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By: Laura Paddison

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SUNSTAR

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By: Jay Pelayo IV

As we bear witness to the alarming signs of a changing climate, it becomes evident that the effects of climate change are no longer a distant threat, but a stark reality that demands our immediate attention. Across the globe, from the scorching heatwaves to

the intensification of typhoons, we are experiencing firsthand the consequences of our failure to prevent this environmental crisis. Nowhere is this truth more evident than in the Philippines, one of the most vulnerable countries grappling with the devastating impacts of climate change.

THE MANILA TIMES

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By: Brix Lelis

The country's renewable energy sector has drawn more interest from European investors after the government removed the foreign ownership limits on RE projects, the European Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines (ECCP) chief said.

Information and Knowledge Management Division

AL JAZEERA

Germany's climate effort to lag below 2030 targets, say experts

Germany's greenhouse emissions gap will likely be more extensive than government estimates in 2030, even if reduction measures are fully implemented, a group of climate experts said.

Berlin aims to cut its carbon dioxide emissions by 65 percent by 2030 compared with 1990, on the road to becoming greenhouse gas neutral by 2045.

Last year, the country's CO2 levels were already 40 percent below the 1990 level.

While the German government's planned CO2 cuts for the energy and industrial sector could cut emissions significantly, efforts in the buildings and transports sector are lagging, a council said in a report on Tuesday.

Even if all the measures are implemented, the buildings sector will have a CO2 gap of 35 million tonnes by 2030, while the transport sector is expected to miss the target with excess emissions of 117 million to 191 million tonnes.

Hans-Martin Henning, the council's chairman, said in a statement, "The expected overall reduction is probably overestimated".

According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), between 2013 – 2020, Berlin missed overall climate targets in critical sectors, particularly transport and buildings.

However, the report indicated that a bill aimed to phase out oil and gas heating systems would contribute to lower cuts in the building sector.

Last year, the building sector emitted 112 million tonnes of greenhouse gases or 15 percent of the total.

The scope of a rule phasing out the use of fossil fuels in heating systems in old buildings in favour of ones that run with 65 percent renewable energy from 2024 was significantly pushed back from the pro-business Free Democratic Party to amend the initial bill.

The transport ministry's assumptions on the effectiveness of the planned measures for cutting emissions are also "optimistic", the council said.

“There is a lack of coherent and consistent overall concept and an overarching framework of measures,” the report found.

ARAB NEWS

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The program focuses on implementing policy, and finding financial and technological solutions to achieve an equitable energy transition. It also aims at repairing climate financing, while putting nature, lives, and livelihoods at the core of climate action.

The event is also bidding to be the most inclusive climate change conference in history.

The program was developed in collaboration with stakeholders such as nongovernmental organizations, youth bodies, and indigenous peoples.

The program begins with a two-day World Climate Action Summit, which will present the first Global Stocktake to leaders.

The remaining two weeks will look at the impact of climate change on human health, agriculture, water systems, and biodiversity.

The event will also focus on boosting the role of indigenous peoples; the importance of gender equality throughout the entire climate spectrum; and educating children.

It aims to investigate issues such as renewable energy, decarbonization and carbon capture technologies, as well as building greener urban mobility systems to aid the transition to low-carbon environments and infrastructure.

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By: Laura Paddison

The weather conditions that fueled record-shattering wildfires in eastern Canada earlier this summer – and sent plumes of hazardous air into the US – were made more likely and more intense by the climate crisis, according to a new report published Tuesday.

Scientists from the World Weather Attribution initiative – which calculates the role of climate change in extreme weather events – found human-caused climate change more than doubled the likelihood of hot, dry and windy conditions that drove the Quebec fires between May and July, and made this fire-prone weather at least 20% more intense.

The severity of Quebec's fire season up to the end of July was also made 50% more intense by climate change, according to the report.

Climate change's impact may be much greater than the study's figures show, said Friederike Otto, co-founder of WWA and senior lecturer at the Grantham Institute in the UK, who added that the report had used the most conservative estimates.

