



ROUNDUP

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Marcos says to prioritize use of renewable energy to address climate change

By Rose Carmelle Lacuata

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. said Monday his administration will prioritize the use of renewable energy sources to cushion the impacts of climate change in the Philippines.

TRANSCRIPT: President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.'s first SONA

President Ferdinand Marcos, Jr. has vowed to support the agriculture sector, make healthcare accessible to Filipinos nationwide, and to make Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) mandatory in Senior High School.

ARAB NEWS

'Friend to all, enemy to none': Marcos vows to safeguard Philippine territory in national address



By Ellie Aben

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Monday vowed to safeguard Philippine territory against foreign powers while also promising that the country would continue to be a “friend to all,” in his first address to the nation as its new leader.

BUSINESS WORLD

State of the world, state of the nation

By Bienvenido S. Oplas, Jr.

This paper will expand my hypothesis that I mentioned last week — that Europe and North America will deindustrialize in the short- to medium-term and many companies there will migrate to Asia. The Philippines should prepare for this.

MANILA BULLETIN

China swelters under record heat

By: Agence-France-Presse

Beijing, China — Cities across China were on red alert for heatwaves on Monday, as tens of millions of people were warned to stay indoors and record temperatures strained energy supply. Swathes of the planet have been hit by extreme and deadly heatwaves in recent months, from Western Europe in July to India in March to April.

What did Marcos discuss in his ‘drug-free’ first SONA

By Argyll Cyrus Geducos

Unlike his predecessor, who was passionate about fighting illegal drugs, President Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr. made no mention in his first State of the Nation Address (SONA) how his administration plans to address this particular problem.

President’s energy plan includes nuclear power plants, renewables

By: Argyll Cyrus Geducos

As he recognized that the country’s demand for energy far exceeds its reliable supply, President Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr. presented measures to increase the Philippines’ energy production, and this includes revisiting the construction of nuclear power plants.

MINDANAO TIMES

Mindanao biz sector pushes for 12-point agenda for BBM admin

By: Carmelito Franciso

AS President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. addresses the country today to outline his programs in the next six years during the state-of-the-nation address, the business sector in Mindanao has also called on him to implement key initiatives.

PINSENT MASONS



Philippines publishes national renewable energy programme to 2040

The Philippines' Department of Energy (DOE) has published its national renewable energy programme (NREP) for the period 2020 to 2040, setting out its goals of 35% renewable energy generation by 2030 and 50% by 2040.

According to the NREP (1.79MB / 104-page), by reaching these goals, the Philippines' government wants to meet people's growing electricity need with cleaner energy resources, to adapt renewable energy more widely and to use hybrid technologies, to reduce carbon dioxide emissions and to mitigate climate change.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

We are drowning in plastic, and we need to catch up fast

By: Atty. Gloria Estenzo Ramos

Just last month, Canada took a huge leap and issued a ban on the manufacture and import of six categories of single-use plastics by the end of the year. Likewise, California recently enacted the boldest plastic source reduction policy requiring a steep reduction in the amount of single-use plastic packaging produced in the state by 2032.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

DOST backs BBM's stance on investing in sci-tech

By Ma. Cristina Arayata

The Department of Science and Technology (DOST) is supporting President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.'s stance on investing in science and technology to boost the country's disaster risk reduction (DRR) efforts.

[Pangandaman backs Marcos' campaign for prudent fiscal management](#)

#PBBMSONA2022

MANILA – Department of Budget and Management (DBM) Secretary Amenah Pangandaman on Monday expressed support on the campaign of President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. towards achieving prudent fiscal management and bureaucratic efficiency, as outlined in his first State of the Nation Address (SONA).

Renewable energy tops Marcos admin's climate change agenda

By: Ruth Abbey-Gita Carlos

Manila – President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. on Monday pushed for the transition to renewable energy to mitigate the worst impacts of climate change on the country.

PHYS ORG

Unraveling the interconnections between air pollutants and climate change

By Anuradha Varanasi



In June 1991, Mount Pinatubo in the Philippines erupted for nine hours, ejecting volcanic ash, water vapor, and at least 15 to 20 million tons of noxious sulfur dioxide gas into the stratosphere. Within two hours, the gas transformed into tiny sulfate mists or aerosols that formed bright clouds. Those clouds spread across the entire Earth and persisted for a year, effectively reducing global temperatures by 0.4 to 0.5 degrees Celsius between 1992 and 1993. Once these cooling aerosols fell out of the stratosphere two years later, global temperatures rose again.

POLITIKO

Pampanga showcases disaster preparedness

The Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office (PDRRMO) of Pampanga highlighted its emergency preparedness in responding to disaster.

RAPPLER

The pros and cons of Marcos' nuclear energy dreams

By Ralf Rivas

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. is eyeing nuclear energy and renewable technology to address the Philippines' energy crisis.

THE MANILA TIMES

IHC commits to sustainability

By Ed Paolo Salting

Real estate developer Imperial Homes Corp. (IHC) has made significant innovations in the home and development sector as it launched the 50,000-square-meter Via Verde Trece Martires development in Cavite, which is targeted for completion in 2025.

Thousands evacuate as California wildfire grows

By Agence France-Presse

Midpines, California: A fierce wildfire in California expanded on Sunday (Monday in Manila), burning several thousand acres and forcing evacuations as tens of millions of Americans sweltered through the scorching heat.

[OPINION] We're on the cusp of the most catastrophic food crisis in 50 years: Where is the global response?

By IPS

Berlin/Terni, Italy: A growing mountain of data and analysis points to an unprecedented global crisis in the making, due to the convergence of "Four Cs" (conflict, Covid, climate and costs).

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

Marcos SONA: A lot of talk on environment, not as much on its defenders

By Gaea Katreena Cabico



While climate change—an issue put on the back burner during the election campaign—was mentioned at least six times in the first State of the Nation Address of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr., his speech was silent about the threats faced by Filipino climate advocates and environmental defenders.

CCC IN THE NEWS

THE MANILA TIMES

[Bringing back the use of clean energy in Mindanao](#)

In a report by the Department of Energy in 2021, 31 percent of the installed energy capacity of Mindanao came from renewable energy (RE) sources as of 2020. This was way lower than the 2011 data, where 65 percent of the total power generation mix in the island came from clean power.

Information and Knowledge Management Division



ABS-CBN NEWS

Marcos says to prioritize use of renewable energy to address climate change

By Rose Carmelle Lacuata

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. said Monday his administration will prioritize the use of renewable energy sources to cushion the impacts of climate change in the Philippines.

Marcos, in his first State of the Nation Address (SONA), said although the Philippines is considered a minor contributor to climate change, it is one of the countries most vulnerable to its effects.

In order to alleviate the effects of climate change, he said there is a need to prioritize the use of renewable energy sources.

"The use of renewable energy is at the top of our climate agenda. We will increase our use of renewable energy sources such as hydropower, geothermal power, solar and wind," he said.

There is also a need to invest in technology to provide more accurate weather forecasts and disaster alerts, he said.

"Geographically, we are a disaster-prone country. Capacity building for our natural disaster resilience is therefore a must. Investment in science and technology is imperative to enable us to have accurate weather forecast and on-time disaster alerts," said Marcos.

He pushed for disaster-proofing of communities, especially those that are already affected by climate change.

"Studies show that already now, many areas in the Philippines are at high risk from the rise in sea levels brought about by the increase in global temperature," he said.

"We must adapt to this phenomenon with disaster-proof planning for our communities."

Consumer group Power for People Coalition, meanwhile, said it was "disappointed" that Marcos' renewable energy plans were "full of contradictions" given that gas remained necessary during the transition.

"President Marcos' energy plans are at odds with what he promises. He cannot say that renewable energy is his top agenda when he is peddling nuclear and natural gas, both of which are not clean sources of energy, not to mention the environmental risks and hazards that come with it." said Gerry Arances, convener of the group.

They urged Marcos to follow through with his plans.

"Renewable energy is a top priority not just by saying it, but committing to minimizing, then eliminating the use of fossil fuels to protect the environment and consumers. It's disappointing to hear him talk about incentives and bill for gas and action point for nuclear but no actual plans for renewable energy," he added.



NUCLEAR POWER

Marcos, who advocated for the revival of the Bataan Nuclear Power Plant during his presidential campaign, said "it was time to reexamine" the country's strategy in building nuclear power plants locally, noting that public-private partnerships would help fund future nuclear projects.

He also assured the public that the government would follow international regulations on nuclear operations.

"In the area of nuclear power, there have been new tech developed that allows small-scale modular nuclear plants and other derivations. PPPs will play a part in support," he said during his address.

The Department of Energy had said the country's nuclear energy push is possible under the current administration as more countries veer away from the use of coal-fired power plants, which have contributed to large carbon emissions detrimental to the environment.

Government, however, will need a proper regulation framework and a strong foundation to build new nuclear power plants or revive the one in Bataan, given the wide skepticism surrounding it due to safety issues.

WATER SUPPLY

Aside from prioritizing the use of renewable energy, Marcos said there is a need to rehabilitate and improve the country's water supply systems.

This can be done by looking for more sources of fresh water and working with the private sector.

"We will also look into the precarious fresh water supply situation in the country, especially in our urban areas. Many of our water supply systems date back to the 1950s, and they must now be rehabilitated and improved," Marcos said.

"I've instructed the DENR, together with the DPWH to explore positive partnerships with the private sector to address this crucial situation," he added.

In terms of protecting the environment, Marcos said companies exploiting the country's natural resources should follow environmental laws.

"The Philippines has excellent laws on the environment, but we have to guarantee that these laws are properly enforced. And this will require a great deal of coordination and cooperation between concerned government agencies and private stakeholders. Companies who exploit our natural resources must follow the law," he said.

"We all have the responsibility to preserve this earth. For we are but custodians and we will pass on this great treasure to future generations," he added.



"There is no question that the preservation of the environment is the preservation of life. If we cannot mitigate climate change, all our plans for the economy, all our plans for our future will be for naught."

Climate change is among the biggest global challenges. Former President Rodrigo Duterte himself had said he hoped the Marcos administration would do better in addressing the issue.

Newly-appointed Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Toni Yulo-Loyzaga earlier said she will prioritize fighting climate emergency and protecting indigenous species.



TRANSCRIPT: President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.'s first SONA

President Ferdinand Marcos, Jr. has vowed to support the agriculture sector, make healthcare accessible to Filipinos nationwide, and to make Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) mandatory in Senior High School.

Marcos has also asked Congress to pass some priority measures, which included the National Government Rightsizing Program, the National Budget Modernization Bill and the Tax Package 3 Valuation Reform Bill.

Here is the full transcript of Marcos' first State of the Nation Address (SONA):

STATE OF THE NATION ADDRESS OF HIS EXCELLENCY FERDINAND R. MARCOS JR.

PRESIDENT OF THE PHILIPPINES TO THE CONGRESS OF THE PHILIPPINES

[Delivered at the Session Hall of the House of Representatives, Batasang Pambansa Complex, Quezon City on July 25, 2022]

Vice President Sara Zimmerman Duterte; Former Presidents Joseph Ejercito Estrada, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and Rodrigo Roa Duterte; Senate President Juan Miguel Zubiri and the honorable members of the Senate; House Speaker Ferdinand Martin Romualdez and the honorable members of the House of Representatives; Chief Justice Alexander Gesmundo and the honorable Justices of the Supreme Court; the Apostolic Nuncio Most Reverend Charles John Brown and the esteemed members of the diplomatic corps; the honorable members of the Cabinet; our First Lady Louise Araneta Marcos and our children [applause]; distinguished guests; ang mga minamahal kong mga kababayan; ladies and gentlemen; magandang hapon po sa inyong lahat.

I come before you today to address you, as it is my duty as President of the Republic.

We live in difficult times brought about by some forces of our own making, but certainly, also by forces that are beyond our control.

But we have, and we will continue to find solutions.

And these are some of them.

In terms of the economy, we will implement a sound fiscal management.

Tax administration reforms will be in place to increase revenue collection.

Expenditure priorities will be realigned, and spending efficiency will be improved to immediately address the economic scarring arising from the effects of COVID-19, and also to prepare for future shocks.

Productivity-enhancing investments will be promoted.



Our country must become an investment destination, capitalizing on the Corporate Recovery and Tax Incentives for Enterprises or the CREATE Law and the economic liberalization laws such as the Public Service Act and the Foreign Investments Act.

Ecozones will be fully supported to bring in strategic industries such as those engaged in high-tech manufacturing, health and medical care, and all emerging technologies.

This is also seen to facilitate economic growth outside of Metro Manila.

Our tax system will be adjusted in order to catch up with the rapid developments of the digital economy, including the imposition of value-added tax on digital service providers.

The initial revenue impact will be around Php 11.7 billion in 2023 alone.

Tax compliance procedures will be simplified to promote ease of paying taxes.

We will pursue measures to determine possible undervaluation and/or trade mis-invoicing of imported goods.

Through information and communications technology, the Bureau of Customs will promote streamlined processes.

Disbursements for 2022 to 2023 will be maintained at above 20 percent of gross domestic product or Php 4.955 trillion and Php 5.086 trillion, respectively, to ensure continuous implementation of priority programs.

Disbursement will further increase over the medium-term from Php 5.402 trillion or 20.7 percent of our GDP in 2024 to Php 7.712 trillion or 20.6 percent of GDP in 2028.

The Medium-Term Fiscal Strategy of this administration seeks to attain short-term macro-fiscal stability while remaining supportive of the country's economic recovery and to promote medium-term fiscal sustainability. Furthermore, and more importantly, fiscal policy aims to bring together the National Government's resources so that these are mobilized and utilized in order to gain the maximum benefit and the high multiplier effects for our economy.

Measurable medium-term macroeconomic and fiscal objectives include the following headline numbers. These are based on forecasts that are consistent with the guiding principles of coherence of strategies, policy discipline and fiscal sustainability.

6.5 to 7.5% real gross domestic product (GDP) growth in 2022; 6.5 to 8% real GDP growth annually between 2023 to 2028

- 9% or single-digit poverty rate by 2028
- 3% National Government deficit to GDP ratio by 2028
- Less than 60% National Government debt-to-GDP ratio by 2025

At least 4,256 USD income (GNI) per capita and the attainment of upper middle-income status by 2024



The aforementioned headline goals summarize the objectives of this Medium-Term Fiscal Strategy (MTFF) being submitted to Congress, for its adoption and concurrence through a Concurrent Resolution by the Senate and House of Representatives.

Once adopted, the MTFF will become an anchor for the annual spending and financing plan of the National Government and Congress when preparing the annual budget and undertaking related appropriation activities. It is therefore a forward-looking document that extends beyond the traditional three-year horizon to reach six (6) years, coinciding with the six-year coverage of the Philippine Development Plan (PDP) 2023 to 2028.

The MTFF also promotes transparency and credible commitment to pursue the indicated socio-macroeconomic goals that optimize the government budget.

Medium-term growth targets and the assumptions regarding key macroeconomic variables underpin the medium-term fiscal plan. The recent past and the COVID-19 pandemic has beset the macroeconomic environment with challenges and a series of external shocks. Inflation has accelerated in recent months due largely to significant increases in international prices of oil and other key commodities.

Still, the economic growth momentum remains firm as demonstrated by the strong 2022 first quarter GDP growth at 8.3 percent. However, the recovery process from the impact of the pandemic is still on-going amid elevated uncertainty in the international economic environment. Revisions in the macro-economic assumptions incorporate these challenges and most recent economic developments, leading to upward adjustments in the following:

- Inflation rate for 2022 to 2023;
- Foreign exchange rate for 2023 to 2025; and
- Goods and services imports growth for 2022.

