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By: Betheena Unite

The Philippines and Germany agreed to continue strengthening their climate cooperation. President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. discussed the agenda with German Ambassador Andreas Michael Pfaffernoschke when the latter presented his credentials in Malacañang on Thursday, Aug. 17.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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THE PHILIPPINE STAR

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Information and Knowledge Management Division

BUSINESS MIRROR

PHL and Germany vow deeper ties to fight climate change

By: Samuel P. Medenilla

President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. on Thursday said he considers Germany as a key ally in pushing for his climate-change agenda globally.

During the presentation of credentials of new German Ambassador Andreas Michael Pfaffernoschke in Malacañang, the Chief Executive said the country's newly signed partnership with Germany will help in his promotion of "the climate agenda in both the local and international settings."

"It is axiomatic to me to say that no country can do this alone. The economies, climate change, energy, all of these things have to be done in partnership. So, let's look in that direction Mr. Ambassador," Marcos said during the event.

Under the Philippines-Germany Joint Declaration of Intent on Interdepartmental Consultations for Bilateral Technical Cooperation Projects, both countries will "hold regular interdepartmental consultations about ongoing and pipeline bilateral technical cooperation projects" related to climate, energy and biodiversity.

The Marcos administration, through the Climate Change Commission, has been calling for the creation of loss and damage mechanism to help in the climate change adaptation measures of developing countries.

The President stressed the importance of a collective response from the international community to address the effects of climate change.

"I always describe it as really the first truly global problem that humanity faces because it's global in the sense that everybody is affected. And it's also global because we cannot solve it without everybody doing their part," Marcos said.

Aside from climate change the President and Pfaffernoschke discussed the thriving people-to-people connections between the Philippines and Germany.

They committed to maintain the Philippine-Germany diplomatic relations, which will mark its 70th anniversary next year, and exploring other areas of cooperation.

"There are many things that I think we can do. I hope few of them will come to fruition so that we can say that we have done the fullest that we can do in this partnership," Marcos said.

BUSINESS WORLD

Climate change deal inked

By: Kyle Aristophere T. Atienza

THE PHILIPPINES and Germany vowed to boost their climate cooperation on Thursday when President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. received German Ambassador Andreas Michael Pfaffernoschke in Malacañang.

“Let’s look in that direction,” Mr. Marcos told Mr. Pfaffernoschke about addressing concerns on the economy, climate change and energy, among other things.

“The Chief Executive agreed that the partnership between the Philippines and Germany would greatly benefit the country, especially in promoting the climate agenda in both the local and international settings,” the palace said in a statement.

The two countries have signed a joint declaration of intent on consultations for technical cooperation projects in the fields of climate, energy and biodiversity.

Expanded collaboration within ASEAN needed to unlock climate funding

By: Aaron Michael C. Sy

THE Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is missing out on regional collaboration opportunities for climate finance, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) said in a study.

“There is massively underused potential for subregional collaboration in climate finance under ASEAN leadership,” the bank said.

The ADB said that such projects could help ASEAN countries reach their nationally determined contribution climate goals.

Increasing the visibility of flagship projects will also increase the capacity of member states to develop bankable projects and access international funding.

“ASEAN has been working to harmonize guidelines for financing project loans, such as the ASEAN Taxonomy for Sustainable Finance and the ASEAN Green Bond Standards, to provide the subregion with a common language for communicating their climate vision to a wide range of investors so they can play more critical roles in filling the financial gaps in the future,” the ADB said.

Meanwhile, climate budget tagging or climate change expenditure tagging, which countries use to account for financial flows, will enable governments to determine and prioritize adaptation initiatives with the most impact as investment information becomes public.

Budget tagging will also increase the capacity of the public-private partnership funding system.

The ADB cited the ASEAN Climate Finance Mobilization and Access Strategy currently under development. The strategy will “harmonize the use of more bottom-up and peer-to-peer sharing of tools and frameworks for tracking finance flows in the subregion.”

However, ASEAN faces multiple challenges in increasing adaptive financing due to uneven budgeting and limited private contributions.

