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By: Jasmine Romero

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BUSINESS WORLD

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By: Kyle Atienza

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GMA NEWS

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By: Patrick Galey

Paris — Scientists on Monday welcomed the passing of US President Joe Biden's "historic" climate bill while calling for other major emitters—namely the European Union—to follow suit and implement ambitious plans to slash emissions.

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By Jon Viktor D. Cabuenas

GMA Network Inc. on Monday inked an agreement with Nestlé Philippines for a joint campaign on climate change, covering awareness initiatives across the country given its vulnerability to such risks.

MANILA BULLETIN

['Habagat' still affecting Central, Southern Luzon; new LPA forms east of Mindanao](#)

By Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz

The southwest monsoon or “habagat” and a new low pressure area (LPA) may bring rains over some areas in Central and Southern Luzon, Caraga, and Davao Region in the next few hours, the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) said in its 11 a.m. weather advisory on Monday, Aug. 8.

Taal emits high levels of volcanic sulfur dioxide anew, says Phivolcs

By Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz

The volcanic sulfur dioxide (SO₂) emitted from Taal’s main crater on Sunday, Aug. 7, has exceeded 17,000 tons—the highest SO₂ emission since the volcano’s alert status was lowered to Level 1 on July 11, said the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs).

Teves bill calls for new nuclear plant if BNPP can’t be used anymore

By: Ellson Quismoro

If the Bataan Nuclear Power Plant (BNPP) can no longer function safely, then the Philippines must build a new nuclear plant.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

[OPINION] Extreme weather events and conflict (2)

By Rufa Cagoco-Guiam

On April 15, 2015, the Group of Seven (G7), issued a declaration that highlighted its commitment to tackle “climate-related risks in states experiencing situations of fragility.” An intergovernmental forum, the G7 consists of Canada, the United States, France, Italy, Germany, Japan, and the United Kingdom. The European Union (EU) participates in this forum as a “non-enumerated member.”

PHILIPPINE INFORMATION AGENCY

55th ASEAN theme underscores togetherness

By: Alice Sicat

This year’s theme for the ASEAN’s 55th Anniversary focuses on the spirit of “Togetherness”, that as one community with a common will, the member states with collective endeavor will address and overcome challenges that are facing the region.

PHILIPPINE STAR

[For recovery's sake, Philippines rescues 'dirty' companies from pandemic hole](#)

By: Ramon Royandoyan

Part 1 of a 2-part special report on the Philippines' lack of attention to 'green' recovery from the pandemic.

MANILA, Philippines — Teofilo Tredez, a 55-year-old environmentalist and forest ranger, has won an onslaught of cases defending the environment, including trespass to dwelling and grave oral defamation.

THE MANILA TIMES

[More countries back arbitral award on SCS](#)

By Bernadette E. Tamayo

The Philippines has informed fellow member-states in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) that there is a "growing list" of countries supporting the 2016 arbitral award in the South China Sea (SCS).

CCC IN THE NEWS:

BUSINESS WORLD

[Building a more climate-resilient Philippines](#)

By: Raymond Abrea

It's been three weeks since I arrived in Cambridge, Massachusetts. I never thought I would have to experience heat waves to know how serious climate change is. It's not even on the list of courses I want to study at the Harvard Kennedy School (HKS). But the discussion on climate change is part of our summer program, and it's quite intense.

RMN ONLINE

[DepEd, nakiisa sa Climate Change Commission para mapalakas ang climate literacy](#)

Suportado ng Department of Education (DepEd) ang Climate Change Commission na palakasin ang climate literacy at suportahan ang pagtugon sa pabago-bago ng klima sa

pamamagitan ng basic education curriculum upang turuan ang mga mag-aaral at personnel na may kaalaman sa klima.

THE MANILA TIMES

[Climate change to be taught in schools](#)

By: Kristina Maralit

The Climate Change Commission (CCC) on Monday hailed the Department of Education's (DepEd) move to integrate climate change into the basic education curriculum.

Information and Knowledge Management Division

ABS-CBN

[DOST optimistic technology will improve in PH regions](#)

By: Jasmine Romero

Manila—The Department of Science and Technology is optimistic that technology and innovation in various areas of the country will improve after the Provincial Science and Technology Office Act lapsed into law last month.

“The whole family of DOST would be very happy for the passage of the PSTO Act, simply because we have been really pushing for this,” DOST Usec. and Phivolcs OIC Renato Solidum told ABS-CBN News on Monday.

The law aims to “fast-track the transfer of technologies and services to the rural areas” to boost the development of “technology-based livelihood enterprises in the countryside”.

Part of it is converting DOST’s Provincial Science and Technology Centers to Provincial Science and Technology Offices which would “identify the needs and opportunities in Science and Technology (S&T) in provinces; and develop institutional linkages with provincial offices of other departments, local government units (LGUs).”

Another is existing senior science research specialists will be promoted to the position of chief science research specialist where their salaries will be upgraded 5 notches higher, from salary grade (SG)19 to SG 24.

“They are our frontliners, they are doing almost everything that we at the national government would be doing, of course not to the scale.. but they are actually doing all the things that different organizations within DOST would be aiming for. And it is high time that they are recognized, and of course, compensated accordingly,” Solidum said.

The DOST official believes the law can also pave the way to increase staffing.

“Essentially we wanted to do more, and to do more we wanted more people and for our colleagues to be financially compensated as well. It would be unfair to do many things and you have the public to take care of so we can actually develop better programs, this will catalyze the use of science and technology innovation in making sure... would be able to help the regional development,” he added.

The law can help boost the momentum on spotting solutions for various problems in the economy, climate change, disaster risk reduction, food security, and malnutrition at the local level.

But as to when the changes will take place, Solidum said it still needs to be discussed within the DOST.

“The law states that the funding for this year, kung kaya will be taken out from the budget of the DOST, we have to make sure that this will be part of next year’s budget. Kung kukunin sa budget ng DOST, medyo mahihirapan 'yun, it is not enough... kailangan upuan pa ito, Solidum said.

BUSINESS WORLD

[Climate emergency declaration awaited from national gov't](#)

By: Kyle Atienza

The government must declare a climate emergency to wield extraordinary powers that will facilitate a shift to renewable energy, which analysts and economists said will address prevailing problems like the unreliable food supply and the Philippines' vulnerability to calamities.

They said on Sunday that senior officials and the public should initiate wide-ranging discussions on the economic costs of climate change.

"The climate crisis precedes — and is a factor in — many of the issues we are facing today, and so declaring a climate emergency should have been done years ago," Lea Guerrero, country director of Greenpeace Philippines, said in an e-mail.

President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. said in his first address to Congress that he will work towards a shift to green energy and boost investment in climate-resilient infrastructure.

Mr. Marcos has yet to declare a climate emergency, which would authorize the government to mobilize funds to step up climate mitigation efforts.

Makati City, home to a major business district, declared a climate emergency last week, introducing a plan to put up solar panels in schools and government offices to ensure

uninterrupted power services during disasters. It also encouraged the business community to enforce mitigation measures.

