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Information and Knowledge Management Division

BUSINESS WORLD

[Opinion] To achieve energy security, balance is key

By: Victor Andres C. Manhit

On Aug. 13, nine business groups released a joint statement expressing their support for the Department of Energy's pursuit of a balanced energy mix, saying that this policy is appropriate to the country's particular context. "As an emerging market," the group said, "the country must balance energy security and affordability with climate change concerns to support its economic progress."

The groups — the Blockchain Council of the Philippines, the Employers Confederation of the Philippines, the Federation of Philippine Industries, the Financial Executives Institute of the Philippines, Fintech Alliance.PH, the Foundation for Economic Freedom, the Makati Business Club, the Management Association of the Philippines, and the Women's Business Council Philippines — said that the country has growing energy demands and that our energy supply per capita is the third lowest in the ASEAN region. Thus, "we need to prioritize augmenting power capacity."

They further pointed out that energy insecurity is expensive, using the power outage on Panay Island in January as an example. The outage led to about P3.8 billion in economic losses in Iloilo province.

Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla has reaffirmed the importance of a balanced energy mix amidst claims that the Department of Energy's moratorium on coal-fired projects is being violated. He stressed the need for a blend of renewable and traditional energy sources, such as coal, oil, and natural gas, to meet the Philippines' energy demands while ensuring affordability, reliability, and environmental responsibility.

He further pointed out that the Energy department's strategy involves not just the immediate expansion of renewable energy but also maintaining and upgrading existing coal and gas facilities to prevent power shortages.

We at Stratbase echo the sentiments of the business groups. Diversifying our energy sources will allow the Philippines to mitigate risks like power outages and wide-scale disruption, reduce the reliance on imports, and support economic stability while transitioning to cleaner energy which is a long and tedious process that will take decades to achieve.

We recognize the great need for power. An economy like the Philippines' needs a reliable supply of electricity to power economic activity. Power costs here in the Philippines are among the most expensive in the region. We are also angling to attain

middle-income status in the foreseeable future, and to achieve this, our industries must have a stable supply of power.

All this lies on a continuum between two extremes. On the one hand, there is a clear need to move away from dirty sources because these have been proven to cause harm to the environment on a planetary scale. Our commitment to the Paris Agreement and our very real experience of the calamitous effects of climate change should erase all doubt that we have to lessen and eventually eliminate our dependence on coal-fired power plants and fossil fuels as a source of energy.

On the other hand, purely renewable energy (RE) sources are not yet viable as a baseload alternative as these are still developing and costly technologies. While essential for reducing carbon emissions, renewables like solar, hydro, and wind are unpredictable and weather-dependent, risking power shortages without more reliable energy sources. The Philippine government's targets — 35% RE by 2030, 50% by 2040, and over 50% by 2050 — reflect a keen recognition of this reality.

For the time being, only a balanced energy mix combining renewable and non-renewable sources will ensure energy security, affordability, and sustainability. This approach is what the Philippines needs at this time. It allows us room to manage the inherent variability of energy sources and recognize that there remains a significant need for fossil fuel-based sources to ensure energy reliability and affordability, all while moving toward the goal of being increasingly powered by cleaner energy over time.

With a balanced energy mix, we do not have to sacrifice economic growth and stability for environmental sustainability.

A crucial aspect of the balanced and optimal mix of energy sources are so-called transition fuels like natural gas. Natural gas delivers an adequate supply at the least social cost toward a smooth transition to cleaner energy. In the past two decades, the Malampaya gas field has served the country well in contributing a significant part of our energy needs, even as production has dropped significantly since 2022.

There is now an urgency to shift to imported liquefied natural gas (LNG) — a cleaner alternative as it emits 50-60% less carbon dioxide than coal. LNG also has quick startup and shutdown capabilities.

The private sector plays a crucial role in meeting the objectives of the country's energy plan, including access to affordable energy, a reliable and resilient energy supply, and transition to clean, sustainable, and climate-centered energy resources. Private partners

have the technical expertise and financial capability to build the necessary infrastructure to facilitate the transition to clean energy.