“Southeast Asia is also faced with the issue of uneven adaptation-mitigation funding, limiting the countries’ capacity to reverse the effects of climate change and to make their vulnerable populations more climate resilient,” ADB said.

Lenders still find adaptation financing risky due to the long planning and implementation period, as well as the small scale of projects.

Financial institutions are also displaying a preference for mitigation financing due to quicker returns on investment, apparent climate-related impact, and more favorable market conditions.

“Their involvement will help in tapping new adaptation-related business opportunities, such as in developing markets for new goods and services that support the strengthening of climate resilience, and designing financing mechanisms and business models for the implementation of adaptation priorities,” the ADB said.

The region is also lacking in institutional readiness and prioritization in adaptation financing.

“Southeast Asian countries should regard adaptation as an extension of sustainable development practices intended to build resilience and minimize the costs of emissions that have been locked into the climate system,” the ADB said.

“The window of opportunity for addressing the climate crisis is rapidly shrinking, and governments must consider further efforts to rebalance the risks to shareholders with the urgency of responding to the climate adaptation needs of the most vulnerable countries,” the ADB said.

MANILA BULLETIN

[PH, Germany to bolster climate cooperation](#)

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The Philippines and Germany agreed to continue strengthening their climate cooperation. President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. discussed the agenda with German Ambassador Andreas Michael Pfaffernoschke when the latter presented his credentials in Malacañang on Thursday, Aug. 17.

"I always describe it as really the first truly global problem that humanity faces because it's global in the sense that everybody is affected. And it's also global because we cannot solve it without everybody doing their part," Marcos said.

The President stressed that the partnership between the Philippines and Germany would greatly benefit the country, especially in promoting the climate agenda in both the local and international settings.

"It is axiomatic (for) me to say that no country can do this alone. The economy, climate change, energy, all of these things have to be done in partnership. So, let's look in that direction Mr. Ambassador," he told the German diplomat.

The two countries recently signed a Joint Declaration of Intent on Interdepartmental Consultations for Bilateral Technical Cooperation Projects in the Fields of Climate, Energy and Biodiversity.

Under the declaration, the parties agreed to hold regular interdepartmental consultations about ongoing and pipeline bilateral technical cooperation projects.

People-to-people ties

Marcos and Ambassador Pfaffernoschke also acknowledged the thriving people-to-people connections between the two countries, exemplified by the large population of Filipino overseas workers in the European nation.

Both sides expressed a shared commitment to nurturing these relationships and exploring opportunities for bilateral growth.

"There are many things that I think we can do. I hope few of them would come to fruition so that we can say that we have done the fullest that we can do in this partnership," Marcos said.

The Philippines and Germany will mark the 70th anniversary of their diplomatic ties next year.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Senators ask: Why is flood control budget bigger than agriculture, defense funds?

By: Maila Ager

Senators on Wednesday questioned the huge allocation for flood control next year placed under the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH).

or 2024, the DPWH is seeking a P215 billion budget for flood control.

“For the record, this is six times larger than entire outlays for school buildings, 16 times larger than the outlay for hospitals, and then eight times larger than the calamity funds,” Senator Grace Poe said at a budget hearing in the Senate.

“So talagang kailangang ay detalyado kung ano ang mga plano na ito,” she said.

Senator Francis “Chiz” Escudero also pursued this issue.

Directing his questions to the administration’s economic team, Escudero asked why the budget for flood control is bigger than the allocations of other government agencies like the entire agriculture sector with P181 billion.

This, he said, is considering that the country is an agricultural economy and President Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr. sits as the concurrent head of the Department of Agriculture (DA).

“The fifth biggest allocation, not even a department, is flood control,” Escudero said.

Given the problems with China, the senator could not also understand why the government would spend more on flood control instead of beefing up the country’s defense against perceived enemies.

Budget Secretary Amenah Pangandaman explained that all projects of government are “equally important” but pointed out that the big budget for flood control is “timely” given the recent flooding in parts of the country.