The House of Representatives made a similar declaration in 2019, but Greenpeace said “we have not seen the follow-through from our national government.”

“This tells us that a declaration itself isn’t enough — the sitting administration must ensure there is a coherent plan to address the climate crisis with urgency and efficiency,” it said.

“More than 60% of (the Philippine) population is coastal, and the majority of our cities are in coastal areas,” Greenpeace said, noting that extreme weather events and slow-onset impacts of climate change, including ocean heating and acidification, also affect economic performance.

“The World Bank estimates that we spend 0.5% of our gross domestic product on natural disasters annually,” it said.

Citing its own study on rising sea levels, Greenpeace said as much as 80% of Manila could be submerged by 2030, “potentially impacting 87% of its GDP.”

“(Climate change) will further affect not just fisheries and agriculture and livelihoods, but also access to water and secure shelters and homes.”

Renato E. Reside, Jr., an associate professor at the University of the Philippines School of Economics (UPSE), said climate change effects impede economic productivity — a reality that the government should recognize as early as now.

“Climate and environmental problems lead to poor health outcomes which reduce worker and student productivity,” he said in a Messenger chat. “So, the social cost of climate problems is very large and growing. The cost of abatement and cleanup is itself part of the social cost and it is growing too.”

Climate change took its toll on Europe recently, with the region experiencing record-breaking temperatures last month. The European Parliament declared a climate emergency in 2019.

The US has also not been spared from the effects of climate change. Last month, some 100 million Americans from New York City to Las Vegas were under heat warnings as temperatures rose well above 100°F (38°C), Reuters reported.

The US has yet to declare a climate emergency, nor has China. The two economies accounted for 41.89% and 34.75% of world GDP in nominal and purchasing power parity terms, respectively.

Mr. Marcos, 64, needs to collaborate with Congress to implement a massive plan to combat climate change, policy analyst Michael Henry Li. Yusingco said in an e-mail. “The supermajority support he has in both chambers is a huge plus, but he will still have to deal with various interests and agenda that could dilute his original objective.”

Mr. Yusingco said the President and his team need to provide an evidence-based rationale that can be understood by the public to gain broad support.

“Whether the emergency declaration is as provided for in the constitution or not, a coherent and cogent explanation is very crucial in order to gain public support for the declaration as well as the moves that will follow after it,” he said.

“A lot of sacrifices will be made by the people, so it’s very important that they understand why we are doing this radical step,” he added. “More critically, civil society and the business sector need to be engaged every step of the way.”

Mr. Marcos has said he would make infrastructure more resilient to disasters, vowing to modernize ports and update housing standards.

Terry L. Ridon, convenor of infrastructure think tank InfraWatchPH, said “infrastructure and government projects must be designed to achieve net zero emissions.”

“It means incorporating climate adaptation... in designing various infrastructure projects,” he said in an e-mail. “It means installing solar panels and other renewable energy solutions in unused infrastructure spaces.”

The former legislator said the government needs to determine an appropriate level of climate intervention, “as we are not expected to introduce advanced measures... unlike developed economies.”

“The appropriate level of intervention determines whether low or moderate levels of emissions produced by infrastructure projects remain acceptable in the medium term,” he said. “A higher level of intervention will certainly incur significantly higher immediate costs, and this is a question which both government and the private sector will have to address together.”

Mr. Ridon said the government needs to expand tax and nontax incentives for firms undertaking climate-resilient projects and programs. “This is ‘the only way’ for the private sector to participate in accelerated climate intervention.”

“These incentives should be long-lasting, as the purpose for the incentive, climate intervention and resilience, is a long-term national and international undertaking,” he said.

Mr. Reside of UPSE said the government needs to revisit climate abatement laws and rules, including a policy that provides incentives to businesses that reduce air pollution.

“Have they actually abated pollution in any way since they were passed? If so, by how much? No one is doing the math.”

“We already have the Clean Air Act and this law provides tax incentives for pollution abatement, but the take-up of tax benefits from this law in exchange for abatement is very low,” Mr. Reside said. “Climate-targeted financing could also be made available to fund initiatives to protect the environment at various levels of government.”

Greenpeace urged the government to institute a “rapid and just” transition to a low-carbon pathway through a massive uptake of renewable energy solutions.

“It should strengthen energy security starting by scaling up renewable energy targets to at least 50% by 2030, and instituting a blueprint for 100% RE by 2050,” it said.

The government also needs to ratchet up its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) under the Paris Agreement, it said. The Philippines has promised a 75% carbon emissions reduction between 2020 and 2030, subject to foreign funding. The reduction target using internal resources is only 2.72%.

Greenpeace also challenged the government to expand coverage of the coal-fired power plant moratorium to include projects in the pipeline and implement a phaseout plan for operating coal projects.

It said businesses should be required to align with the government’s commitments under the Paris Agreement “to address the human rights impacts of climate change.”

BUSINESS WORLD

[PHL lining up US support for climate, health, digitalization](#)

By Diego Gabriel C. Robles

The Philippines discussed potential support from the US for its climate finance, health, and tax system digitalization efforts, the Department of Finance (DoF) said.

In a tweet following the Aug. 1 meeting, Finance Secretary Benjamin E. Diokno said he heard expressions of willingness from the US, represented by Ambassador to the Philippines MaryKay L. Carlson, to increase its support in those areas.

“As of December 2021, the US was the Philippines’ largest source of grants reaching \$628.20 million. The amount accounts for 33.23% of total grant assistance received by the country from all its bilateral and multilateral development partners,” the DoF said in a statement on Monday.

The US is the Philippines’ seventh-largest provider of official development assistance (ODA).

On climate change, Ms. Carlson said that the US is willing to increase climate financing support to the Philippines.

The Philippine position on climate change is that the industrialized countries must do their share in funding mitigation efforts. The Philippines accounts for only 0.3% of global emissions but is being counted on to reduce its emissions from dirty sources of energy that have been crucial in other countries’ industrial transitions.

“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,” President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. said during his first State of the Nation Address (SONA) on July 25.

“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 added.

Mr. Diokno told finance ministers and central bank governors at a Group of 20 (G20) event last month that climate financing will be sourced from bond issues, new taxes, and aid from the international community.

“We are supporting the passage of a bill that will either regulate or tax the use of single-use plastics to cut pollution and adopt more sustainable practices. We are also considering the imposition of a carbon tax,” he told the G20.

The mobilization of climate finance will be directed by the so-called Green Force, an interagency body led by the DoF along with the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP).

In April, the government committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 75% by 2030 when then-President Rodrigo R. Duterte approved the Philippines’ first Nationally Determined Contribution.

On health security, both sides discussed efforts to increase coronavirus vaccination rates, as well as “the need for awareness of a possible next pandemic or any global issue that could affect economic and human development.”

On Sunday, the Department of Health reported 4,621 additional coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) cases, bringing total active cases to 37,805.

