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By: Dake Kang, Victoria Milko, and Lori Hinnant

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[ADB commits to supporting PHL climate, infra efforts](#)

By: Diego Robles

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has expressed its support for the Philippines' efforts on climate mitigation, expanding employment, and developing infrastructure, the Department of Finance (DoF) said.

Moving and going 'forward faster'

Top experts share their insights on how the Philippines and businesses can speed up the country's economic recovery, grow further, and build a more inclusive and sustainable future for all

DAILY TRIBUNE

K-12 upgrade focuses on environment

By: Neil Alcober

The Department of Education (DepEd) said yesterday it will support a basic education curriculum that aims to produce climate literate students guided by teachers who are conscious of environmental issues.

GMA NEWS ONLINE

Even modest climate change imperils northern forests — study

By Patrick Galey

PARIS, France - Even relatively moderate heating and rainfall loss could dramatically alter the make-up of Earth's northern forests, risking their biodiversity rich ecosystems and undermining their ability to store planet-warming carbon pollution, researchers said Wednesday.

PHILIPPINE INQUIRER

How do we empower MSMEs to be resilient and sustainable?

Teddy Monroy, country representative for United Nations Industrial Development Organization, said this during the Inquirer Project Rebound's webinar on ensuring the resiliency and sustainability of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) with their recovery. This was in reference to the COVID-19 crisis, which truly exposed how MSMEs, despite being "the lifeblood of the economy," is the sector "most vulnerable to both environmental and economic shocks."

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

DOE to focus on expanding indigenous energy sources

By: Kris Crismundo

Manila – Department of Energy (DOE) Secretary Raphael Lotilla said on Tuesday the agency will focus on expanding and harnessing indigenous energy sources as its long-term strategy toward energy security.

[House creates special committee on nuclear energy](#)

Manila – The House of Representatives on Tuesday created a special committee that will be tasked to tackle policies and programs relating to the production, utilization, and conservation of nuclear energy.

PHYS ORG

[On the menu at a UK restaurant: carbon footprint](#)

By: Valentine Graveleau

The menu at The Canteen in southwest England doesn't just let diners know how much a dish costs. They can also check its carbon footprint.

THE MANILA TIMES

[\[OPINON \] What does a climate emergency declaration really mean?](#)

By: Yen Makabenta

Why am I not surprised that Makati Mayor Mar-Len Abigail Binay is so hellbent and obstinate in declaring a state of climate emergency in Makati?

CCC IN THE NEWS:

MANILA BULLETIN

[DepEd strengthens climate education in K to 12 curriculum](#)

By: Merlina Hernando-Malipot

The Department of Education (DepEd) reiterated its commitment to strengthening climate education in the basic education curriculum.

REMATE ONLINE

[Pagpapalakas ng climate education sa K-12 curriculum suportado ng DepEd](#)

Manila, Philippines- Nagpahayag ng suporta ang Department of Education (DepEd) sa mga inisyatiba na naglalayon na paigtingin ang climate literacy sa bansa.

Information and Knowledge Division

BUSINESS MIRROR

[‘The Sacrifice Zone’: Myanmar bears cost of green energy](#)

By: Dake Kang, Victoria Milko, and Lori Hinnant

In the wake of rare earth element mining, an AP investigation has found environmental destruction, the theft of land from villagers and the funneling of money to brutal militias with links to Myanmar’s secretive military government.

The birds no longer sing, and the herbs no longer grow. The fish no longer swim in rivers that have turned a murky brown. The animals do not roam, and the cows are sometimes found dead. The people in this northern Myanmar forest have lost a way of life that goes back generations. But if they complain, they, too, face the threat of death.

This forest is the source of several key metallic elements known as rare earths, often called the vitamins of the modern world. Rare earths now reach into the lives of almost everyone on the planet, turning up in everything from hard drives and cellphones to elevators and trains. They are especially vital to the fast-growing field of green energy, feeding wind turbines and electric car engines. And they end up in the supply chains of some of the most prominent companies in the world, including General Motors, Volkswagen, Mercedes, Tesla and Apple.

But an AP investigation has found that their universal use hides a dirty open secret in the industry: Their cost is environmental destruction, the theft of land from villagers and the funneling of money to brutal militias, including at least one linked to Myanmar’s secretive military government. As demand soars for rare earths along with green energy, the abuses are likely to grow.

“This rapid push to build out mining capacity is being justified in the name of climate change,” said Julie Michelle Klinger, author of the book *Rare Earths Frontiers*, who is leading a federal project to trace illicit energy minerals. “There’s still this push to find the right place to mine them, which is a place that is out of sight and out of mind.”

The AP investigation drew on dozens of interviews, customs data, corporate records and Chinese academic papers, along with satellite imagery and geological analysis gathered by the environmental non-profit Global Witness, to tie rare earths from Myanmar to the supply chains of 78 companies.

About a third of the companies responded. Of those, about two-thirds didn’t or wouldn’t comment on their sourcing, including Volkswagen, which said it was conducting due diligence for rare earths. Nearly all said they took environmental protection and human rights seriously.

Some companies said they audited their rare earth supply chains; others didn’t or required only supplier self-assessments. GM said it understood “the risks of heavy rare earths metals” and would source from an American supplier soon.

Tesla did not respond to repeated requests for comment, and Mercedes said they contacted suppliers to learn more in response to this story. Apple said “a majority” of their rare earths were recycled and they found “no evidence” of any from Myanmar, but experts say in general there is usually no way to make sure.

Just as dirty rare earths trickle down the supply chains of companies, they also slip through the cracks of regulation. In 2010, in response to war in the Congo, Congress required companies to disclose the origin of so-called conflict minerals — tantalum, tin, gold and tungsten — and promise their sourcing does not benefit armed groups. But the law does not cover rare earths. Audits are left up to individual companies, and no single agency is held accountable.

The State Department, which leads work on securing the US rare earths supply, did not respond to repeated requests for comment. But experts say the government weighs the regulation of rare earths against other green goals, such as the sales and use of electric vehicles. With ongoing negotiations in Congress, the issue has become increasingly touchy, they say.

Rare earths are also omitted from the European Union’s 2021 regulation on conflict minerals. A European Commission statement noted gaps in oversight of the supply chain stretching to Europe, and said “it is yet unclear how” a Chinese push to regulate rare earths will work.

With no regulation or alternatives, companies have quietly continued shipping rare earths without environmental, social and governance audits, known as ESG.

“What would be the result if now the world would say, ‘We want to do ESG audits on all rare earths production?’” said Thomas Kruegger, director of Ginger International Trade & Investment, which does mineral and metal supply chain management. “The result would be that 70% of production would need to be closed down.” The story of rare earths is one of a naked grab for resources while leaving the wreckage to other countries.

The United States offshored its rare earths mining to China in the 1980s because of environmental and cost issues. China’s leader at the time, Deng Xiaoping, declared rare earths China’s answer to “oil in the Middle East.” Tens of thousands of Chinese in the countryside discovered that they could make more in a month of mining than years of farming. For decades the industry prospered. China became the world’s foremost miner of rare earths. A Beijing magazine called the profits “more addictive than drugs.”

Then, stung by public criticism, officials in Beijing declared war on the country’s dirty industries, including rare earths mining. At a 2012 press conference in Beijing, a top Chinese industry official brandished photos of the devastation — pockmarked land stripped bare of vegetation.

Caught in the crossfire were miners like Guo, who asked to be identified by his last name only.

For years, Guo, a former car repairman, earned a handsome living after joining the booming rare earths industry in his native Jiangxi province. Then Beijing began enforcing some of the world's strongest environmental laws, shutting down mom-and-pop operations like his. Chinese satellites now snap photos from space, hunting for hidden mines.

But even while the supply from China is now monitored, the global demand for rare earths is expected to explode by 300% to 700% by 2040, according to the International Energy Agency. The proposed Inflation Reduction Act in the U.S. would increase demand even more by subsidizing the sale of electric vehicles in one of the world's largest markets.

"The disturbing reality is that the cash that fuels these abuses ultimately comes from the world's fast-growing demand for these minerals, driven by the scaling up of green energy technologies," said Clare Hammond, a senior researcher at Global Witness, which also conducted field work in Myanmar.

China is also responding to competition from Europe and its greatest rival, the United States, which has called its dependence on rare earths from China a "national security risk." Concerned that its shrinking reserves could allow Western countries to break its stranglehold on the industry, China encouraged companies to look abroad.

"Environmental controls have become much stricter," said a government trade researcher, who declined to be named because he was not authorized to speak to the media. "That's why imports have increased. It's better to get rare earths from abroad."

The Chinese foreign, industrial and environmental ministries and the Jiangxi regional government did not respond to requests for comment.

As mines in China shuttered, ore prices rose. In neighboring Myanmar, home to some of the world's richest deposits of what are known as heavy rare earths, opportunity beckoned. Thousands of Jiangxi miners streamed across the border.

"It reminds me of the European colonial attitudes towards Africa," said an industry analyst, speaking on condition of anonymity to avoid damaging ties with the Chinese government. "You just can't be relying on third-world-type mining practices in a dictatorship like Myanmar. It's not sustainable."

That does not bother Guo.

In 2019, he got a call. An old contact was opening up shop in Myanmar and needed a technician. Would he like to go?

Guo said yes, joining what he describes as a modern-day gold rush. He recounted primitive working conditions, including clouds of mosquitoes and nights spent burning logs

in ramshackle cabins. The miners dug hundreds of feet deep with shovels and their bare, callused hands.

“I lived in a virgin forest, I lived like a savage,” he said.

He and other Chinese workers in Myanmar described a web of small, unlicensed private mines that sell to China’s big state-owned mining conglomerates – directly or through trade intermediaries. When cash changes hands, few questions are asked.

“I’m only responsible for digging the mountain up and selling it,” Guo said. “The rest is none of my business.”

Since 2015, imports from Myanmar have grown almost a hundredfold, according to UN trade data. Myanmar is now China’s single largest source of heavy rare earths, making up nearly half of the supply, according to Chinese customs data and expert estimates.

A few years ago, there were just two or three mines in Myanmar, then dozens. Today there are hundreds, and Guo guesses there may soon be thousands. At this pace, he predicts, it won’t be long before Myanmar’s rare earths are all gone.