Wildfires are complex to study because of the tangle of factors that influence them, but scientists say climate change, driven by the burning of fossil fuels, is loading the dice in favor of more devastating fires.

"It's becoming evident that the dry and warm conditions conducive to wildfires are becoming more common and more intense around the world as a result of climate change," said Clair Barnes, a research associate at the Grantham Institute and a report author.

Canada has experienced an unprecedented fire season this year, amid hot and dry conditions. May to June was the warmest such two-month period in Canada since records began in 1940, breaking the previous record by a substantial margin – 0.8 degrees Celsius (1.4 Fahrenheit).

More than 15 million hectares (over 37 million acres) across the country have been scorched – an area about the size of Illinois. The fires have killed at least 17 people and forced the evacuations of more than 150,000.

Quebec has been particularly affected, with the most area burned of any Canadian province. Wildfires have devastated 5.2 million hectares (12.8 million acres) there so far, about 26 times the average amount burned by late August.

The fires have also caused dangerous levels of air pollution in Canada and across swaths of the US, leading to school closures in both countries and a spike in asthma-related hospital visits. Smoke from the fires even made it to Western Europe.

It is by far the worst wildfire season Canada has ever experienced, and there are still more than two months left to go.

To understand the role of climate change in the fires, the WWA scientists looked at “fire weather” – including high temperatures, strong winds and dry conditions, all of which help fires ignite, spread and intensify.

The scientists used data from the Fire Weather Index – a measure of fire danger – to gauge the persistence of extreme fire conditions as well as the severity of the fire season overall. They then used climate models to understand the role climate change played.

They concluded that a wildfire season as severe as the one Quebec experienced up to the end of July was at least seven times more likely to occur because of climate change, and that human-induced warming made Quebec’s total fire weather season at least 50% more intense.

Climate change also made the peak fire weather in Quebec during the same period at least twice as likely and 20% more intense, according to the report.

While Quebec’s fires were unprecedented, the report authors wrote, “they are no longer extremely unusual.”

In today’s climate, which is around 1.2 degrees Celsius warmer than preindustrial times, similar weather conditions can be expected once every 25 years, the report found.

Around 1,000 fires continue to rage across Canada, with 200 of them burning in the Northwest Territories, where thousands of people were evacuated Friday from the capital Yellowknife. About 35,000 people are under evacuation orders in British Columbia.

Kira Hoffman, a fire ecologist at the University of British Columbia and the Bulkley Valley Research Centre, who was not involved in the report, said there are many factors

that contribute to extreme wildfire seasons, including logging, large-scale clearouts and abandoning Indigenous fire stewardship techniques.

But all these factors interact with the climate crisis, she told CNN. “A rapidly changing climate is creating longer, drier and hotter wildfire seasons across Canada,” Hoffman said.

One of the major concerns with increasingly intense fire behavior is the impact on wildfire management, said Michael Flannigan, BC research chair for Predictive Services, Emergency Management and Fire Science at Thompson Rivers University.

“If we see more days above fire intensity thresholds, we will see more escape fires, more area burned and more impacts to society,” he told CNN.

“Until we stop burning fossil fuels,” said Otto in a statement, “the number of wildfires will continue to increase, burning larger areas for longer periods of time.”

ECO BUSINESS

[Unlocking capital for sustainability 2023 - Philippines: Mobilising climate finance from the 4Ps](#)

As a country consistently affected by extreme weather events, the Philippines is in a race against time to mitigate the effects of climate change on its people and economy.

This year, President Ferdinand “Bong Bong” Marcos, Jr.’s Agenda for Prosperity announced the country’s ambition to become a “moderately prosperous” economy by 2040. However, climate-related events – including typhoons that pummel the country each year, as well as floods, landslides, and droughts – continue to thwart efforts to reach this goal.