Thus, while the adoption of a policy of balanced mix of energy sources is commendable, as the business groups already articulated in their statement, there needs to be a parallel effort on the part of the government to create an attractive and enabling policy environment for investors. There are many private groups who would like to participate in helping in the transition to clean energy, and they should be given the opportunity to help and contribute to this crucial journey.

DAILY TRIBUNE

[Climate change vulnerability](#)

The Senate on Monday, 19 August 2024, passed on third and final reading Bill 2780 conferring juridical personal and legal entity on the Board of the Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage due to Climate Change, allowing it to buy land and (other) assets and enter into contracts in the country.

“Loss and damage” pertains to the United Nations’ description of harm, including — among other things — loss of lives, prolonged heat waves, species extinction, crop failures, monetary costs from the destruction of infrastructure, buildings, crops and other property, even impaired ways of life inflicted by climate change on countries.

To recall, at the historic Conference of Parties (CoP) 28 UN Climate Change Conference held in Dubai, UAE on 30 November–13 December 2023 delegates from 198 countries agreed to transition away from fossil fuels and move forward with a fund to provide financial support to vulnerable countries hardest hit by the impact of climate change.

The creation of such a fund had already been agreed upon on paper at CoP27 held in Egypt in November 2022 but it was only at CoP28 in Dubai that a move was made to actually operationalize funding arrangements to address the loss and damage caused by climate change challenges.

As soon as it was gavelled, financial commitments started coming in on the first day of CoP28. As of March 2024, \$661 million has been pledged to the Fund by countries including France, Italy, Germany, and the UAE which committed at least \$100 million each; the United Kingdom committed \$50 million; the US, \$17.5 million; and Japan, \$10 million.

In a meeting in Abu Dhabi in early May 2024, nominees were named to the Board of the Fund responding to Loss and Damage (LDF Board) with Jean-Christophe Donnellier of France and Richard Sherman of South Africa as co-chairs.

The LDF Board formed in that meeting also had an opportunity to engage the World Bank in establishing the LDF as a WB-hosted financial intermediary fund (FIF). In June, the WB’s Board of Directors approved the bank’s role as interim secretariat host and fund trustee.

The following month, on 12 July 2024, the LDF Board, in its meeting in Songdo, South Korea, selected the Philippines as its host country (eight other countries had submitted

proposals to host the Board: Antigua, Barbuda, Armenia, Bahamas, Barbados Eswatini, Togo and Kenya).

As host, the Philippine government will organize meetings of the LDF Board in the country. Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Undersecretary Analiza Rebuelta-Teh said that in its bid, the government had to show that it has the necessary facilities available, from venue to personnel, to host the Board.

The selection of a host country is a major milestone as the Philippines' hosting the Board grants the latter the legal personality needed to — among other matters — negotiate and enter into a hosting arrangement with the WB which will be the Fund's interim trustee, operationalize the FIF, and host the Fund secretariat.

After its selection as LDF Board host country, the Philippines needed to finalize an agreement to work with the Board which entailed seeking the enactment of a law before it could officially assume its role as host country. Thus, the significance of the step taken by the Senate in passing Bill No. 2780.

What does it mean to host the LDF Board? For one, the Philippines would now have a “formidable voice” in discussions about global climate action and could very well speak for fellow climate change-vulnerable countries.

For DENR Secretary Ma. Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga, the selection of the Philippines as LDF Board host country is a “big deal.”

For one thing, climate funds are often based in developed countries. “Germany hosts the Adaptation Fund, the Green Climate Fund Board is hosted by Korea, and now we have been recognized as LDF Board; that's quite significant,” she said.

Observers have noted that funds pledged so far to the LDF, in relation to the enormity of the adverse impacts of climate change in totality, looks like a paltry sum. Could the fund get any bigger?