But Guo cares little about preservation or politics.

“They talk about future generations, I’m talking about survival today,” he said. “We just see if we can make money. It’s that simple.”

There is a name for what Myanmar has become: A “sacrifice zone,” or a place that destroys itself for the good of the world.

The sacrifice is visible from the air, in toxic turquoise pools that dot the landscape covered by mountain jungles just a few years ago. Since rare earth clays in Myanmar are soft and near the surface, they can easily be scooped into these pools of chemicals. Satellite imagery commissioned by Global Witness showed more than 2,700 of these pools at almost 300 separate locations.

The leaching agents have tainted tributaries of Myanmar’s main river, prompted landslides and poisoned the earth, according to witnesses, miners and local activists. Water is no longer drinkable, and endangered species such as tigers, pangolins and red pandas have fled the area.

A villager who lives along a river some 15 miles from the center of the mining sites said his wife used to catch and sell fish. Now the few they can catch make them ill, so they must buy from elsewhere at higher prices instead. Every time he enters the water, his feet feel itchy.

“There are no fish along the creek, not even small fishes,” said the villager, who asked to be anonymous for his safety. “Everything went extinct.”

Militias are rampant in these northern forest frontier areas, with at least one tied to the Border Guard Force backed by the Myanmar military, or Tatmadaw. After a coup last year, the Tatmadaw is under international sanctions for human rights abuses, which means the rare earths money it gets from the militia may be going into a violent crackdown against civilians.

With the armed militias in control, villagers have no recourse to defend their land.

When village leaders filed a complaint about the effects of rare earth mining and testing on land needed for black cardamom, walnuts and livestock, a high-ranking militia leader aligned with the Border Guard Force angrily summoned them. He said rare earth mining would proceed with or without their agreement.

“You, village leaders, should solve this issue,” he yelled as he pointed to the leaders, according to a recording of the January meeting obtained by Global Witness, which was shared with and verified by the AP. “Otherwise, I’ll have to start shooting and killing people. Do not underestimate me. I am not a child – this is not child’s play.”

The Myanmar military, militia-owned mining companies and militia leaders did not respond to requests for comment.

In the meantime, mining projects continue to get ever closer to the land villagers are trying to protect.

“We dare not complain,” said a villager, who also asked to be anonymous for his safety. “If we say something ... they beat us. We don’t want to be in prison.”

The militias and warlords have turned Myanmar’s frontier with China into a modern-day wild west, with each tiny fiefdom demanding a cut of the profits that flow through its land.

“[The money] has to be going to people that are not nice people,” said an executive at a Chinese magnets maker, who declined to be named to speak on a sensitive topic. “There’s no way out of it.”

For Dong, a Chinese miner, the hundreds of dollars he hands to the armed men lining the roads in Myanmar are the price of doing business.

“To enter Myanmar, you pay,” he said, declining to give his first name to speak on a sensitive topic. “It’s all about the money.”

Dong said police have told him that the rare earths he extracts can only be sold to China, not to the Americans or Japanese, because they are China’s strategic resources. He is under no illusions about the damage from acids so strong that they corrode the shovels of his bulldozers and excavators – something he’d never seen before.

“This stuff is unbelievable,” he said. “It’s definitely polluting.”

As rare earths from Myanmar travel around the world, they pass through many hands. The most destructive mining is for heavy rare earths, which are critical to make powerful magnets heat-resistant. Ores are trucked across the border from illicit mines in Myanmar to southern China, where state-owned companies buy them up in sacks by the thousands. Among them: Minmetals, China Southern Rare Earth, and Rising Nonferrous Metals.

Some 70% of China Southern's rare earth ores came from Myanmar, with the rest from recycling, Jiangxi customs official Liu Jingjing wrote in a paper. China Southern, among the world's largest processors of heavy rare earths, has no active mining in China, according to Liu's paper. A company post highlighted how it is "seizing overseas rare earth resources" and "opening up" imports from Myanmar.

Minmetals, another major producer, warned shareholders in recent annual reports that it relied heavily on imports, as its one major mining project in China didn't produce enough. Rising Nonferrous, the third company, wrote on their website in 2020 that their trading subsidiary had won approval from Chinese customs to import Myanmar heavy rare earth ores.

All three companies did not respond to calls, emails and faxes requesting comment.

Those companies in turn supply three major magnet companies: Yantai Zhenghai Magnetic Material, JL MAG, and Zhong Ke San Huan, public agreements show. Rising Nonferrous also supplies Guangdong TDK, a joint venture with Tokyo-based TDK, one of the world's largest manufacturers of cell phone, laptop, and hard drive components and a supplier of Apple and Samsung. TDK and the magnet companies did not respond to requests for comment.

As the ore is transformed into magnets, it is separated, refined and melted, according to interviews with miners and magnet engineers. Along the way, materials from different sources often get mixed, making it difficult to track any particular shipment of rare earths from Myanmar to a specific batch of magnets.

Chinese magnet makers often don't know where their rare earths come from because many multinational companies don't ask, an engineer at one company noted.

"There's never been like, where do you get your rare earth?" said the engineer, declining to be named to speak candidly. "There should be concern, but there's no concern within the industry."

The magnet companies go on to supply intermediaries like components manufacturers and trading companies as well as big brands. The rare earths can pass through many more tiers of suppliers before reaching a consumer.

"The transparency in this industry is just so poor that the companies don't know," said Kristin Vekasi, a professor studying rare earth sourcing at the University of Maine.

Among global carmakers, GM, Volkswagen, and Mercedes said they expect suppliers to adhere to codes of conduct and due diligence, and Mercedes added that they were designing new motors to eliminate heavy rare earths. Ford said they conduct audits and request suppliers to identify sourcing.

Hyundai denied using rare earths from Myanmar, and Stellantis said that “to the best of Stellantis’ knowledge,” their rare earth supply chains only involve operations in China. Some auto parts makers, including Bosch, Brose and Nidec, also said they were assured by the magnet companies that their components were free of rare earths from Myanmar. Others, such as Continental AG and BorgWarner, said they expected suppliers to adhere to their codes of conduct.

However, only an order from the Chinese government could force companies to separate rare earths from Myanmar and China, according to Nabeel Mancheri, secretary general of the Rare Earth Industry Association. The group is trying to build a blockchain-based verification to link up international customers with the Chinese companies “upstream.”

“Nothing exists on auditing the Chinese supply chain,” he said. “Downstream players simply rely on whatever certificate they get from Chinese companies.”

Among electronics giants, Samsung said they did not tolerate rights violations or environmental damage but did not answer other specific questions about their suppliers. Toshiba, Panasonic and Hitachi did not comment on suppliers but said they would suspend working with businesses violating human rights.

Thyssenkrupp said it had “initiated measures” to find out more about the origin of the minerals for its magnet supplier. Other machinery manufacturers like Mitsubishi did not respond.

Among wind turbine manufacturers, Siemens Gamesa, which has projects in the United State and Europe, said it audits immediate suppliers and is preparing to trace those further upstream. It said “supplier feedbacks” showed only rare earths from China. Other wind companies, like Xinjiang Goldwind, did not respond.

But Klinger, the expert on illicit minerals tracing, said the only way for a company to be certain to avoid rare earths from Myanmar is to have their supply chain “entirely outside of Myanmar, China and potentially outside Southeast Asia.” She said there are cleaner ways to mine, but they cost more – a huge hurdle in the cutthroat world of commodities.

Mike Coffman, a former congressman who pushed for the original US conflict minerals rules a decade ago, said he would like to see an expansion of the domestic supply of rare earths minerals, which is now before Congress. And US Sen. John Cornyn, a Texas Republican, introduced a measure this year aimed at reducing US reliance on China for rare earths and other critical minerals.

However, alternatives are still a long way in the future. In 2022, the US and Australian governments both backed domestic rare earths projects with multimillion-dollar financing, but facilities are years and tons of metals behind China's current capacity.

Other countries with rare earths deposits are reluctant to mine them. Greenland's parliament last year voted to halt a rare earth mining project, and efforts to develop a promising deposit in Sweden stalled because of local objections.

In the meantime, villagers still protest in one area in northern Myanmar where the black cardamom and walnuts grow – for now. Standing in the green mountains under a tree, a villager made it clear why they continue to raise their voices even when there's been no recourse for others just a few mountains away.

"They are mining rare earth everywhere and we are no longer safe to drink water," she said. "There is nothing to support the children. Nothing to eat."

BUSINESS WORLD

[ADB commits to supporting PHL climate, infra efforts](#)

By: Diego Robles

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has expressed its support for the Philippines' efforts on climate mitigation, expanding employment, and developing infrastructure, the Department of Finance (DoF) said.

"I am very pleased to hear that the Bank is fully committed to helping us fulfill our goal of inclusive and sustainable long-term growth by aligning the ADB-Philippines Country Partnership Strategy with this administration's socioeconomic priorities," Finance Secretary Benjamin E. Diokno said in a tweet after meeting with ADB Country Director Kelly Bird.

At the end of 2021, the ADB was the Philippines' second-largest source of official development assistance (ODA), with financing of nearly \$9 billion, representing 28% of all ODA.

The bank said its lending program to the Philippines averages \$3 billion a year until 2024.

In a statement on Wednesday, the ADB said it intends to focus on three key priorities for the Philippines in 2024-2029 — climate action, transport and communication, and investing in welfare projects. Mr. Diokno said the ADB's priorities do not conflict with the administration's eight-point socioeconomic agenda, which include addressing inflation and creating "more jobs, quality jobs, and green jobs" via investment in infrastructure, human capital, and digitalization.

The administration has signaled its intent to focus on railways, expressways, disaster-mitigating infrastructure and irrigation. It has also identified agriculture, tourism, financial inclusion, healthcare, and social assistance as priority areas.

The ADB has 28 active loan programs worth \$8.33 billion in the Philippines, in areas like infrastructure, local economic development, and human capital.

"Among ongoing projects are the Malolos-Clark Railway Project, EDSA Greenways Project, projects on local governance and senior high school support, and programs for COVID-19 (coronavirus disease 2019) recovery," the DoF said.

The ADB is also supporting Philippine efforts to transition to clean energy.