The economy is expected to grow by 6.5 to 7.5 percent this year as we continue to reopen the economy while considering the recent external developments.

In the first quarter alone, GDP saw an increase in household consumption and private investments, along with a robust manufacturing industry, high vaccination rate, improved healthcare capacity, and an upward trend in tourism and employment. This is expected to continue for the rest of the year. This strong economic growth is projected to be sustained and expanded further to 6.5 to 8 percent from 2023 until 2028.

The average inflation for 2022 is projected to range from 4.5 to 5.5 percent, following the uptick in fuel and food prices as a result of the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict and the disrupted supply chains.

It is slightly adjusted to 2.5 to 4.5 percent in 2023, and is seen to return to the target range of 2.0 to 4.0 percent by 2024 until 2028.

Dubai crude oil price is expected to settle at 90 to 110 USD per barrel in 2022, 80 to 100 USD per barrel in 2023, and 70 to 90 USD per barrel from 2024 onwards as oil supply is expected to catch up and stabilize over the medium-term.



The Philippine peso is projected to average between 51 to 53 PhP per US dollar in 2022 and 51 to 55 PhP per US dollar from 2023 onwards due to aggressive monetary policy tightening by the US Federal Reserve, market aversion amid the Russia-Ukraine conflict, and again, increased global oil prices.

Lastly, exports of goods are expected to grow by 7 percent in 2022, and 6 percent from 2023 to 2028.

On the other hand, imports of goods are projected to grow by 18 percent in 2022, 6 percent in 2023, and 8 percent from 2024 to 2028.

I have instructed the NEDA to coordinate with other agencies and work on the Philippine Development Plan for 2023 to 2028 and to submit to me the complete blueprint and progress of its implementation not later than year-end.

One of the main drivers of our push for growth and employment will be in the agricultural sector.

With regard to food supply, we are confronted by a two-pronged problem: that which will hit us in the short term and that which will hit us in the long term.

Tayo ay nahaharap sa mga problemang kagyat nating mararamdaman, at mga hamong pang-matagalan.

Ang mga suliraning agarang mararamdaman ng ating mga kababayan ay ang posibilidad ng tuloy-tuloy na pagsipa ng presyo ng pagkain at kakulangan sa suplay ng ating pagkain.

Upang masuportahan ang mga mamimili para mapanatili ang kanilang purchasing power o kapangyarihan sa pagbili, isinapinal ng Department of Agriculture ang planong taasan ang produksyon sa susunod na panahon ng pagtatanim o planting season, sa pamamagitan ng tulong pinansiyal at teknikal.

Magbibigay tayo ng pautang, habang mas ilalapit natin sa sektor ng agrikultura ang hindi gaanong mahal na farm inputs na bibilhin na ng buldo ng gobyerno.

Kabilang dito ang abono, pestisidyo, mga punla, feeds, fuel subsidy at ayuda para sa mga karapat-dapat na benipisyaryo.

Para sa pang-matagalang solusyon: itataas natin ang produksyon ng mga kalakal at produktong pang-agrikultura. At para magawa ito, pagtitibayin natin ang tinatawag na value chain na nagsisimula sa mga magsasaka hanggang sa mga mamimili.

May mga bahagi ng value chain na ngayon ay kanya-kanya ang operasyon. Pagtibayin natin ang koordinasyon ng iba't ibang bahagi nito.

Ang pagsasaliksik para sa mga makabagong paraan ng pagtatanim at pag-aalaga ng hayop ay masusing gagabayan ng Department of Agriculture.



Ang produksyon ng farm inputs o mga kakailanganin ng mga magsasaka sa pagpapalago ng kanilang sakahan ay ating i-aayon sa mga hamong dala ng climate change at global warming.

Mahigpit na pagsusuri ang gagawin ng ating mga eksperto tungo dito.

Ang mga pautang at financial assistance sa mga magbubukid at mangingisda ay magiging institusyon at patakaran ng aking administrasyon. [applause]

Ipaprayoridad natin ang modernisasyon ng mga sakahan sa pamamagitan ng mga makabagong teknolohiya para sa ating mga magsasaka. Ating palalawakin ang mga palaisdaan, babuyan at manukan. Lahat ng ito, gagamitan ng siyensya para tumaas ang produksyong agrikultural. [applause]

Maging ang post-production at processing ay susuportahan ng pamahalaan.

Gagawa tayo ng national network ng farm-to-market roads upang mas mabilis na mailakbay ng mga magsasaka ang kanilang mga produkto sa mga pamilihan.

At gagawa tayo ng mga paraan upang maramdaman ng mga mamimili ang pagluluwag ng presyo ng mga produktong pagkain sa kayang halaga, gaya ng muling pagbubuhay ng mga Kadiwa Centers.

Hindi ito magagawa sa isang araw, hindi magagawa sa isang buwan, o isang taon lamang.

Ngunit kailangan na natin simulan NGAYON. [applause]

Ang agrarian reform program ay dapat magpatuloy.

Agrarian reform is not only about acquisition, but also about support services and distribution.

To assist this, I intend to issue an executive order to impose a one-year moratorium on the payment of land amortization and interest payments. [applause]

This is included in Republic Act No. 11469 or the Bayanihan to Heal as One Act.

A moratorium will give the farmers the ability to channel their resources in developing their farms, maximizing their capacity to produce, and propel the growth of our economy.

The civil society organizations also support this because it will unburden the farmers of their dues and be able to focus on improving farm productivity.

Congress must also pass a law that will emancipate the agrarian reform beneficiaries from the agrarian reform debt burden, thereby amending Section 26 of Republic Act 6657.

In this law, the loans of agrarian reform beneficiaries with unpaid amortization and interest shall be condoned.



Layunin ng batas na ito ay burahin ang hindi mabayarang utang ng ating mga magsasaka na benipisyaryo ng agrarian reform.

Agrarian reform beneficiaries who are still to receive their awarded land under the comprehensive agrarian reform program shall receive it without any obligation to pay any amortization.

The condonation of the existing agrarian reform loan will cover the amount of 58.125 billion pesos benefiting 654,000 agrarian reform beneficiaries and involving a total of 1.18 million hectares of awarded lands. [applause]

Executive Order No. 75, Series of 2019 requires that all government agencies, bureaus, departments and instrumentalities to turn over agricultural lands to qualified agrarian reform beneficiaries.

At present we have a total of 52,000 hectares of unused agricultural lands of the government which shall now be used for distribution to the following sectors in accordance with Section 40 of the Republic Act No. 6657, as amended, thus:

- Landless war veterans
- Landless surviving spouse and orphans of war veterans
- Landless retirees of the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Philippine National Police

Agricultural lands acquired under this program will be given to graduates of college degrees in agriculture who are landless.

The call of the times is for the infusion of fresh and new blood in the agricultural sector. We need a new breed of farmers equipped with modern agricultural technology able to engage in sustained scientific farming that will not only increase farm yields, but also resilience in the face of climate change.

They say that each brand has a story. As for the Filipino brand, ours is deeply rooted in our rich cultural heritage and the tourism sector plays an invaluable role in the promotion of the Filipino brand.

Tourism is not only an important economic development tool but the abundance of opportunities that the sector creates in terms of regular employment and even job creation at the grassroots level is undeniable.

To boost our tourism industry, we will first and foremost make basic developments such as road improvements for easier access to tourism spots. We will also upgrade our airports and create more international airports [applause] to help decongest the bottleneck in the Manila Airport.

We will also make it more convenient for travelers to go around the country, even to remote areas to help promote undiscovered tourist spots. This program will be led by the Department of Tourism, together with the Department of Public Works and Highways.



To foster the Filipino brand is to spark our sense of pride and reaffirm our strong sense of identity. It is time to welcome the rest of the world with an enhanced Filipino brand that is unique, attractive, and creative.

The creativity of the Filipino is truly world-class. We excel in arts and culture, new media, live events — avenues which generate primary and downstream jobs for our creative and talented countrymen. Unfortunately, ang mga hanapbuhay na ito ang unang pinadapa ng pandemya at ang pinakahuli namang makakabalik sa normal.

The creative industry likewise faces many challenges including workplace conditions, working hours, intellectual property rights, and the welfare of our beloved freelancers who were left vulnerable during the height of the pandemic.

We require an institutionalized creative industry that will advance the interests of its stakeholders — sila na nagbibigay ng kaluluwa at [pagkakilanlan] sa ating pagka-Pilipino. Protektahan natin sila.

The Department of Social Welfare and Development has a large part to play in all of this.

Magpapatuloy ang ating pagkalinga sa ating mga kababayan na lubos na nangangailangan.

Hindi po natin sila pababayaan.

Mangunguna sa pag-aagapay sa kanila ang Department of Social Welfare and Development.

Utos ko sa DSWD ang mabilis na pagtugon sa pangangailangan ng mga biktima ng kalamidad at mga iba't ibang krisis.

Ang mga field office nila ay inatasan na maagang maglagak ng family food packs at non-food essentials sa mga LGU, bago pa man manalasa ang anumang kalamidad.

Magdadagdag tayo ng mga operations center, warehouse at imbakan ng relief goods, lalo na sa mga malalayong lugar na mahirap marating.

Titiyakin natin na maayos ang koordinasyon ng DSWD at Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development ng sa ganun, madali ang pagpapatupad ng Emergency Shelter Assistance program para sa mga biktima ng kahit anong kalamidad. [applause]

Pagtitibayin pa natin ang komprehensibong programang 'Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situations' o ang ating tinatawag na AICS, para maiparating ang tulong sa mas maraming biktima.

Hindi natin papahirapan ang mga biktima ng krisis na dudulog sa ahensiya — gagawin nating simple ang proseso ng paghingi at pagpaparating ng tulong. Dahil hindi naman dapat dinadagdagan pa ang hirap na nararanasan ng ating mga mamamayan.



Upang matiyak na mapupunta sa kwalipikadong mga pamilya ang tulong ng pamahalaan sa pamamagitan ng 4Ps o Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program, titiyakin natin na malilinis ang listahan ng benipisyaryo. [applause]

Higit na sa isang milyong pangalan na ang naka-graduate na sa listahan. At nagagalak akong mabatid na sila ay nakakatayo na sa kanilang sariling paa.

Kaugnay nito ay inutusan ko ang DSWD na pag-ibayuhin pa ang pag-repaso ng listahan upang maitutok ang pamimigay ng sapat na ayuda sa mga lubos na nangangailangang pamilya.

Magpapatuloy ang supplemental feeding program para sa mga bata sa Child Development Centers at Supervised Neighborhood Play, at lalo pa nating palalawakin sa taong 2023.

Hindi rin natin nakakalimutan ang mga solo parents at mga nanay na nahiwalay sa kanilang mga mister dahil sa karahasan.

Pagtitibayin natin ang programa sa Violence Against Women and Their Children, kabilang na ang counselling para sa mga biktima, katuwang ang ating mga LGU.

Tiyakin natin na sapat ang pondo sa halos pitumpong residential care centers at pitong non-residential care centers para sa vulnerable sectors at persons with disabilities na sumisilong dito.

Sa ating sitwasyon ng pangkalusugan, nariyan pa rin ang banta ng COVID-19, lalo't may mga nadidiskubrang bagong variants ng coronavirus. Pero hindi na natin kakayanin ang isa pang lockdown. Wala na tayong gagawing lockdown.

Dapat nating balansehin nang maayos ang kalusugan at kapakanan ng ating mga mamamayan sa isang banda, at ang ekonomiya naman sa kabilang banda.

Nakikipagtulungan ang iba't ibang ahensya ng pamahalaan sa pag-monitor sa mga COVID-19 hospital admission upang makatiyak tayo na may sapat na kapasidad ang ating health care system, at maiwasan ang pagsipa ng bilang ng nagkakasakit.

Patuloy din ang ating vaccine booster rollout para sa ating pangkalahatang depensa.

Sa ganitong paraan, kahit pa tumaas muli ang bilang ng mga COVID cases, mananatiling mababa ang bilang ng mga maospital at bilang ng mga namamatay.

Sa pamamagitan nito, unti-unti rin tayong masasanay na nariyan ang virus pero hindi na seryoso ang banta sa ating buhay.

I-aayon natin ang ating mga health protocols sa kung ano ang ating pangangailangan sa paglipas ng panahon at lalo pang iibayuhin ang kooperasyon kasama ang pribadong sektor upang tumaas pa ang kumpyansa ng mga mamumuhunan, nang sa gayon ay bumalik na tayo sa "full capacity" lalong-lalo na ang ating mga negosyo. [applause]



Pagbubutihin pa natin ang pagpapakalat ng tamang impormasyon ukol sa COVID, kasama ang kahalagahan ng bakuna.

Mananatili muna sa ngayon ang ating Alert Level System natin. Pinapag-aralan natin ang ibang paraan ng klasipikasyon upang mas babagay sa kasalukuyang sitwasyon lalong-lalo na sa pagbabago ng Covid.

Sa pakikipagtulungan ng Kongreso, itatatag natin ang ating sariling Center for Disease Control and Prevention at ang isang vaccine institute. [applause]

Magtatayo tayo ng dagdag na mga health center at ospital.

Beyond the issues that the pandemic has brought, the need for a stronger health care system is self-evident. We must bring medical services to the people and not wait for them to come to our hospitals and health care centers.

Napakinabangan natin nang husto ang malalaking specialty hospitals gaya ng Heart Center, Lung Center, Children's Hospital at National Kidney and Transplant Institute. Kaya maliwanag na na hindi lang dapat dito sa National Capital Region, kundi maging sa ibang parte ng bansa... [applause] Maliwanag na hindi lamang dapat dito lamang sa National Capital Region kundi maging sa ibang parte ng bansa kailangan magdagdag ng ganitong uri ng mga pagamutan.

Bukod dito, upang mailapit natin ang health care system sa taumbayan nang hindi sila kailangang pumunta sa sentro ng kanilang bayan, lalawigan o region, ay maglalagay tayo ng mga clinic, mga RHU na pupuntahan ng mga doktor, nurse, midwife, medtech, isang beses, dalawang beses sa isang linggo — nang sa gayon, magiging mas madali sa may karamdaman na magpapagamot nang hindi na kailangang magbiyahe nang malayo.

One of the cornerstones of a strong healthcare system is the provision of competent and efficient medical professionals. We will exert all efforts to improve the welfare of our doctors, our nurses, and other medical frontliners.

Dapat din tayong magkaroon ng sapat na suplay ng gamot na kinakailangan sa pang-araw-araw ng ating mga mamamayan.

Sinimulan ko na ang pakikipag-usap sa mga kumpanya ng gamot dito sa Pilipinas at sa ibang bansa. Hinihikayat natin na buksan nila ang merkado upang bumaba ang presyo ng gamot. [applause]

Halimbawa, kung mas marami ang mas murang generic o hindi branded na gamot sa merkado, mas bababa rin ang presyo dahil sa kumpetisyon.

Ang Department of Trade and Industry ay nakikipag-usap sa mga interesadong manufacturer ng generic drugs na papasok sa ating bansa.

Inuutusan ko naman ang Philippine Competition Commission na pantay-pantay dapat at walang kartel sa hanay ng mga pharmaceutical companies. [applause] Dahil kapag bukas ang merkado, bababa ang presyo ng gamot para mapakinabangan ng ating mga mamamayan.



This is one of the hard lessons that we learned when the pandemic struck, and therefore, we must act on that shortcoming.

In the educational sector, I believe it is time for our children to return to full face-to-face classes once again.

The Department of Education, led by our highly able Vice President Sara Duterte, [applause] is now preparing for its implementation in the upcoming school year, with utmost consideration for the safety of students, as we are still in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic.