The World Bank estimates that the economic impact from climate change in the nation could reach up to 7.6 per cent of GDP by 2030, with capital-intensive sectors likely to suffer the most, along with the agriculture sector, which severely affects the poorest households. Without urgent action, the economic and human costs to the country due to climate change will be profound.

President Marcos’s climate budget worth P464.5 billion is a step in the right direction, but only makes up less than a tenth of the total national budget and may fail to cover increasing climate-induced losses. Climate-related hazards have incurred P506.1 billion in damages to the Philippines over the past decade alone.

How can the Philippines unlock more funding to weather future storms? What role do the 4Ps – private, public, and philanthropic partnerships – play in mobilising much-needed funding for climate action? What frameworks are needed to make transition finance an effective tool for hard-to-abate sectors?

Unlocking Capital for Sustainability Philippines 2023 will convene leaders and decision-makers across the government, financial institutions and civic society to explore the latest developments and pathways forward to enable an equitable transition.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

[IEEFA: Investors' interest in PH renewables rises](#)

By: Kris Crismundo

The Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis (IEEFA) expects the Philippines' renewable energy (RE) sector to grow at a faster pace as investors' interest in the country's RE rises.

A report by Ramnath Iyer, IEEFA lead for climate and renewable energy finance for Asia, shows that listed companies in the Philippines accelerated the adoption of renewables, while investors put higher value on pure play RE firms compared to non-pure play renewables companies.

Iyer said there has been an enhanced interest and notable growth in the country's RE sector in the past two years.

He said new and existing players with a track record in infrastructure and utilities have started to boost investments in renewables.

"In terms of how investors view asset values, pure play renewables companies command a valuation premium over utilities having lower levels of renewables in their mix," he added.

IEEFA's research said higher investor support is seen in pure play renewable companies such as Solar Philippines and Ayala's ACEN Corp. compared to First Gen Corp. and Aboitiz Power Corp.

"Investors are willing to reward firms which plan to grow in the field of renewables and are able to execute their plans, the report finds. For example, investors value each megawatt (MW) of installed capacity at ACEN at PHP137 million (USD2.46 million) based on the market capitalization and megawatts in operation as of August 4 this year, and CREIT (CITICORE Energy REIT Corp.) at PHP102 million/MW (USD1.83 million)," IEEFA said.

"Non-pure plays First Gen Corporation and Aboitiz Power are valued at only PHP26.7 million/MW (USD479,000) and PHP73.7 million/MW (USD1.32 million), respectively," it added.

Iyer also highlighted the country's "history of private sector involvement in important parts of the economy", especially in the energy sector, as they have the know-how and ability to take on and deliver the projects.

“Power generation, power distribution, telephony, transport, and airlines have all been privately owned in the Philippines for decades, unlike most of Southeast Asia, where the public sector or SOEs (state-owned enterprises) dominate these sectors,” he said.

PH and UAE: Almost 5 decades of building bridges of friendship

The essence of the task of a diplomat is to build bridges of friendship and understanding between countries and peoples. I found, upon my arrival in January this year, that Filipinos have been successfully undertaking this task long before the first Filipino diplomat ever set foot in the UAE.

I say this as we mark today the 49th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Philippines and the UAE in 19 August 1974. The Philippines' first diplomatic mission was opened in Abu Dhabi on 19 June 1980 at the Al Ain Palace Hotel before it moved to Janana Building along Electra Street in Khalidiya Area, now the Philippine Embassy is located in Al Mushrif.

Moreover, I would not be surprised to learn that immediately after the Founding Father Sheikh Zayed established the seven emirates in 1971 into the United Arab Emirates we know today, Filipinos were already part of the first group of expatriates that came to the UAE's desert sands to help build the foundations of the cities of this country. They were among the first architects, builders, and engineers to come to the UAE to build the first bridges and buildings of this young nation. Those Filipinos founded and cemented the strong ties between our two countries which have endured to this day.