"We will deal with the impact of climate change while bringing down energy costs through developing clean and renewable energy sources, such as hydro, geothermal, wind, and solar power. We will work together with the international community, such as our ongoing partnership with the ADB, to accelerate our transition from coal to clean energy," Mr.

Diokno told the G20 last month. Consultations to refine the ADB's framework will commence in October this year, the DoF said.

In July, the government outlined its plan to set aside 5-6% of gross domestic product (GDP) for infrastructure spending.

The government's debt-to-GDP ratio eased to 62.1% at the end of June from 63.5% the previous quarter, still above the 60% threshold considered manageable for developing economies.

The national debt was a record P12.79 trillion at the end of June

BUSINESS WORLD

Moving and going 'forward faster'

Top experts share their insights on how the Philippines and businesses can speed up the country's economic recovery, grow further, and build a more inclusive and sustainable future for all

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP), together with the national government, is committed to bringing the economy back to its pre-pandemic growth level.

On our part, BSP is determined to help sustain economic recovery by creating an appropriate, growth-enabling and growth-enhancing macroeconomic environment through its three pillars of price stability, financial stability, and safe and efficient payments and settlements system. By successfully fulfilling its three core mandates, the BSP can help create the conditions conducive to economic growth. Nurturing the economy, including addressing inequality and resource distribution, is not the direct mandate of the central bank but a by-product of doing its three duties — and doing these well. That said, we will endeavor to do so, mindful of the risks from developments both locally and globally.

As we remain vigilant against risks to the inflation outlook. We will also carefully coordinate with other government agencies in implementing non-monetary interventions, so as to mitigate the impact of persistent supply-side factors on inflation.

We will continue to craft banking policies and regulations that would help ensure that the Philippines' financial system continues to be sound and stable. We are aware of the key role that MSMEs (micro, small and medium enterprises) play in propelling growth at the grassroots, so we will continue to develop policies that will address their needs, as the country continues to lift itself from the deep impact of the pandemic.

Financial inclusion and the digitalization of financial services are also important to our economy as they enable more Filipinos to reap the benefits of economic growth. As such, we will foster an environment where financial innovation would be safe and responsive to the needs across sectors of the economy.

Against this backdrop of creating a growth-enabling macro environment, the BSP believes the county will achieve a faster, sustainable and inclusive economic recovery as we focus on key areas including:

Strengthening the health-care system. The government needs to craft long-term plans and strategies for the healthcare system so that it will emerge from the crisis stronger than before. It should foster closer public-private collaboration to bring about innovations in the health sector and further develop the country's health-care infrastructure. In addition, it should increase investments in human capital, particularly in doctors, nurses, and other health-care professionals. The universal health-care system must be overhauled. The use of digital and IT systems must be promoted to make health services readily available, particularly in remote areas.

Modernizing and boosting agriculture. Low labor productivity has plagued the agriculture sector due to inefficient production methods and low investments in the sector. Also, government funding to agriculture must be increased but should be well targeted to sub-sectors and goods that have comparative advantage. Modernizing agriculture will require upgrading R&D, investing in new and climate-smart technologies, and providing the right incentives for farmers and agricultural workers to increase productivity.

Promoting manufacturing through sound industrial policy. Sound industrial policy focuses on innovation and new technologies at the national and regional levels.

The government can promote manufacturing by supporting sectors that have strong backward and forward linkages. Manufacturers that have high labor absorption, especially those that can provide opportunities for less educated workers, must also be adequately supported. This industrial policy should also foster closer academe-private sector collaboration to maximize commercial returns to innovations resulting from R&D.

Accelerating information technology and digitization. Faster adoption of technologies should increase productivity in the industrial sectors, including manufacturing, power, mining, oil and gas, and agriculture.

These technologies exploit improvements in data collection, computing power, and connectivity. They include internet of things (IoT), advanced analytics, robotics, automation, and advanced engineering techniques like 3-D printing. Various programs can be implemented to help MSMEs benefit from these new technologies faster. One-stop platforms and training programs could also be created to ease the transformation of these businesses in areas like targeted marketing, consumer behavior insights, logistics, and procurement

Preparing for a blended and hybrid educational system. Covid-19 derailed efforts to improve the quality of education. Significant investments in blended learning must be made such that the most essential learning competencies are highlighted. A curriculum review towards rationalizing and strengthening the K-12 and tertiary programs must also be done. Investment in teachers' training and professional development must also be increased. Collaboration of community, school, parents, and learners in school improvement plans and governance must be fostered.

Dr. Felipe M. Medalla
Governor
Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas

UNDP Philippines

The pandemic has reversed decades of progress made in the fight against poverty. It has also brought in a “new normal” that is detrimental to the poor: more difficult access to healthcare, setbacks in educating our children in a remote set-up, risks to our environment and, the limited access of families to clean water and sanitation. COVID-19 worsened inequalities and exposed the precarity being faced by millions of Filipinos in the fringes of society.

As we pave the way to sustainable recovery, it is vital that we align our collective actions with the Philippine Development Plan and the UN Agenda 2030 to achieve the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The 17 SDGs are integrated — that is, action in one SDG will affect outcomes in others, and that development must balance social, economic and environmental sustainability. The 2030 Agenda puts forward targets to recreate a world where NO ONE lives in extreme poverty. Where there is no inequality. Where we use our resources wisely and sustainably. Where we do not continue to degrade our environment. Where our governments are accountable to the people and the people are accountable to the planet we live in. The SDGs are far more than inspirations or words of good intent. They provide a guide for action in the key areas where countries, including the Philippines, will have to invest in order to move forward better after years of battling a pandemic.

Government plays a critical role to set a clear polies that can create an enabling environment for the Global Goals. They play a major role in shaping where and how resources are used. It is possible to avoid the waste, inefficiency, and corruption that ambiguous and contradictory policies – such as fossil fuel subsidies – encourage today.

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Government plays a critical role to set a clear policies that can create an enabling environment for the Global Goals. They play a major role in shaping where and how resources are used. It is possible to avoid the waste, inefficiency, and corruption that ambiguous and contradictory policies – such as fossil fuel subsidies – encourage today. The private sector, undoubtedly, also makes a significant contribution towards pandemic recovery and achieving the SDGs. By being “greener,” they can create:

MORE JOBS: Approximately 380 million jobs can be created, 90% of these are in developing countries

MORE OPPORTUNITIES: \$12 trillion worth of market opportunities can be opened with sustainable business models

MORE VALUE: 2-3x growth compared to average GDP growth over the next 10-15 years

Mobilizing investment and an action agenda towards delivering the Global Goals requires the alignment of interests, incentives and policies between the public and private sector. To deliver, all parties need to cooperate more than ever before and for

that to happen, trust across them is crucial. Portfolios and investment decision-making need to be shifted to make SDGs, green finance, sustainable infrastructure and development become the norm. Businesses must make sure they create well-paid jobs and provide decent working conditions and training. In order to get there, investors must adapt their strategies to deliver not only financial results, but positive social and environmental outcomes as well. We look forward to seeing more investors and business leaders commit to investing in innovative opportunities that deliver strong financial returns while reducing poverty and inequality, advancing health and education, and protecting the environment.

Dr. Selva Ramachandran
Resident Representative
UNDP Philippines

International Finance Corporation

The Philippines, like most countries in the region, is slowly starting to recover from the impacts of COVID-19. The latest estimates by the World Bank show the economy grew 8.3% in the first quarter. Despite favorable economic conditions ahead, the reality is the needs of the Philippines still greatly exceed the government's financial capacity. Just as in other countries, billions of dollars in private finance will be needed to bridge the country's gaps in infrastructure and connectivity and improve its resilience to climate change.

So, to move forward faster towards a better Philippines, the private sector can help create a digital economy far more accessible to people through improved infrastructure and digital platforms. The Philippines is home to over 73 million internet users. The country needs a significant number of new towers and data centers to keep up with rapidly increasing network capacity requirements. Shared infrastructure will be key in addressing this need. It can be done. IFC just partnered with a new tower company, CREI Phils. Inc. to build 600 new towers by next year to be shared on an open-access basis, a first for a telco company in the Philippines.

Let's also make it easier for small businesses to access digital platforms. The pandemic has shown us digital tools are crucial for micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) to thrive and survive. Growsari, an IFC client, is part of this digital transformation by providing sari-sari stores with e-services including telco loads, bills pay, e-commerce and wifi, allowing store owners to maximize their capital and easily expand their business. GrowSari's platform also generates crucial data and insights into

the stores' operations while providing affordable, on-demand inventory and working capital loans.

Clearly, the private sector will also be vital in helping move towards a better country by bringing in the financing needed to meet other challenges, such as with infrastructure and health.

But an overarching need is to work together to meet the financing needs to tackle climate change. It's not just a job for government. The private sector and financial institutions play a crucial role in aligning and transitioning their business to support the country's climate goals.

IFC has played a big role in creating a market for sustainable finance in the country, not only through the issuance of the first green bond, but also in helping the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) become a member of the Sustainable Banking Network, to support the BSP in promoting good governance and effective risk management among Philippine banks. IFC also helped the country's largest private bank, BDO Unibank, to issue its first blue bond, with proceeds to tackle marine pollution and preserve clean water resources.

For securing the Philippines' future, there's clearly a need to keep up the momentum. Ahead of COP27, IFC will stage a climate finance forum in September, bringing together global and industry experts to promote green lending and climate investment opportunities. It's part of an IFC initiative to encourage banks in the Philippines, Egypt, Mexico, and South Africa to boost climate lending.

There is a lot of ground to cover, with zero time to waste. But we know securing a more inclusive and sustainable future for the Philippines will only be possible by drawing on the innovation and financing of the private sector.

Jean-Marc Arbogast
Country Manager for the Philippines
International Finance Corporation

Acumen Strategy Consultants

To speed up business recovery and grow faster, there are three major imperatives we are seeing based on all our researches and client engagements:

First, Customer Centricity. Reconnecting with customers to understand the needs and motivations behind their behaviors, decision making and purchasing patterns has never been a more pressing imperative given a lot of market shifts that we saw during the pandemic. This requires a deliberate effort and real discipline, not just lip-service. Identifying a core target segment of customers whose needs can be met by the business' products and services in a relevant, differentiated, and credible way is the fundamental starting point. The rest of the task is to execute very well across the marketing and sales mix — pricing, distribution, customer service, communications, and logistics.