Pangandaman quickly clarified, though, that the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) “cannot identify the flood control projects.”

“You’re saying based on your earlier answer, wala kayong say doon sa allocation within the DPWH budget for different programs?” Senator Sonny Angara, the panel chairman, asked.

“Wala po,” the budget chief said, “because they have an internal formula of providing caps for every major project and program under the DPWH budget.”

Still, Escudero asked why the DBM allowed one item in the budget of the DPWH to be bigger than the funds of the DA and other departments.

The senator also scrutinized Pangandaman’s earlier mention of the recent flooding as the reason for the big flood control budget.

In the proposal, most of the budget for flood control would go to the National Capital Region which Escudero said did not suffer as much as the provinces in Region III.

Region III, however, would only get P10 billion or 3.9 percent of the total budget for flood control, he also noted.

Meanwhile, Senate Majority Leader Joel Villanueva was surprised to learn that the 2024 National Expenditures Program (NEP) did not contain funding for a 60-kilometer floodway in the region.

His home province Bulacan was among those affected by recent flooding in the country.

Villanueva noted that no less than DPWH Secretary Manuel Bonoan had mentioned in another Senate hearing about the floodway project that would address the flooding in Bulacan and nearby provinces.

“But I was checking the NEP this coming year, Mr. President, it’s not there,” he said.

THE MANILA TIMES

[UC Summer School empowers sustainable agricultural solutions in difficult environments](#)

THE Southeast Asian University Consortium for Graduate Education in Agriculture and Natural Resources (UC) conducted its annual UC Summer School in Thailand empowering sustainable agricultural solutions in difficult environments.

The Summer School which took place from July 24 to 4 August 4, 2023 at Kasetsart University (KU) Chalermphrakiat Sakon Nakhon Province Campus marked the seventh installment of the learning event which brought together 28 delegates from UC member universities.

These universities include IPB University, Universitas Gadjah Mada, and Universitas Brawijaya from Indonesia; Universiti Putra Malaysia; Kasetsart University and Maejo University from Thailand; Tokyo NODAI from Japan; National Taiwan University; University of the Philippines Los Baños, Visayas State University, Central Luzon State University and Central Mindanao University from the Philippines.

There were also four delegates from Cagayan State University and Capiz State University, both members of the State Universities and Colleges-Association of Colleges of Agriculture in the Philippines (SUC-ACAP) who participated in the event.

KU's network also contributed 23 delegates, including representatives from KU Sakon Nakhon Campus, Prince of Songkla University, University of North Sumatra, and Bonsucro, the global sustainability platform for sugarcane.

In this learning event, KU collaborated with the Talent Program on Sustainable Land Management of the French Agricultural Research Centre for International Development (Cirad). Now on its two-year partnership with Cirad, this year's program was preceded by Universitas Brawijaya in Malang, Indonesia, as the host institution.

Anchored on the "Sustainability of Agricultural Systems in Difficult Environments," the Summer School offered a comprehensive discussion on the economic, social and environmental challenges to sustainability when agricultural productions are extended in unfavorable conditions.

Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (Searca) director Dr. Glenn Gregorio explained that these conditions encompass regions characterized by suboptimal soil fertility, erratic rainfall patterns, and limited access to irrigation, which are exacerbated by the effects of climate change.

He added that the evolving dynamics of social demographics and migration patterns also contribute to a decline in off-farm labor availability for small-scale farming, potentially pushing a return to more extensive farming practices and threatening the overall sustainability of these systems.

Gregorio said the Summer School is an annual event of the UC designed to enhance the understanding of students and other professionals in rural studies, agriculture and natural resource management on the sustainable use of land and water resources in agricultural production in Southeast Asia.

"The program not only equips participants with interdisciplinary insights and expert teachings but also offers a unique multicultural experience and a glimpse into different countries and perspectives," Gregorio said.

Throughout the program, Searca said the 51 participants engaged in practical fieldwork, interactive lectures, participatory assessments of smallholders, and on-farm surveys. And to enrich their experience, participants also had the opportunity to tour the KU Institute of Food Research and Development, as well as the KU Milk Center.