The work that I and eight previous ambassadors before me have been doing, including countless diplomats these past 48 years, are indeed firmly founded on the strong friendship and solidarity between our Filipino compatriots with Emiratis and fellow expatriates in the UAE. Today, we take great pride in the fact that a million-strong Filipinos reside in the UAE, held in high esteem in the business, medical, construction, creative fields, holding leadership and executive rank, to mid-level down to the humblest positions. In whatever sector they may be in, whichever rank they may hold, they are always held in high regard, respected for their skill and professionalism, having found their place, and success, in the UAE. An example is the way key Dubai-based Filipino designers are widely acknowledged for helping put the UAE in the global fashion map.

I believe that this is made possible because the UAE, under the visionary leadership of Sheikh Zayed, has fostered an inclusive and tolerant society, built on the principle of peaceful coexistence with people of all nations and faiths.

On many occasions, the UAE leadership, led by His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, UAE President, and Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, UAE Prime Minister and Vice President, has expressed the UAE's high regard for Filipinos. HH Pres. Mohamed has given the highest honor to Filipino medical frontliners who served in the fight against coronavirus in the UAE, calling them personally, checking on their conditions, and assuring them of his support. Likewise, when I

presented my credentials before HH the Prime Minister, and when I met with Tolerance Minister HH Sheikh Nahyan bin Mubarak Al Nahyan, MOHRE Minister H.E. Dr. Abdulrahman Al Awar, and with other high-level officials of the UAE, they repeatedly and unequivocally raised the contributions of the Filipino people to UAE's economy and social fabric.

This recognition has generated goodwill that has been translated into many forms. One of these manifestations of goodwill is in the way the UAE has provided humanitarian support to the Philippines through the Emirates Red Crescent in many instances. Examples include UAE humanitarian assistance during the onslaught of Typhoon Haiyan in 2013, the eruption of Taal Volcano in 2020, the provision of PPE and medical aid at the height of the pandemic in 2020, and the 50 RT-PCR machines with testing kits sent last year on 19 August 2022 (on the 49th anniversary of PH-UAE diplomatic relations) which was received in the airport in Manila by myself, my predecessor the previous Philippine Ambassador to the UAE, Amb. Hjayceelyn M. Quintana, and the UAE Ambassador to the Philippines my good friend, Mohammed Obaid Salem Al Qattam Al Zaabi.

On 12 June 2023, a little over two months ago, during the Philippine's national day celebration, the UAE sent to the Philippines a 50-ton planeload of relief goods, food and medicine for the impending eruption of Mayon volcano. What is significant about this gesture is that even before the need arose, the UAE already made provisions. The Philippine President, H.E. Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr., thanked His Highness Sheikh Mohamed in a letter and they also spoke on the phone, further discussing ways forward for the bilateral relations of the Philippines and the UAE. It was also during this phone call that my President accepted HH Sheikh Mohamed's invitation to attend COP28 which the UAE is hosting by end of this year.

Underpinning the robust relations between our two countries is indeed the Filipino people's deep bonds of kinship with Emiratis and all peoples in the UAE, the goodwill generated reaching into the highest levels as exemplified above. This wealth of trust and friendship between our two countries has allowed the Philippines and the UAE to expand and venture into new, previously uncharted areas of cooperation.

On labor, which has long been the primary basis of our strong relations, we have broken new ground in the deployment of workers in 2021 at the 3rd PH-UAE Joint Committee Meeting on Bilateral Labor Cooperation. More recently, I had a meeting with MOHRE where the UAE indicated strongly that it needs more Filipino workers across a wide range of sectors. Likewise, the PH-UAE MOU in Combatting Human Trafficking was signed in September 2019, and the PH-UAE MOU on Consular Cooperation was signed in April 2021, important agreements that ensure mechanisms are in place to protect the rights and welfare of Filipinos in the UAE. On the back of this solid foundation, many

Filipinos in the UAE have built on the opportunities given them, and made the transition from employee to entrepreneur, becoming business owners through sheer determination, hard work and faith. I have come across many such success stories and had the privilege of meeting a number of them. Truly remarkable and an inspiration to all.