Second, Strategic Thinking coupled with Agile Execution. Market sizes have contracted, competitive heat is up and resources are limited — financial, time and organizational energy. Business leaders need to invest time in stepping back, assessing the situation as rigorously as possible and making hard, deliberate choices on where to play and how to win. Once there is a plan, be ready to execute but with an agile mindset of constantly learning, re-applying successes, and adjusting for wrong assumptions.

Third, Organizational Transformation. This is the most challenging yet one of the most critical imperative C-leaders have told us in our pandemic research. The organization must be calibrated – its team structure, culture, as well as leadership approach – in order to meet changing customer needs and challenging market dynamics. Old ways of working must be unlearned (especially with digitalization), foundational skills must be re-learned and new skills must be learned and embedded. All these start with deep employee listening and organizational assessment.

Bottomline, businesses will go forward faster if they calibrate their business and organizational engines in response to changing landscapes. To do so, they'd benefit from external expertise to navigate through these steps who can provide objective, unbiased perspectives to enable them in making the tough decisions and adapting to change.

Pauline Fermin
President and CEO
Acumen Strategy Consultants

Bain & Company

We are excited to have established Bain & Company's physical presence in Manila this year and look forward to helping businesses in the Philippines. With a more challenged and disrupted macro-economic environment (e.g., rising energy prices, supply chain

turmoil, looming recession), our local leadership team together with our global experts have continued to help our clients work through their mitigation plans. The good news is that we have seen increased investment activity through COVID, attracted by the pace of consumer change, increased digitalization and a dynamic entrepreneurial environment.

Looking at 2022-2023, GDP (gross domestic product) forecasts have been revised downwards; however, we believe a couple of factors are helping to insulate Southeast Asian economies from broader macro turbulence resulting in a business outlook that is relatively more positive than the rest of world. Actions taken by companies today will be pivotal. Our research has found that companies gains and losses are significantly magnified in periods of economic downturns than during stable times. Businesses in the Philippines can position themselves for growth by carefully tweaking their strategies to adapt for a recession. These include actions such as (i) surgically restructuring costs before the downturn, (ii) diligently managing liquidity and the balance sheet, (iii) obsessively focusing on customers, and (iv) aggressively pursuing M&A opportunities.

The 'new normal' has become far more complex, with the now rising cost of capital, ambitious environmental, social, and corporate governance (ESG) commitments and material shortages in the global supply chain. These are critical nuances that will determine whether companies can ride out the recession and emerge from it more successful than when they began.

Patricia Buenaventura Nichol
Partner and Office Head
Bain & Company's Manila office

Boston Consulting Group

When faced with the extraordinary challenge of a global pandemic in 2020, the business community and public sector came together and collaborated at an unprecedented speed and scale to meet the challenge. In adversity, new ways of collaborating have come to life and 'symbiotic' relationships have helped mitigate both health and economic damages. The new Presidency has clearly registered the value of close public-private collaboration with the set up of its Private Sector Advisory Council, as a way to actively address and sustain dialogue between sector groups.

Defining a bold ambition for the country across a set of national priorities (e.g.: healthcare, education, financial inclusion, competitiveness) should help crystalize the national change agenda and provide clarity to all stakeholders. Businesses should act with boldness and confidence to further unlock the Philippines growth potential for the

next decade, with a specific focus on addressing the most acute pain points and challenges of more market segments. Accelerating financial inclusion, digital inclusion, and work force inclusion would specifically be among the priorities.

Anthony Oundjian
Managing Director & Senior Partner
Boston Consulting Group

Ipsos Philippines

Vicky V. Abad

We are in a period of continued change. In our recent Ipsos surveys, both local and global, we see signals of moving on from the COVID-19 pandemic (turning endemic) and consumers' worries shifting towards the rising inflation rates. Are we still in an era of constant disruption? How can we move Forward Faster as businesses and as a nation? If we apply long-term foresight and map out our certainties, we will have better-informed strategies and decisions in the future as it occurs.

While it is too early to tell the full impact of our current realities, we can look at the macro forces shaping our Planet, People, Systems, and Technology. Let's look at "People" as a macro force, one of Philippines' strengths is having a young and dynamic population ready to drive growth. When businesses and government initiatives focus on supporting and empowering this segment through education, we can better equip them as the world shifts to a service and knowledge economy. Aside from this, improving connectivity by strengthening communication infrastructure creates an even more literate and globally connected society. Down the line, funneling resources to education allows for better opportunities for employment and livelihood creation.

In the Ipsos 2021 Global Trends Survey, 89% of Filipinos surveyed believe there is a climate emergency. This is evident with our new economy of disrupted [just-in-time] supply chains and growing concern for food and water insecurity due to agricultural issues. Considering these and looking at the macro forces "Planet" & "Technology", we know that technological solutions can help lead to efficient management of resources to address agricultural issues. Should our Nation's focus on modernizing the agri-business bear fruit, we can anticipate improvements or even recovery in our economy.

Overall, we know that growth is no longer a long-term given. Aiming to move Forward Faster and prioritize inclusivity and sustainability will be a great challenge. Despite this and knowing how polarizing situations may get, if we learn to transcend our differences and take on our respective roles & functions in society, we will be able to move as one — even as the shifting power dynamics lead to new and emergent ways of being.

Vicky V. Abad
Country Manager
Ipsos Philippines

Isla Lipana & Co.
Roderick M. Danao

The Philippines is poised to post strong economic growth, post pandemic, given its strong economic fundamentals.

There is a consensus that the country will grow somewhere between 6 and 7% this year despite the expected headwinds brought about by inflation, underpinned by rising domestic consumption and sustained government expenditure on critical infrastructure.

However, despite our expected economic growth, the poverty rate remains to be a problem for the country. Official government data reported that our poverty incidence among Filipinos increased to 23.7% in the first half of 2021, higher than the 21.1% for the same period in 2018. This translates to 26.14 million Filipinos living in poverty or an additional 3.9 million.

So the challenge is: How do we accelerate our growth to build a truly inclusive and sustainable economy? Here are some of my dreams for the country:

a) Invest, adopt and support policies to build the resilience of micro, small and medium sized enterprises (MSMEs). They play a vital role in the country's economy as they generate employment opportunities for the unemployed or underemployed Filipinos. The public and the private sectors need to work together to upskill and upgrade workers' competencies, provide easier access to capital that they generally lack, and support the sector's digital transformation. This will enable them to grow, expand and be more resilient. A thriving MSME sector is a big boost to the economy.

b) Increase investments in critical infrastructure across the country, either through government spending or credible/transparent public, private partnerships (PPPs). We need better physical and digital infrastructure across the country that will create and/or accelerate economic activities.

c) Increase productivity in, and make genuine transformation happen, for the agriculture sector. I am from a farming town in northern Luzon. The farming system has not changed since my elementary school days except for the isolated presence of tractors, which make land tilling fast and efficient. Beyond this, nothing has changed. Farmers remain under the control of unscrupulous traders, who charge usurious interest at a minimum of 5% per month. What about the institutionalized countrywide cooperative system and shift to high-value crops? Imagine if we reduce our dependence on imported agricultural products? These will surely enable our poor farmers to achieve economic prosperity.

d) Increase manufacturing output, new manufacturing facilities and investments. How do we achieve this? We need to attract more investments, be it local or foreign investors expanding in the Philippines. But we need to be more competitive and implement genuine reforms to improve the ease of doing business. While we improved our ranking in the World Bank's 2020 Doing Business Report, we are still lagging behind our major ASEAN neighbors. Thanks to Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar, we are not at the tail end.

e) Accelerate transition to digital economy. E-commerce, no doubt, enables larger market access, drives expansion, hence a real economic multiplier. Based on a think tank study, the digital economy can raise economic output by at least P5 trillion by 2030. However, our workforce of the future must be technologically enabled, too. Real reforms are needed by the country's education system so that we will not be left behind.

As a Filipino, I continue to dream and believe that one day, we will achieve an inclusive society where there will be no hungry Filipinos, where economic prosperity is felt and shared equitably. God bless our country.

Roderick M. Danao
Chairman and Senior Partner
Isla Lipana & Co.

Kantar Philippines, Inc.
Gary de Ocampo

As we try to move on from the COVID crisis, we increasingly realize how crucial it is to adapt to how the pandemic has upended life and livelihood.

Most recent Google Mobility data shows that, despite the return to retail places, groceries, pharmacies, parks, transit stations and workplaces, the frequency of staying home remains higher than before the lockdowns, which indicates that the life-lived-at-home, or better yet, life-lived-close-by, behaviors continue. Sari-sari stores, in general, have recovered quite quickly from the business slump after lockdowns were imposed, and have been the primary source of growth for brought-home fast moving consumer goods purchases as of Q1 2022.¹

People have a new set of concerns that have already affected priorities. The pandemic and other threats to public health continue to worry people. In addition to this, social justice and climate change have also become more salient topics of interest.² Filipinos, especially those exposed to online conversations about the matter, understand that we are in this situation because of people's own doing, and we are willing to do the right thing to try to remedy the situation. However, Filipinos need a lot of help to take the appropriate actions.³

Another source of worry is about the economy with two fifths of online adult Filipinos concerned about inflation⁴ even though most do not understand what it is and why it happens. All people know is that their money can buy much less than it could before, which then makes spending a much more difficult decision to make. There is also the global plague that affects mental health⁵, which, in tandem with the overhauling of priorities, has driven, to a large extent, the Great Resignation, which continues to be a big headache for businesses.

Digital is here to stay after its adoption has been brought to a point of no return through the lockdowns. eCommerce in the Philippines remains small, especially when compared to most other countries, but its continued growth is evident⁶.

For businesses to move forward faster, empathy will be key. The extent that consumers, customers, shoppers and even employees see and feel genuine empathy in the product and service innovations, and work arrangements that businesses make happen to address new or amplified friction points will determine in a big way how quickly these businesses can stage a rebound or sustain their recovery.

More than ever, businesses need to be where their target markets are and be ubiquitous there whether this means digital, delivery, pop-up stores or using any other relevant media and retail touch point.