We must ensure that our classrooms are safe for teachers, for students, and the entire academic community when they return to face-to-face classes.

We continue to encourage everyone to get their booster shots in preparation for the resumption of in-person classes.

This is one of the reasons I have directed the Department of Health (DOH) and the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) to undertake another rollout of booster shots.

The condition and availability of school rooms for our students must also be addressed, again, in coordination with the Department of Public Works and Highways.

Though some complications have arisen over the question of repair of school buildings in relation to the Mandanas-Garcia ruling, this will be ironed out.

We have been in discussion with local government leaders, Governors and Mayors, in the last few weeks to determine, with the LGUs, what is actually practicable, what functions belong to the LGUs and what belong to the National Government.

There have also been lengthy discussions on the continuation and viability of the K to 12 school system. We are giving this a careful review, and all necessary inputs and points of view are now being considered.

In the longer term, we are instituting a program of refresher courses and re-trainings for our teachers so they can stay abreast of the rapid growth in technology, especially in this post-pandemic world. [applause]

As for the 'horror' stories that we have heard about the poor quality of educational materials and supplies that are being given to our schools — this must end! [applause]

Our children must always be equipped with the best that we can provide.

Ang edukasyon ay ang tangi nating pamana sa ating mga anak na hindi mawawaldas. Kaya anumang gastusin sa kanilang pag-aaral ay hindi tayo nagtitipid. Hindi rin tayo nagtatapon.

And once again, I am not talking about history, or what is being taught. I am talking about materials that are necessary for effective teaching in this day and age.



Children now need connectivity to the internet; they need devices to use; they need computers, educational tools [applause] so that they might participate fully in the digital community here and abroad.

We must do better in the international rankings especially when it comes to the so-called STEM subjects: Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics.

These skills and this knowledge are necessary for our young people to be able to compete in a highly technological and competitive world.

The raw talent is there in our young people. It is up to our educational system to develop and to refine that great pool of talent.

Foreign employers have always favored Filipino employees because of our command of the English language. This is an advantage that we must continue to enjoy.

The internet has now become the global marketplace. Not only for goods services but also for ideas, even extending to our own personal interactions.

The language of the internet — for better or for worse — is English.

Therefore, the question of our medium of instruction must be continuously re-examined to maintain that advantage that we have established as an English-speaking people. [applause]

On a related subject, we are entering an age of exponential adoption of technology. It is the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

This will be characterized by the infusion of technology into almost every facet of our lives. Breakthrough technologies in the areas of quantum computing, artificial intelligence, nano technologies, the internet of things, robotics, self-driving electric vehicles, 3D printing, Virtual and Augmented Reality, among others that will radically transform the way business is done.

The scale and the speed at which these innovations are introduced universally into our everyday lives and activities is unprecedented in our recorded history.

We cannot stand idly by.

The mission of our Department of Information and Communications Technology is to identify and utilize these innovations to improve governance.

It has the daunting task now of transforming our government into an agile bureaucracy that is responsive to the needs of the public, provide good and solid data to ensure informed decision-making, as well as allow secure and seamless access to public services.

The voluminous records stored in the government warehouses and archives have to be digitized. Those that are already stored in various inventories of data should be harmonized and shared across departments and agencies.



Needless to say, these have to be kept in large data centers that are secure yet accessible.

The National ID will play an important part in this digital transformation. [applause]

For citizens to be able to seamlessly transact with government, their identity must be easily verifiable.

We expect to issue 30-million physical IDs and 20-million digital IDs by the end of this year. [applause] The target is to accomplish the issuance of about 92-million IDs by the middle of next year.

As the world moves into rapid digitalization, the digital divide will become more pronounced. The depth and breadth at which these technologies will be transformative in our lives is fully expected.

This will open new opportunities for the creation of wealth but will also likely create inequalities.

Hence, universal connectivity will be a vital component in order to ensure that no citizen is left behind.

I have therefore tasked the DICT to deploy digital connectivity across our various islands. This will be done through the implementation of the National Broadband Plan, the common tower program, connecting our Geographically Isolated and Disadvantaged Areas (GIDA) via our 'Broad Band ng Masa' project. [applause]

All relevant modes of digital transport should be utilized. These may be through a combination of terrestrial or submarine fiber optics, wireless and even satellite technology.

As our Public Service Act has opened the doors and removed the restrictions on foreign investment, we foresee an increase in direct investment of overseas players.

This will translate into better quality, availability and affordability of telecommunications services all over the country.

We come now to infrastructure. The backbone of an economy is its infrastructure.

The infrastructure program of the Duterte administration must not only continue but, wherever possible, be expanded. [applause]

We shall confidently build on this firm foundation established by my predecessor. As it is in building an edifice.

We must keep the momentum. And aspire to build better more.

Necessarily, infrastructure development will remain a very high priority in our drive for growth and employment.



Once again, I will not suspend any of the ongoing projects as those have already been shown to be of benefit to the public that they serve. [applause]

We will continue to study the proposals that have been made.

Infrastructure development spending will be sustained at 5% to 6% of GDP.

The planned expansion of infrastructure projects, I believe, would be possible if we continue to encourage the participation of the private sector in the development of our programs.

Public Private Partnerships or PPPs hold great potential for that expansion, for infrastructure development and for innovation.

Our infrastructure development is of primary importance as it is a necessary element to improve many other sectors — to include agriculture, tourism, general economic activity, and even to governance.

It is my belief also that we have missed some great opportunities to develop our rail transport system.

It is clear in my mind that railways offer great potential as it continues to be the cheapest way of transporting goods and passengers.

We can build upon already existing lines by modernizing these old railway systems.

There are dozens of railway projects – on the ground, above the ground, below ground, not just in Manila, but in other regions – at various stages of implementation, and with a combined cost of 1.9 trillion pesos. [applause]

This administration is committed to finish building the current portfolio of investments: approved railway projects such as the North-South Commuter Railway System, [applause] the 33-kilometer Metro Manila Subway Project, the 147-kilometer North-South Commuter Railway System, the 12-kilometer LRT-1 Cavite Extension, [applause] the 23-kilometer MRT-7, and the Common Station that will connect LRT-1, MRT-3 and MRT-7.

And beyond NCR, larger scale railway systems like the 102-kilometer Mindanao Railway Project; [applause] the Panay Railway Project; [applause] and the Cebu railway system will be integrated as a vital part of our transport and communications systems.

We will also continue to improve our roads and transportation systems in key cities throughout the country through various projects such as the Cebu Bus Rapid Transit, Davao High Priority Bus System, Ilocos Norte Transportation Hub, and the El Nido Transport Terminal. [applause]

My order to the Department of Transportation or DOTr is really very simple: full speed ahead!



Improving our railway system, along with modernizing existing airports and seaports, will maximize our strategic location in the Pacific. And connect our many islands.

A key sector in our transformation plans is that of energy.

Another fundamental requirement for growth and increased employment will be the availability of cheap, reliable energy. This even comes under the category of “ease of doing business”. If we are to attract investors, both local and foreign, to set up shop here in the Philippines.

At present, our demand for energy far exceeds our reliable supply. We must increase the level of energy production. We must look at every possible option that would be appropriate for the Philippine situation. There is some room to expand our present power supply through existing power sources, but this is only to a very limited extent. We must build new power plants. [applause] We must take advantage of all the best technology that is now available, especially in the areas of renewable energy. [applause]

Our search for new power sources should always be with an eye to improving the mix of the energy supply between traditional and renewable sources.

The technology on renewable energy is progressing rapidly. And many of these technologies are appropriate for the Philippines. We have already begun windmill power. We are now expanding very quickly our solar power production.

For both offshore and on-shore wind turbines, for example, the World Bank has calculated that there is the potential of 255 gigawatts by the year of 2030. [applause]

Solar power has steadily increased its efficiency in converting sunlight to electrical power, which is particularly attractive for the Philippines. Because unlike wind power, solar power is practical almost everywhere in the Philippines all year round.

In the move to lowering our carbon footprint caused by energy production, our advancement to renewables will have a lead time.

In the interim, natural gas will hold the key. We will provide investment incentives by clarifying the uncertain policy in upstream gas, particularly in the area close to Malampaya.

This requires clarification of the processes and review of service contracts policy.

I believe that it is time also to re-examine our strategy towards building nuclear power plants in the Philippines. [applause]

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.

Once again, PPPs will play a part in support as funding in this period is limited.



Furthermore, we must examine the entire system of transmission and distribution for the purpose of finding ways to lower the price of energy to the consumer and to industry.

We must expand the network of our transmission lines while examining schemes to improve the operation of our electrical cooperatives. All this in aid of reducing energy cost especially but not limited to households. [applause]

All this impetus for development and growth, we undertake within the context of accelerating climate change and extreme weather conditions.

Though we are a minor contributor to climate change globally, we have the unfortunate distinction of being one of the most vulnerable countries to the effects of climate change.

For the welfare of our people, it is incumbent upon us to alleviate the effects of that vulnerability.

The use of renewable energy is at the top of our climate agenda. We will increase our use of renewable energy sources such as hydropower, geothermal power, solar, and wind.

Geographically, we are a disaster-prone country. Capacity building for our natural disaster resiliency is therefore a must. Investment in science and technology is imperative to enable us to have accurate weather forecasts and on-time disaster alerts.

Studies show that already now many areas in the Philippines are at high risk from the rise in sea levels brought about by the increase in global temperature. We must adapt to this phenomenon with disaster-proof planning of our communities.

We will also look into the precarious fresh water supply situation in the country, especially in our urban areas. Many of our water supply systems date back to the 1950's, and they must now be rehabilitated and improved.

I have instructed the DENR together with the DPWH, to explore possible partnerships with the private sector to address this crucial situation.

The Philippines has excellent laws on the environment, but we have to guarantee that these laws are properly enforced. And this will require a great deal of coordination and cooperation between concerned government agencies and private stakeholders.

Companies who exploit our natural resources must follow the law. We all have the responsibility to preserve this Earth, for we are but custodians, and we will pass on this great treasure to future generations. [applause]

There is no question that the preservation of the environment is the preservation of life. [applause]

If we cannot mitigate climate change, all our plans for the economy, all our plans for our future, will be for naught.



Bawat Pilipino sa ibayong dagat na nagsasakripisyong lisanin ang kanyang pamilya sa Pilipinas upang mag-hanapbuhay ay nararapat lamang magkaroon ng pamahalaang matatawag nilang “tahanan” habang nasa ibang bayan. [applause]

Ito ang papel na gagampanan ng Kagawaran ng Manggagawang Mandarayuhan o Department of Migrant Workers matapos itong ideklara bilang ganap na ahensiya ng gobyerno noong isang taon. [applause]

Ang kagawarang ito ang magsisilbing kanlungan ng ating mga kababayan sa gitna ng mundong walang kasiguruhan at mahigpit na kumpetisyon. Ito ang maglalalag sa kanila ng mga oportunidad; titiyak na ang kanilang mga hanapbuhay ay tugma sa kanilang mga kasanayan; maninigurong akma ang sahod at maayos ang kalagayan sa kanilang mga kumpanya; at mangangalaga sa kanilang mga pamilya habang sila ay nasa malayo.

Gagawin natin ito sa pamamagitan ng pag-aalis ng red tape sa sistema ng pagsusulong ng digital empowerment. We shall automate the verification of contracts and issue secure Overseas Employment Certifications (OEC) that you can keep on your smartphone. I call on the Department of Migrant Workers and the DICT to make this a top priority.

Tinatawagan ko rin ang Department of Foreign Affairs na makipagtulungan sa Department of Migrant Workers na tiyakin ang lahat ng mga diplomatic post ay tutulong na agarang maibalik sa trabaho ang mga ating mga Overseas Filipino workers na nawalan ng hanapbuhay nitong nakalipas na ilang taon.

Mula sa tatlong buwan ay gagawin na lang nating tatlong linggo para sa isang dayuhang employer na i-proseso ang mga papeles ng Pilipinong nais nitong kunin bilang empleyado.

Aatasan din natin ang kagawaran na gawing simple ang kumplikadong handbook ng mga tuntunin at regulasyon para sa mga OFW, nang sa gayon ay maging maalwan ang mga transaksyong may kinalaman sa kanilang pangingibang-bansa.

Mula sa handbook na may dalawang daan at apatnapung (240) seksyon ay gagawin nating pamphlet na lamang na hindi hihigit sa isandaang pahina.

Mahirap na nga ang buhay, kaya naman ayaw pa natin makitang lalo pang nahihirapan ang ating mga manggagawang mandarayuhan sa pagtupad sa kanilang mga pangarap.

Para sa mga kababayan nating naiipit sa kaguluhan, inaabuso, at nanganganib ang buhay, ikinagagalak kong sa ilalim ng aking pamumuno, ay ilulunsad natin ang One Repatriation Command Center o ORCC. Ilalaan natin ang isang social media platform ng Department of Migrant Workers at ang hotline upang matulungan agad at mailigtas sila mula sa mas higit na kapahamakan.

Noon, nangungutang pa ang isang ina ng bawat OFW upang sumakay ng barko para pumunta sa Maynila at mangatok sa iba't ibang ahensiya para mapauwi ang anak na inaapi. Ngayon, kami na ang tatawag sa mga magulang ng OFWs [applause] para



sabihin sa kanila ang petsa kung kailan nila mayayakap at makakapiling ang kanilang mga anak.

Sa kasalukuyan ay nakikipag-ugnayan tayo sa pamahalaan ng Saudi Arabia upang buksang muli ang deployment. Kaya natin, at gagawin natin, ang makipag-negosasyon na mabigyan ang ating mga kababayan doon ng tamang pasahod, at mapangalagaan ang kanilang karapatan at kapakanan.

Muli nating pagtitibayin ang respeto at pagkakaibigan ng ating dalawang bansa tulad ng namagitan sa aking ama at sa kanilang hari.

Sa mga susunod na buwan ay magtutungo si Secretary Susan Ople sa Saudi Arabia upang tiyakin na may sapat na puwersang magsisiguro na mabubuksang muli ang empleyo sa bansa, [applause] at para maisulong ang ating kampanya laban sa human trafficking.

Ngayon, para naman sa mga anak na naiwan sa Pilipinas. Titiyakin ng Department of Migrant Workers, sa pamamagitan ng OWWA, na sila ay maipapasok sa magagandang paaralang magtuturo sa kanila ng financial literacy, mental wellness, sports, sining at kultura. Ito ay mangyayari sa pakikipagtulungan ng iba't ibang ahensiya ng pamahalaan. Alagaan natin ang kabataang Pilipino sapagkat sila ang kinabukasan ng ating Inang Bayan.

Sa ating mga kababayan na nasa ibang bansa: You deserve a home in government not only for the money that you send home, but you are not cold tools of the economy. You deserve it for your sacrifices, for our country and your perseverance and excellence in the global arena.

You, OFWs, represent the fighting faith of the Filipinos as a nation and as a people. Let us transform your overseas journey into inspirational stories for all time.

Thanks to you, our dear legislators, and of course, to the man, every OFW now refers to as their "Tatay", President Rodrigo Duterte. You passed the law that created this new home for our OFWs.

On the area of foreign policy, I will not preside over any process that will abandon even one square inch of territory of the Republic of the Philippines to any foreign power. [applause and cheers]

With respect to our place in the community of nations, the Philippines shall continue to be a friend to all, an enemy to none.

The Philippines has always been open and welcoming to all our foreign friends and visitors. That is our world view, that is our culture.

But let me be clear. We are very jealous of all that is Filipino.

We will be a good neighbor — always looking for ways to collaborate and cooperate with the end goal of mutually beneficial outcomes.