“Nariyan pa rin ang banta ng COVID-19, lalo’t may mga nadidiskubring bagong variants ng coronavirus. Pero hindi na natin kakayanin ang isa pang lockdown. Wala na tayong gagawing lockdown (The threat of COVID-19 is still with us, with new variants emerging. But we cannot afford another lockdown. We will no longer resort to lockdowns)” Mr. Marcos said during the SONA.

Mr. Diokno brought up previous US assistance in reforming the Philippine tax system.

“The USAID (US Agency for International Development) previously supported the DoF in crafting the comprehensive tax reform program through technical assistance, while the US Trade and Development Agency (USTDA) provided a grant worth \$809,450 for the Bureau of Internal Revenue’s (BIR) Information Communication Technology Modernization Strategy and Data Center,” the DoF said.

The grant, which helped finance the BIR's full automation by 2030, was signed last year by then-Finance Secretary Carlos G. Dominguez III and by the US Embassy in Manila on behalf of the USTDA.

"The long lines during the tax payment period (are) gone. I think almost 99% paid electronically. That's good," Mr. Diokno said.

Ms. Carlson also said that the US government is "very reassured" by the appointment of Mr. Diokno and the other members of the economic team.

The composition of the economic team sends a positive signal to US companies who want stability, predictability, and transparency, she added.

BUSINESS WORLD

[Philippines told to come up with plan amid US-China tensions](#)

By Kyle Aristophere T. Atienza

Political analysts on Sunday urged the government to craft a contingency plan to help the Philippines withstand possible shocks from escalating tensions between the United States and China over Taiwan.

Both countries would likely intensify diplomatic offensives to "consolidate regional opinion behind them," Herman Joseph S. Kraft, who heads the University of the Philippines Political Science Department, said in a Viber message. "Given that Taiwan seems to be at the center of the current issue, the country should have contingencies activated that are not just about how we are going to get our overseas workers out of Taiwan," he added.

Philippine President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. last week met with US State Secretary Antony J. Blinken in Manila as part of his larger Southeast Asian tour — something that Mr. Kraft said might cause trouble for the region. Mr. Blinken arrived in the Philippines days after US House Speaker Nancy Patricia Pelosi visited Taiwan, which is being claimed by China. Ms. Pelosi's Taiwan visit angered China, leading it to scrap several pacts with the US including cooperation on transnational crimes and drugs. China also halted talks on climate and change and said it would stop accepting deportees from the US.

"The rivalry between the US and China is definitely moving along regardless of what countries in the region would prefer," Mr. Kraft said. "China's reaction to the Pelosi visit shows that it is now treating the US as an overriding threat and global issues where

cooperation between the two superpowers is paramount are of secondary importance to its rivalry with the US.”

Mr. Kraft said the Marcos government should try to keep relations with both, but the dynamics between the US and China might make it difficult to do so.

The Philippines should take into account the risks and opportunities brought by the competition between the US and China, Dindo C. Manhit, president of Stratbase ADR Institute for Strategic and International Studies, said in a Facebook Messenger chat.

He added that Mr. Marcos should go beyond the strategic competition and look for a broader alliance of nations that values a rule-based international order, something that experts had also recommended to his predecessor.

“That will allow the Philippines to advance its strategic interests,” Mr. Manhit said. “Compared with the Duterte administration, the Marcos government has continued to engage with both powers in an effort to become a more relevant player in the region,” he said. “It is also in the best interest of the Philippines to pursue a limited balancing strategy to safeguard its national security and avoid unnecessary risks.”

Mr. Manhit said Mr. Blinken’s Manila visit “demonstrates the relevance of the US-Philippine alliance despite being challenged by the policy pronouncements of the previous administration.”

“Given the current regional security landscape, the Marcos administration should harness these opportunities to advance the country’s strategic interests and contribute to maintaining peace and stability in the region,” he added.

He said engagements with like-minded states such as the US, Japan, Australia and the European Union “create an opportunity for the Philippines to promote a rule-based international order wherein shared democratic values can be fully realized.”

Mr. Blinken at the weekend said the US would come to the defense of the Philippines if it is attacked in the South China Sea, and he sought to allay concerns about the extent of US commitment to a mutual defense treaty with the Southeast Asian nation.

During meetings in Manila dominated by discussion on rising US-China tensions over Ms. Pelosi’s Taiwan visit, Mr. Blinken said a 70-year-old defense pact with the Philippines was “ironclad.”

“An armed attack on Philippine armed forces, public vessels and aircraft will invoke US mutual defense commitments under that treaty,” he told a news briefing. “The Philippines is an irreplaceable friend, partner and ally to the United States.”

Mr. Marcos said he did not think Ms. Pelosi’s visit to Taiwan had “raised the intensity” of conflict. “It just demonstrated how the intensity of that conflict has been,” he told Mr.

Blinken, based on a transcript of the meeting sent by the presidential palace. "It actually has been at that level for a good while, but we got used to it and put it aside."

The Philippine leader said he hoped the country's relationship with the US "will continue to evolve in the face of all changes we have been seeing." He added that the Mutual Defense Treaty with the US is "in constant evolution."

"As I spoke with your ambassador some time when she came, [I said] we cannot, we can no longer isolate one part of our relationship from the other," Mr. Marcos told Mr. Blinken. "We are too closely tied because of the special relationship between the United States and the Philippines and the history that we share."

GMA NEWS

[After 'historic' US climate bill, scientists urge global action](#)

By: Patrick Galey

Paris — Scientists on Monday welcomed the passing of US President Joe Biden's "historic" climate bill while calling for other major emitters—namely the European Union—to follow suit and implement ambitious plans to slash emissions.

The bill, which would see an unprecedented \$370 billion invested in cutting US emissions 40 percent by 2030, should provide a launchpad for green investment and kickstart a transition towards renewable energy in the world's largest emitter.

It passed the Senate on Sunday night after months of arduous negotiations and only after a number of tax and energy provisions were tacked on to Biden's original proposal.

Michael Pahle, from the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research, said the bill was particularly relevant to EU lawmakers, who he said were on the verge of adopting "the world's most ambitious climate policy" in the form of the bloc's "Fit for 55" plan.

"The EU's policy can only succeed—economically and politically—when major emitters and trade partners take similar action," he told AFP.

GMA NEWS

[GMA, Nestlé Philippines partner for environmental advocacy](#)

By Jon Viktor D. Cabuenas

GMA Network Inc. on Monday inked an agreement with Nestlé Philippines for a joint campaign on climate change, covering awareness initiatives across the country given its vulnerability to such risks.

Under the partnership, the two parties are set to roll out initiatives which would prompt public attention to environmental issues, along with information dissemination.

The memorandum of agreement (MOA) signing ceremony was held virtually on Monday, and attended by top executives of GMA including chairman and chief executive officer Atty. Felipe L. Gozon.

“With this partnership with Nestlé, we will be able to communicate that it does not take a lot to become environmentalists,” Gozon said during the ceremony.