The DENR chief is pretty certain that it will. “I'm confident, yes,” she said. “We are at this point in the discourse internationally where developed countries have recognized their role in opening up the resources that are needed in order for those who have contributed the least to actually be able to cope and survive the disastrous impact of climate change.”

MALAYA BUSINESS INSIGHT

[PH, Singapore sign MOU on climate action](#)

By: Jed Macapagal

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) is intensifying its partnership with Singapore for environment related efforts, particularly in exploring innovative solutions for inclusive and climate resilient development through water resource management, biodiversity conservation, energy transition and reforestation.

DENR Secretary Maria Antonia Yulo Loyzaga and Singapore's Minister for Sustainability and the Environment and Minister-in-charge of Trade Relations Grace Fu Hai Yien on August 15 sealed a Memorandum of Understanding facilitating cooperation under Article 6 of the Paris Agreement.

The two countries agreed to cooperate on climate action to meet emission reduction targets by developing high integrity carbon credits while supporting reforestation and community development.

DENR said the agreement was followed by a meeting on August 16 between Loyzaga and Singapore President Tharman Shanmugaratnam together with representatives from the private sector and government agencies of both countries where they discussed efforts in sustainable development, leveraging technology to address shared challenges, attraction of international investments and adoption of best practices.

The DENR presented an overview of its Geospatial Database Office's water resource management initiatives and its achievements in mapping the nation's natural resources, including water bodies, forests and mangrove ecosystems.

The DENR said it will work with its Singaporean counterpart to ensure the partnership yields tangible gains against the impacts of climate change for both nations to set a benchmark for science-informed bilateral and public-private cooperation in the area of environmental stewardship.

PALAWAN NEWS

[Coca-Cola, CI offer grant for climate project to save mangroves](#)

The Coca-Cola Foundation, the global philanthropic arm of The Coca-Cola Company, and Conservation International Ventures announce the launch of a new, innovative climate resilience project in Southeast Asia to protect and restore mangrove areas, which play a critical role in guarding against the impact of climate change.

Globally, protecting mangrove areas against coastal flooding is estimated to help save more than \$80 billion in losses annually, and could impact around 18 million people worldwide.

Southeast Asia is a critical region for mangrove ecosystems, including Indonesia, which is home to 3.63 million hectares, representing a significant amount of the world's remaining mangroves. Mangroves contribute to coastal resilience, especially in the Philippines, which experiences the devastation of multiple typhoons yearly.

Through a \$1.5 million grant, the project will create a dedicated investment pool in Conservation International's Venture philanthropy fund, financing up to three to four small and medium sized enterprises.

Investment will go towards businesses that support local communities and mangrove protection such as crab cultivation or wild shellfish harvesting.

"This financing initiative delivers on The Coca-Cola Foundation's continued focus to help support climate resilience and enable vulnerable communities to adapt to the impacts of climate change," said The Coca-Cola Foundation President Carlos Pagoaga.

"While this is just the first step, we envision that this project will help improve the lives of thousands of people living in vulnerable shoreline communities by restoring and protecting mangrove coastlines across Indonesia and the Philippines," he added.

Gracie White, Conservation International Ventures Director of Global Ocean Investments, said, "Marine and coastal ecosystems, such as mangroves, seagrasses and salt marshes play a significant role in global climate mitigation and adaptation. Mangroves are climate superstars—a single square kilometer of mangroves can lock away as much climate-warming carbon as the annual emissions of 35,000 cars."

"This new innovative climate resilience project is the latest to transform the way we approach climate protection and support businesses that are focussed on the growth

and protection of vital mangrove ecosystems. We are excited for the support of The Coca Cola Foundation on this effort,” she added.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

Fair weather, isolated rain showers to prevail across PH

By: Ma. Cristina Arayata

Fair weather and isolated rain showers will prevail across the archipelago, the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) said Wednesday.

"We expect that a huge part of the country will experience a generally fair weather. It will be warm at noon," PAGASA forecaster Obet Badrina said.