If we agree, we will cooperate and we will work together. And if we differ, let us talk some more until we develop a consensus.

After all, that is the Filipino way.

But we will not waver. We will stand firm in our independent foreign policy, with the national interest as our primordial guide.

We commit to maintaining good relations with the rest of the world.

As a matter of fact, it is my sincere belief that the need for strong bonds and collaboration among nations emerges in the direst of times, such as in a pandemic.

The partnerships and alliances that we make with all will provide the stability that all nations will need as we emerge into this new global economy.

The Philippines will continue to promote stronger and multi-faceted relationships with all our partners around the world.

We are, in fact, grateful for the messages of support and offers of help that we have received from many of our friends in the international community. This has been communicated to us through the different Envoys and the Ambassadors here in the Philippines.

Such strong relationships can only be beneficial to all involved.

As I am here today addressing the legislature, allow me now to propose legislation that we would like you to pass in support of these programs:

National Government Rightsizing Program (NGRP)

A reform mechanism that seeks to enhance the government's institutional capacity to perform its mandate and to provide better services, while ensuring optimal and efficient use of resources.

Compared to previous government reorganization efforts, the NGRP will entail a comprehensive strategic review of the functions, operations, organization, systems and processes of the different agencies, and massive and transformational initiatives in agencies concerned, such as mergers, consolidation, splitting, transfer, and even the abolition of some offices. The rightsizing efforts will also involve the conduct of a comprehensive strategic review of functions, programs and projects that will cut across various agencies.

Budget Modernization Bill

This seeks to institutionalize the Cash-based Budgeting System (CBS) under Executive Order No. 91, Series 2019 to strengthen fiscal discipline in the allocation and use of budget resources by ensuring that every peso budgeted by the government would lead to the actual delivery of programs and projects. The full implementation of the CBS is timely and vital as the government executes response and recovery plans post-pandemic.



Tax Package 3: Valuation Reform Bill

This bill provides for the :

(a) establishment of real property values and valuation standards across the country and (b) the development of Real Property Information System that provides for the database of all real property transactions and declarations in the country

Passive Income and Financial Intermediary Taxation Act (PIFITA)

This seeks to reform the taxation of capital income and financial services by redesigning the financial sector taxation into simpler, fairer, more efficient and a revenue neutral tax system. It also represents to adopt a regionally competitive tax system.

E-Government Act

Which provides for the establishment of the E-Government Master Plan which shall cover all e-government services and processes.

Internet Transaction Act or E-Commerce Law

Which aims to establish an effective regulation of commercial activities through the internet or electronic means to ensure that consumer rights and data privacy are protected, innovation is encouraged, fair advertising practices and competition are promoted, online transactions are secured, intellectual property rights are protected, and product standards and safety are observed.

Government Financial Institutions Unified Initiatives to Distressed Enterprises for Economic Recovery (GUIDE)

This seeks to provide financial assistance to distressed enterprises critical to economic recovery through programs and initiatives to be implemented by the Land Bank of the Philippines, the Development Bank of the Philippines and the Philippine Guarantee Corporation for purposes of addressing liquidity or solvency problems of MSMEs and strategically important industries, to encourage their continued operations and maintain employment. [applause]

The Establishment of a Medical Reserve Corps

Establishes a Medical Reserve Corp (MRC) under the Health and Emergency Management Bureau (HEMB) of the DOH. The MRC shall be composed of licensed physicians, medical students who have completed their four (4) years of medical course, graduates of medicine, registered nurses, and licensed allied health professionals.

National Disease Prevention Management Authority

This bill seeks to create the Center for Disease Prevention and Control (CDC), attached to the DOH.



Creation of the Virology Institute of the Philippines

This will create the Virology Science and Technology Institute of the Philippines (VIP) as an attached agency of the DOST. All offices and units under the DOST with functions related to virology shall now be transferred to the Virology Institute of the Philippines.

Department of Water Resources

This seeks to create the Department of Water Resources and adopts the Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM) as the strategic framework for national water management, policymaking and planning.

Unified System of Separation, Retirement and Pension

This grants a monthly disability pension, in lieu of disability benefits provided under existing laws, for military and uniformed personnel (MUPs) retired by reasons of disability. [applause]

E-Governance Act

It promotes the use of internet, intranet and other ICT to provide opportunities for citizens.

National Land Use Act

This will provide for a rational and holistic management and development of our country's land and water resources; hold owners accountable for making these lands productive and sustainable; strengthen the LGU to manage ecological balance within its jurisdiction. It also provides for Land Use and Physical Planning/Framework as a mechanism in determining policies and principles to implement this legislative measure.

National Defense Act

This seeks to amend the antiquated National Defense Act of 1935 to provide for a change in the military structure of the Armed Forces of the Philippines that is more responsive to current and future non-conventional security threats to the country's territorial integrity and national sovereignty. [applause]

Mandatory Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) and National Service Training Program (NSTP)

This seeks to reinstitute the ROTC program as a mandatory component of senior high school programs (Grades 11 and 12) in all public and private tertiary-level educational institutions. The aim is to motivate, train, organize and mobilize the students for national defense preparedness, including disaster preparedness and capacity building for risk-related situations.

Enactment of an Enabling Law for the Natural Gas Industry



This seeks to foster the development of the Midstream Natural Gas Industry in a bid to strengthen Philippine energy security by diversifying the country's primary sources of energy and promoting the role of natural gas as a complementary fuel to variable renewable energy. [applause]

Amendments to the Electric Power Industry Reform Act or EPIRA (Rep. Act No. 9136)

This aims to improve the implementation of the law's provisions and enhance its effectiveness to address high cost of electricity, alleged market collusion, and insufficient power supply.

The bill seeks to restructure the Energy Regulation Commission (ERC) to foster accountability and improve the commission's government system that would ensure consumer protection and in enhancing the competitive operation of the electricity market.

Amendments to the Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) Law

This seeks to improve the implementation of the Public Private Partnership (PPP) Program and to be able to direct the desired outputs and outcomes in line with the strategic development targets of the country. Specifically, the amendments seek to:

1. Address the ambiguities in the existing law;
2. Address the bottlenecks and challenges affecting the implementation of the PPP Program; and,
3. Foster a more competitive and enabling environment for PPPs.

To my fellow Filipinos, ang aking mga minamahal na kababayan.

Batid ko na hindi madali ang ating pinagdaraan sa nakaraang higit na dalawang taon.

Alam ko rin na ang bawat isa sa inyo ay ginagawa ang lahat ng inyong makakaya upang patuloy na harapin ang lahat ng pagsubok sa kasalukuyan.

I do not intend to diminish the risks and the challenges that we face in this turbulent time in global history, and yet, I see sunlight filtering through these dark clouds.

We have assembled the best Filipino minds to help navigate us through this global crisis that we are now facing.

We will endure. Let our Filipino spirit ever remain undimmed.

I know this in my mind, I know it in my heart, I know it in my very soul ... The state of the nation is sound.

Thank you and good afternoon. Marami pong salamat sa inyong lahat.



ARAB NEWS

'Friend to all, enemy to none': Marcos vows to safeguard Philippine territory in national address

By Ellie Aben

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Monday vowed to safeguard Philippine territory against foreign powers while also promising that the country would continue to be a "friend to all," in his first address to the nation as its new leader.

Marcos, who scored a landslide victory in May's presidential election and was sworn in on June 30, had promised to open a new chapter in the country's history and said that his administration would pursue an independent foreign policy.

In a comprehensive policy speech to Congress that was screened live on television, Marcos said he would create jobs and support growth by improving tourism, education, and modernizing agriculture, while also touching on plans for infrastructure developments, tax overhaul, and climate-change mitigation.

He pointed out that the Philippines' foreign policy would remain independent, with its national interest serving as a "primordial guide."

"The Philippines shall continue to be a friend to all, and an enemy to none," he added.

"I will not preside over any process that will abandon even one square inch of territory of the Republic of the Philippines to any foreign power."

The statement, likely alluding to the Philippines' historic run-ins with Beijing in the South China Sea, drew a lengthy applause from Congress.

The South China Sea is a strategic and resource-rich waterway claimed by China almost in its entirety, but other countries, including the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, and Brunei, also have overlapping claims.

Manila has filed hundreds of diplomatic protests against Chinese activity in the South China Sea in the past few years, after an international tribunal in The Hague dismissed Beijing's sweeping claims to the region in 2016.

Under former President Rodrigo Duterte, the Philippines had embraced a Beijing-friendly direction while attempting to distance the Southeast Asian country from its colonial master the US.

With both major powers attempting to boost their influence in the region, their envoys have separately met with the new president in what appears to be a diplomatic push to deepen alliance.

In early June, US Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman became the first top foreign official to meet Marcos prior to his inauguration. China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi, on a working trip earlier this month, was the first top foreign official to visit Manila since the new Philippine leader took office.



“We will be a good neighbor, always looking for ways to collaborate with the end goal of mutually beneficial outcomes,” Marcos said.

“If we agree, we will cooperate and we will work together. And if we differ, let us talk some more until we develop a consensus,” he added. “After all, that is the Filipino way.”

In a speech that lasted one hour and 18 minutes, Marcos also said the government was in talks with Saudi Arabia to resume deployment of workers to the Kingdom, after it was suspended in November last year as Manila sought to settle the financial claims of thousands of Filipino workers.

“We can, and we will, negotiate to give our countrymen working there a decent wage, and to ensure that their rights and welfare are protected,” he added.

Saudi Arabia, where more than 1 million Filipinos work, was the most preferred destination of overseas Filipino workers in 2019, according to government data.

Philippines’ Migrant Workers Secretary Susan Ople will visit Saudi Arabia in the coming months to tackle the issue, Marcos said.

“We will renew the respect and friendship between our two nations, as exemplified by my late father and their king,” he added.



BUSINESS WORLD

State of the world, state of the nation

By Bienvenido S. Oplas, Jr.

This paper will expand my hypothesis that I mentioned last week — that Europe and North America will deindustrialize in the short- to medium-term and many companies there will migrate to Asia. The Philippines should prepare for this.

DEGROWTH AND BLACKOUT ECONOMICS

I encountered for the first time the concept of Degrowth economics from these articles:

1. “Climate Change Modeling of ‘Degrowth’ Scenarios — Reduction in GDP, Energy and Material Use” by University of Sydney, scitechdaily.com, May 11, 2021;
2. “1.5°C degrowth scenarios suggest the need for new mitigation pathways” by Lorenz T. Keyßer and Manfred Lenzen, nature.com, May 11, 2021;
3. “Degrowth: Universities Push Permanent Poverty as the Solution to Climate Change” by Eric Worrall, wattsupwiththat.com, May 13, 2021.

To argue for reduced production of material goods and services to “save the planet” is irresponsible and insane, and the idea comes from the academe.

Then when there were frequent yellow-red alerts in the Philippines in May-June 2021, and electricity prices in Europe started rising due to less windy and more cloudy condition and thin reserves in July 2021 onwards, I started writing about “Blackout economics” in this column in BusinessWorld: “Ten indicators of blackout economics” (June 14, 2021), “Blackout economics, COP26 and Negros’ power prices” (Nov. 15, 2021), “Europe’s blackout economics and the Philippines’ path to brownouts” (Dec. 27, 2021).

EUROPE DECLINING POWER GENERATION

Energy is development. Insufficient and unstable energy supply means slow and unsustainable growth, higher power and consumer prices. Meanwhile, a high and stable electricity supply means there is a high capacity for power-intensive manufacturing, malls, residential and office condos and villages, hospitals, etc. to keep humming and producing various goods and services 24/7.

The Group of Seven (G7) industrialized countries of the world are in the forefront of “decarbonization” and “net zero” campaigns to fight “man-made” climate change. They do not believe that there is natural and cyclical climate change. The last two decades showed a drastic reduction in power generation of G7, also in two other big European countries with a GDP size of at least \$1 trillion, Spain and Netherlands.

East and South Asia, excluding Japan, just paid lip-service to “decarbonization” and went on to make huge increases in power generation, based mainly on fossil fuels, especially China, India, Vietnam, and Indonesia. Russia took the East Asian path, though at a slower pace. Overall global power generation saw continued growth in energy production.



The G7 and other European countries have a sustained belief in climate and energy alarmism. This will lead them to a path of deindustrialization.

STATE OF THE WORLD IN INFLATION AND GROWTH

Industrialized countries by default have low inflation because their technological advancement means they can mass produce many things, and have efficient storage and transportation logistics for a huge volume of goods 24/7. Thus, the average inflation rate from 1990-2010 were: Italy 3.1%, the UK 2.7%, the US 2.6%, Canada 2.1%, Germany 2%, France 1.8%, and Japan 0.4%.

Insufficient power generation and expensive electricity relative to their high industrial and commercial demand contributed to 37- to 49-years of high inflation in G7 countries except Japan. They have had anemic GDP growth over the past two decades, with 2.3% average growth already considered “very high.”

In contrast, East and South Asians that pursued high power generation would consider average growth of 3.3% as “very low” because their growth would range from 4-10%.

STATE OF THE NATION IN TAX COMPETITIVENESS

My view is that North America and Europe will further deteriorate economically, and are likely to experience “stagflation” or stagnant/low growth with high inflation. So, many companies there will start migrating to Asia where growth is fast, where consumers are in the billions, and where energy policies are not held fully hostage by climate alarmism.

The Philippines should continue down the path of lower tax rates and a broader tax base that can lead to stable and high revenues. The Corporate Recovery and Tax Incentives for Enterprises (CREATE) Act of 2021 (RA 11534) has reduced the corporate income tax rate from 30% to 25% for big corporations and 20% for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) with net taxable income of P5 million or lower, and total assets of P100 million or lower excluding land. This was a good move by the Duterte administration.

The next challenge would be to reduce the value-added tax (VAT) from 12% to around 10% and reduce the number of exempted sectors to have a broader tax base. We have the highest VAT or gross sales tax (GST) rate in the ASEAN and this is not good for us.

The current strategy of Finance Secretary Benjamin Diokno of further broadening the tax base is good — I support it. Then there is the improvement in tax administration via digitalization and the taxation of many online transactions to be at par with taxation in malls, shops, and groceries. But no amount of raising revenues will be sufficient to reduce our huge public debt, outstanding and guaranteed debt — only P8.2 trillion in 2019, P12.2 trillion in 2021, and P12.9 trillion in May 2022 — unless there is corresponding fiscal discipline and cuts in expenditures or subsidies. This column will discuss more fiscal policies in future articles.

To summarize, the state of the world is there is generally more economic sanity but it is the rich, industrialized, and influential countries like G7 that lead in economic and energy irrationality. The Philippines should prepare for companies migrating from the



west. The government's economic team, local business, labor, and even civil society sectors should prepare for this.



MANILA BULLETIN

China swelters under record heat

By: Agence-France-Presse

Beijing, China — Cities across China were on red alert for heatwaves on Monday, as tens of millions of people were warned to stay indoors and record temperatures strained energy supply. Swathes of the planet have been hit by extreme and deadly heatwaves in recent months, from Western Europe in July to India in March to April.

Swathes of the planet have been hit by extreme and deadly heatwaves in recent months, from Western Europe in July to India in March to April.

Scientists say the extreme weather has become more frequent due to climate change, and will likely grow more intense as global temperatures continue to rise.

China is no exception and is sweating through one of its hottest summers on record.

In the eastern provinces of Zhejiang and Fujian, the mercury rose above 41 degrees Celsius (106 degrees Fahrenheit) over the weekend, reaching all-time highs in two cities.

People in areas under red heat alerts — mostly concentrated in the southeast and northwest — are being ordered to “cease all outdoor activities” and “pay special attention to fire prevention,” the national meteorological service said in multiple notices over the weekend.