“Through our joint efforts, Nestlé and GMA will inspire Filipinos that through basic acts at home like proper waste disposal, power and water conservation practices, creative recycling and repurposing, and even simply embracing a less material lifestyle, all these can make a big difference,” he added.

Gozon also hinted at more initiatives being rolled out in line with the partnership, including joint workshops to train GMA employees on greener living at home and at work.

He also welcomed the opportunity for artists of the Sparkle GMA Artist Center to take on roles as ambassadors of change when they appear in the coming advocacy plugs.

Gozon's sentiment was shared by Nestlé Philippines chairman and chief executive officer Kais Marzouki who cited the need for the cooperation of all stakeholders.

"We have to work hand in hand between the government, the private sector, and the communities toward a healthier and more livable planet," he said.

Marzouki said among the initiatives being pursued are those that involve sustainable sourcing, transforming operations, and helping address future risks.

"Our joint campaign to bring awareness of plastic waste and to reduce, reuse, recycle plastic at home can go a long way indeed," he said.

"We are very honored to share this environmental advocacy with GMA Network. We can't wait to see the powerful synergy between Kapuso and Kasambuhay come to life driving the right mindsets and behavior for a waste-free Philippines," he added.

MANILA BULLETIN

'Habagat' still affecting Central, Southern Luzon; new LPA forms east of Mindanao

By Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz

The southwest monsoon or “habagat” and a new low pressure area (LPA) may bring rains over some areas in Central and Southern Luzon, Caraga, and Davao Region in the next few hours, the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) said in its 11 a.m. weather advisory on Monday, Aug. 8.

As the habagat continued to prevail over Central and Southern Luzon, “light to moderate with at times heavy rains” may persist in Pangasinan, Zambales, Bataan, Occidental Mindoro, Northern Palawan, and Kalayaan Islands.

Meanwhile, PAGASA said the LPA located 960 kilometers east of Mindanao is less likely to develop into a tropical depression within 48 hours but could also bring light to heavy rains over Caraga and Davao regions.

“Under these conditions, scattered flooding and rain-induced landslides are likely, especially in areas that are highly or very highly susceptible to these hazards as identified in hazard maps and in areas with significant antecedent rainfall,” it warned.

The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to cloudy with isolated rain showers or thunderstorms due to the habagat and localized thunderstorms.

PAGASA advised the public to stay vigilant as severe thunderstorms, which are often accompanied by sudden heavy rains, lightning, thunder, gusty winds, and sometimes hail, could also trigger flash floods or landslides.

MANILA BULLETIN

Taal emits high levels of volcanic sulfur dioxide anew, says Phivolcs

By Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz

The volcanic sulfur dioxide (SO₂) emitted from Taal's main crater on Sunday, Aug. 7, has exceeded 17,000 tons—the highest SO₂ emission since the volcano's alert status was lowered to Level 1 on July 11, said the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs).

In its 11:30 p.m. advisory, Phivolcs said Taal Volcano had emitted 17,141 tons of SO₂ on Sunday morning.

It pointed out that the average SO₂ flux since July 15 was at 6,041 tons per day—higher than the average of 1,289 tons per day between May and mid-July 2022.

“Increased degassing has been visible in the form of upwelling in the main crater lake and voluminous steam-rich plume activity in the past three days,” Phivolcs said.

It warned of airborne volcanic gas that could be drifted to the general east to west of Taal Volcano Island, based on the air parcel trajectory data from the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration.

In the past 24 hours, Taal Volcano also had three tremor events that lasted nine.

Phivolcs reminded the public that Alert Level 1 prevails over Taal Volcano, which means that it is still in abnormal condition and should not be interpreted to have ceased unrest nor ceased the threat of eruptive activity.

“Should an uptrend or pronounced change in monitored parameters forewarn of renewed unrest, the Alert Level may be raised back to Alert Level 2,” it said.

“Conversely, should there be a return of monitoring parameters to baseline levels after a sufficient observation period, the Alert Level will be further lowered to Alert Level 0,” it pointed out.

Under Alert Level 1, sudden steam-driven or phreatic explosions, volcanic earthquakes, minor ashfall and lethal accumulations or expulsions of volcanic gas can occur and threaten areas within the Taal Volcano Island (TVI).

“Phivolcs strongly recommends that entry into TVI, Taal’s permanent danger zone or PDZ, especially the vicinities of the main crater and the Daang Kastila fissure, must remain strictly prohibited,” it said.

MANILA BULLETIN

[Teves bill calls for new nuclear plant if BNPP can’t be used anymore](#)

By: Ellson Quismoro

If the Bataan Nuclear Power Plant (BNPP) can no longer function safely, then the Philippines must build a new nuclear plant.

This is the gist of House Bill (HB) No.2921 filed in the ongoing 19th Congress by Negros Oriental 3rd district Rep. Arnolfo Teves Jr.

Under the bill, the Department of Energy (DOE), Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Department of Science and Technology (DOST), the National Power Corp. (Napocor), and the Philippine Nuclear Research Institute (PNRI) should conduct an initial validation on the feasibility of firing up the mothballed BNPP to make sure that it would be within the internationally accepted nuclear power industry standards.

“In the event this nuclear power plant is no longer feasible for operation, I urge the government to construct another nuclear plant or a nuclear barge, which is also safer against the earthquake, so that Filipinos can avail of lower electricity cost,” Teves said.

The former deputy speaker also said that aside from being a reliable source of energy, nuclear energy would serve as a way to alleviate the problem of global warming and climate change.

Existing power plants in the country usually rely on traditional fossil fuel, which has been proven to produce toxic substances and radioactive elements that are hazardous to humans and the environment.

“The BNPP will help our country cut electricity cost by almost half, in comparison to the rates of the coal-fired power plants,” Teves said.

He added that around 441 nuclear power plants are now in operation in at least 30 countries. This, he said, shows that nuclear power is a safe means of generating electricity, and has the ability to operate without interruption, thus making it a more reliable source of energy.

Teves’s proposal also states that only the President, after favorable recommendation by the DOE, DENR, DOST, NAPOCOR, and the PNRI, has the authority to determine and decide the final commercial use of the nuclear power plant.

Construction of the \$2.3 billion-BNPP began in 1976. By 1984, the facility was thought to be nearly complete.

“But due to some technical and political issues its operation and supposed utilization did not materialize,” the lawmaker’s camp said.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

[\[OPINION\] Extreme weather events and conflict \(2\)](#)

By Rufa Cagoco-Guiam

On April 15, 2015, the Group of Seven (G7), issued a declaration that highlighted its commitment to tackle “climate-related risks in states experiencing situations of fragility.” An intergovernmental forum, the G7 consists of Canada, the United States, France, Italy, Germany, Japan, and the United Kingdom. The European Union (EU) participates in this forum as a “non-enumerated member.”