He added that isolated rain showers were likely, mostly in the afternoon or evening, due to localized thunderstorms.

PAGASA also forecast the easterlies to bring isolated rain showers or thunderstorms over Eastern Visayas, Caraga, and Davao Region.

Severe thunderstorms could result in flash floods or landslides, it added.

Meanwhile, Badrina said the low pressure area (LPA) that PAGASA was monitoring yesterday had exited the Philippine Area of Responsibility.

The LPA is not expected to affect any part of the country.

Light to moderate winds and slight to moderate seas will prevail across the archipelago, PAGASA said.

[PH, Singapore boost partnership on climate action](#)

By: Marita Moaje

The Philippines and Singapore have committed to strengthening partnership in the fight against climate change through sustainable measures.

This came as Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Maria Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga hosted a luncheon for Singaporean President Tharman Shanmugaratnam at The Peninsula Manila Hotel on Aug. 16, the agency said in a news release on Tuesday.

The two sides discussed deeper collaboration and exploring innovative solutions for inclusive and climate-resilient development through water resource management, biodiversity conservation, energy transition, and reforestation.

The gathering came a day after the DENR chief and Singaporean Minister for Sustainability and the Environment Grace Fu Hai Yien signed on Aug. 15 a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to facilitate cooperation under Article 6 of the Paris Agreement.

Singaporean President Tharman Shanmugaratnam witnessed the MOU signing in Malacañang Palace during his official visit to Manila, where he met with President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.

“It enables both countries to cooperate on climate action in order to meet emission reduction targets through the development of high-integrity carbon credits while supporting reforestation and community development,” Loyzaga said.

Article 6 of the Paris climate pact recognizes that some parties choose to pursue voluntary cooperation in implementing their Nationally Determined Contributions to allow for higher ambition in their mitigation and adaptation actions and promote sustainable development and environmental integrity.

Before the signing, representatives from the two countries, consisting of the private sector and government agencies, discussed efforts in sustainable development, leveraging technology to address shared challenges, attract international investments, and adopt best practices.

During the discussion, Loyzaga and DENR Undersecretary for Integrated Environmental Science Carlos Primo David presented an overview of the DENR Geospatial Database Office’s (GDO) water resource management initiatives,

showcasing its achievement in mapping the country's natural resources, including water bodies, forests, and mangrove ecosystems.

Loyzaga said both sides would work together in achieving tangible gains against the impacts of climate change for both nations and setting a benchmark for science-informed bilateral and public-private cooperation in environmental stewardship.

RAPPLER

[A foundation is funding climate-resilient Quezon City schoolyards. Students got to design it](#)

By: Mj Catequista

“Dapat may tree!” (There should be trees!) a grade school student from Diosdado P. Macapagal Elementary School exclaims, as he sits on the floor with other schoolmates, arranging twigs, leaves, and flowers in the shape of a schoolyard.

Outside, sixth graders are preparing for their moving-up ceremonies. But these 20 kids, ranging from six to ten years old, are working in circles on the floor of the public school’s audio visual room. More kids walk into the room with a handful of dirt. Except to these kids, this isn’t just dirt. It’s the makings of a flower garden for their “dream” schoolyard, one they are creating on the floor.

What if kids were given the power to design their own schoolyard? What would it look like? And how would they use it?

On this morning last May 21, these students of Diosdado P. Macapagal Elementary School or DPMES for short, were participating in a co-design and consultation session led by the Resilient Cities Network.

This urban resilience non-profit is part of a project with the Quezon City government that aims to make schools more prepared for climate-related impacts like flooding and intense heat. Called the OASIS Schoolyards program, one of its distinctive features is participatory planning: including the students and teachers in the design of the schoolyards they will use.

The program is funded by the Temasek Foundation, a Singapore-based non-profit that serves as the philanthropic arm of the Singapore government’s sovereign fund. It has partnered with Resilient Cities Network to help implement the program in the Philippines.