Saturday marked the “Great Heat” day on China’s traditional calendar, long recognised as the hottest period of the year, but this summer has been exceptionally warm.

Earlier this month Shanghai recorded its highest air temperature — 40.9C — since records began in 1873.

The scorching heat sent hundreds of people to the beach in Fujian’s Xiamen city on Sunday, while others hid from the sun under hats and face coverings.

China’s power grid is also feeling the strain from increased demand for air conditioning, with the country’s largest power plants generating at a record capacity in mid-July, according to energy industry publication Sxcoal.

Some local governments have resorted to turning off street lamps and raising peak period electricity tariffs for factories this month.

The ongoing heat wave, which has struck the lower reaches of the Yangtze River especially hard, will also “adversely affect local crops,” warned Fu Jiaolan, chief forecaster at the National Meteorological Centre.



President's energy plan includes nuclear power plants, renewables

By: Argyll Cyrus Geducos

As he recognized that the country's demand for energy far exceeds its reliable supply, President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. presented measures to increase the Philippines' energy production, and this includes revisiting the construction of nuclear power plants.

Marcos said this during his first State of the Nation Address (SONA) on Monday, July 25.

In his 73-minute speech, the President said the Philippines must look at every possible option that would be appropriate for the country's situation.

"There is some room to expand our present power supply through existing power sources, but this is only to a very limited extent," he said.

"We must build new power plants. We must take advantage of all the best technology that is now available, especially in the areas of renewable energy," he added.

According to Marcos, the country's search for new power sources should always consider improving the mix of the energy supply between traditional and renewable sources.

"The technology of renewable energy is progressing rapidly and many of these technologies are appropriate for the Philippines. We have already begun windmill power. We are now expanding very quickly our solar power production," he said.

"Solar power has steadily increased its efficiency in converting sunlight to electrical power, which is particularly attractive for the Philippines. Because, unlike wind power, solar power is practical almost everywhere in the Philippines all year round," he added.

In the move to lower the carbon footprint caused by energy production, President Marcos said the country's advancement to renewables will have a "lead time" due to natural gas.

"We will provide investment incentives by clarifying the uncertain policy in upstream gas, particularly in the area close to Malampaya. This requires clarification of the processes and review of service contracts policy," he said.

Nuclear energy

President Marcos said it was now time for the country to reconsider nuclear energy. This was also a suggestion of his predecessor, former President Rodrigo Duterte.

"I believe that it is time also to reexamine our strategy towards building nuclear power plants in the Philippines," he said, earning the applause of his audience.

Marcos said the country will comply with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) regulations for nuclear power plants as they have been strengthened after the Fukushima nuclear disaster in 2011.



However, he said the government will require the help of the private sector to realize this plan.

“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.

“Once again, PPPs (public-private partnerships) will play a part in support as funding in this period is limited,” he added.

Lowering power rates

According to President Marcos, there is a need to examine the entire system of transmission and distribution to lower the price of energy to the consumer and industry.

“We must expand the network of our transmission lines while examining schemes to improve the operation of our electrical cooperatives. All this in aid of reducing energy cost especially but not limited to households,” he said.

He said the availability of cheap and reliable energy is likewise a fundamental requirement for growth and increased employment.

“This even comes under the category of ‘ease of doing business.’ If we are to attract investors, both local and foreign, to set up shop here in the Philippines,” the President said.

Climate change

Meanwhile, Marcos said the country’s journey toward development and growth will be within the context of “accelerating climate change and extreme weather conditions.”

Though the Philippines is a minor contributor to climate change globally, the President said it has the unfortunate distinction of being one of the most vulnerable countries to the effects of climate change.

“For the welfare of our people, it is incumbent upon us to alleviate the effects of that vulnerability,” he said.

With this, Marcos said the use of renewable energy is at the top of his administration’s climate agenda.

“We will increase our use of renewable energy sources such as hydropower, geothermal power, solar, and wind,” he said.



What did Marcos discuss in his 'drug-free' first SONA

By Argyll Cyrus Geducos

Unlike his predecessor, who was passionate about fighting illegal drugs, President Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr. made no mention in his first State of the Nation Address (SONA) how his administration plans to address this particular problem.

Marcos’ speech on Monday afternoon, July 25, ran for 73 minutes. He spoke in both English and Filipino. However, he did not mention anything about the drug war, unlike former President Rodrigo Duterte, who discussed the issue in almost every speech, not just the yearly SONA.

This, a month after International Criminal Court (ICC) prosecutor Karim Khan formally requested the judges of the court’s pre-trial chamber to proceed with its investigation of the alleged irregularities in the campaign.

In September last year, a pre-trial chamber of the ICC green-lit the probe of President Duterte’s drug war, citing a “reasonable basis” to believe that crimes against humanity had been committed in the course of the anti-illegal drugs campaign.

Two months later, the ICC suspended its probe after the Philippines filed a deferral request, saying the country was investigating the alleged abuses and killings.

President Marcos also did not discuss the country’s drug problem in his inaugural speech on June 30. However, before he assumed the presidency, he said he intended to approach Duterte’s drug war differently.

Marcos had offered Duterte to be his drug war czar, but the former chief executive declined. The latter, however, hoped that the next administration would sustain the gains of his anti-illegal drugs campaign.

Despite the lack of mention of the issue in Marcos’ speeches, Interior Secretary Benhur Abalos said the drug war under the present administration “will be as intensive as before on the basis of my oath as a public official in accordance with the Constitution.”

Data from the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) showed that as of May 31, 2022, the drug war of the Duterte administration resulted in the arrest of 345,126 individuals and the deaths of 6,252 during anti-drug operations.

Duterte’s drug war cleared 25,361 of 42,046 barangays of illegal drugs and seized P89.79 billion worth of illegal drugs and laboratory equipment.

What did Marcos discuss in his first SONA?

Throughout his SONA, Marcos was applauded by his audience 90 times, based on an official transcript from Malacañang.

The President started his speech by discussing the economy and how his administration plans to aid its recovery after taking a blow from the Covid-19 pandemic. Marcos mentioned tax reforms, promoting productivity-enhancing



investments, supporting ecozones, adjusting the tax system, promoting medium-term fiscal sustainability, and crafting the Philippine Development Plan 2023-2028.

In agriculture, Marcos mentioned increasing food production, addressing the food crisis, providing aid to farmers, building farm-to-market roads, and modernizing the agriculture sector. Marcos also serves as the secretary of the Department of Agriculture.

The President expressed his desire for a law to condone the existing agrarian reform loans to help around 654,000 beneficiaries.

For social welfare, Marcos said there would be a strategic distribution of relief goods under his administration. He added that the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) will continue and that the rights of solo parents will be strengthened.

In terms of health, President Marcos vowed affordable medicines for ordinary people and to build easy-to-reach hospitals and health centers for those living in far-flung areas.

Marcos said there would no longer be lockdowns as the country continues to address the threat of the Covid-19 pandemic. He also mentioned improving the healthcare system.

For education, Marcos reiterated his desire to develop and refine Filipino students' performance in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). He also said the country must continue capitalizing on its command of the English language.

He likewise said that he wanted to end the production and utilization of "poor quality" materials and that learners must only be provided with "the best."

The President reiterated his intention to push through with the resumption of face-to-face classes later this year.

For digitalization, President Marcos underscored the importance of bridging the digital divide in the country, prioritizing the distribution of national IDs, and connecting the country digitally.

Regarding infrastructure, Marcos vowed to continue Duterte's "Build, Build, Build" but will focus more on developing the country's railway system.

In his speech, the President also recognized the country's growing demand for energy despite the limited resources. He said the government would revisit building nuclear plants and use renewable energy to bring down power rates and mitigate the effects of climate change. Aside from this mention of climate change, Marcos did not mention anything about protecting the environment.

For the migrant workers, Marcos said his administration would prioritize the automation of the verification of contracts and issue secure Overseas Employment Certifications (OEC) that overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) can keep on their



smartphones. He added that they would establish a command center to help Filipinos abroad in crisis.

The President did not forget to mention tourism, saying his administration will develop roads, airports, and tourist destinations to boost the tourism industry.

In terms of foreign policy, Marcos said while the Philippines would remain a friend to all and an enemy to none, he would not allow the country to lose even an inch of its territory to foreign powers. While it seemed to refer to the issue in the West Philippine Sea, Marcos did not mention it or anything related to it specifically.

The President capped his speech by enumerating his administration's 19 priority bills, including the mandatory Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC) for senior high school students, bureaucracy rightsizing, and e-government.

The state of the nation is 'sound'

Despite the past two years being challenging for Filipinos, Marcos said that the state of the nation is "sound," as he had assembled the "best" Filipino minds to help navigate the pandemic.

"Bawat isa sa inyo ay ginagawa ang lahat ng inyong makakaya upang patuloy na harapin ang lahat ng pagsubok sa kasalukuyan (Each of you tried his best to continue facing the challenges). I do not intend to diminish the risks and the challenges that we face in this turbulent time in global history, and yet, I see sunlight filtering through these dark clouds," he said.

"We will endure. Let our Filipino spirit ever remain undimmed. I know this in my mind, I know it in my heart, I know it in my very soul. The state of the nation is sound," he concluded.



MINDANAO TIMES

Mindanao biz sector pushes for 12-point agenda for BBM admin

By: Carmelito Franciso

AS President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. addresses the country today to outline his programs in the next six years during the state-of-the-nation address, the business sector in Mindanao has also called on him to implement key initiatives.

Arturo M. Milan, regional governor of the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said the new administration should sustain the gains that the country has achieved under then President Rodrigo Duterte.

“As Mindanaoans, we want these sustained and even enhanced because there are still many to be done in Mindanao,” Milan said in a message to TIMES, in reference to the achievement of the Duterte administration particularly on peace and infrastructure programs.

Milan said his group has developed a 12-point agenda, among them sustaining the peace and security both in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, the continuation of the National Task Force to End Local Armed Conflict and the fight against illegal drugs.

Issues that it wants addressed are;

- Continuing the Build, Build, Build Program especially the Flagship Projects in Mindanao such as the Mindanao Railway Project, Panguil Bridge Project, Davao-Samal Connector Project; modernizing airports in Mindanao especially Laguindingan Airport, Bukidnon, Mati, Mlang and others; modernizing of seaports and establishment of container terminals in the cities of Cagayan de Oro, Davao, General Santos and Zamboanga; and continuing the Marawi Rehabilitation Project.
- Improving the regional and provincial healthcare system;
- Digitizing of government processes and implementing strictly the ease of doing business and paying of taxes,
- Introducing smart agriculture, reviewing of the land reform and ancestral domain laws;
- Improving transportation and logistics in the Island,
- Revisiting the electric cooperative setup and pursue sustainable water supply in Mindanao,
- Inculcating love for country in our basic education, strengthen science and math and open post graduate studies to foreign universities to set up their branch in the country;
- Promoting the manufacturing sector in Mindanao, work on the revival of the paper, cotton and other industries and establish an integrated steel Mill in Mindanao.



- Climate Change adaptation, lessen carbon footprint and calamity proofing of areas frequented by typhoon and natural calamities,
- Including and promoting Mindanao as a major tourism destination and undertake Tourism related development projects,
- Establishing Regional Science and Technology Parks (Innovation Centers).



PINSENT MASONS

Philippines publishes national renewable energy programme to 2040

The Philippines' Department of Energy (DOE) has published its national renewable energy programme (NREP) for the period 2020 to 2040, setting out its goals of 35% renewable energy generation by 2030 and 50% by 2040.

According to the NREP (1.79MB / 104-page), by reaching these goals, the Philippines' government wants to meet people's growing electricity need with cleaner energy resources, to adapt renewable energy more widely and to use hybrid technologies, to reduce carbon dioxide emissions and to mitigate climate change.

To meet the renewable goals, the country will need to install another 102 gigawatts (GW) electricity capacity by 2040 including 27GW solar, 17GW wind, 6GW hydro, 2.5GW geothermal and 364MW biomass.

As of 31 December 2021, a total of 901MW committed renewable power generation projects are expected to be operational from 2022-2027. Among these, 54% of projects are solar and 26% are hydro.

Renewables expert John Yeap of Pinsent Masons said: "It is exceedingly encouraging to see the Philippines setting out an aggressive energy policy but as the numbers from the report identify, there is a tremendous need for new capacity and that can only be filled partially by today's technology. Clearing the impediments to fully utilise resources, such as constitutional requirements on the ownership of natural resources, will help to achieve these targets."

The NREP proposes four solutions to help reach the renewable goals. These are renewable transition pathways that identify the mandatory policies and voluntary programmes which will build a strong need and market for renewable energy; renewable transition enablers that help to create suitable environment for renewable investments via laws, programmes and activities; renewable energy for off-grid and productive use of renewable strategies to support social service delivery, livelihoods and quality of life in rural communities and off-grid areas; and developing specific renewable programmes and technologies.

Specific programmes cover offshore wind, waste-to-energy, expanded rooftop solar and geothermal generation. The government also plans to develop new renewable technologies in hydrogen and ocean and tidal stream energy.

"The Philippines also has significant opportunities around nature based solutions to the challenge of carbon. The Philippines can therefore not only address its climate change ambitions through renewable or low/no carbon resources, but also through participating in carbon removal and sequestration," Yeap said.

The Philippines government proposed the NREP in November 2021.



PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

We are drowning in plastic, and we need to catch up fast

By: Atty. Gloria Estenzo Ramos

Just last month, Canada took a huge leap and issued a ban on the manufacture and import of six categories of single-use plastics by the end of the year. Likewise, California recently enacted the boldest plastic source reduction policy requiring a steep reduction in the amount of single-use plastic packaging produced in the state by 2032.

Not many may realize it, but we are drowning in plastics, with global plastic production now at 400 million tons per year with highly underestimated impacts to our natural ecosystems and people.

The Philippines has a forward-looking Republic Act 9003 or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act in place, but the National Solid Waste Management Commission (NSWMC) has allowed this progressive law to languish in the “sickbed of non-compliance” as a dear friend puts it, for more than two decades. Unaware of the hidden cost of plastic, the government’s inaction has resulted in the notorious sachet economy and the overwhelming magnitude of the plastic crisis that we face today.

We could have been the model country had we faithfully abided by the law. This is gravely concerning considering that we too have been identified to be one of the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Nearly every piece of plastic begins as a fossil fuel, and greenhouse gases are emitted at each of each stage of the plastic lifecycle: 1) fossil fuel extraction and transport, 2) plastic refining and manufacture, 3) managing plastic waste, and 4) plastic’s ongoing impact once it reaches our oceans, waterways, and landscape.

With a solid waste management system that is unable to keep up with the surge of waste, plastic has long been creeping into the ocean, in the food we eat, the water we drink, and the air we breathe. Even the most isolated of marine protected areas are being breached by plastic waste and the artisanal fisherfolk, one of the poorest sectors in society, lament catching more plastics than fish in their nets. We are likely already unconsciously ingesting microplastic, with recent studies raising alarms on the presence of microplastics in human lungs and blood.

In a waste assessment and brand audit report by the Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives (GAIA) in 2019, the average Filipino uses 174 pieces of plastic shopping bags annually. Moreover, plastic bags, re-affirmed by a group of waste pickers we reached out to in Cebu City recently, can’t be recycled. The situation today is far worse due to the surge of pandemic-related waste.

Oceana, along with its partners from the Break Free from Plastics coalition, recommends the following single-use plastics to be banned: plastic straws, plastic stirrers, sachets, plastic cups, cutlery, plastic bottles, Styrofoam/polystyrene containers, thin take-out containers, labo bags and plastic bags. Imagine the number of plastics we would be able to prevent from reaching the ocean and our planet if we use eco-bags and baskets made from indigenous materials instead.