These hands-on activities provided a deepened understanding of the challenges faced by farmers, enabling participants to develop informed strategies and propose viable solutions to the challenges, it added.

The closing ceremony and certificate conferment was held on Aug. 4, 2023 in Bangkok, Thailand. Gregorio, together with Dr. Alain Rival, regional director for Cirad's Southeast Asian Island Countries, extended their congratulations to the participants who completed the intensive two-week course.

KU President Dr. Chongrak Wachrinrat graced the event and formally closed the Summer School.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

'Silent threat': Bahrain to build walls against rising sea

By: Hashem Osseiran

Already battling extreme heat, Bahrain is scrambling to ward off another environmental threat: rising seas that could swallow parts of its coast, the island nation's oil and environment minister told AFP.

By next year, the tiny Gulf state will begin building its coastal defences against sea levels that have begun advancing, by widening beaches, constructing taller sea walls and elevating land.

"Bahrain is vulnerable," Mohamed bin Mubarak bin Daina, Bahrain's oil and environment minister and special envoy for climate affairs, said in an interview.

"The main threat is a silent threat, which is the sea level rise," he said at his office in the capital Manama.

According to official estimates, an extreme rise of five metres (16.4 feet) would swamp most of the country, including its international airport.

Even a rise of 0.5 to two metres could submerge five to 18 percent of Bahrain's total area, according to Sabah Aljenaid, an assistant professor at the Arabian Gulf University in Manama.

Bahrain is the only island nation among the resource-rich countries lining the Gulf. Most of its population and major facilities are located in low-lying coastal areas less than five metres above the water.

Other islands around the world are also threatened by rising seas as global warming melts ice sheets and glaciers.

Ironically, Bahrain is a producer of the oil whose pollutants have triggered the climate crisis.

- 'Rock wall' -

Bahraini authorities have already recorded sea levels rising between 1.6 millimetres to 3.4 millimetres every year since 1976, bin Daina said.

But by 2050, sea levels could rise by at least 0.5 metre, according to the minister, citing the United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. Some experts view the estimate as conservative.

Rising seas aggravate flooding, threaten coastlines and could pollute Bahrain's already scarce groundwater reserves with salty seawater.

"That's why one of Bahrain's top priorities is the sea level rise," bin Daina said.

"Either we make the beaches (wider)... or a rock wall for certain areas, or reclaim lands before the shore."

It is part of a "detailed plan" that will be completed in "under 10 years" and funded by the government, according to the minister.

Ranked by the University of Notre Dame's Global Adaptation Initiative as one of the most climate-vulnerable countries among Arab states in the Gulf, Bahrain must also contend with hazardous temperatures in one of the hottest regions on Earth.

Extreme temperatures due to accelerated climate change could make parts of the Gulf unliveable by the end of the century, according to experts.

Bahrain is already feeling the heat.

This month, it has twice broken its record for energy consumption as temperatures topped 44 degrees Celsius (111.2 degrees Fahrenheit), sending air conditioners into overdrive.

- Dual role -

"In all previous years, the electricity has not consumed the amount of megawatts as this year, so the temperatures are increasing," bin Daina said.

To do its part to combat climate change Bahrain, a small-scale oil producer, is planning to reduce emissions by 30 percent by 2035 and scale up renewable energy to meet 10 percent of its needs over the same period.

It is also looking to double its areas covered by greenery and quadruple the amount of mangroves, which absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, over the next 12 years.

Bin Daina said he sees no contradiction in his dual role as minister of both oil and environment -- a conflation that is common in the hydrocarbon-rich Gulf states.

Kuwait's environment authority falls under the oil ministry, and the United Arab Emirates has chosen Sultan Al Jaber, who heads state oil giant ADNOC, as president of the UN's upcoming COP28 climate talks in Dubai.

"Having one person looking at both oil and the environment at the same time, shows how serious Bahrain is about" combatting climate change, bin Daina argued.