DPMES is one of three public schools selected for the project. The other two are Manuel L. Quezon Elementary School and Placido Del Mundo Elementary School.

These schools were selected based on their vulnerability to heatwaves and flooding, and the availability of open spaces within their campuses.

Visualizing the ideal schoolyard

These activities with twigs, leaves, and flowers aren’t just play, but give life to the project’s approach to participatory planning and co-designing.

In the co-designing workshop, elementary school students mapped out areas in their school that they felt could be improved. They also identified “activity hot spots,” or areas where students spent the most time during school hours. This helped the participants in creating miniature models of their “dream” schoolyards.

The students first roamed the school grounds gathering materials that could be used to build their schoolyard models — rocks, sticks, leaves, and even flowers.

Along with bits of clay, paper, and photo printouts, they used these to represent chairs, benches, trees, gardens, and play pens in their “dream” schoolyard.

Since early March this year, the program has already conducted a series of assessments and consultations with teachers and students from the selected schools. DPMES in Barangay Tatalon, Quezon City served as the last stop for the first phase, with about 40 students and teachers as participants.

TANATA, a holistic design company in charge of consolidating the final schoolyard designs, will use these inputs from the students to come up with plans that would also take into account the schools’ spatial limitations.

Students designing for students

The co-designing process begins with the students, who know their school best and how the school’s areas are used.

Eli, an eight-year-old third grade student, for example, recommended certain improvements.

“Gusto ko pong dagdagan [ang mga upuan na may sandalan] kasi po ang mga estudyante po rito, pagkatapos po ng pag-aaral nila, gusto nilang mag-hangout muna or chill bago umuwi. (I want to add more benches with backrests around the school grounds because students after their classes want to hangout or chill first before going home.)

“Gusto ko rin po na ma-flatten ‘yong ground [sa mga piling areas] kasi po may [mga] nadapa na po doon (I also want to flatten the ground [in some areas] since there were students who tripped there already),” Eli added.

Angelo, a first-grade pupil, also wants more resting spots.

“Dito po [sa playground] po yung upuan para magpahinga po yung mga naglalaro. Tapos [dito naman] po para makaikot-ikot ang mga bata diyan (The playground should have benches so the children playing can rest. Then this area can be where kids can roam around),” he said, as he explained his model schoolyard.

Meanwhile, other students suggested more greeneries and safe play areas.

“Nilagay ko po mga flowers and puno para hindi mainit sa school. Naglagay din po ako ng park at plants (I added flowers and trees so it won’t be hot in the school. I also placed a park and plants),” grade one student Elisha shared while presenting their work to the organizers.

Designing for climate resilience

The OASIS model stands for “Openness, Adaptation, Sensitization, Innovation and Social Ties.”

This program is inspired from the Paris OASIS Schoolyard program that was able to reduce schoolyard temperatures in the French capital and was part of the city’s overall “resilience strategy.”

“We want to adopt the Paris OASIS model [here in QC]. They were able to reduce the heat to 2°C to 4°C [on] a microscale, in the neighborhood scale. The situation is quite similar,” Aurora Lokita, program manager of Resilient Cities Network said.

However, the on-the-ground realities are different in the Philippines, a tropical country that is hit by around 20 typhoons a year.

“We need to adapt to the local context. The size of schools in Paris is quite small, compared [to] here in the Philippines. You have one school that has 7,000 or 8,000 students, so it’s really different,” Lokita added.

The Department of Education (DepEd) said the country was short of 159,000 classrooms for academic year 2023 to 2024. This means that schools are forced to cram too many students in classrooms or must resort to alternative spaces, often not suited to holding classes.

When schools are used as evacuation centers

Ironically, weeks after the co-design workshops in Diosdado Macapagal P. Elementary School, the school’s first day of classes had to be postponed because of a typhoon.

The school was used as an evacuation center for nearby residents affected by flooding caused by the southwest monsoon enhanced by Typhoon Carina. The elementary school is not officially used as an evacuation center. But nearby Dr. Josefa Jara Martines High School, the school that usually serves as an evacuation center, was being demolished at the time of the flooding.