But more than our collective efforts as citizens to adopt a plastic-free lifestyle, the bigger challenge lies in ensuring that RA 9003 is effectively carried out.

It is highly encouraging that the new President aired his concern over the worsening plastic crisis in his inaugural address to the Filipino people. We expect that this will be translated into official directives with specific measures and timelines to ensure that destructive single-use plastics are banned from the source.

With new faces in the National Solid Waste Management Commission, can we trust the body to prioritize the neglected mandate of stopping pollution at the source and perform all their mandates?

It is our hope that the Philippines under the Marcos administration will do what the previous administrations have utterly failed to do – have the sense urgency to step up in the determined and genuine implementation of RA 9003 and address the banning of single-use plastics being a major source of the plastic pollution.

Hope the burgeoning plastic pollution and human-induced pressures facing our ocean merit the attention that they deserve in the President's first State of the Nation Address.

Political will is needed now more than ever.



PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

DOST backs BBM's stance on investing in sci-tech

By Ma. Cristina Arayata

The Department of Science and Technology (DOST) is supporting President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.'s stance on investing in science and technology to boost the country's disaster risk reduction (DRR) efforts.

Marcos, in his first State of the Nation Address on Monday, acknowledged that the Philippines is a disaster-prone country.

"Capacity building for natural resiliency is therefore a must. Investment in science and technology is imperative to enable us to have the accurate weather forecasts and on-time disaster alerts," he said.

He added that based on studies, many areas in the country are now at high risk from the rise in sea levels brought about by the increase in global temperature.

"We must adapt to this phenomenon with disaster-proof planning of our communities," Marcos said.

DOST officer in charge, Undersecretary Renato Solidum Jr. said the agency agrees and supports the need to invest in science and technology in DRR and climate change adaptation and mitigation.

"For the immediate dimensions of resilience to disaster and climate change, DOST identified six R&D (research and development) areas -- natural and health hazards, water, energy, environment, and society, including infrastructure. We strongly believe that addressing one of these dimensions can bring co-benefits in the other dimensions. These dimensions of resilience are then the focus of R&Ds that we will pursue in the next six years," Solidum said after Marcos' maiden SONA.

Solidum said the R&D budget of the DOST for DRR efforts this year is PHP150 million, excluding the budget of the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) and the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology.

He said the DOST believes that the Harmonized National Research and Development Agenda (HNRDA) will address Science, Technology and Innovation needs of the Philippines.

"We will collaborate with national, local, and private sector to pursue the Filipino aspiration of disaster and climate resilience," Solidum said.

The DOST held a series of consultation with its sectoral stakeholders in health, agriculture, aquatics and natural resources, energy, industry and emerging technologies, and in DRRCC.



He said the agency will address these sectoral and societal concerns through the HNRDA 2022-2028 that was approved by National Economic Development Authority this month.

Meanwhile, Vicente Malano, weather bureau's administrator, also agreed on the need to improve the forecasting capabilities.

He said PAGASA's proposed budget for next year is PHP3 billion.

Malano said PAGASA has enough budget for operation and maintenance, but its budget for infrastructure is limited for this year due to the Covid-19 pandemic.



Pangandaman backs Marcos' campaign for prudent fiscal management

#PBBMSONA2022

MANILA – Department of Budget and Management (DBM) Secretary Amenah Pangandaman on Monday expressed support on the campaign of President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. towards achieving prudent fiscal management and bureaucratic efficiency, as outlined in his first State of the Nation Address (SONA).

"We, at the Department of Budget and Management, are one with the President and vow to contribute to the pursuit of economic prosperity where no one is left behind," the Budget chief said.

According to Pangandaman, the DBM will facilitate the implementation of reforms to reverse the pandemic's adverse effects, sustain current economic gains, and restore the country's development trajectory.

"We shall maximize our limited fiscal space and commit to prioritizing food sufficiency, infrastructure, and climate change goals. And we will do so with complete integrity, competence, and diligence," Pangandaman said.

During the SONA, the Chief Executive underscored the need to institute government programs to achieve sound fiscal management, in order to swiftly address the effects of the pandemic to the economy.

"In terms of the economy we will implement a sound fiscal management. Tax administration reforms will be in place to increase revenue collection. Expenditure priorities will be realigned and spending efficiency will be improved to immediately address the economic scarring arising from the effects of the COVID-19 and also to prepare for future shocks," President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. said.

"The Medium-Term Fiscal Strategy of this Administration seeks to attain short-term macro-fiscal stability while remaining supportive of the country's economic recovery and aims to promote medium-term fiscal sustainability. Furthermore and more importantly, fiscal policy aims to bring together the national government's resources so that these are mobilized and utilized in order to gain the maximum benefit and the higher multiplier effect on our economy," Marcos added.

For her part, Pangandaman expressed confidence on the leadership of Marcos to steer a course of stability and progress for the economy.

"The economy is in good hands with our President," Pangandaman said.

"The MTF (medium-term fiscal framework) is our response to the socio-economic needs of our people today for competitiveness, inclusivity and sustainability so we are grateful that President Marcos is 100% attuned to this economic transformation agenda of the economic managers," the Secretary added.

Pangandaman likewise expressed her gratitude to Congress for the support the bicameral legislature has given to the 2022-2028 MTF.



"With Congress's support for the MTFF, efforts will be harmonized which will facilitate prompt formulation and adoption of policies and reforms that will help the country back on the path to rapid economic growth," the Budget chief stated.

Cash-based budgeting system

The Chief Executive likewise identified the Budget Modernization Bill as a priority legislative measure of his administration. He underscored the need to fully implement the Cash-Based Budgeting System (CBS) as part of the government's thrust.

"The Budget Modernization Bill seeks the institutionalization of the Cash-based Budgeting System (CBS) under Executive Order No. 91, s. 2019, to strengthen fiscal discipline in the allocation and use of budget resources by ensuring that every peso budgeted by the government would lead to the actual delivery of programs and projects. The full implementation of the CBS is timely and vital as the government executes response and recovery plans post-pandemic," President Marcos said.

To fulfill this directive, Pangandaman said that the DBM will ensure the adoption and strengthening of the CBS implementation for the whole-of-government, coupled with other key reforms such as the Early Procurement Activity, to sustain the initial gains and "ensure that every peso budgeted by the government would lead to the actual delivery of programs and projects."

Under the CBS, all appropriations shall be made available for obligation and implemented only until the end of each fiscal year, while payments for obligations incurred may be settled within the year or up to an extended period of three months after the end of the validity of appropriations. This will address bottlenecks in obligations, which will lead to on-time implementation and disbursement of the government's programmed projects.

Rightsizing for lean, efficient gov't workforce

Marcos ordered the establishment of a lean, efficient and responsive government workforce.

"[This is] a reform mechanism that seeks to enhance the government's institutional capacity to perform its mandate/functions and provide better services, while ensuring optimal and efficient use of resources," Marcos emphasized.

"Compared to previous government reorganization efforts, the NGRP [National Government Rightsizing Program] will entail a comprehensive strategic review of the functions, operations, organization, systems and processes of the different agencies, and massive and transformational initiatives in agencies concerned, such as merger, consolidation, splitting, transfer, and abolition of offices. The rightsizing efforts will also involve the conduct of a comprehensive strategic review of functions, programs and projects that cuts across various agencies," the President added.

To this end, Pangandaman said that the DBM will support the streamlining of the bureaucracy through the NGRP which will also generate savings for the government to fund priority projects.



"At the end of the day, a bloated and double-layered bureaucracy is a great disservice and a burden to our citizenry," Pangandaman underscored.

The Budget secretary, however, pointed out that the NGRP does not automatically equate to the reduction in the number of personnel in government agencies.

"Rightsizing will strengthen the entire organization through the implementation of structural and procedural reforms that will ensure the government's efficiency and productivity," she highlighted.

Digital transformation

In his speech, Marcos stressed on the importance of pushing forward his administration's campaign on digitalization.

"We are entering an age of exponential adoption of technology. It is the 4th industrial revolution. This will be characterized by the infusion of technology into almost every facet of our lives. Breakthrough technologies in the areas of quantum computing, artificial intelligence, nanotechnologies, internet of things... among others that will radically transform the way business is done," the President said.

Pangandaman vowed to support the President's push for digitalization that will accord the highest priority to public sector programs that promote transparency, accountability and good governance.

"We shall expedite the digitalization of our public financial management system and the reforms on the procurement process and law," she said.

Pangandaman said the DBM shall roll out its first 100-day Roadmap on Digitalization to diminish human discretion and eradicate corruption, through the exploration of capabilities of cloud infrastructure and application programming interfaces (APIs) for real-time processing of government service, as well as blockchain technology for decentralized transparency.

"Ultimately, emerging technologies and capabilities will be utilized to digitize government processes, in accordance with the President's 8-point socio-economic agenda," Pangandaman said.

"We will focus on enhancing the Government Integrated Financial Management Information Systems (GIFMIS), that facilitates the generation of vital information on all aspects of government financial transactions, to be made publicly accessible through information technology," the Secretary added.

To realize this, the Budget chief stated that the DBM, together with the Department of Finance, Bureau of Treasury, and the Commission on Audit, will fast-track the development and implementation of the Budget and Treasury Management System (BTMS) -- an integrated, web-based and fully-automated system designed to streamline and monitor various financial transactions of government agencies, which is an integral part of the GIFMIS.



"The implementation of the BTMS is a crucial digitalization initiative. It has already been introduced and pilot-tested by the government, and is presently being reviewed for improvement and optimization," Pangandaman said.

Towards a green public procurement

In order to support the Marcos administration's goal of ensuring sustainable management and use of natural resources by 2030, the Budget chief stated that the DBM, through the Government Procurement Policy Board (GPPB), will spearhead the implementation of the Green Public Procurement (GPP) Roadmap.

The GPP Roadmap was crafted with a circumspect approach that reflects the principle of value for money, addresses suppliers' readiness and builds on the capacity of existing procurement practitioners in government. This aims to radically transform the Philippine market by integrating green choices in public procurement and with the long-term perspective of achieving sustainable public procurement initiative.

"A GPP Manual is currently being crafted to guide procurement practitioners in embedding green specifications. To date, the government has seven Common-use Supplies and Equipment (CSE) items with green specifications," the Budget chief said.

Empowering LGUs

Aligned of the President's SONA message of empowering local government units (LGUs), Pangandaman conveyed that the DBM will uphold Executive Order No. 138, which provides for the implementation of the full devolution of certain national government's functions to the LGUs.

The Budget chief said that the DBM issued Local Budget Circular No. 146 dated July 7, 2022 prescribing the guidelines on the release and utilization of the Local Government Support Fund - Growth Equity Fund (LGSF-GEF), while the DILG initiated capacity development efforts and interventions in support of full devolution.

Pangandaman noted that the Committee on Devolution, led by the DBM and the DILG, will reevaluate and strengthen the framework upon which the devolution will be anchored to ensure continuous and efficient delivery of essential government services, while promoting local economic growth and autonomy.

"As we navigate our way to full economic recovery with prudent fiscal management and enhanced bureaucratic efficiency, I am confident that we will achieve our goals for economic transformation, growth, and sustainability," she said.



Renewable energy tops Marcos admin's climate change agenda

By: Ruth Abbey-Gita Carlos

Manila – President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. on Monday pushed for the transition to renewable energy to mitigate the worst impacts of climate change on the country.

Marcos, in his first State of the Nation Address (SONA) delivered at Batasan Pambansa in Quezon City, said the use of renewable energy will top his administration's climate change agenda.

"We will increase our use of renewable energy sources such as hydropower, geothermal, solar, and wind," said Marcos, whose home province Ilocos Norte houses the now-famous Windmills of Bangui.

The shift to renewable energy is seen as a solution to help slow down the effects of climate change.

The United Nations-body Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), in its report released in April 2022, bared that solar and wind energy and batteries have shown sustained cost reductions of up to 85 percent since 2010.

Many policies and laws have improved energy efficiency, reduced deforestation rates, and accelerated renewable energy deployment, according to the IPCC report.

Marcos emphasized the need to promote the use of renewable energy, as he noted that the Philippines is a disaster-prone country.

Given the country's geographical situation, capacity-building for natural disaster resiliency is "a must," he said.

Marcos said investing in science and technology would enable the government to have accurate weather forecasts and on-time disaster alerts.

"For the welfare of our people, it is incumbent upon us to lessen our vulnerability," he said. "Studies show that many areas in the Philippines are already at high risk from the rise in sea levels brought about by the increase in global temperature. We must adapt to this phenomenon with disaster-proof urban planning.

Partnership with private sector

The Philippines, though a minor contributor to climate change globally, is one of the most vulnerable countries to the effects of climate change.

Marcos also raised alarm over the precarious fresh water supply situation in the country, especially in urban areas.

"Many of our water supply systems date back to the 1950's and they must already be rehabilitated and improved," he said.



He then directed Environment Secretary Ma. Antonia "Toni" Yulo-Loyzaga and Public Works Secretary "Manuel" Manny Bonoan "to explore possible partnerships with the private sector to address this critical situation."

"There is no question that the preservation of the environment is preservation of life. If we cannot mitigate climate change, all our plans for the economy will be for naught," Marcos said.

Marcos said environmental laws and policies must be followed when the government forges partnership with the private sector.

"Companies who exploit our natural resources must follow the law. We all have the responsibility to preserve the Earth, for we are but custodians, and we will pass this treasure on to future generations," he said.

Marcos, in his inaugural speech delivered on June 30, mentioned plastic pollution and climate change as among critical issues his administration will address.

Finance Secretary Benjamin Diokno earlier said Marcos will continue pursuing a whole-of-nation approach in mitigating climate risks.



PHYS ORG

Unraveling the interconnections between air pollutants and climate change

By Anuradha Varanasi

In June 1991, Mount Pinatubo in the Philippines erupted for nine hours, ejecting volcanic ash, water vapor, and at least 15 to 20 million tons of noxious sulfur dioxide gas into the stratosphere. Within two hours, the gas transformed into tiny sulfate mists or aerosols that formed bright clouds. Those clouds spread across the entire Earth and persisted for a year, effectively reducing global temperatures by 0.4 to 0.5 degrees Celsius between 1992 and 1993. Once these cooling aerosols fell out of the stratosphere two years later, global temperatures rose again.

Although microscopically tiny, aerosol particles can have mighty impacts on the atmosphere and climate. Major volcanic eruptions and their resulting aerosol emissions high up in the atmosphere are infamous for altering monsoon circulations and precipitation patterns around the world, even triggering severe droughts in Eastern China and India.

Aerosols created by burning fossil fuels can also impact the climate, although the effects are somewhat different at the ground level. And as human civilizations attempt to reduce their emissions of these harmful particles, they are inadvertently generating unwelcome side effects, too.

Understanding aerosols

Ever since the first Earth Day was observed in 1970, the global average temperature has been accelerating at the rate of 1.7 degrees Celsius per century. Before 1970, the rate of warming was only 0.01 degrees C per century. At the current rate, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) warned that the average global temperatures could rise by more than 2 degrees Celsius by 2100, which would unleash devastating impacts on the planet.

"When we talk about the causes of human-driven climate change, a lot of attention is given to greenhouse gases like carbon dioxide and methane, but the anthropogenic aerosols component is rarely mentioned," said Scott Barrett, a vice dean at Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs and the Lenfest-Earth Institute Professor of Natural Resource Economics.