Collectively, G7 countries, including the EU, fund at least two-thirds of global development initiatives. As a developing country, the Philippines is the recipient of multiple and different types of development programs from G7 countries, as well as from the EU.

In their declaration, G7 foreign ministers declared that “climate change is among the most serious challenges in our world. It poses a threat to the environment, global security, and economic prosperity.” Such a threat will push back some progress achieved in global poverty, among others.

Earlier, G7 commissioned an independent consultancy group to examine the relationship between climate change and fragile and conflict-affected states in different parts of the world. The findings of this investigation are included in the report, “A New Climate for Peace: Taking Action on Climate and Fragility Risks.”

The report identifies seven “compound risks” that are interlinked that make climate change a “threat multiplier” (US Department of Defense, 2014), especially in fragile and weakly governed states. These are local resource competition; livelihood insecurity and migration; extreme weather events and disasters; volatile food prices and provision; transboundary water management; sea-level rise and coastal degradation; and unintended consequences of climate policies.

In its conclusion, the G7-commissioned report stressed the importance of integrating policies and programs in three key sectors, namely: climate change adaptation, development and humanitarian aid, and peacebuilding. For these key sectors, multipronged, integrative, and comprehensive policies and programs are needed to address the compound risks brought about by climate change.

The seven compound risks identified in this report are quite noticeable in the fledgling Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), as shown in the key findings of our exploratory research project on “Climate Fragility Risks in the (Philippine) Bangsamoro,” that I already mentioned earlier in my previous column.

Using a combination of both qualitative and quantitative data gathering methods, our study aimed at generating evidence on how climate change and fragility had posed (and could pose) joint and new risks in past (and possible future) violent conflicts in the Bangsamoro.

Quantitative approaches used were the following: extrapolating conflict data sets from the 1960s to 2020, using information from comprehensive database of conflict incidence from the Uppsala Conflict Dataset program and that of the Bangsamoro Conflict Monitoring System of International Alert; analysis of satellite imagery of land use changes, as well as of long-term climate variations in the region from 1960s to 2020; and analysis of price fluctuations of basic food commodities in the region for the past five decades. The research team also analyzed long-term climate data that yielded information on intense precipitation and long droughts in the region within the five-decade timeline.

On the other hand, qualitative data gathering tools included a focus group (community-based) discussion guide and a key informant interview schedule. The information gathered through the qualitative tools corroborated the data culled from the quantitative approaches.

Among our key findings are the following: for the past 50 years (1960s to the present) the BARMM, formerly the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, has had the highest exposure to intermittent and sometimes cyclical violent conflicts compared to other regions in the country. This exposure has resulted in more than 120,000 deaths, with an unaccounted number of missing persons, as well as undocumented cases of different forms of disabilities among its population. Both informants and group discussion participants narrated experiences of different levels and layers of inequality (in the past and present) and massive human rights violations, especially at the height of the martial law years (1970s to mid-1980s). They also recalled how extreme weather events (like the long drought season in the 1970s) facilitated the incursion of Philippine military tanks and howitzer launchers into the sprawling Ligawasan Marsh, where the municipalities of Datu Piang, Rajah Buayan, and Pagalungan are located.

PHILIPPINE INFORMATION AGENCY

[55th ASEAN theme underscores togetherness](#)

By: Alice Sicat

This year's theme for the ASEAN's 55th Anniversary focuses on the spirit of "Togetherness", that as one community with a common will, the member states with collective endeavor will address and overcome challenges that are facing the region.

The ASEAN 2022 logo shows a lotus flower symbol that represents a form of Khmer art derive from the relief carvings on the walls of ancient Khmer temples, which depicts purity and self-regeneration.

The symbol is beautifully encased in an intricate golden circle with the ASEAN emblem at the center to symbolize prosperity and harmony in peace.

The meticulous placement of these symbols altogether embodies the spirit and joint efforts of the 10 ASEAN nations bound together by friendship and solidarity with the common overarching goal of overcoming all challenges towards inclusive and sustainable development of the ASEAN community now and in the future.

Here are among the priorities of Cambodia in hosting the ASEAN 2022 celebration:

Under the ASEAN Political-Security Community, Cambodia will focus on strengthening the ASEAN Centrality and ASEAN Unity, for both regional mechanism and external partners' cooperation, based on ASEAN Way and Principles stipulated in the ASEAN Charter, Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia, and ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific.

- (1) Strengthening ASEAN centrality in the ASEAN-led mechanisms in maintaining and upholding peace, security, and prosperity;
- (2) ASEAN community post 2025 vision and sustainable development;
- (3) Regional contribution to global peace through peacekeeping operations;
- (4) Enhancing women peace and security (WPS) agenda;
- (5) Promoting ASEAN's external relations; and
- (6) Timor-Leste's application for ASEAN membership.

On ASEAN Economic Community, Cambodia will promote effective implementation of all initiatives and measures agreed, as well as, leverage trade agreements to the maximum so as to expedite the recovery of economic growth while the world is living with COVID-19 in the new normal, and ensure that ASEAN remains an attractive and dynamic hub for trade and investment by enhancing both physical and digital connectivity; strengthening the capacity of MSMEs; and promoting the entrepreneurship amongst women and youth; as well as other priorities aimed at narrowing the development gaps and advancing regional integration.

- (1) Realizing an inclusive, sustainable and resilient post-COVID-19 ASEAN community;
- (2) Strengthening ASEAN's competitiveness and regional integration; and
- (3) Future-proof ASEAN's growth and prosperity.

And under ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community, Cambodia will strengthen the development of human resources to respond to the needs on the ground for community

building, promote the participation of women and youth in building and maintaining peace, and develop an inclusive social protection system.

(1) Enhance ASEAN values, awareness and identity;

(2) Promote human resource and development and women empowerment;

(3) Enhance health, well-being, and social protection for peoples of ASEAN; and

(4) Strengthening ASEAN socio-cultural community's institutional capacity and effectiveness.

PHILIPPINE STAR

[For recovery's sake, Philippines rescues 'dirty' companies from pandemic hole](#)

By: Ramon Royandoyan

Part 1 of a 2-part special report on the Philippines' lack of attention to 'green' recovery from the pandemic.

Edited by Ian Nicolas Cigaral | Photos by Deejae Dumlao

MANILA, Philippines — Teofilo Tredez, a 55-year-old environmentalist and forest ranger, has won an onslaught of cases defending the environment, including trespass to dwelling and grave oral defamation.

He is again on the frontline of a new battle that has already reached court: stopping the construction of a new coal plant on the island province of Palawan, considered one of the world's last ecological frontiers.

DMCI Power — the power unit of DMCI Holdings Inc., the business empire of the Consunji family whose business interests span mining, energy, real estate and infrastructure — is behind the construction of the coal plant in question. The project is located in the town of Narra, known as the rice granary of Palawan. DMCI is spending about P2.7 billion to construct the power plant.

"For farmers like me, the ash from the coal plant could contaminate our crops and make them unsafe for consumption. Also, there are fishermen in our town. The coal ash could pollute our sea," Tredez said in an interview together with other petitioners in a case against the coal project.