“Technically speaking, [DPMES] is not a designated evacuation center. Dr. Josefa Jara Martines High School is. However, during that time, Jara had an ongoing demolition. Kaya hindi siya nakatanggap ng evacuees. (That’s why they did not received evacuees.),” school administrator Cristian Timonan shared with Rappler.

DPMES was used as a temporary shelter for 2,137 individuals or 514 families.

Because of this, the school was among the 738 public schools in four regions that were not able to begin classes on July 29 because of flooding and landslides caused by the enhanced southwest monsoon.

What happened to DPMES illustrates the consequences to basic education posed by the common policy of using school buildings as evacuation centers. It shows how education and education infrastructure have to be part climate resilience planning, both at the local and national level.

For DPMES and their community, flooding is one of their major issues. Flooding is an impact of climate change because multiple studies have shown how global warming has led to more extreme rainfall events.

“Maswerte yung school namin na hindi kami totally naaabot ng baha. (We are lucky that our school does not get flooded),” said Timonan.

“If the weather worsens, it takes a whole village to address the drainage situation. Also, the vicinity of the school is on a low-lying area with creeks and rivers surrounding us,” he added.

The project also seeks to make schoolyards better prepared, not just for rain, but also for heat. In April, classes frequently got suspended due to extreme heat in schools.

Elijah Go Tian of the Resilient Cities Network said the group will propose the use of permeable surfaces that don’t absorb and store as much heat, and thus don’t contribute to the heat island effect. These surfaces are also able to absorb rainwater, thus reducing surface runoff, and ultimately, flooding.

Making the most of school space

What's common among the three QC schools is the lack of spaces where students can stay and play, a deficiency that teachers also pointed out when they participated in the co-designing workshops and consultation sessions.

This lack was most felt in Placido Del Mundo Elementary School and Manuel L. Quezon Elementary School, said Alfonso Ancheta, co-founder of TANATA. The shifting class schedules also prevent students from staying longer in the campus to rest.

"Most of the spaces we have in public schools are just transient spaces, spaces that people just walk past," Ancheta said.

What if there were ways to develop these often ignored areas into areas students could benefit more from?

This is what makes the co-design and consultation sessions with students critical. The students, after all, would be the best people to say what types of activities or design would induce them to stay in an area longer, or use it in productive and enriching ways.

"[We can] either do this through play, community, socialization, and maybe change the school program where we allow students to go out [to the school grounds] or stay after school hours just so they can hang out with their friends," said Ancheta.

The teachers and school administrators of Diosdado P. Macapagal Elementary School said they wanted their schoolyard to be a collaborative space where students can discover more about themselves and their peers. How can school spaces foster creativity, friendships, and productivity?

"Overall, the main goal of the OASIS project is to develop the school grounds into more functional areas aside from being mere school grounds," school administrator Cristian Timonan said.

The DPMES teachers also envisioned their school grounds to be used for sports, given how their students regularly participate in the Palarong Pambansa, the annual multi-sport event for student athletes organized by the Department of Education.

"Our school is sports-inclined. We envision that the project can incorporate areas that are developed to have sports and exercise area, and where our athletes can inspire their co-students to join sports and participate in sports activities," said Timonan.

A model for other Quezon City schools

So far, there are no plans to expand to other cities and municipalities. But according to Resilient Cities Network, the Quezon City local government already expressed interest in replicating the project across its city schools division.

“QC [Quezon City] has almost 150 public schools both elementary and [high schools], the replication of this project will affect thousands of people,” Go Tian said.

The next phase of the project resumes this month as the new academic year begins. The Resilient Cities Network and TANATA are now crafting a conceptual design based on the students and teachers’ inputs for the three Quezon City schoolyards.

If all goes according to plan, said Go Tian, construction of the schoolyard designs should begin in November or December.

