the Sangguniang Bayan of Kabacan, said the majority of the council members approved the declaration of a state of calamity so funds could be released immediately to help affected residents.

Guzman said they planned to tap at least P1.7 million from five per cent of the town's Quick Response Funds to buy more food packs and tarpaulins for more than 5,000 displaced families.

"Some of the affected villages still have water. That's why there are evacuees who prefer to still stay at our evacuation sites, while the rest took refuge in the houses of their relatives," Guzman said.

The heavy downpour brought about by the Intertropical Convergence Zone submerged the villages of Aringay, Kayaga, Salapungan, Poblacion, Malanduaque, Bangilan, Bannawag, Kilagasan, Cuyapon, and Magatos in flood waters after the Kabacan river overflowed.

"Even if we don't experience rain, the water released by the dam in Bukidnon contributes to the swelling of rivers in our area, especially as we serve as catch basins of the excess water," Guzman explained.

The flooding also brought about untold damage to agriculture as vast areas in Kayaga and Cuyapon, some with newly planted rice, were under water.

Guzman said the municipal agriculture office was trying to validate the exact number of farmers and areas affected.

"We will also extend assistance to our farmers once we have their names. The assistance will depend on the extent of damage to their crops," Guzman said.

In nearby Datu Montawal and Pagalungan towns of Maguindanao del Sur, some residents stayed along the highway while waiting for the flood to subside.

Balumol Kadiding, the municipal disaster risk reduction and management officer of Datu Montawal, said some residents were staying in makeshift structures along the Mindanao-Cotabato highway hoping to get assistance from the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

But he denied reports that some evacuees were asking for alms from commuters and motorists traversing the highway.

Kadiding said some of the 6,000 families affected by the floods had returned home while others continued to stay in the town's evacuation sites, waiting for the flood to subside.

The whole of Datu Montawal, with 11 villages, was also flooded last week, while nine of the 12 villages of nearby Pagalungan town, were also inundated, affecting more than 9,000 families, their disaster official reported.

[DENR targets 1 million hectares of reforestation during Marcos Jr.'s term](#)

By: Sofia Abrogar

The state environment bureau aims to reforest at least one million hectares of lands nationwide before President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.'s term ends in 2028, said Secretary Maria Antonia Loyzaga on Tuesday.

While the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) wants to reforest two million hectares of land, its modest target currently sits at one million hectares due to a lack of partnerships with parties in priority areas.

“We need partnerships. The only way that we are going to be able to implement reforestation at a pace and in-anticipate ng lahat is to build partnerships in those areas na priority siya... One million is the modest target... Two million is our reach, but sana po sa 10 million in terms of the overall 15 by the end,” said Loyzaga.

DENR first prioritizes forest sites from its National Greening Program (NGP) that were unsuccessful in generating the targeted forest covers, specifically in Cagayan Valley and parts of Mindanao.

According to the DENR chief, the Philippines has 15 million hectares of classified forest lands. However, only seven million hectares—less than half— have forest cover.

The Forest Survey of India defined forest cover as an area of more than one hectare in extent that has a tree canopy density of 10% and above. Hence eight million hectares of Philippine forest lands remain sparse, if not deforested.

THE FINANCIAL TIMES

[What's next on the road from Paris to Dubai for climate finance](#)

By: Attracta Mooney and Kenza Bryan

President Emmanuel Macron's two-day summit in Paris involved 40 world leaders, a concert headlined by Billie Eilish and a plan to overhaul the world's financial system to tackle climate change and poverty — and left plenty of work for a hectic negotiations schedule leading up to the UN COP28 summit in Dubai.

What was missing from Paris last week was most of the G7 country leaders, and any substantial new finance or debt cancellation for poor countries suffering disproportionately from climate change. The proposals for reform presented were also criticised by non-profit groups representing some of those most affected as too modest or not concrete enough.

As he closed the conference, a still hopeful Macron said participants had agreed on several “work streams” to address in the months ahead around the core issue of how to distribute funds to help developing countries cope.

There will be a series of further opportunities to confront the wealthier countries in the next six months, with the G20 leaders led by India as this year's host setting the tone at their September meeting in New Delhi.

It will be followed by the UN Climate Ambition Summit in New York later in September, and the World Bank and IMF annual meetings in Marrakech in mid-October. The culmination of the year's climate dialogues is the particularly contentious UN COP28 meeting of almost 200 countries in oil-rich Dubai for a fortnight from the end of November.

In Paris, the presence of leaders predominantly from the group of countries known as the Global South for the finance summit, co-hosted by Barbados' prime minister Mia Mottley, has put them in “the driving seat” on “all the substantive proposals”, analysts said.