To get to Narra from Puerto Princesa, the provincial capital, is a two-hour drive along the countryside, where anyone who has journeyed there will attest to flitting in and out of scenes of farmland, beaches and mountains. The charm of driving there stays until the monolithic figure of the soon-to-be-completed coal plant comes into view.

The project is a brutalist monument to the aspirations of the Philippines to energize its entire archipelago. The country has so much potential to develop renewable energy, but coal is still widely regarded as the cheapest power source for developing economies.

When the pandemic spurred massive spending plans from the governments to salvage their economies, the Philippines, like any other country, found itself in an opportune time to initiate meaningful policies to embrace a green recovery of sorts. But while other economies have seized this chance, the Philippines, a country that is highly vulnerable to the effects of climate change, missed it.

Missing the 'green recovery' boat

When the health crisis hit in 2020, the Philippine government sealed off its borders and imposed harsh lockdowns that threw millions of Filipinos into joblessness and sent the economy to its worst crash on record.

Other countries also swiftly moved to blunt the economic pain from the pandemic. But there are nations that took their response to the next level after realizing one thing: the pandemic might not last long but the threat of climate change is very much present and its effects could be felt by the next generations.

Ripping up the fiscal rule books, other countries reached for the environmental reset button by inserting funds for sustainability projects and “green” policies in their stimulus packages. The Philippines, meanwhile, chose more of the same stimulus approach that did not pay attention to the environment.

Data from the United Nations showed that, in 2020, the Philippines was clustered with other nations that did not allocate funding for green recovery, such as South Africa, Thailand, Malaysia, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Argentina, Portugal, Nigeria, Peru, Iraq, Mexico, and the Netherlands.

As it is, there were two “Bayanihan” laws that funded the country's coronavirus response at the onset of the health crisis. The Bayanihan to Heal as One (Bayanihan 1), or Republic Act 11469, was enacted in March 2020 to give former President Rodrigo Duterte direct power to realign and repurpose funds in the 2020 national budget. The law focused on replacing Filipinos’ incomes that were lost at the height of lockdowns, as well as spending on healthcare and aid for small businesses.

Documents from the budget department showed that out of P363.16 billion Bayanihan 1 funds that were actually spent as of 2021, the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) and Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) — two agencies that cornered a large share of climate change funds in the 2020 and 2021 national budgets — did not receive any amount from the stimulus law.

In fact, the DENR was among the agencies that had their 2020 budget reduced under Bayanihan 1. The DENR reported that its budget that year was slashed by P1.4 billion to help bankroll the state’s pandemic response. Meanwhile, the DPWH suffered the deepest budget cut in 2020.

When Bayanihan 1 expired in June 2020, its successor, RA 11494 or Bayanihan to Recover As One (Bayanihan 2), also allowed Duterte to move funds within the national outlay, but with a small augmentation of P140 billion in new funding.

But like its predecessor, Bayanihan 2 did not allot any funds for green projects. Notably, the Department of Transportation received P1.1 billion for a bike lane networks project which, the law said, was only meant to “provide the necessary infrastructure and support” for commuters, with no mention of any sustainability purpose of the project.

Bayanihan 2 allotted P2.8 billion for DPWH but mainly for its quick response fund in times of disasters and “rehabilitation of tourism roads”, not for any climate change programs.

"The Bayanihan laws financing the P616-billion response were largely budget realignments and did not constitute the fiscal stimulus the lockdown-choked economy so needed," Sonny Africa, executive director at IBON Foundation, a non-profit economic think tank, said.

"The magnitude of the Bayanihan laws was too small to meaningfully contribute to any recovery, much less a green recovery," he added.

Saving ‘dirty’ companies

Not only did the Philippines pass up an opportunity to lock in significant environmental gains during the pandemic, the country ended up helping companies that contribute to climate change for the sake of economic recovery.

Apart from the two Bayanihan laws, another hallmark piece of legislation passed a year after the pandemic ravaged the domestic economy was the Corporate Recovery and Tax Incentives for Enterprises (CREATE) law, a repackaged version of the Duterte administration proposals whose intentions can be traced back to the Ramos presidency, which sought to reform tax incentives that finance officials believed were "too generous" and were at the expense of state revenues.

The fight to get CREATE passed was not easy. In the Duterte administration alone, the measure was rehashed three times carrying different names like TRABAHO and CITIRA. What gave the bill a fresh wind at the time was the urgency cited by economic managers who touted the measure as a critical component of their stimulus to assist the economy’s rebound from the health crisis.

The recalibration of the old measures to CREATE meant the government became open to take an instant 5% cut in corporate income tax (CIT) rates to 25%, which was enforced retroactively to July 2020 after the law’s enactment in March 2021. Present tax perks, initially to be watered down quickly by the finance department under CITIRA, are maintained much longer under CREATE.

The idea is, with lower tax rates and steady incentives, higher earnings from corporates should drive companies to retain workers heavily battered by the health crisis. But this is also where the Duterte administration would come to the rescue of many corporations and conglomerates that have dirty power investments.

Data compiled by Philstar.com showed there were publicly-listed companies that have coal investments that posted higher earnings in 2021, the year financial results fully reflected the new CIT rates under CREATE.

The dataset only focused on publicly-listed companies because their financial statements are easily accessible. Three of these listed companies — Aboitiz Power Corp., AC Energy Corp. and San Miguel Corp. — already have a combined local market share of 47% in 2020, according to Statista, a data provider. Companies with interests in coal but did not declare nor recognize deferred tax assets in their annual financial statements were excluded from the data visualization.

In 2021, eight companies with coal in their power generation portfolio saw their earnings grow on an annual basis, with some firms even posting triple-digit bottom-line growth. Meanwhile, one company managed to narrow its losses while two firms returned to profits that year. However, SPC Power Corp., whose assets consist of diesel-fed and coal-fired generators, saw its net income dip 25.74% year-on-year in 2021 after damages to power facilities caused by Typhoon Odette sank the company to a net loss in the final quarter of last year.

Made with Flourish

Data compiled by Philstar.com also showed how the new CIT rates figured in these firms' deferred tax assets, an item on a company's balance sheet that reduces its taxable income in the future. A firm typically reports deferred tax assets when it overpays its taxes. And since CREATE was only enacted in 2021 but the lower CIT rate was retroactively applied to July 2020, there are firms that might have had overpaid their taxes because the old CIT rate was still used in their 2020 financial statements. The companies can recover the overpayments through tax credits.

The movement in deferred tax assets varied across companies in 2020 and 2021. Notably, Aboitiz Power, AC Energy and San Miguel reported increases in their deferred tax assets.

Of course, there were other factors that contributed to the earnings growth of these publicly-listed companies. As the country emerged from harsh lockdowns, demand for energy recovered, boosting the revenues of power companies. Moreover, there were data distortions in the year-on-year corporate earnings because of the so-called "low base effects", which magnified the growth numbers in 2021 because they were compared to figures in 2020, the year many businesses sank to losses and company earnings were extraordinarily low because of harsh lockdowns.