What will surprise most people is that in the last 15 months alone, we signed three important agreements between our two countries. First is the groundbreaking MOU on Space Cooperation signed in December 2022 between the Philippine Space Agency and the UAE Space Agency. The two space agencies will conduct joint space research and development; exchange of space data for application in climate change, disaster management and emergency response, food security, and agriculture. Second, on 28 June 2022 we signed an MOU between the Department of Agriculture and the UAE Ministry of Climate Change, Agriculture and Environment where both countries will collaborate on soil science and management, biotechnology, post-harvest, agriculture research and development, agricultural innovation, agriculture technology, irrigation and water resources. Third, on 9 June 2022, the Philippines and the UAE signed an investment promotion and protection agreement (IPPA) which will boost investment between the countries and pave the way for the Philippines' enhanced access to the broader Middle Eastern region. On the field of high technology and AI, the Philippines and the UAE are finalizing an MOU that will bolster cooperation in a number of areas including on artificial intelligence. Also being finalized are MOUs on defense, culture and a free trade agreement called the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA). Truly, these areas of cooperation have expanded in a manner that Filipino diplomats of the early years could only have imagined.

The upcoming visit of President Marcos to the UAE for COP28 further opens opportunities for sustainable development cooperation, and we are hoping that the MOU on Climate Change Cooperation which the Philippines is proposing to the UAE, as well as the Framework Agreement on Renewable Energy, will be signed during this visit. Additionally, we are looking forward to UAE's investment in renewable energy projects in the Philippines. A major undertaking between the Philippines and the UAE is the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) which we hope will also be signed soon, as the bilateral discussions on the Terms of Reference (TOR) is ongoing, a precursor to the negotiations and signing. The UAE looks forward to the UAE's ambitious plans for COP28 that would present real benefits for countries such as the Philippines, considered among the most vulnerable nations to climate change.

From the foregoing, we see clearly that the path for our two countries' bilateral relations is on an upward trajectory, evolving now into areas where we see deeper complementarity and mutual benefit. For one, the Philippines, counted as among the countries most vulnerable to climate change, can benefit from the UAE's expertise and

resources, in terms of renewable energy. Likewise, the UAE's thrust to move towards a knowledge-based economy will need a young workforce adept in science and technology and AI which the Philippines can provide.

At the end of the day, there is one driving force as to why the Philippines and the UAE are working together, this is to forge a partnership that will enable each country to prepare a bright future for the next generation of Filipinos and Emiratis. The one million-strong Filipino community in the UAE comprise of families whose children see the UAE as their home, having been educated here. There is also a growing generation of Filipino-Emiratis who speak in both Filipino and Arabic, love both adobo and khuzi, of course, with generous portions of rice. Within their hearts are the hopes and dreams of both the Philippines and the UAE, and it is for their future that both countries need to work hard for.

On the occasion of the 49th anniversary of the establishment of Philippines-UAE diplomatic relations, as we look forward to the golden anniversary next year, I and on behalf of the Filipino community in the UAE, take this singular opportunity to thank the UAE leadership under UAE President His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, and UAE Prime Minister and Vice President His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, for recognizing the efforts and contributions of Filipinos towards the growth and development of UAE's economy and society. It is our hope that moving forward, the partnership between the Philippines and the UAE will grow even deeper and more meaningful as both countries prepare a bright future for the next generation of Filipinos and Emiratis.

SUNSTAR

Climate Change's Unyielding Grip

By: Jay Pelayo IV

As we bear witness to the alarming signs of a changing climate, it becomes evident that the effects of climate change are no longer a distant threat, but a stark reality that demands our immediate attention. Across the globe, from the scorching heatwaves to the intensification of typhoons, we are experiencing firsthand the consequences of our failure to prevent this environmental crisis. Nowhere is this truth more evident than in the Philippines, one of the most vulnerable countries grappling with the devastating impacts of climate change.