The minister "can enforce all environmental regulations over the oil industry", he said, dismissing the inverse possibility that hydrocarbon interests could trump climate concerns.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

THE DAILY GUARDIAN

[CCC calls for 'Bayanihan' for climate and disaster resilience](#)

The Climate Change Commission (CCC) has called on stakeholders to do “Bayanihan” in addressing the climate crisis and strengthening regional and national climate change and disaster resilience.

In his “Call to Action and Collaboration” at the Asian Conference on Climate Change and Disaster Resilience (ACCCDR), CCC Vice Chairperson and Executive Director Robert E.A. Borje urged all stakeholders to form part of a global, concerted effort to urgently address climate change.

“Our collective resolve will allow us to do more to save lives and protect the livelihoods of the present and future generations,” Borje said.

In view of Asia’s climate and disaster vulnerabilities, Borje emphasized the need for climate change to be mainstreamed in the country’s socio-economic development planning and implementation.

Under President Ferdinand Marcos, Jr.’s leadership, the Philippine government embedded climate change in the Philippine Development Plan 2023-2028.

The plan specifically embodies “Chapter 15: Accelerate Climate Action and Strengthen Disaster Resilience.”

As climate change now underpins human development and human security, Borje said climate change must be the “lynchpin for all of the policy formulation, planning, and implementation.”

He likewise underscored the key roles of government agencies and legislators, business and private sector leaders, academic and research institutions, civil society and non-government organizations, and international and regional organizations particularly on the need to do ‘Bayanihan’ to further intensify collaboration, nurture innovative solutions, and exhibit accountability across sectors and nations.

“I call on everybody, it is time for us to work very closely together, and it should bring out the very best in the Philippines and every Filipino,” he stressed.

Reflecting on the event theme, “Building Bridges: Driving Collective Action for a Climate and Disaster Resilient Asia,” Borje reminded the participants that “building bridges is not just a metaphorical concept but a moral imperative to achieve the desired resilience for us all.”

“The challenge is now—we must challenge ourselves to do better for our sake, and for our world’s future,” he said.

Representatives from the private sector, government, civil society and non-government organizations, international organizations, and the academe also pledged their commitment to collective action.

The ACCCDR brought together thought leaders, policymakers, climate and disaster experts, practitioners and scientists, and advocates to discuss critical issues on climate and disaster resilience in Asia.

The event was presented by Aboitiz Power Corporation in partnership with the CCC, Asian Institute of Management (AIM), NOW Corporation, and EASD Environmental Consultancy.

MAHARLIKA TV

CCC partners with the private sector for the production of environmentally friendly goods

The Climate Change Commission (CCC) has established collaborations with private sector entities to advance the creation and production of local environmentally friendly goods.

These partnerships are also aimed at finding cooperative approaches for safeguarding the environment and addressing the challenges of climate change through adaptation and mitigation strategies.

Albert Dela Cruz Sr., the Climate Change Commissioner, recently announced the signing of a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with SafeWater Technologies Incorporated (SWTI).

This MOU signifies a joint endeavor to bolster the nation's climate change action program. Another MOU was also secured with 11 FTC Enterprises Inc. (11 FTCEI) to foster joint initiatives in crafting ecologically sustainable products, as well as exploring innovative techniques for waste collection and recycling.

Commissioner Dela Cruz emphasized that effectively addressing the consequences of climate change necessitates a comprehensive and collective approach involving the entire nation and its communities.

He stressed that everyone's participation is crucial in the concerted effort to safeguard and conserve the environment.

Francis Eric Chao, the President and CEO of SafeWater Technologies, concurred with the commissioner's stance. He noted that as a domestically owned manufacturing and service company, SWTI envisions a robust collaboration with the CCC.

Such a partnership aims to facilitate projects that contribute to the government's pursuit of resilience and economic stability.

Similarly, John Gilbert Madarang from 11 FTCEI highlighted the vital role of private organizations in orchestrating and leading diverse climate change, environmental, and ecological sustainability initiatives in coordination with relevant government bodies.

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