But overall, there are corporates in the Philippine Stock Exchange that recognized the benefits of CREATE, including DMCI Holdings, the parent of the power firm behind the upcoming coal plant in Palawan. In its financial statement, DMCI Holdings reported a one-off gain amounting to P955 million in 2021 that, the company said, mostly came from adjusted deferred tax because of CREATE.

Doing more

To be fair, enacting meaningful green policies has been a very hard task for many emerging economies compared to their developed counterparts, which have already reached the zenith of their industrial phase.

At the same time, transitioning to renewable energy sources, depending on who one asks, is either costly or requires great amount of political will.

For instance, industry titan Manuel V. Pangilinan — who has diversified interests in infrastructure, power, healthcare, water, and telcos in Southeast Asia — said on several accounts that the shift to sustainable and clean power could prove expensive, especially for corporations.

But this does not mean the Philippines is not doing anything. While the Philippines contributes only 0.3% to the global greenhouse gas emissions (GHG), the government said the country committed to reduce these emissions by 75% in 2030.

In 2020, the government announced it will no longer accept proposals to construct new coal power plants, a dramatic shift in energy policy that counts on declining costs of renewables to attract clean power investments. However, proposals for new coal projects that had had received environmental compliance certificates and permits from local government units prior to the announcement were exempted.

The coal moratorium was announced in tandem with the relaxation on foreign ownership limits in geothermal energy projects worth \$50 million or more, doubling down on the slow transition to clean power seen as a long-term fix to the Philippines' supply problems and now even sky-high power costs. Based on the energy department's latest Philippine Energy Plan (PEP), the government wants renewables to comprise 35% of the country's generation mix by 2030 and 50% by 2040.

In 2020, renewables accounted for 21.2% of the Philippines' power generation mix, according to data provider Statista.

But Laurence Delina, assistant professor at the Division of Environment and Sustainability at the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, believes the government could have done more to speed up the Philippines' transition to renewable energy.

Delina — who studies environmental sustainability and just transitions, with particular focus on sustainable energy transitions — said legislators and policymakers should have taken advantage of CREATE by inserting provisions that would “levy taxes on coal and other fossil fuels. Then using the collected taxes to finance the energy transition.”

“CREATE should have been as a platform to accelerate the energy transition. Dirty energy should be priced properly,” Delina said in an interview.

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THE MANILA TIMES

[More countries back arbitral award on SCS](#)

By Bernadette E. Tamayo

The Philippines has informed fellow member-states in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) that there is a "growing list" of countries supporting the 2016 arbitral award in the South China Sea (SCS).

On July 12, 2016, the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague, Netherlands ruled in favor of the Philippines as it declared so-called China's nine-dash line national boundary has no legal basis to claim historic rights to almost all resources in the SCS.

Ambassadors from Japan, Australia and France to the Philippines in separate tweets on July 12 have voiced support for a rules-based order in the Indo-Pacific region.

Foreign Affairs Undersecretary for Bilateral Relations and Asean Affairs Ma. Theresa Lazaro raised the Philippine priorities, including the assertion of the arbitral award in the SCS during the 55th Asean Foreign Ministers' Meeting (AMM) and Related Meetings held in Phnom Penh, Cambodia from July 30 to August 5.

Lazaro reiterated that the arbitral award and the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea "are the twin anchors of policy and actions of the Philippines on the West Philippine Sea."

She said that while the Philippines remains committed to efforts within Asean to resolve the SCS disputes, it is taking note of the growing list of countries supporting the award.

Lazaro represented Foreign Affairs Secretary Enrique Manalo during the foreign minister-level meetings. He tested positive for Covid-19 days before the start of the AMM.

The meetings allowed Asean member-states to discuss issues of common concern with each other and with external partners, including, among others, the situation in the SCS, the crisis in Myanmar, pandemic recovery, the situation in Ukraine and cross-strait developments, as well as traditional and non-traditional security issues, such as climate change, terrorism and cybersecurity.

Apart from the AMM, other foreign minister-level meetings included the Post-Ministerial Conferences with Dialogue Partners, the East Asia Summit (EAS) Foreign Ministers' Meeting, the Asean Plus Three Foreign Ministers' Meeting, the 29th Asean Regional Forum (ARF), and the Asean Foreign Ministers' Interface Meeting with the Asean Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights.

Lazaro voiced hope that the new EAS Plan of Action (2023-2027), which was adopted during the EAS Foreign Ministers' Meeting, will continue the momentum of identifying

concrete ways to address pressing regional and global challenges, such as public health emergencies, climate change and emerging opportunities in digital technologies, among the new generation of issues.

She also announced the Philippine hosting of the EAS Workshop on Maritime Cooperation in Manila in September.

"Maritime cooperation will remain at the heart of Philippine initiatives in the East Asia Summit."

As country coordinator for Asean-European Union Dialogue Relations, Lazaro co-chaired the Post-Ministerial Conference with the EU. The meeting adopted the Plan of Action to Implement the Asean-EU Strategic Partnership (2023-2027) and approved the convening of the Asean-EU Commemorative Summit on December 14 in Brussels to mark 45 years of Asean-EU Dialogue Relations.

She also delivered Asean's Common Statement on Asean-EU Dialogue Relations, which highlighted cooperation in cybersecurity, maritime security, trade, connectivity, Covid-19 pandemic response and post-pandemic recovery, environmental protection, and addressing climate change.

During the 29th ARF, Lazaro highlighted the importance of the forum as a platform for dynamic cooperation on global issues.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

BUSINESS WORLD

[Building a more climate-resilient Philippines](#)

By: Raymond Abrea

It's been three weeks since I arrived in Cambridge, Massachusetts. I never thought I would have to experience heat waves to know how serious climate change is. It's not even on the list of courses I want to study at the Harvard Kennedy School (HKS). But the discussion on climate change is part of our summer program, and it's quite intense.

It is also part of my ordeal, having to walk daily for 15-20 minutes under the heat of the sun from my apartment to HKS. It's definitely hotter than the summer in the Philippines. I even got a dry cough and a cold in the second week. But it's not COVID-19, that's climate change!

The first time I heard about climate change was in 2015. The Paris Agreement was all over the news. At that time, it seemed to me that the problem was solved already. I'm not sure how many people around the world did care much about it, but I joined our government in celebrating since the Philippines is a signatory of the climate agreement, without clearly understanding what it really meant for me and our country.

Unfortunately, the Philippines is a disaster-prone country and more vulnerable to the effects of climate change. While we are used to tropical storms and flash floods which usually result in the cancellation of classes (especially in Metro Manila), we have also been experiencing earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, and El Niño has been happening more often recently, and then the COVID-19 pandemic happened.