People know and want to do what is right to avoid another calamity, but they look to businesses and the government to help them do what they know they must do because sustainable practices, products and services remain expensive and unwieldy.

It is not time for brands and businesses to be quiet because people continue to look for guidance as they navigate the new environment that remains in a flux. The businesses that can translate genuine empathy into products and services that address new or more relevant needs and that can deliver topnotch experience will be secure in the hearts and wallets of the Filipino.

1,6: Worldpanel Division, Kantar. Q1 2022

2,4,5: Kantar Global Issues 2022

3: Kantar Sustainability Foundational Study 2022

Gary de Ocampo
Managing Director, Insights Division President
Kantar Philippines, Inc.

P&A Grant Thornton
Maria Victoria C. España

More than two years after the COVID-19 pandemic hit, experts are seeing an asymmetrical or an uneven post-pandemic economic recovery. Not all countries are moving at the exact same speed toward economic recovery. Concrete government actions, including improvement of existing fiscal or monetary policies and programs to address high inflation, are needed. In the Asia Pacific (APAC) region, increased regional cooperation were cited by experts as one way to prevent a skewed economic recovery across APAC.

But while the government plays a pivotal role in leading the Philippine economy toward recovery and growth, businesses and even professional partnerships play a part in achieving this goal.

Agility and Innovation

The pandemic has tested the business community's ability to survive; nonetheless, some companies have found a way to not only survive but also thrive amidst the continuing pandemic effects. Some of the ingredients to pivot the company with cautious optimism are:

1. Listening to the changes in the needs of the customers

The needs and focus of customer have changed, the channels where customer are also have changed. Companies need to continue to become more relevant in creating value to the customers.

2. Being flexible in the needs of the employees

News of the great resignation or the great talent reshuffle is felt by businesses. The expectations of employees i.e. hybrid and work from home arrangements, criteria of focus and sustainability when choosing companies, etc. continue to evolve brought with the shift of working generation and escalated by the pandemic scenario. As an opportunity, companies now can look at expanding talent geographically and taking in better talent. As a focus, strategic human capital and culture has now become a board agenda.

3. Reviewing and reinventing the business model

With the pandemic, companies are bound to look at the basics, i.e cash flows, business continuity, reinforcement of the vision, mission, and purpose. At the same time, companies employ their creativity to actualize opportunities out of the situation. This may mean changes in the business models, exploring partnerships, and developing new services, products, or channels.

For example, entering into partnerships, where two companies contribute and raise bigger funds for operating expenses, does not only ensure greater financial strength for business. The economy will also benefit from positive business outcomes as a result of

strategic partnerships because successful businesses create jobs and help the government generate more revenue.

In all these, companies need agility and resilience in pushing forward by creating opportunities for themselves.

Digitalization and Technology Advancement

The fourth industrial revolution has been upon us even before the pandemic; nonetheless, the situation has allowed for greater reception and adoption of technology, has pushed for urgency in digital transformation in organizations, and has made itself indispensable in everyday life. The government, businesses, and other organizations have to continue going digital in improving processes, optimizing costs and revenues, and creating value to customers, stakeholders, and society. This is critical if we want the country to move forward and create a brighter future.

Collaboration and support

Different stakeholders have a role to play. The government is critical in developing policies and executing programs that can propel economic growth, encourage key growth sectors, support disadvantaged sectors, and create a stable and reliable economic environment. The business groups and the professional organizations have a role in advancing the needs of the business community and the people they represent and guiding them, as well as finding ways to communicate concerns to and [judiciously] support initiatives of the government. Businesses have a role as corporate citizens in contributing to society and environment. Collaboration and support of different stakeholders are needed to move forward faster and create a prosperous future for the country.

The impact that we hope for — Growth, Sustainability and Inclusivity

1. Growth

Different stakeholders support the country's growth. Businesses help the Philippine economy recover amid challenging times like this. Improved collaboration with the government and stakeholders, promotion of sustainability and inclusivity – all these are initiatives that can help us go beyond in ensuring continuous economic recovery and an inclusive and sustainable future.

2. Sustainability

Companies can likewise help accelerate the realization of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. An example is using technology and digitalization in reducing their carbon footprint. Through automation and digital processes that speed up work processes and lessen, for example, the number of product shipments which contribute

to carbon emission, the carbon footprint of supply chains can be reduced . Remote or hybrid work arrangements, now considered the future of work, also reduce a company's carbon footprint. These policies, on top of putting a premium on CSR initiatives, can contribute a lot in ensuring a sustainable future while still securing work productivity and business growth.

3. Inclusivity

Grant Thornton's 2022 Women in Business Report showed that the Philippines ranked third in the list of countries which recorded the highest number of women leaders in mid-size firms. This figure is also in line with the average percentage of women in leadership roles across ASEAN.

While there remains a lot to be done in terms of breaking gender barriers and ensuring workplace parity, progress, no matter how small, is still progress. Businesses must continue to adopt a shift in mindset to make significant strides in addressing gender inequality in the workplace. Also part of bridging the gender gap is building more diverse and inclusive leadership teams.

Maria Victoria C. España
Chairperson and Chief Executive Officer
P&A Grant Thornton

Palafox Associates
Felino "Jun" Palafox, Jr.

The Philippine population is projected to rise to 148.3 million by 2050. According to our studies, we will need 100 new well-designed, properly planned cities by 2050 to bring the Philippines to first world status. Critical social issues for the country include food security, which can be attained with designing an agropolis (city anchored on agriculture) encouraging urban, suburban and rural farming; and healthcare infrastructure in which we need at least 5500 new good quality hospitals in the next years. Right now, in a country of 110M people, around 2000 of our hospitals are substandard.

In 2021, Savills published a report listing the most resilient and future-proof cities in the world which includes New York, Los Angeles, London, Tokyo, San Francisco, Paris, and Seoul. We can study and learn from these cities — how they dealt with their cities' problems, what worked for them and what didn't — then we adapt these lessons to benefit the Philippines.

However, while a mission of building well-designed and empathetic built environments lead us to progress, affirmative change will only follow with vision and good leadership.

As evidenced by one of the quickest cities in the world to reach first world status, radical growth is led by visionary leadership, good governance, strong political will, and excellent management along with good appreciation of architecture, urban planning, and good design.

Even a leader with excellent foresight will struggle leading a country to progress if there is no vision and persistent will to do so. On the other hand, definitely, a dishonorable one will only bring us to our descent. Hence, good governance by a good, capable selection of leaders is critical to give the country a head start. We should address corruption, red tape, inequality, and criminality and promote transparency, open data, ease of doing business.

Among these, we must also emphasize on climate change adaptation where we modify our ways – from something as personal as proper trash disposal to wider applications like environmental policies and green building. We should not only “Build, build, build” but should “Build, better, berde”.

Linking the whole Philippines will also aid in spreading development and progress throughout the country which will alleviate poverty and bring about elevated living standards for Filipinos.

Building considering nationwide mobility, connectivity, and accessibility. Basic necessities at the minimum should be accessible to all.

Felino “Jun” Palafox, Jr.
Principal architect and urban planner; founder
Palafox Associates

Philippine Business for Education
Ramon R. del Rosario, Jr.

A healthy and educated workforce is the key to shared prosperity. When we talk about economic growth, often we put priority on physical infrastructure, but education is at least equally important. Investing in the learning of our people, upon whom nations are built, is an investment that comes with enduring benefits.

Everybody wins in education. For each individual, it bears promise of better employment, earnings, health, and quality of life. For our country, it is the key to long-term economic growth, poverty reduction, innovation, and social cohesion. Individual prosperity leads to the whole country’s prosperity.

In his first state of the nation address, President Marcos set out a big economic goal of slashing Philippine poverty to a single digit and growing the economy up to 8%. How do we take this giant leap? The challenge is daunting, but we must start by making major

strides through proper education reforms. When well-nourished students stay in school to learn, they have an increased likelihood to break the cycle of poverty. Based on a simulation from Stanford economists, if we reform our education system in the next 15 years resulting in learners reaching the basic literacy and numeracy proficiencies based on international standards, our GDP (gross domestic product) is expected to increase on average, 28% per year, immediately after that 15-year period. And this effect is expected to last 80 years.

Right now, what is keeping us from achieving this goal is the longstanding education crisis. We cannot address our learning losses without sufficient resources. Historically, only 3% of our GDP has been allotted for the education sector. While the proposed budget for basic education now is at 4.3%, we still do not meet the global standard of 6%. We should spend as much for education as we do for physical infrastructure.

Just as with public and private partnerships in infrastructure building, the government can also count on private sector support in improving our education system. The convergence of tools, resources, networks, and technical expertise from the education and private sector is needed to address our country's learning crisis. With Education Commission 2 (EdCom 2) finally becoming a law, we hope the private sector can be given a seat at the table and considered an equal partner as we strive for greater education and industry alignment.

Here are some of the strategies that we at Philippine Business for Education (PBE) and our other partners in the business community propose in improving our education system:

1. Bring all children to quality pre-Kindergarten to Grade 3 education and developmental programs.
2. Improve the quality of instruction and teachers with the target that all learners meet basic skills based on international standards.
3. Use the lens of lifelong learning in workforce development.
4. Fully leverage private education to better complement delivery of services.
5. Strengthen autonomy, coupled with accountability, of school leaders and local governments.

Shared prosperity in the Philippines can be achieved, within our lifetime, through education reforms. To move forward faster, this time let us try prioritizing investment in education.

By Ramon R. del Rosario, Jr.
Chairman, Philippine Business for Education (PBE)

Rene “Butch” S. Meily

Poverty is the country’s greatest ill. So we need to create jobs to give people an income and lift them up. We can start by focusing on MSMEs (micro, small and medium enterprises) since they make up over 90% of the Philippine economy. Government institutions and private banks can loan money to small businessmen to help them restart their livelihoods, many of which were affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown. Several startups, the telcos and others are pushing for the digitalization of MSMEs which would open them up to the growing world of online ordering and distribution.