This would boost their profile and credibility at summits including the UN COP28 climate talks, said Franklin Steves, a senior policy adviser at the climate-focused think-tank E3G.

Avinash Persaud, an economic adviser to Mottley, said: “Paris was a significant point along this journey but it is a just point along this journey.”

Big push to raise cash for development banks

US Treasury secretary Janet Yellen said proposed reforms to the lending practices of international development banks could unlock \$200bn in new funds over the next decade.

While Paris has “given them a target”, said Persaud, a key event to watch next would be the annual meetings of the World Bank and the IMF in October. “[Marrakech is] where we need to see the implementation of these reforms,” he said.

Progress on major issues such as so-called callable capital — or the level of cash pledged by countries but not yet paid in to the lending institutions — was now needed, he added.

The G20 meeting in India will also be important, where the agenda is expected to include talks on whether countries should be paying in even more cash to the multilateral banks.

‘Pause clauses’ to freeze debt repayments

At the Paris summit, the World Bank said it would offer “pause clauses” to freeze debt repayments for countries in distress when they are hit by climate or other disasters. France and the US also promised to bring in similar clauses to their bilateral lending or export credit finance.

The UK said it would add these clauses to its export credit finance to 12 African and Caribbean countries. It told other countries at the summit that all bilateral, multilateral and private lenders should offer these clauses by COP28 in Dubai at year end, or by the end of 2025 at the latest.

“We have seen a first wave [of pause clauses] but we need to see this wave getting bigger with more institutions announcing it,” said Persaud. It has to move from “exotic to normal” in the months ahead, he added.

The US, UK and France all committing to implement debt clauses by year-end was a “big win”, said Sara Harcourt, senior policy director at the non-profit poverty group ONE Campaign. “These will give countries much-needed additional room in their budgets when a natural disaster strikes. But we do need to see more countries and big creditors coming on board.”

The \$100bn target in reserve assets

At the summit, developed countries said they had reached a target to make \$100bn in so-called special drawing rights available for the fight against climate change and poverty — almost.

SDRs are a type of reserve asset that are released in emergencies by the IMF in amounts linked to the size of member country economies.

About \$650bn was issued by the IMF in 2021 to help countries deal with the coronavirus pandemic, with the vast majority going to developed countries.

The G20 agreed later that year to reallocate \$100bn to poorer countries, which typically can only access limited amounts, but has struggled to reach that target.

While the fund reallocation was one of the big headlines to come out of Paris, after France agreed to give away 40 per cent of its own drawing rights, the matter is still plagued with problems.

The biggest question mark is over the US's \$21bn contribution after Republicans in the US Congress previously threatened to block the release of its share.

How multilateral development banks can receive the drawing rights in the coming months is the next development to watch.

Debt restructuring for debt-laden nations

One of the main conversation topics of the summit was Zambia's concurrent debt negotiations. After more than two years of talks, China and other creditors reached a deal to restructure \$6.3bn in loans to Zambia.

Speaking at the end of the summit, Kenya's president William Ruto said there were more than 50 countries facing debt distress, warning there needed to be a "more creative way of dealing with this" problem.

Ahead of the bank annual meetings and COP28, expect more discussions around how to speed up these debt negotiations.

Julie Kozack, director of strategic communications at the IMF, was "cautiously optimistic" that the global roundtable on sovereign debt discussions held around the Marrakech annual meetings of the IMF and World Bank could iron out some issues that can plague debt restructuring deals, such as equal treatment for creditors and better information sharing.

The roundtable participants have previously included major bilateral creditors such as China and France, as well as debtor countries and private sector representatives such as asset manager BlackRock.

Setting a global carbon price

IMF managing director Kristalina Georgieva told the Paris summit that “without a carbon price”, there was “no chance” of meeting the goal of limiting the global temperature rise to 1.5C above pre-industrial levels.

The IMF proposed a carbon price floor, where poorer countries pay less, middle-income countries more, and rich countries have the highest price.

Dan Jørgensen, Denmark’s minister for development co-operation and global climate policy, said there was “a lot of very strong voices advocating the need for more financing”.

Denmark, Spain, Vietnam, Ireland and 19 other countries are backing a shipping levy, which is expected to be discussed at the upcoming International Maritime Organization meetings. Jørgensen said there was growing support for the levy, though the fine details of how it would work had yet to be agreed.

But IMO meetings are typically difficult. “Often there is a disconnect between what leaders say and what happens at the IMO,” noted Nick Mabey of E3G.

Other taxes and levies were also discussed, including a fossil fuel tax, which is also on the longlist of items due for further discussion ahead of COP28.