A new department to deal with disasters was already proposed prior to the pandemic. It is separate from the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC), an attached agency under the Department of National Defense, which is currently handling disaster-related concerns. In the opening of the 19th Congress, a proposal for the creation of the Department of Disaster Resilience (DDR) was filed again. In House Bill No. 13, it was reiterated that 74% of Filipinos and 80% of the country's land area are exposed to the risk of natural calamities.

Consequently, President Ferdinand Marcos, Jr. expressed his support for the creation of the new department during his first State of the Nation Address (SONA) on July 25. He said that renewable energy is on top of his climate agenda to further lower our carbon footprint. He briefly mentioned building new nuclear power plants, using more solar power, and providing investment incentives by clarifying the uncertain policies on upstream gas, particularly in the area close to the Malampaya gas field — a deep-water gas-condensate reservoir located offshore, 65 km northwest of the island of Palawan.

After attending the lectures and discussions on climate change as part of the MPA Summer Program at the HKS, I got even more confused and, at the same time, overwhelmed about how it affects the Philippines and what exactly are we doing back home.

So, I became more curious. I started reading and searching for all related laws and regulations, policies and programs, and anything about climate change.

I'm not a climate change expert but we all have to know and support what our country is doing to save the planet. A strategy roadmap is needed to engage all stakeholders, especially with the use of a balanced scorecard which the public can understand to monitor progress, similar to the World Bank Report on Ease of Doing Business.

As Co-Chair of the Ease of Doing Business on paying taxes, I have witnessed how all stakeholders, both from the public and private sectors, have been very much involved and committed to improving our competitiveness ranking in the World Bank report.

The Philippines has committed to 75% Greenhouse Gas (GHG) reduction and avoidance by 2030. With less than 1% of global greenhouse gas emissions, we are definitely not a major source of carbon emissions, unlike China, the US, and Russia who are the Top 3 countries with the largest carbon footprint. But why should we care? And who is on top of all these climate change initiatives?

The simple answer is we are all in this together. We have one earth to save, regardless of our country's CO₂ emission. We can choose to blame other countries, or resolve to contribute to mitigating the risks and effects of climate change.

In the Philippines, it's the Climate Change Commission (CCC) that is the sole policy-making body of the government tasked to coordinate, monitor, and evaluate the programs and action plans of the government relating to climate change.

As a fiscal policy and tax consultant, I have worked with the CCC on tax incentives and regulations to build resilience against climate change. In the same way that we strive to have an efficient tax system, a climate-resilient Philippines requires a whole government approach involving all stakeholders, not just to push for a climate agenda but to transition to a more sustainable lifestyle for every Filipino.

While we laud the CCC's leadership and accomplishments, we need a balanced scorecard to objectively measure the impact of all existing laws, particularly those granting tax incentives, whether they're really promoting green industries, cities, or jobs — e.g. the Renewable Energy Act of 2009 (RA 9513), the Green Jobs Act (RA 10771), the Philippine Clean Air Act of 1999 (RA 8749), and the Philippine Clean Water Act of 2004 (RA 9275), among others.

Given the challenges we face in implementing the existing laws related to climate change, the CCC must work closely with Congress to make sure mechanisms are in

place before new taxes are imposed. We have to be careful so as not to pass the burden of new taxes to the consumers.

The CCC will be in the best position to give an impact assessment and make recommendations as to what policies or best practices can be adopted to achieve our target of 75% GHG reduction by 2030. They should also be part of the discussion and deliberation in the Ways and Means Committee regarding the laundry list of proposed taxes, e.g., carbon tax, congestion tax, energy tax, air pollution tax, biodiversity services tax, single-use plastic tax, and even a border carbon adjustment so we can impose carbon tariffs on carbon intensive products.

In the end, we are one with the CCC in its vision of a climate-resilient and climate-smart Philippines with healthy, safe, prosperous, and self-reliant communities, and more environment-friendly, earth-loving and responsible Filipinos.

RMN ONLINE

[DepEd, nakiisa sa Climate Change Commission para mapalakas ang climate literacy](#)

Suportado ng Department of Education (DepEd) ang Climate Change Commission na palakasin ang climate literacy at suportahan ang pagtugon sa pabago-bago ng klima sa pamamagitan ng basic education curriculum upang turuan ang mga mag-aaral at personnel na may kaalaman sa klima.

Sa bisa ng Republic Act (RA) No. 9729 o Climate Change Act, ang DepEd Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Service ay pinapahalagahan ang climate education sa pamamagitan ng iba't ibang programa, proyekto, at aktibidades na naaayon sa bagong K-12 curriculum.

Ayon sa DepEd, ang konsepto ng climate change ay nakapaloob na sa K-12 curriculum sa mga sumusunod na asignatura, kabilang ang

- Science
- Health
- Araling Panlipunan
- Edukasyon sa Pagpapakatao
- Mathematics
- English at Filipino
- Edukasyong Pantahanan at Pangkabuhayan and Technology and Livelihood Economics,
- at Music, Arts, at PE

Habang ang konsepto naman ng climate change ay pinagsama na sa K-12 curriculum, kung saan mayroong kailangang palakasin sa kasalukuyang curriculum upang makapantay sa paghahatid ng kaalaman.

Matatandaan na ang kagawaran ay nakatutok upang pag-aralan ang kaalaman na may kaugnayan sa Climate Change Education (CCE) at makipag-ugnayan sa iba't ibang tanggapan at eksperto na kailangang maiangat ang kamalayan na naaayon sa multi-disciplinary climate change education.

THE MANILA TIMES

Climate change to be taught in schools

By: Kristina Maralit

The Climate Change Commission (CCC) on Monday hailed the Department of Education's (DepEd) move to integrate climate change into the basic education curriculum.

In a statement, CCC Secretary Robert Borje underscored the importance of including climate education in the K to 12 program as this is key in raising the awareness of the Filipino youth.

"Climate change education is imperative as we develop our homegrown science, and engage our children, youth, educators and education administrators in transformative climate actions," Borje said.

"A strengthened curriculum integrating climate change education is a vital step in empowering the citizenry in thinking critically and preparing for the challenges of climate change," he added.

Consistent with the pronouncement of President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. toward a "Climate Resilient and Climate Smart Philippines 2050," the CCC will continue to work with the education department and other key agencies in transforming the country into upper middle income, low carbon and climate-resilient economy by 2050.

DepEd established its Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Service (DRRMS) to ensure the integration of climate literacy in the basic education sector pursuant to the Climate Change Act of 2009.

The DRRMS has been promoting climate education through different programs, projects and activities aligned with the updated K to 12 curricula as mandated by Republic Act 9729 or the "Climate Change Act."

Additionally, climate change concepts have been integrated with the curriculum in subjects such as Science, Health, Araling Panlipunan (Social Studies), Edukasyon sa Pagpapa-katao (Values Education), Mathematics, English, Filipino, Edukasyong Pantahanan at Pangkabuhayan (Home Economics and Livelihood Education), Technology and Livelihood Economics, and Music, Arts and Physical Education.

=END=