We should encourage this trend and train our small business owners so they have the technological skills to avail of new resources. We need to incentivize the private sector including foreign companies to invest in the country by giving them tax breaks, easing restrictions on the flow of capital, and removing unnecessary regulation. Let’s make it easier for foreigners to put their money to work here and that includes lifting limitations on the ownership of land and various industries. Their investments will generate jobs and improve the infrastructure while increasing competitiveness in the local economy and freeing it from self-defeating protectionism.

Disasters knock Filipinos back into poverty. Therefore, we should develop tax-free PEZA (Philippine Economic Zone Authority) zones in disaster-stricken areas to enable them to rebound faster by encouraging investment and the creation of businesses and jobs. The government will earn more from the added revenues and higher property taxes than it ever would in a normal tax environment. We should upgrade our health care system so that all of our people are healthy and ready to work. In addition, we need to build more resilient communities so that we are better prepared for the more than 20 typhoons that hit the Philippines every year plus the earthquakes and volcanic eruptions that come from living in the Pacific Rim of Fire. People are ready when they have business continuity plans in place, emergency supplies, sturdier houses and can move their boats away from danger areas.

We should also advocate for population control to relieve the pressure of having to produce more and more jobs for over 110 million people. Any increase in our growth rate is reduced by increases in population size. We need to improve the educational system to restore our lost advantage of speaking English, as the President has mentioned, to allow Filipinos to compete globally for employment and locally for jobs in the BPO (business process outsourcing) industry. Good governance and a fair and impartial legal system will give our countrymen the best opportunity to rebound from the pandemic and rebuild their lives in safety and prosperity. It is said that fortune favors the bold and if we act boldly, we can finally achieve our dream of making the Philippines a First World country.

Rene “Butch” S. Meily
President

SGV & Co.
Wilson P. Tan

These are challenging times that call for greater collaboration between the government and the private sector in areas such as education, health, food security, energy sufficiency, employment, investments in infrastructure and technology, and climate change. We see businesses striving to regain their footing as the economy reopens after more than two years of crippling lockdowns. The pandemic has forced them to be agile and transform their business in order to make it through this global health crisis. But beyond surviving, they will have to shift gears and begin to focus on thriving.

The government can prop up businesses with the enabling infrastructure and environment. Time and again the Filipino’s entrepreneurial spirit has proven to be indomitable, but this is a special time for the government to lend a hand and nurture entrepreneurship as small businesses nurse their way back to healthier bottom lines. At no time has business and industry ever stopped emphasizing their preference for clear and consistent government rules and policies, but in this difficult time, policy stability should be a key ingredient in our business and economic recovery goals.

In all this, we believe that the quality of leadership in business becomes all the more significant, as leaders face changes in the way talents and even consumers interact with organizations and brands. For professional services firms like us, we see these challenging times as an opportunity to be of service by staying true to our Purpose as an organization – to nurture leaders and enable businesses for a better Philippines.

The crisis has called upon business leaders to lead with empathy, to protect the health and wellbeing of people, and to contribute to economic recovery. These are responsibilities that we will continue to cultivate in our conversations and interactions with business leaders. Our experience with the pandemic over the past two years has strengthened our resolve at SGV to continue to build trust in the capital markets and in business transactions, and to remain a strong catalyst for socio-economic development as we have always done so for more than 76 years now.

Wilson P. Tan
Chairman and Managing Partner
SGV & Co.

DAILY TRIBUNE

[K-12 upgrade focuses on environment](#)

By: Neil Alcober

The Department of Education (DepEd) said yesterday it will support a basic education curriculum that aims to produce climate literate students guided by teachers who are conscious of environmental issues.

It said that by virtue of Republic Act 9729, or the Climate Change Act, the agency's Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Service has been promoting climate education programs, projects, and activities aligned with the updated Kindergarten to Grade 12 (K-12) curriculum.

"Climate change concepts are integrated with the K-12 curriculum in Science, Health, Araling Panlipunan, Edukasyon sa Pagpapakatao, Mathematics, English, Filipino, Edukasyong Pantahanan at Pangkabuhayan, and Technology and Livelihood Economics, and Music, Arts and PE," the DepEd said in a statement.

"While climate change concepts are already integrated into the K-12 curriculum, there is a need to strengthen its presence in the curriculum by refining learning competencies and standards and monitoring learning delivery," it added.

The DepEd said it will review learning competencies relevant to climate change education and shall coordinate with various offices and experts for the enhancements needed in developmentally-appropriate and multi-disciplinary climate change education.

GMA NEWS ONLINE

[Even modest climate change imperils northern forests — study](#)

By Patrick Galey

PARIS, France - Even relatively moderate heating and rainfall loss could dramatically alter the make-up of Earth's northern forests, risking their biodiversity rich ecosystems and undermining their ability to store planet-warming carbon pollution, researchers said Wednesday.

Boreal forests cover much of Russia, Alaska and Canada and are a major carbon sink, but they are menaced by more frequent wildfires and invasive species outbreaks linked to climate change.

To assess how higher temperatures and less rainfall may impact the tree species most commonly found in the forests, a team of researchers based in the United States and Australia conducted a unique five-year experiment.

Between 2012-2016 they grew some 4,600 saplings of nine tree species -- including spruce, fir and pine -- in forest sites in northeastern Minnesota.

Using undersoil cables and infrared lamps, the saplings were warmed around the clock at two different temperatures -- one lot at 1.6 degrees Celsius hotter than ambient, the second at 3.1C warmer.

In addition, moveable tarps were positioned over half the plots before storms to capture rainwater and mimic the type of precipitation shifts that climate change is anticipated to bring.

The study, published in Nature, found that even the trees grown under 1.6C of warming experienced major problems, including reduced growth and increased mortality.

"I thought we'd see modest declines -- of a few percent -- in survival and growth for even the boreal species like spruce and fir, but we saw very large increases in mortality and decreases in growth in a number of species," lead author Peter Reich told AFP.

The team found that warming on its own, or combined with reduced rainfall, increased juvenile mortality in all nine tree species studied.

'Exponential negative effects'

The 2015 Paris goals committed nations to work towards limiting temperature rises to "well below" two degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, and to work towards a safer 1.5C cap.

Wednesday's research suggests that even this relatively modest heating would have profound impacts on boreal ecosystems.

Current government plans put Earth on course to warm as much as 2.7C this century.

Previous research has shown that boreal forests are likely to experience both positive and negative effects from climate change, such as a longer growing season in the far north.

The experiment showed that modest warming -- in the 1.6C sample -- enhanced the growth of some hardwood species such as maple and oak. These are currently scarce in boreal forests but abundant in more temperate, southerly forests.

The team however suggested that the southern hardwoods are likely too rare to fill the void left by other species such as conifers, which fared very poorly in the experiment.

Reich, director of the University of Michigan's Institute for Global Change Biology, said that increased CO₂ levels were likely to have "modest positive effects" on some species.

"But as CO₂ and temperatures continue to rise, plants will be saturated with CO₂, so further increases will have less and less effect," he said.

"Whereas the negative effects of climate change will get worse exponentially."

Reich said that warming was likely to impact boreal forests' ability to store carbon due to poorer plant regeneration.

"Additionally, more fires, which will accompany warming, will cause greater losses of carbon back to the atmosphere too," he said. -- Agence France-Presse

PHILIPPINE INQUIRER

[How do we empower MSMEs to be resilient and sustainable?](#)

Teddy Monroy, country representative for United Nations Industrial Development Organization, said this during the Inquirer Project Rebound's webinar on ensuring the resiliency and sustainability of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) with their recovery. This was in reference to the COVID-19 crisis, which truly exposed how MSMEs, despite being "the lifeblood of the economy," is the sector "most vulnerable to both environmental and economic shocks."

The importance of MSMEs

MSMEs are local businesses involved with either industry, agri-business, or services. As the name implies, these are smaller-scale businesses with under 200 employees and under P100 million asset sizes.

"For us, small businesses [are] the focus. They're the beating heart of the economy," said Rene Meily, president of the Philippine Disaster Resilience Foundation (PDRF).

MSMEs have created a "total of 5,380,815 jobs or 62.66 [percent] of the country's total employment" and "25 [percent] of the country's total exports revenue," according to the Department of Trade and Industry's (DTI) 2020 MSME statistics brief.

"We realize small businesses are important to everybody and we realize that if we can help them, we can make a better country," Meily said.

However, because of their size, MSMEs face a unique challenge in terms of growth. It's harder for them to gain the means to expand their businesses or even to remain in business.

"A lot of MSMEs, they want to survive, they want to grow, but the capital is limited. They have limited financial resources. Sometimes trying to access financial support from commercial groups, from development banks, [can be] kind of very tricky for them," noted Monroy.

"Most MSMEs lack the capacity to prepare project proposals that would be approved by the banks. They need help with that. And some banks do require collateral so sometimes these MSMEs don't have the collateral to put in place," he added. "The micro enterprises are better off because there are opportunities or financing mechanisms for them but mostly the small and medium size are having trouble."

With the economy slowly re-opening and gaining new ground, MSMEs have also started focusing on new priorities.

“An immense value has to be accorded now to measures that will protect our health and ensure that economic and social activities are not further disrupted. We expect that health and safety protocols will increasingly be instituted in work settings, while the evolving business landscape also sees the fast expanding digital space that can at the same time boost productivity, competitiveness, and resilience to future shocks.”

The two struggles

Whether due to their size or their inherent connection to local industry, MSMEs are among the most affected by meteoric changes in the nation.

Business owners didn't just have to struggle with the danger of the COVID-19 virus itself as they try to keep their employees safe. They also had to struggle with the restrictions meant to minimize the threat of the virus, such as the imposition of lockdowns as well as health and safety regulations.

“The first few years of the pandemic [were] shocking to most of us... My role towards helping MSMEs was of course affected because when businesses [are] closed due to lockdowns, you can't do much,” said Joey Concepcion, founder of Go Negosyo, a non-profit organization that addresses job-related issues such as unemployment by helping and mentoring MSMEs.

“That whole first year of the pandemic was really a very stressful year for us,” he added.

The same containment measures meant to save lives were also endangering the lifeblood of small businesses.

“We have to protect lives and thus health took primacy over economy, especially at the start,” admitted former DTI secretary Ramon Lopez in his keynote speech.

But these enterprises soldiered on.