THE MANILA TIMES

[Searca seeks collaboration with New Zealand](#)

By: Leander C. Domingo

To strengthen research collaborations, the Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (Searca) presented its initiatives and programs on education and training in agriculture at the Philippines-New Zealand Program Launch here.

The program launch was held at the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) chancellor on June 20, 2023.

Searca joined the New Zealand Agricultural Greenhouse Gas Research Centre, the Department of Agriculture-Philippine Carabao Center and the UPLB.

During the event, New Zealand Ambassador to the Philippines Peter Kell discussed his country's present and potential engagement for global research with the Philippines.

Also covered during the launch event was an overview of objectives and components of the current New Zealand investment and the UPLB project titled "Enhancement of Greenhouse Gas Inventory and Mitigation for Cattle in the Philippines."

For Searca, Deputy Director for Programs Nur Azura Adam presented the center's initiatives and programs on education and training in agriculture in Southeast Asia as well as the center's Web-based Integrated and Spatial Engine and Smart Ecosystem or Wise Carbon Farming Project.

Gregorio said there were five emerging areas of research that were also tackled: circularity in agriculture; indigenous engagement in Philippine agricultural science; Philippine agriculture toward low carbon, climate-resilient food systems with progressive farmers and fisheries; development of climate-smart feeding rations for cattle and buffaloes; and climate change.

During the roundtable discussion segment of the program that was also participated by Searca, possible areas of collaboration between the Philippine and New Zealand were also explored.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

Pascual seeks more RE investments from Europe

By: Catherine Talavera

The Philippines is actively encouraging increased investments from European firms in an effort to expedite the growth of the renewable energy (RE) sector.

During the Philippine Business Forum on green energy and digital technologies in Brussels, Belgium, Trade Secretary Alfredo Pascual recognized Europe's significant investments in renewable energy research, development, as well as education.

"By partnering with European institutions, we can enhance our capabilities in renewable energy research, development, and training, as well as in other fields. This collaboration will empower our workforce and academic institutions to contribute to the green energy sector, fostering innovation and mutual growth," Pascual said.

"With the Philippines partnering with the EU, we can expedite renewable energy growth, enhance energy security, and contribute to global climate change mitigation," he said.

Pascual recognized the EU's successful implementation of renewable energy policies, saying that this will be instrumental in accelerating the energy transition in the Philippines.

He stressed that the shift to green energy presents not only an environmental imperative but also a remarkable economic opportunity.

"Our country also has vast potential in the green energy sector, thanks to abundant renewable resources like solar, wind, hydro, and geothermal power. The Philippines has close to 246 gigawatts (GW) of untapped renewable energy. It has the world's third-largest geothermal capacity," Pascual said.

He emphasized that the Philippines is also well positioned for solar energy as well as tidal energy, saying that the country has identified eight areas to harness tidal energy with a potential of up to 170 gigawatts (GW) of capacity.

"Aligning our standards with European requirements can improve access to Philippine green energy products and services, facilitating partnerships and expanding export potential in the global clean energy value chains," Pascual said.

In a bid to attract RE investors, Pascual highlighted that the country allows 100 percent foreign ownership in RE projects,

The Philippines has implemented the National Renewable Energy Program (NREP) 2020-2040, which sets a target of achieving a 35 percent share of renewable energy in the generation mix by 2030, with a further increase to 50 percent by 2040.

“The Philippines offers vast opportunities in sustainable manufacturing, services, and connectivity. Key sectors such as electric vehicles (EV), battery manufacturing, mineral processing, electronics, and semiconductors align with new industrial technologies and renewable energy,” Pascual said.

Pascual highlighted that the country possesses critical minerals necessary for battery production and storage systems to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote a circular economy.

He emphasized that the country is the fifth most mineralized country in the world – the second top global source of nickel, third-largest reserves of gold, fourth for copper, and sixth for chromite; as well as important chemicals in technology industries such as selenium and scandium.

“Combined with the government’s sustainability commitment, the Philippines provides European investors with leverage,” Pascual said.

Moreover, Pascual stressed that research and innovation are central to the Philippines’ commitment to green and digital transitions and also in other sectors.

“Many international companies have set up production plans in the Philippines to avail of low-cost manufacturing. But soon, they become aware of the talent of the Filipinos for design and creative work, and soon a number of them set up their R&D centers also in the Philippines to support the development of a new product,” Pascual stressed.

He cited American solar cell manufacturer Maxison as an example, which started in the Philippines with version five of solar cells.

“Now, Filipino engineers and scientists, and the company every now and then develop higher efficiency solar cells. They are now about to embark on the production of their Maxison 8 version of solar cells with a much higher solar energy conversion to electricity. This product is supported by 100 patents filed in the Philippines, and the production will now be done in the Philippines for the higher version of their solar cells,” Pascual said.

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