Aerosols (also known as particulate matter or PM) are a mix of suspended liquid and solid particles in the air with distinctive chemical compositions. The smaller the size of an aerosol, the more severe its health impacts. Particulate matter with a diameter of less than 2.5 microns (PM_{2.5}) can easily infiltrate the lungs. PM_{2.5} has been associated with higher rates of respiratory, autoimmune, and neurological disorders than a comparatively bigger PM with a diameter of 10 microns or less—also known as PM₁₀.

Scientists estimate that 90% of aerosols in the atmosphere are naturally occurring, such as dust, pollen, plankton, and sea salt. On average, up to 80% of the particulate matter in coastal areas comes from sea salt. Waves breaking and bubbles bursting at the ocean surface make sea salt aerosols stay suspended in the air, said Faye



McNeill, an atmospheric chemist and professor at Columbia University's School of Engineering. The good news is that most natural sources of aerosols have remained at constant levels without any significant fluctuations—giving less cause for concern.

But anthropogenic or human-made aerosols are the opposite. They are constantly emitted from vehicles, coal power plants, factories, oil refineries, agricultural areas, industrial facilities, ships, and wood burning, among other activities. Since the industrial revolution began in the Global North, the presence of anthropogenic aerosols in the atmosphere had steeply increased along with greenhouse gases. As the air got more and more polluted in the U.S., by 1970, the general public and environmentalists were concerned over poor air quality.

Despite the obvious sources of air pollutants, in 1981, President Ronald Reagan claimed that trees cause more pollution than automobiles do. "This led some people to believe that cutting down all the trees will reduce air pollution. Obviously, that is not the solution," said McNeill, who leads Columbia Climate School's Clean Air Toolbox for Cities, a project that is working toward cleaner air in Jakarta, Indonesia, Indore, India, and Nairobi, Kenya.

"It is true that trees emit volatile organic compounds. But unhealthy levels of ozone pollution form only after these naturally occurring volatile organic compounds react with nitrogen oxides—which get emitted when coal, oil, and natural gas are burned," added McNeill.

The majority of anthropogenic aerosols are made in the atmosphere from gas molecules. For example, during the coal burning process, the sulfur present in coal becomes oxidized and gets released into the atmosphere as sulfur dioxide gas. The gas then reacts with clouds, water vapor, and other pre-existing compounds before it transforms into sulfate aerosols that have a cooling effect on the lower atmosphere.

"Various chemical and physical transformations lead to the polluted state that we would see in an urban area," McNeill explained.

Aerosols: A double-edged sword

In the United States, sulfur dioxide emissions gained widespread attention in the 1970s due to acid rain. When sulfur dioxide mixes with water in the air, it results in sulfuric acid raining down on those locations.

At the time, industrialized countries in the Global North were collectively emitting such high levels of sulfur dioxide from their coal power plants and vehicles that it was the equivalent of over a dozen Mount Pinatubo volcanic eruptions.

The U.S. federal government implemented the Clean Air Act during the 1990s to clamp down on the sources of sulfur dioxide pollution and prevent acid rain pollution. In Europe and Canada, governments mandated that scrubbers should be installed on all industrial smokestacks. Countries in the Global North also passed legislation that made it compulsory for vehicle owners to use exhaust emission control devices. Hefty fines were imposed on polluters. These regulations worked.



For more than three decades, the Global North witnessed a dramatic decrease in PM2.5 and ozone pollution levels. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency reported an 80% decline in anthropogenic sulfur dioxide emissions between 1990 and 2014. Within the same period, deaths related to air pollution in the U.S. were halved. Forests that were damaged from acid rain started recovering.

Even though reducing aerosol emissions has immense public health and ecological benefits, researchers say it is crucial to take into account the impact of such reductions on climate change. While the Global North succeeded in cutting down aerosol pollution, they continued burning huge amounts of fossil fuels like coal. That resulted in the warming of the northern hemisphere.

"Before these policies were enforced, industrialized countries were increasing their carbon dioxide emissions at the same pace as they were increasing the levels of atmospheric aerosols," explained McNeill. "But then they disrupted the cooling effects of short-lived aerosols by cutting down on their sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxide emissions."

Scientists refer to this phenomenon as uncovering global warming. Before industrialized countries collectively got rid of sulfate aerosols, warming was already occurring on a global scale—albeit at a slower pace.

The only way to simultaneously deliver benefits for public health and climate change is by transitioning to renewable energy, said McNeill. In that case, both anthropogenic aerosols and greenhouse gas emissions would be reduced.

Similar to sulfate particulate matter, other anthropogenic aerosols like nitrates and airborne microplastics also scatter and deflect solar radiation back to space, leading to atmospheric cooling. Certain forms of organic carbon could also have a net cooling influence by scattering sunlight away from the Earth's surface.

On the other hand, black carbon and brown carbon absorb sunlight and have a warming influence on the planet—so cutting their emissions has dual benefits for public health and the planet's temperature.

The aftermath of phasing out sulfur dioxide emissions

To better understand the complex relationship between aerosols and climate change, Columbia researchers analyzed the impacts of drastically lower levels of sulfur dioxide emissions in the northern hemisphere on other parts of the world.

Interestingly, they found that cleaner air in the Global North ended up influencing monsoon patterns in Africa's Sahel region and South Asia in entirely different ways.

"Lower levels of sulfate aerosols in the northern hemisphere ended up changing the energy balance of the Earth's system and affected the dynamics of how air moves around the planet. That has far-reaching impacts on the southern hemisphere," explained Arlene Fiore, formerly an atmospheric scientist at Columbia Climate School's Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory, who is now a professor at the MIT Center for Global Change Science.



Dan Westervelt, an atmospheric scientist at Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory, observed with colleagues that once the northern hemisphere started experiencing faster warming, the tropical rain belts shifted in a northward direction—thereby resulting in substantially more rainfall in Africa's Sahel region. While local aerosol emissions might also be playing a role in these anomalies, rainfall patterns have become far more erratic than usual in most of the Sahel.

"These interconnections are concerning and fascinating all at the same time. What we do in the northern hemisphere affects other regions and can have downstream impacts," added Fiore.

But African countries are not the only ones grappling with the side effects of lower concentrations of anthropogenic aerosols in the northern hemisphere.

In a 2022 study published in the journal *Science Advances*, researchers proved that the North Atlantic has also witnessed more extreme weather events with decreasing aerosol emissions. Since the implementation of the Clean Air Act more than 30 years ago, hurricane seasons became more frequent and intense in the North Atlantic region compared to prior decades.

On the other side of the globe, industrialization and economic growth have significantly increased the concentration of sulfate aerosols in India and China over the last four decades. This had a cooling influence on the land surface despite global warming. The difference between the temperatures of the land and ocean also decreased. That, in turn, drove down the intensity of monsoonal winds and resulted in fewer tropical cyclones and typhoons in South and East Asia in that time span, said Westervelt.

Westervelt's work showed that on the Indian subcontinent, higher levels of sulfate aerosol emissions caused less rainfall over the Indo-Gangetic plain. At present, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and India have the most polluted air in the world.

Pick your poison: PM2.5 vs. ozone pollution

In 2014, the Chinese government announced it was "declaring war against air pollution." Four years after allocating billions of dollars for clean air, major cities in China successfully cut down their PM2.5 concentrations by 32 percent. Unfortunately, that positive development led to a negative outcome: a spike in ozone pollution.

Ozone pollution forms when nitrogen oxides (that are emitted from burning fossil fuels) and volatile organic compounds react with each other in the presence of sunlight. Unlike the ozone layer high up in the atmosphere that protects us from harmful ultraviolet rays, on-the-ground ozone pollution is a threat to public health.

Repeated exposure to ground-level ozone can trigger chest pain and coughing, reduce lung function, and may permanently damage lung tissue. Ozone pollution has also been associated with cardiovascular disease and stroke. Westervelt and colleagues have calculated that cutting down ozone pollution by 60% would save 330,000 lives in China by 2050.

Climate change has made ozone pollution a lot worse than before in many parts of the world. Warmer temperatures ramp up reactions between nitrogen oxides and volatile



organic compounds that get trapped in the lower atmosphere. Researchers observed that getting rid of aerosols or fine particulate matter is another reason why Chinese cities are experiencing a spike in ozone pollution.

Previously, high levels of PM_{2.5} in the air acted like sponges that efficiently absorbed the radicals responsible for generating ozone pollution. The aerosols consistently inhibited ozone production. By aggressively tackling the sources of sulfur dioxide emissions, China inadvertently tinkered with the atmosphere's chemistry. Once the sulfate-dominated PM_{2.5} concentrations started depleting, more sunlight and radicals were left behind to produce ground-level ozone, according to a study published in PNAS.

The need to address global inequalities

Climate scientists and innovators worldwide are grappling with the multiple challenges involved in reducing emissions of greenhouse gases and air pollutants while also promoting healthy economic development.

"This issue has not been prioritized during international climate negotiations. The focus is still on what individual countries could do for reducing their greenhouse gas emissions," said Barrett. "Policymakers need to develop an approach that addresses both the economic interests of developing countries like India, as well as the collective interests of other nations."

He emphasized that India—one of the world's top three emitters of greenhouse gases—desperately needs financial and technological support from industrialized countries. This will prevent India from replicating China's history of unsustainable growth that not only undermines India's future development but also that of the rest of the world—thanks to greater surges in aerosol and greenhouse gas emissions.

While there are no straightforward solutions for tackling such complex and nuanced issues, experts like McNeill say it highlights how proposed geoengineering technologies (that would use aerosols to temporarily reduce global warming) can have unintended consequences.

"Every country is interconnected through the atmosphere and global trade," added Barrett. "We need to transform the economic system for better mitigation strategies."



POLITIKO

Pampanga showcases disaster preparedness

The Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office (PDRRMO) of Pampanga highlighted its emergency preparedness in responding to disaster.

The PDRRMO exhibited its capability and resourcefulness during the launch of the National Disaster Reduction and Management Festival inside SM City Pampanga with Pampanga Governor Dennis Pineda and local officials in attendance.

The event is part of the National Disaster Resilience Month (NDRM) observation.

This year's theme is "Sambayanang Pilipino, Nagkakaisa tungo sa Katatagan at Maunlad na Kinabukasan," highlighting "the unifying efforts of all sectors and communities toward sustainable development."

Pineda said the province was committed to upholding standards in disaster response and continually upgrading and updating the province's disaster response capabilities.

The governor also lauded the PDRRMO for continually ensuring that the province is ready for any disaster response.

PDRRMO officer Angelina Blanco led the presentation of the disaster management office's response and the exhibition of the province's disaster response capabilities.

The exhibit included the province's logistical capabilities including ambulances, fire trucks, flotation devices, life vests, medical equipment among others.

The exhibit is currently on display at the SM City Pampanga event center.



RAPPLER

The pros and cons of Marcos' nuclear energy dreams

By Ralf Rivas

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. is eyeing nuclear energy and renewable technology to address the Philippines' energy crisis.

"We must build new power plants. We must take advantage of all the best technology that is now available, especially in the areas of renewable energy," Marcos said in his first State of the Nation Address (SONA) on Monday, July 25.

Data from the Department of Energy (DOE) showed that the Philippines is powered mostly by coal (47%), while natural gas comprises 22% and renewables (hydro, geothermal, wind, and solar) make up 24%. The remaining 6.2% are from oil-based sources.

Marcos reiterated his agenda to push for more renewable energy sources to improve the country's energy mix.

"I believe that it is time also to reexamine our strategy towards building nuclear power plants in the Philippines," the President said.

The pros

Here are some of the advantages of having a nuclear power plant:

More efficient. According to experts, 6 grams of nuclear fuel will yield the same amount of energy as 1 metric ton of coal.

No direct emissions. In the United States, nuclear is the largest source of clean power. The US DOE said it generated nearly 800 billion kilowatt hours of electricity and produced half of the country's carbon-free electricity in 2021. Some 470 million metric tons of carbon emissions were avoided in 2020, which is equivalent to removing 100 million cars off the road.

It is important to note, however, that nuclear power plants still contribute to climate change because mining and refining uranium emit carbon dioxide. Fossil fuels could also have been used in building the plants.

Smaller land area. The US DOE said "nuclear energy produces more electricity on less land than any other clean-air source."

The cons

Marcos did not explicitly mention the P110-billion Bataan Nuclear Power Plant (BNPP) project under his father, the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos.

But as the younger Marcos revives the Philippines' plans to pursue nuclear energy, the controversies of his late father's dreams are likely to be revisited.

Here are some of the issues in getting the BNPP up and running:



The cost. The mothballed power plant costs the Philippines P40 million to P50 million per year to maintain, even though it is not operating, according to a report by Vera Files.

In 2017, the DOE consulted experts from Korea and Russia to conduct a pre-feasibility study to rehabilitate the BNPP. Korean experts said it would cost \$1 billion or P55.8 billion, while Russian experts said it would cost \$2 billion to \$3 billion and take up to four years to rehabilitate.

Nuclear waste. Filipino scientist Fabian Dayrit warned that nuclear power has a maximum life span of 40 years. Decommissioning and maintaining nuclear waste “might be expensive.”

The US allocates some \$44 billion for its nuclear waste disposal facility, while Japan spends \$123 billion for safety measures and decommissioning.

Potential damages. The Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis (IEEFA) warned there could be staggering environmental damages in event of disasters.

“Unless the Philippines can invest in expensive best-in-class safety and storage facilities, accidents resulting from typhoons or volcanic activity could leave Filipino taxpayers – not the US or private companies – on the hook for trillions of pesos in environmental damages,” IEEFA said.

In his SONA, Marcos said the possible construction of a nuclear power plant would be based on international standards.

“We will comply of course with the International Atomic Energy Agency 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,” he said.

The President added that public-private partnerships would “play a part in support as funding in this period is limited.”

Other hazards. Scientist Kelvin Rodolfo wrote that the BNPP “sits on the western coast of Natib, a dormant volcano so massive that many people who frequently travel on its roads don’t even realize it is a volcano.” While Natib is dormant, Rodolfo cautioned that “a future eruption could break out.”

The late former president Corazon Aquino had set aside the nuclear power plant following the Chernobyl disaster in 1986.



THE MANILA TIMES

IHC commits to sustainability

By Ed Paolo Salting

Real estate developer Imperial Homes Corp. (IHC) has made significant innovations in the home and development sector as it launched the 50,000-square-meter Via Verde Trece Martires development in Cavite, which is targeted for completion in 2025.

The Energy Regulatory Commission spearheaded the launch of this project touted as the first solar-metered community in the country.

It is envisioned to serve as a model for affordable, resilient and sustainable projects that will have its own solar power source and the capability to sell its excess energy to the electricity grid.

Emma Imperial, president and chairman of IHC Group, described the long path they had to go through in order to realize her vision.

Imperial said they did Leisure Homes but were focused more on mass housing. IHC wanted to take it a step further to introduce something different for the low-income group at the time and seized every opportunity that came.

"We are 37 years in the business and it started in 1983, we built 22,000 homes and now we are currently developing about 8,000 to become sustainable and resilient in the future. So the total right now is 30,000. We have also done about 2,000 solar-powered homes and communities in different locations and that is equivalent to 3 megawatts," she said.

Besides being solar-metered, the homes will be made using a material called "connovate."

"In addition to this, we also constructed around 2,000 green buildings using connovate, which is coming from Denmark. So, we transformed our company into a sustainable and resilient developer, and we started this around 2014-2015," she added.

Connovate is an alternative to concrete. It uses high-performance concrete building technology that offers less carbon footprint, 100-year material lifespan, fast construction and insulation abilities, and other innovative features. IHC partnered with Connovate Philippines in 2016 and has since been making buildings and houses together. Its three factories have an average yield of 110 houses per month.