“We saw MSMEs struggle with issues around supply chain management, availability of human resources, and cash flow issues. In attempts to stay afloat, MSMEs moved heaven and earth to implement the required health protocols, reduced operating hours, facilitated alternative work arrangements for employees, increased utilization of digital platforms, identified alternate suppliers, diversified operations as best possible, tapped additional financial resources to address challenges in their cash flow. You name it, and they did it,” said Monroy. However, despite their best efforts, many were not able to make it.

But the pandemic is not the only existential threat that MSMEs face.

“We're one of the most disaster prone countries in the world, unfortunately, whether it's a typhoon, volcano eruption, or earthquake,” Meily said.

Since the country is situated on the Pacific Ring of Fire and typhoon belt, the Philippines is susceptible to natural disasters. In 2021 alone, there were 15 typhoons that hit the country. And all these are exacerbated by climate change.

“Climate change is expected to lead to more intense typhoons, higher sea levels, and storm surges. Storm surges are projected to affect about 14 percent of the total population and 42 percent of coastal populations,” reported the World Bank in 2013/ These predictions have since become a reality.

“[Speaking of] the effects of climate change, the Philippines is one of the highest ranked in terms of threat,” Meily said.

And small business owners have to face this head on. “They’re the ones getting hit. Whether it’s rising flood waters, whether it’s storm surges, all of these things affect them and [can] knock them back into poverty. There’s really so much at stake,” he stressed.

Because of these threats, it’s become even more of an imperative to emphasize the importance of resiliency and sustainability.

Weathering disasters and going green

To weather storms (and earthquakes, and eruptions, and pandemics), local enterprises need to be prepared for natural disasters and—as the COVID-19 pandemic has taught us—medical crises. That’s the only way they can ensure their longevity even in the midst of catastrophe.

Thankfully, the government offers tools for that.

“We planned a business continuity planning national road map to help business owners prepare for disasters. We launched two new MSME resilience tools: the business continuity capability assessment tool and the disaster risk assessment preparedness tools. These tools are designed to help small business owners evaluate their business continuity plans should something happen, [like] how prepared are they. It also assesses their readiness for emergencies. [It’s] very important and also free,” Meily said.

Aside from that, the government also offers financial and training assistance for MSMEs. Lopez noted that the agency “nurtured [MSMEs] through training, mentoring and assistance programs in financing digitalization, product development, [and] market access among others.”

This training is important because it lays down a guide work for MSMEs to further develop their enterprise and learn how to successfully run a business.

“Becoming an entrepreneur is not natural, so there’s a lot of teaching that needs to be done. There’s a lot of nurturing that needs to be done,” said Manuel “Bam” Mejia, chief

commercial officer of SariSuki, a startup that allows people to become their own communities' local grocery. "Our app tries to be an accelerator for anyone who wants to do business. We try to teach them how to sell."

Government financial assistance is also highly needed because aside from letting them be prepared for catastrophes, it keeps small business owners from falling into predatory financial schemes like 5-6 loans.

However, many MSME owners do not know that these tools are in place.

"There's some challenge in making sure people understand the programs that the government [has] at the moment. Sometimes, when we speak with MSMEs, they say that 'We're not aware that the [government] has these programs,'" Monroy said.

"Reach will be important, efficiency as well as how [the government] delivers those services. As much as there's already a long list of services available, they are only as good as how efficient these services are being delivered. There's still some room to work on that," he added.

But businesses shouldn't just be prepared for disasters; they should also be proactive in putting sustainable measures in practice.

"It's no longer a matter of if there's interest from the MSMEs to go green. Look at climate action as an important element in the operations. They really can't afford not to for many reasons. First is sustainability and making sure that we do not compound anymore the problems that we have already caused with our disregard of the environment. We've seen that," Monroy said.

He noted that it's not just good for the environment to go sustainable—it's good for businesses as well, as "going green" ensures efficiency in the use of raw materials and eliminates wastes.

"These all have dollar values. it all makes good business sense," he further said.

However, it is true that many small businesses do not prioritize that yet.

"Truthfully, if you're [just] surviving, the environment would be the last thing you're going to think about. That's a reality for most of the MSMEs," Mejia said. This is why it's important that both the private sector and the government help out MSMEs in putting forth these sustainable business practices.

Hopefully, with their assistance, MSMEs can, as Monroy said, "forge courageously ahead and recover ground that was lost during the past two years."

There's a case for hope. Monroy noted that despite the fact that many MSMEs were forced to close, this was offset by the number of MSMEs that opened. Lopez also

reiterated the startlingly rise of MSMEs, noting that “the growth of MSMEs has since ballooned from 1.37 million registered and renewed businesses in 2017 to 2.3 million in 2022 even during the pandemic.”

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

DOE to focus on expanding indigenous energy sources

By: Kris Crismundo

Manila – Department of Energy (DOE) Secretary Raphael Lotilla said on Tuesday the agency will focus on expanding and harnessing indigenous energy sources as its long-term strategy toward energy security.

In a virtual press conference, Lotilla said the country remains dependent on imported energy supplies, particularly coal and oil.

He said the Philippines’ primary energy supply in 2021 was 56.8 percent imported and 43.2 percent indigenous.

Indigenous sources include geothermal, natural gas, hydro, and other renewable energy sources like solar.

Of the imported energy supply, coal accounts for 37.1 percent, of which 98 percent is sourced from Indonesia.

Oil, on the other hand, accounts for 34.6 percent of the energy supply. It also accounts for 89 percent of power sources in off-grid areas.

Lotilla said this makes the country “energy insecure” amid the increase in fuel prices and uncertain supply of coal as exporting countries can implement a coal export ban.

He added exploring and harnessing indigenous energy sources will help the DOE to achieve its energy goals presented to President Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr..

The DOE aims for the country to have energy security, accessible and affordable energy, and transition to a sustainable low-carbon future.

“(T)he longer term solution however, is to move from —again the President says— from over-dependence on imported sources and to go for more indigenous sources,” Lotilla said.

He said the government does not have to look as far as the West Philippine Sea to find indigenous energy sources, but it can start and focus on undisputed areas.

“We are also looking at areas that are clearly undisputed and areas near Malampaya,” he added.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

House creates special committee on nuclear energy

Manila – The House of Representatives on Tuesday created a special committee that will be tasked to tackle policies and programs relating to the production, utilization, and conservation of nuclear energy.

During the plenary session, Senior Deputy Majority Leader Sandro Marcos made the motion to create the Special Committee on Nuclear Energy.

The panel, composed of 25 members, will be led by Pangasinan Rep. Mark Cojuangco.

The committee will also focus on the development of nuclear power infrastructure, as well as the interaction of other energy sources with nuclear energy as a reliable, cost-competitive, and environment-friendly energy source to ensure energy security consistent with the national interest and the State’s policy of freedom from nuclear weapons.

In his manifestation, Cojuangco explained that nuclear energy is an energy source that is cheap, clean, and reliable, regardless of weather conditions.

He assured that his committee would do its part in informing the public on the efficiency and benefits of nuclear energy, as well as in crafting measures that could provide for the construction of nuclear power plants in the country.

Meanwhile, the House amended the jurisdiction of the Committee on Energy, to read, “All matters directly and principally relating to the exploration, development, utilization or conservation of energy resources, including the development and utilization of alternative and renewable energy sources and the entities involved in energy or power generation, transmission, distribution, and supply, excluding nuclear energy and its sources and infrastructures.”

The creation of the special committee is in line with President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.'s agenda of building new power plants in the next six years of his administration.

In his State of the Nation Address in July, Marcos reiterated his earlier position that it is time to re-examine the government’s strategy toward building nuclear power plants in the Philippines.

“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.

“We will comply, of course, with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) regulations for nuclear power plants as they have been strengthened after Fukushima.”

PHYS ORG

[On the menu at a UK restaurant: carbon footprint](#)

By: Valentine Graveleau

The menu at The Canteen in southwest England doesn't just let diners know how much a dish costs. They can also check its carbon footprint.

The carrot and beetroot pakora with yoghurt sauce is responsible for just 16 grams of CO2 emissions. The aubergines with a miso and harissa sauce with tabbouleh and Zaatar toast caused 675 grams of carbon dioxide.

As customers weigh their options, the menu at the vegetarian restaurant in Bristol includes a comparison with a dish that it does not serve: the emissions from a UK-produced hamburger.

"Three kilos for a burger, wow! I can't believe it," exclaimed Enyioma Anomelechi, a 37-year-old diner sipping a beer outside in the sunshine.

The menu notes that a real beef burger's emissions is "10 times the amount of its vegan alternative".

The carbon footprints of businesses and consumers have come under growing scrutiny as countries scramble to limit global temperature increases to 1.5 degrees Celsius and to achieve net-zero emission by 2050.

The Canteen became in July the first restaurant to agree to put its carbon footprint on the menu under a campaign spearheaded by UK vegan campaigning charity Viva!

The restaurant's manager, Liam Stock, called the move a way to "see what we are doing; to understand and improve ourselves".

The average British person has an annual carbon footprint of more than 10 tonnes, according to UK government figures.

Britain has set the ambitious goal of reducing harmful emissions by 78 percent by 2035, compared with 1990 figures, in order to meet its international climate change commitments.

'Climate emergency'

Switching to a plant-based diet is one of the most effective ways for an individual to reduce their carbon footprint, experts from the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change said in April.

The livestock industry replaces CO₂-absorbing forests with land for grazing and soy crops for cattle feed. The animals also belch huge amounts of methane, a potent greenhouse gas.

Whether diners will let carbon footprints influence their order choices remains to be seen, but Stock said the menu innovation has stoked interest and support.

"In England if you're a big chain restaurant, it's the law that you have to have calories on (the menu)," he said.

"But a lot of people are saying... they're more interested in carbon."

While Anomelechi noted the "huge" difference in emissions between a hamburger and other dishes, he said he did not necessarily want to be burdened with knowing his order's calorie count or carbon footprint.

"When I go out to eat I just want to enjoy," he added, noting he would be more inclined to change his ways when grocery shopping.

Laura Hellwig, campaigns manager at Viva!, said the carbon footprint figure should become compulsory.

"We are in a climate emergency and consumers have to be able to make informed choices," said the activist.

In her view, "most people would actually choose for the planet" if confronted with a comparison between the carbon footprint of a meat-based meal and a vegan dish.