THE MANILA TIMES

[PH, SG partner to protect environment](#)

By: Janine Alexis Miguel

The Philippines is eyeing a partnership with Singapore to strengthen environmental protection and explore innovative solutions.

The Department of Environment Resources (DENR) said on Tuesday that the collaboration would include water resource management, biodiversity conservation, energy transition and reforestation.

This, after Environment Secretary Maria Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga and Singapore President Tharman Shanmugaratnam met on August 16 and discussed these matters.

During the meeting, Yulo-Loyzaga and Undersecretary for Integrated Environmental Science Carlos Primo David presented an overview of the department's Geospatial Database Office's (GDO) water resource management initiatives.

The presentation included the GDO's successful mapping of the country's natural resources, including water bodies, forests and mangrove ecosystems.

The meeting also included representatives from the private sector and government agencies of both countries. They also tackled utilizing advanced technology to address shared challenges, attract international investments and adopt best practices.

Participants of the private sector from the Philippines included Jaime Zobel de Ayala of Ayala Corp., Teresita Sy-Coson of SM Investments, Isidro Consunji of DMCI Homes and chief executive officers (CEOs) of the Manila Water and Maynilad.

CEO of Temasek decarbonization accelerator GenZero and executives from Singaporean companies CarbonSync and Arkadiah were also present.

According to the DENR, the discussion was preceded by the signing of a memorandum of understanding on August 15 between Yulo-Loyzaga and Singapore's Minister for Sustainability and the Environment, and Minister-in-charge of Trade Relations Grace Fu Hai Yien.

The agreement also enables the Philippines and Singapore to cooperate on climate action in order to meet emission reduction targets through the development of high integrity carbon credits while supporting reforestation and community development.

Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla and Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro Jr. were also present. Tharman, meanwhile, was accompanied by Fu, Singapore's Ambassador to the Philippines Constance See, members of the Singaporean Parliament and other senior government officials.

The DENR assured continued gains against the impacts of climate change through the possible cooperation of both countries.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

Senate OKs enabling bill for Loss and Damage Fund Board

By: Jean Mangaluz

The Senate passed on the third and final reading the bill that confers a legal personality to the Loss and Damage Fund Board (LDFB).

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. urged Congress to pass the Senate bill after the Philippines was selected to host the Loss and Damage Fund. The Loss and Damage Fund is an endowment initiated by the United Nations to help countries disproportionately affected by climate change.

Sen. Imee Marcos, Ferdinand Marcos Jr.'s sister, steered Senate Bill 2780 into its passage in the upper chamber. The bill was in substitution of Senate Bills 2734, 2747, 2748, 2750, and 2751, which were filed by Senate President Pro Tempore Jinggoy Ejercito Estrada, Majority Leader Francis Tolentino, Senators Loren Legarda, Ramon Bong Revilla Jr., and Imee, respectively.

"The measure... is our obligation to provide the enabling law to grant the requisite juridical personality to the Board, vesting it with full legal capacity to enter into contract," Imee said in her sponsorship speech on Monday.

The newly passed bill would allow the LDFB to acquire and dispose of properties, institute legal proceedings, conclude and enter a housing arrangement with the World Bank, and undertake other necessary activities.

"This, indeed, is a breakthrough in the decades-long and oft-acrimonious debate on funding for loss and damage brought about by climate change," Imee said.

The president has long vied for the Loss and Damage Fund. The Philippines was selected to host the Fund in July 2024. During his third State of the Nation Address, the president told Congress that an enabling law was needed for the country to carry out its role as a host.

"Precisely because of our inherent vulnerability, we are proactive advocates for heightened climate responsibility and justice on the global stage. To this end, we have secured a seat on the Board of the Loss and Damage Fund. Further, the Philippines has also been selected as host country to that fund," the president said in his Address to Congress.

“This will require an enabling law from Congress to confer the legal personality and capacity to the Board,” he told lawmakers.

The Loss and Damage Fund was established at the COP28 in 2023 when world leaders from almost 200 countries agreed to the fund.

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