"I would tell my friends that I think we have the holy grail of these building materials because they are now comparable to hollow blocks. If you compute the savings of building through hollow blocks and connovate, it would show connovate is cheaper and for this material can be made in only two months," Imperial said.



Thousands evacuate as California wildfire grows

By Agence France-Presse

Midpines, California: A fierce wildfire in California expanded on Sunday (Monday in Manila), burning several thousand acres and forcing evacuations as tens of millions of Americans sweltered through the scorching heat.

More than 2,000 firefighters backed by 17 helicopters have been deployed against the Oak Fire, which broke out last Friday near Yosemite National Park, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Cal Fire) said in a report.

But two days after it began, the blaze has already consumed more than 15,600 acres (6,313 hectares) and remains zero-percent contained, it reported, adding that the heat, combined with low humidity, would "hamper" efforts.

Described as "explosive" by officials, the blaze has left ashes, gutted vehicles and twisted remains of properties in its wake, as emergency personnel worked to evacuate residents and protect structures in its path.

It has already destroyed 10 properties and damaged five others, with thousands more threatened.

More than 6,000 people had been evacuated, Cal Fire official Hector Vasquez said.

California Gov. Gavin Newsom last Saturday declared a state of emergency in Mariposa County, citing "conditions of extreme peril to the safety of persons and property."

In recent years, California and other parts of the western United States have been ravaged by huge and fast-moving wildfires, driven by years of drought and a warming climate.

Evidence of global warming could be seen elsewhere in the country, as 85 million Americans in more than a dozen states were under a weekend heat advisory.

The crisis prompted former US vice president Al Gore, a tireless climate advocate, to issue stark warnings on Sunday about American lawmakers' "inaction."

Asked whether he believes US President Joe Biden should declare a climate emergency, which would grant him additional policy powers, Gore was blunt.

"Mother Nature has already declared it a global emergency," he told ABC News talk show "This Week."

And "it's due to get much, much worse, and quickly," he said separately on NBC.

But he also suggested that recent crises, including deadly heat waves in Europe, could serve as a wake-up call for members of the US Congress who have so far refused to embrace efforts to combat climate change.



"I think these extreme events that are getting steadily worse and more severe are really beginning to change minds," he said.

The central and northeast US regions have faced the brunt of the extreme heat, which is forecast to lessen somewhat on Monday.

"Searing heat will continue across the Mid-Atlantic and Northeast tonight before the upper trough over Canada dips down into the region to moderate temperatures a bit tomorrow," the National Weather Service said on Sunday.

But not all regions are expected to cool down: temperatures of 100 or more degrees Fahrenheit (37 degrees Celsius) are forecast in the coming days across parts of eastern Kansas and Oklahoma into southern Missouri and northern Arkansas.

Not even the usually cool Pacific Northwest will escape the far-reaching heat, with high temperatures "forecast to steadily rise over the next few days, leading to the possibility for records to be broken," the weather agency said.

Cities have been forced to open cooling stations and increase outreach to at-risk communities, such as the homeless and those without access to air conditioning.

Various regions of the globe have been hit by extreme heat waves in recent months, such as Western Europe in July and India from March to April — incidents that scientists say are an unmistakable sign of a warming climate.



[OPINION] We're on the cusp of the most catastrophic food crisis in 50 years: Where is the global response?

By IPS

Berlin/Terni, Italy: A growing mountain of data and analysis points to an unprecedented global crisis in the making, due to the convergence of "Four Cs" (conflict, Covid, climate and costs).

As most recently highlighted at the recent UN High-Level Political Forum on the Sustainable Development Goals (HLPF), the intersection of poverty, climate vulnerability and geopolitical dynamics could unleash the worst humanitarian crisis in recent memory.

How is this different?

All food crises are intrinsically linked to spikes in fossil fuel prices. Recent episodes (such as the food price crises of 2007-2009 and 2012) display several common characteristics: increased demand for biofuels as an alternative energy source, and the diversion of massive amounts of food grains to intensive and unsustainable livestock sectors in countries with an already high and unhealthy consumption of animal protein.

However, until now, severe impacts on food availability have been avoided thanks to favorable weather conditions that have helped to quickly restore market equilibria.

Not this time.

While the root of the current crisis is strongly linked to incessant pressure on food systems to deliver energy and meat, high fertilizer prices mean that production costs are outpacing farmgate prices of food, discouraging farmers from maintaining or increasing production.

This adds yet another layer of complexity to the "perfect storm" that has already been gathering. Covid-19 looms large over the ability of supply chains to deliver food. Conflict (Russia's invasion of Ukraine) has siphoned off enormous amounts of food destined for international markets as well as driving up the price of crude oil, which is highly influential in determining prices of fertilizer — the critical input in global agri-food value chains.

(Note: On July 22, the United Nations, Turkey, Russia and Ukraine signed an agreement in Istanbul aimed at delivering Ukrainian grain to world markets. The deal was the result of months of negotiations as world food prices skyrocketed amid increasing grain shortages connected to Russia's invasion of Ukraine. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres heralded the agreement as a major diplomatic breakthrough. "Today there is a beacon on the Black Sea. A beacon of hope — a beacon of possibility, a beacon of relief — in a world that needs it more than ever.")

Due to our energy-hungry and inefficient food systems, over seven units of fossil fuel energy are required to produce one unit of food — from farm to retail.



Adding to the complexity of these developments is the accelerated impact of the climate crisis on global agriculture. The upshot is that the world is facing record food costs in 2022.

These "Four Cs" are instigating a scenario that could be more severe than anything we've seen in the past five decades, mirroring the hunger crisis of the 1970s in which millions perished from hunger.

Moreover, overall prospects for a global bumper grain crop are increasingly dim. Recent satellite surveillance shows that excessive dryness and heat stress could lead to a 5 million tonne shortfall in the EU wheat harvest and a combined 8 million tonne contraction of wheat output in the US and India.

This adds to uncertainty about continued blockage of wheat supplies from Ukraine, which had a pre-conflict capacity of storing 60 million tonnes of grains and oilseeds.

One hopeful sign is that Ukraine has begun shipping small but increasing quantities of food via land routes, with significant volumes also passing through the Danube River. Several international initiatives are also under way to unblock supply chains and compensate for storage infrastructure destroyed by Russia.

These include US support for new silos along the border with Romania and Poland, and Turkey's offer to help reinstate Ukraine's exports from the Black Sea. However, any delays to these initiatives could force many Ukrainian farmers into bankruptcy, jeopardizing global food security for years to come.

Crisis-proofing food systems

The war in Ukraine has thrown into sharp focus — yet again — to just how vulnerable our energy and food systems are to shocks, including geopolitical tensions. Dependence on a few countries for energy and fertilizer needs, poses exceptional and unacceptable risks.

Faced with severe food shortages, many countries will undoubtedly turn to Russia, which is set for an excellent food harvest this season, raising prospects of "weaponizing grain" in retaliation against sanctions.

Behind the geopolitics of blockades on Ukrainian grain is an untold story of a fragile, overly centralized global food system, constructed and promoted by the richer nations and their corporations, that was already vulnerable to shocks long before the tanks rolled in.

Added to these continuing uncertainties, is the increasing impact of climate extremes on global food production. Once largely associated with the African region, drought is wreaking havoc on food systems around the world. A record-breaking drought reordered plantings in the United States, heat stress in India has led to a reported 10 percent to 35 percent decline in crop yields with more heat waves predicted prompting a ban on the country's wheat exports, with restrictions on food shipments instigated by another 34 countries.



Devastating heat waves and the worst drought in 70 years are also being felt in northern regions of Italy, driving up prices by as much as 50 percent, while the Horn of Africa is being ravaged by the worst drought in four decades. With only 1 percent of arable land equipped for irrigation in the region, the longer-term prognosis for strengthening climate resilience is disturbing, to say the least.

Unfortunately, the global response so far has largely taken the same *laissez faire* approach that was proposed in the wake of previous crises. In Einstein's words, it is tantamount to "doing the same thing[s] over and over again and expecting different results."

To achieve the fundamental reform needed, our food systems need to be set on a transformative pathway, necessitating the redesign around intertwined action.

Restoring sanity

It would be wishful thinking to expect that the world will ever be free of multiple crises. The question, therefore, is how to construct a more resilient global food system to shocks from wherever they might arise.

In the short term, emergency measures are needed to safeguard access to food for those who are hardest hit from high food prices. Moratoriums on the biofuel and livestock feed sectors would free up sufficient quantities of grain to avoid a hunger crisis. Food stocks, where abundant, should also be released to ensure that the most at risk have affordable and open access to food.

A communiqué issued at the close of the recent G7 Summit in Germany unveiled plans to boost fertilizer production and promote the supply of organic fertilizers. G7 leaders also encouraged the release of food from stockpiles and agreed not to introduce any new public subsidies for fossil fuel sectors, even as they called for additional temporary investment in the natural gas industry to mitigate current supply shortages.

In parallel to these emergency measures, we urgently need to embark on a more resilient pathway in the medium to long term. Even if the war in Ukraine ends tomorrow and supply chains return to "normal," we must shift the current paradigm of dependency on climate-destroying mineral fertilizers. We must make hard choices to wean ourselves off conventional monocultural agriculture toward more diverse, localized and ecosystem-sensitive food systems.

Science tells us that nitrogen-based fertilizers derived from fossil fuels can contribute to 40 percent of cereal yields. Continuing to depend on fertilizer supplies from a few countries is therefore tantamount to holding nearly 8 billion people to ransom.

It is increasingly clear that to avert the impact of such geopolitics, policymakers must make serious attempts to delink world food security from fossil fuel-based and climate-destroying inputs. Incentivizing inexpensive and readily available and proven technologies — such as agroforestry and other agro-ecological practices — boosts soil health, improves the availability of nutritious food and strengthens climate resilience.



Repurposing a mere fraction of current perverse subsidies for the fossil fuel sector, which amount to an astounding \$7 trillion per year, is a critical step toward enabling such a transformation.

Ultimately, however, we need to value our food systems differently by including their total footprint on human health and the environment. Ignoring the "true cost" of food production has led to a focus on cheap and non-nutritious food that is linked to the global obesity pandemic and a greater risk of zoonotic disease spillovers.

The benefits of such a true cost accounting (TCA) approach would be manifold: a reduction in food waste, a far more productive and sustainable agricultural sector that respects our natural capital, and a sense of realism in achieving greenhouse gas targets under the Paris Agreement.

Dismantling the 4 Cs

Decoupling the world's food systems from fossil fuel-based inputs would be a major step forward in solving long-term global hunger. A necessary first step toward such transformation is to design pathways in which the global North shares its food stockpiles instead of diverting grains to fuel cars and promoting unsustainable livestock production.

Such repurposing requires immediate investment in renewable energy and the manufacture of biofertilizers. Organic fertilizers are integral to the circular economy, which is an increasingly important model for planetary sustainability.

Equally, the overuse of mineral fertilizers needs to be addressed, especially given their role in creating additional input demand, which in turn leads to higher prices, while compounding environmental degradation.

While the G7 leaders' communiqué is a refreshing break from tradition, the world still has much to learn from history. The world was ill-prepared in the 1970s, the 2000s as well as today. Arguably, solutions to fix increasingly complex and intertwined food systems are difficult.

Vested interests, a lack of governance, and a system of economic accounting that undervalues our natural and societal capital are challenges under which transformation of our food systems needs to happen. This task is by no means underestimated, but bold action is needed to ensure food systems become more crisis-proof.

As an emergency step, prioritizing food for people "over all else" would build up trust especially between developing regions in need and the G7. And trust is also a very scarce resource in the world of today.



THE PHILIPPINE STAR

Marcos SONA: A lot of talk on environment, not as much on its defenders

By Gaea Katreena Cabico

While climate change—an issue put on the back burner during the election campaign—was mentioned at least six times in the first State of the Nation Address of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr., his speech was silent about the threats faced by Filipino climate advocates and environmental defenders.

The Philippines is among the countries most exposed to climate change hazards. It is also consistently identified as one of the most dangerous countries for protectors of nature.

In his speech delivered before Congress, Marcos stressed the use of renewable energy is "at the top" of the government's climate agenda. But he also spoke about the development of nuclear and fossil gas in the same address.

He also said that capacity building for disaster resiliency is a must. "Investment in science and technology is imperative to enable us to have accurate weather forecasts and on-time disaster alerts."

Marcos added there should be disaster-proof planning for communities affected by sea level rise and efforts to look for more sources of fresh water.

Marcos has appointed disaster resilience expert Toni Yulo-Loyzaga to lead the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

Proper enforcement of laws

The chief executive also emphasized that laws on the environment must be properly enforced. The DENR has been often criticized in recent years for the weak implementation of laws that are supposed to protect the country's rich ecosystems and natural resources.

"Companies who exploit our natural resources must follow the law. We all have the responsibility to preserve this Earth, for we are but custodians, and we will pass on this treasure to future generations," Marcos said.

"There is no question that the preservation of the environment is the preservation of life," he added.

Environmental group Kalikasan People's Network for the Environment, however, warned that Marcos' promise to construct more international airports, railway and transport systems, solar and wind farms, nuclear power plants, and dams will cause the destruction of forests, farmlands, and other critical landscapes and seascapes.

"Despite all the rosy rhetoric of responding to worsening disasters and pursuing renewable energy, the proposed-private partnership model for these economic projects has a track record of bringing displacement and conflict to communities and defenders," said Leon Dulce, national coordinator of Kalikasan PNE.



Uneasy silence

Green groups also criticized the lack of mention of human rights in Marcos' first SONA.

"While climate change was woven in agriculture, health and energy themes, Marcos Jr. was distressingly silent about mining issues, human rights, indigenous and women rights, extrajudicial killings and environmental defenders," Alyansa Tigil Mina national coordinator Jaybee Garganera said.

According to a report of watchdog Global Witness, the Philippines remained the worst place in Asia for land and environmental defenders in 2020. Kalikasan PNE, for its part, recorded six new attacks against environmental defenders in the two months after the May elections.

"We thus fear more human rights abuses against environment and other human rights defenders," Dulce said.

CCC IN THE NEWS

THE MANILA TIMES

[Bringing back the use of clean energy in Mindanao](#)

In a report by the Department of Energy in 2021, 31 percent of the installed energy capacity of Mindanao came from renewable energy (RE) sources as of 2020. This was way lower than the 2011 data, where 65 percent of the total power generation mix in the island came from clean power.

Over the years, the continued power supply problems paved the way for oil- and coal-based power sources to be the primary sources of electricity that now constitute 68 percent of installed energy capacity.

To promote renewable energy in the region, the Mindanao Development Authority (MinDA), Ateneo de Davao University's Mindanao Renewable Energy Research and Development Center, and Peace and Equity Foundation (PEF) inked a memorandum of agreement (MoA) to establish the Mindanao Renewable Energy Advocacy and Coordination Hub (Reach) on June 24, 2022.

Mindanao Reach has sought to establish a platform for multi-stakeholder, grassroots-based strategies of promoting renewable energy in poor communities, which are underserved and unserved by traditional grid-based electricity.

The hub would also advocate measures that would promote RE to revise fossil-dependence In Mindanao, electrify off-grid communities to attain inclusive growth and provide access to information, relating to RE.

"We intend to make the center a venue for knowledge sharing, capacity building and advocacy initiatives to push for renewable energy transition and ultimately, address poverty," MinDa Secretary Maria Belen Acosta said during the ceremonial signing of the MoA.



Meanwhile, PEF Executive Director Roberto Calingo emphasized the need to establish the hub with rising fuel costs and exhausting fossil fuel reserves.

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