'Cradle to store'

Stock said he knew his restaurant's dishes would score low carbon footprints, as most of his ingredients are sourced regionally.

"We didn't have to change anything," he said, while admitting some surprises, such as learning that imported spices drive up emissions.

To calculate the dishes' footprints, The Canteen sent its recipes and the source of the ingredients to a specialised company called MyEmissions.

It is able to calculate the carbon impact from "cradle to store", taking into account farming, processing, transport and packaging.

"If I was choosing between two dishes, maybe depending on how hungry I was, I might choose the one with a lower footprint," said Nathan Johnson, a 43-year-old diner at the restaurant.

That day, he opted for the chef's salad, which racks up 162 grams of carbon.

Another diner, 29-year-old Emma Harvey, also backed the idea of increased awareness of carbon footprints "and the ethical effects of the food that we're eating".

"We have to incorporate things (like) that into everyday life," she said.

THE MANILA TIMES

What does a climate emergency declaration really mean?

By: Yen Makabenta

Why am I not surprised that Makati Mayor Mar-Len Abigail Binay is so hellbent and obstinate in declaring a state of climate emergency in Makati?

Makati is a place that is fond of securing all kinds of distinctions, like being the richest patch of ground in the archipelago, in being the first to accomplish or acquire this or that, including the inconsequential and the ephemeral.

And now it wants to be the first Philippine city to sport electric vehicles crisscrossing its streets and showing solar panels in its public buildings.

Historically, Makati is also full of surprises. In an address before the Rotary Club of Makati on Aug. 20, 1968, Fr. Horacio de la Costa, SJ disclosed to his startled audience that Makati originally belonged to the Jesuits. And he even had the text of the deed of donation from Don Pedro de Brito and his wife, Doña Ana de Herrera, to the society.

The Jesuit historian related that "Makati was taken away from the Jesuits by the Spanish crown in 1768, when it was decided that the Spanish empire no longer had need of our services, and when in 1869 the Spanish crown changed its mind, and asked us to return to the Philippines, it was on condition that we would not lay claim to any of our properties."

De la Costa said wryly that the religious order was thankfully spared from a superlative headache not only of managing Makati but other estates in Manila and environs.

In modern times, Makati is a city that has not known a mayor not named Binay for more than three decades running and conjecturally may not know anyone else as its mayor until the climate apocalypse. This is what climate fanatics and fearmongers insist is the future awaiting humanity, if we do not banish or replace fossil fuels from national economies, if we do not bring down to zero carbon emissions, and arrest the warming of the planet.

Mayor Binay, who issued the declaration at a webinar on August 5, says low-lying and coastal areas in Makati and other areas are bearing the brunt of strong typhoons and rising sea levels.

Oddly, Makati has no sea bounding it and no coastal areas to worry about.

"We heard the data. We understood the science. We are feeling its impact. Now is a crucial time to act, and we need to act fast," Binay said in recorded remarks at the close of the webinar organized by the city's disaster risk reduction and management office (CDRRMO).

"With this realization, Makati City has found enough reason to declare a climate emergency in the city, and we are well aware that much still needs to be done to achieve our climate goals," she said.

It is emblematic of modern Makati to extend its sights from monetary and developmental concerns to the planetary, which is the chief excuse for all the hullabaloo about climate change today.

So, it is in character that Mayor Binay has ventured to declare a climate emergency in Makati.

To set the record straight, Makati is not the first Philippine city to declare a state of climate emergency. That distinction belongs elsewhere.

In a front page story on July 20, 2019, the Sunstar Bacolod newspaper reported that Bacolod City became the first city in the Philippines to declare a climate emergency by virtue of a resolution authored by councilor Carl Lopez, chairman of the committee on environment and ecology which endorsed such declaration and which was unanimously approved by the city council during its regular session on July 17, 2019.

Mayor Binay did not issue a signed declaration or resolution by the Makati government. She did it verbally at the close of the webinar.

Declaring a state of climate emergency in Makati is not as consequential or epochal as the mayor fancies it to be.

Makati is just a local jurisdiction in the Republic of the Philippines; it is just one among many in the country. It is not even the first Philippine locality to declare a climate emergency; that distinction belongs to Bacolod, the capital of Negros Occidental province.

To place this initiative in perspective, Mayor Binay's declaration is about as meaningful as Pope Francis' earlier declaration of a climate emergency in Vatican City or the Holy See. Few remember now the pope's declaration.

Significantly, Makati is as small an area as the Vatican. It is absurd to imagine that the two jurisdictions can reshape the global climate through their climate action.

Mayor Binay appears to be promoting the idea of the Philippines as one of the most vulnerable countries to climate hazards as claimed by a so-called Global Peace Index, which is concerned with peacefulness, not climate vulnerability.

The Global Peace Index is a report produced by the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP) which measures the relative position of nations' and regions' peacefulness. The GPI ranks 163 independent states and territories (collectively accounting for 99.7 percent of the world's population) according to their levels of peacefulness.

The index measures or rates the relative peacefulness of countries, and makes a big show of announcing which countries are the most troubled.

Strangely, it is nowhere claimed that the index measures or rates countries according to their susceptibility to climate hazards.

Mayor Binay bought into the purported claim that the index found that 47 percent of the Philippine population are in areas highly exposed to climate hazards such as earthquakes, tsunamis, floods, tropical cyclones and drought.

Forgetting that Makati has no sea or coast at its boundaries, she waxed sentimental and alarmed about rising sea levels in the country because of climate change.

Also, earthquakes are not part of the climate. No climatologist will say that.

She turned a reported increase in rainfall experienced by Makati over the years during storms into an ever-present calamity. She bewailed extreme weather events that disrupt public services and displace families.

"We need to plan and create strategies to make our city more climate-resilient. We need to educate and engage our citizens in this important effort, and we need to lead by example by ensuring that our actions align with our goal of achieving a more sustainable future," she said.

For this reason, the Makati government said it is amping up its efforts to bring down its greenhouse gas emissions.

Among them are plans to use electric vehicles for the city government and solar panels for public schools and government offices.

No climate emergency

Not everyone is as jumpy or naive as Mayor Binay in beholding the challenge of a climate emergency.

In the United Kingdom, British peer and ex-cabinet minister Lord Frost told Mail Online that there is no "climate emergency" and urged the next prime minister to move away from "medieval technology" such as wind power.

The Conservative peer, who was Boris Johnson's Brexit negotiator, has hit out at the "totally unrealistic approach to climate and energy policy" in the UK over the past two decades.

He demanded that Britain change tack from "managing demand" for energy and instead put greater emphasis on fracking and nuclear power, as well as carbon capture and storage (CCS).

He called for a "pragmatic" response to climate change which he said was just one of the many problems facing the UK.

In an essay for the Policy Exchange think-tank, Lord Frost outlined how a new prime minister could alter the government's approach to climate and energy policy.

"The current evidence does not support the assertion that we are in a climate 'emergency'," the Tory peer wrote.

"Rather, the effects of climate change are a problem, one of the many we face, and should be tackled in that pragmatic way rather than by asking us to up-end the whole way our societies work.

"Western society, and indeed world civilization, depends on copious supplies of energy.

"Yet the prevailing mood is one in which individuals are asked to restrict their use of energy and in which unsatisfactory renewables technology is touted as the best solution to our problems.

"Instead of focusing on technological solutions that enable us to master our environment and get more energy in a more carbon-efficient way — nuclear, CCS, fracking, one day fusion — we have focused on managing demand so we can use medieval technology like wind power."

CCC IN THE NEWS:

MANILA BULLETIN

[DepEd strengthens climate education in K to 12 curriculum](#)

By: Merlina Hernando-Malipot

The Department of Education (DepEd) reiterated its commitment to strengthening climate education in the basic education curriculum.

“While climate change concepts are already integrated with the K-12 curriculum, there is a need to strengthen its presence in the curriculum by refining learning competencies and standards and monitoring learning delivery,” DepEd said in a statement issued Saturday, Aug. 6.

In the current K to 12 curriculum, DepEd noted that climate change concepts are already integrated into various subjects including Science, Health, Araling Panlipunan (Social Studies), Edukasyon sa Pagpapakatao (EsP), Mathematics, English, Filipino, Edukasyong Pantahanan at Pangkabuhayan (EPP) & Technology and Livelihood Economics (TLE) and Music, Arts, Physical Education and Health (MAPEH).

Meanwhile, DepEd said that is one with the Climate Change Commission in strengthening climate literacy and supporting climate action in the basic education curriculum to hone learners and personnel who are climate literate and proactive in championing resilient and sustainable schools.

Under Republic Act (RA) No. 9729 or the Climate Change Act, DepEd said that Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Service (DRRMS) has been “promoting climate education through different programs, projects, and activities” aligned with the updated K to 12 curriculum.

DepEd said that it is also reviewing learning competencies relevant to Climate Change Education (CCE) and coordinates various offices and experts with the enhancements needed in developmentally-appropriate and multi-disciplinary climate change education.

REMATE ONLINE

Pagpapalakas ng climate education sa K-12 curriculum suportado ng DepEd

Manila, Philippines- Nagpahayag ng suporta ang Department of Education (DepEd) sa mga inisyatiba na naglalayon na paigtingin ang climate literacy sa bansa.

Sinabi ng DepEd na sinusupportahan nito ang Climate Change Commission, pagtikular na ang pag-develop ng “learners and personnel who are climate literate and proactive in championing resilient and sustainable schools.”

Sinabi ng DepEd na nakapaloob ang climate change concepts sa K to 12 curriculum sa Science, Health, Araling Panlipunan, Edukasyon sa Pagpapakatao, Mathematics, English, Filipino, Edukasyong Pantahanan at Pangkabuhayan at Technology and Livelihood Economics, and Music, Arts, and Physical Education.

“While climate change concepts are already integrated with the K to 12 curriculum, there is a need to strengthen its presence in the curriculum by refining learning competencies and standards and monitoring learning delivery,” sabi ng departamento.

“The department is committed to reviewing learning competencies relevant to climate change education and coordinates various offices and experts with the enhancements needed in developmentally-appropriate and multi-disciplinary climate change education,” dagdag nito.

=END=