Over the past decade, the Philippines has suffered from increasingly hotter seasons, breaking records and pushing the limits of human endurance. With rising temperatures, the delicate balance that once governed weather patterns is being disrupted, leading to more intense and frequent typhoons. These storms, fueled by warmer ocean waters, bring forth destructive winds and heavy rainfall, wreaking havoc on vulnerable communities.

The changing climate has also confounded authorities in the Philippines. The country experiences an unusual surge in monsoon rains, even during periods when El Niño, traditionally associated with drier conditions, should prevail. As a result, areas that were once safe from flooding find themselves submerged, leaving residents displaced and infrastructure devastated. This increase in flooding highlights the urgent need to address the underlying causes of climate change and strengthen preparedness measures to protect vulnerable populations.

The unpredictability of seasons and shifting weather patterns have brought immense challenges to the agricultural sector, leaving farmers in a state of uncertainty. Traditional knowledge passed down through generations is becoming obsolete as the climate becomes increasingly erratic. Farmers are now faced with difficult decisions about which crops to plant, unsure of how changing conditions will impact their yields. This uncertainty threatens food security and the livelihoods of countless individuals who depend on agriculture for their sustenance.

The devastating incident in Maui, Hawaii, serves as a poignant reminder of the interconnectedness of climate change and extreme weather events. While authorities point to a typhoon as the catalyst for the destructive flames that engulfed an entire community, it is crucial to recognize that the intensification of typhoons is, in part, a consequence of climate change. This tragic event underscores the urgent need for comprehensive action to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change.

As the evidence mounts before our eyes, it is clear that humanity has collectively failed in preventing the arrival of climate change. However, this failure does not absolve us of our responsibility to act. We must recognize the urgency of the situation and work collectively to address this global challenge.

Governments, businesses, and individuals all have a role to play. We must transition to cleaner and more sustainable energy sources, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and invest in renewable technologies. Furthermore, we must prioritize the protection of vulnerable communities by developing robust adaptation strategies, improving early warning systems, and implementing resilient infrastructure.

The realities of climate change are no longer abstract concepts. They are manifested in the scorching heat, intense storms, and unpredictable seasons that we face today. In the Philippines and beyond, the impacts of climate change are felt acutely, with devastating consequences on lives and livelihoods.

We cannot afford to turn a blind eye any longer. The time for action is now.

THE MANILA TIMES

[PH 'green' energy draws EU interest](#)

By: Brix Lelis

The country's renewable energy sector has drawn more interest from European investors after the government removed the foreign ownership limits on RE projects, the European Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines (ECCP) chief said.

In an exclusive interview with The Manila Times, ECCP President Paulo Duarte said the RE sector is one of the key areas where the Europeans recently showed "strong interest."

This came after the amendments to the Public Service Act (PSA) started to take effect in April 2023, which lifted restrictions on essential public services and allowed 100 percent foreign ownership of businesses.

Duarte pointed out that the full liberalization of the RE sector and the recent "roadshow" of Trade Secretary Alfredo Pascual in Europe attracted foreigners to invest in solar, wind and hydro systems in the Philippines.

"This was probably the key area where the investors were informed about the recent amendments in the law, and this captured our eyes, especially on the wind sector and solar (sector)," he said.

"I think we will have good investments from [the] European side coming over," the ECCP president added.

With the amendments to the PSA, Duarte said telecommunications, railways and maritime have also become promising investments for Europeans.

He noted that the business process outsourcing (BPO) and electronics industries continue to draw in Europeans and other foreign investors, making them the "key pillars" of the Philippine economy.

Duarte said the Philippines offers a lot of opportunities for European investors, but the macroeconomic environment must be favorable for them

On Tuesday, the ECCP signed a memorandum of agreement (MoA) with The Manila Times, which will provide the former with a space in the weekly columns of the newspaper's business section.

The partnership deal also offers the ECCP media coverage for its events while giving the publication the option to become a media partner for the foreign chamber's flagship events.

Along with Duarte, TMT President and Chief Operating Officer Blanca Mercado and ECCP Executive Director Florian Gottein spearheaded the MoA signing.

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