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By: Wanjohi Kaukuru

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Dagupan to pursue waste-to-energy project

By Hilda Austria

Dagupan City – The city government under the new administration of Mayor Belen Fernandez will continue the W2W waste-to-energy project with the SURE Global Waste to Worth Innovations (W2WI) facility that is expected to end the city's garbage problem.

Finland opens 2 honorary consulates in PH

By Joyce Ann L. Rocamora

MANILA – The Finnish government opened its honorary consulates in Davao and Cebu, signaling Finland's growing presence in the Philippines.

PH, Qatar seek to expand ties on climate change mitigation

By Joyce Ann L. Rocamora

Manila – The Philippine and Qatar governments are looking at expanding their partnership on ways to address climate change, the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) said Thursday.

SUNSTAR (Pampanga)

New U.S. law to address climate change

By Rox Peña

According to the website worldpopulationreview.com, the United States (U.S.) is the second biggest emitter of greenhouse gases which are causing global warming and climate change.

THE MANILA TIMES

DAR allots P12M for solar irrigation system

By: Bella Cariaso

The Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) has set aside P12 million to fund a solar-powered irrigation system for farmers in Cavite.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

MANILA TIMES

[\[Opinion\] Drought drives home the threat of climate change](#)

Major parts of the world are in the grip of droughts, the magnitude of which is unprecedented, bringing the specter of a climate crisis dangerously closer.

[\[Opinion\] Offset, ban, or tax? New and proposed programs to end plastic waste hotly debated](#)

By Ben Kritz

Last of three parts

ONE way in which companies covered under the EPR Act can meet at least some of the requirements of the law is through a relatively new plastic offset program called Plastic Credit Exchange (PCX), a non-profit launched by social entrepreneur Nanette Medved-Po in the Philippines in 2018.

Information and Knowledge Management Division

BUSINESS MIRROR

For clean energy and financial growth, Africa looks to UN talks

By: Wanjohi Kaukuru

Mombasa, Kenya—In Kenya’s semi-arid Makueni County, 50-year-old Purity Kinyili used to spend most of her time traveling for water and firewood to sustain her family and farmland.

But then the government set up an initiative to install solar energy in rural towns, so she got hold of the easy-to-install panels, set them up and sunk a solar-powered borehole. Now her once dry land has turned a lush green, and she’s even got enough power left over for electricity in her home.

Access to more and cleaner energy while continuing to grow economically will be a top priority for African nations in the upcoming United Nations climate conference in November, top officials and climate experts on the continent said. As part of Africa’s goal for what’s called a “just transition”—ensuring that the buildout of clean energy is fair and inclusive—the African Union wants to boost access to electricity and clean cooking resources to hundreds of millions of people. It’s estimated that 600 million people out of 1.4 billion living on the continent don’t have electricity, with 900 million lacking access to cleaner cooking fuels.

But some experts argue that improving living standards means that Africa will, at least temporarily, have to increase its output of fossil fuels.

Africa needs longer timeframes and more financial resources to move towards clean energy if it still wants to meet its social and economic growth goals, Harsen Nyambe, the director of sustainable environment and blue economy division at the African Union, told the Associated Press.

He said that while a just transition is “good”, he urged the need to be “realistic” about expectations for African nations as the continent is also trying to develop infrastructure with fewer resources, while already dealing with the effects of a warming climate.

Africa is particularly vulnerable to climate change, with little resources to adapt to hotter and drier temperatures in some areas and extreme downpours in others. The Horn and east of Africa are suffering from ongoing and devastating drought which has left populations with little food and water, while southern nations are battered by deadly cyclones with growing frequency.

“We have different capacities and responsibilities,” Nyambe said, adding that Africa could, for example, be given up to 100 years to transition away from dirty fuels.

Many nations, particularly developed countries like the US and in Europe who are responsible for a larger share of heat-trapping gases in the atmosphere, are looking to

achieve “net zero” emissions by 2050. China hopes to achieve the net zero goal by 2060, and India by 2070.

Africa already emits far less carbon dioxide than other continents or individual nations, accounting for just 3 percent to 4 percent of emissions despite being home to nearly 17 percent of the world’s population, said James Murombedzi, who heads the Africa Climate Policy Centre.

To achieve “net zero”, countries would need to dramatically cut down their greenhouse gas emissions while offsetting the remainder with projects that suck carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere. Tree-planting projects have sprung up across the continent, such as in Lufasi Park in Nigeria or Mozambique’s mangrove restoration projects, mostly from private investors looking to counterbalance their own polluting activities.

But experts say local governments are not yet able to invest the required funding for such large carbon-absorbing projects.

“There is pressure for the net zero by 2050. I think as Africa we should not give in to the pressure given our circumstances,” Nyambe said, referring to Africa’s lack of financing and growing infrastructure needs.

He said any emissions targets “should be accompanied by resources. Because how do you transform without capacity, finance and technology?”

Nyambe added that getting the right financial support at the UN climate conference, known as COP27, can help kickstart Africa’s transition to cleaner energy.

The African Union has pointed to natural gas as “transition fuel” for Africa’s energy needs, alongside renewables, hydrogen and nuclear energy, although some experts have questioned whether gas should be used in a move toward cleaner sources. Although natural gas emits less carbon dioxide than other fossil fuels, building up gas infrastructure may slow efforts to move to renewables, they say.

“Africa is embracing a clean energy future but will do so based on its needs and circumstances,” said Linus Mofor, a senior environmental affairs advisor at the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa. “The use of natural gas, which is plentiful in the continent, is critical.”

Algeria, Egypt and Nigeria lead Africa in gas production with countries like Senegal, Mozambique, Tanzania and Angola all expected to become gas-producing hubs.

Mofor added that the “transition to renewable energies will require substantial capital investments. By 2030, Africa will need \$2 trillion to address its energy transformation.”

Some of the continent’s larger economies have already invested heavily in renewable energy, with megaprojects like Morocco’s Ourzazate Solar Power Station, Egypt’s Kom

Ombo solar plant, Kenya's Menengai geothermal plant and Lake Turkana's wind farm and the Jasper solar plant in South Africa sprouting up across Africa.

Smaller projects, such as off-grid solar panels to bring electricity to rural areas or rooftop solar panels, are also being installed across the continent, with Kenya, South Africa and Nigeria leading the way.

But a "strong commitment by developed nations" to help cut emissions and assist Africa's energy transition means even more clean energy projects can arise, said Mouhamadou Bamba Sylla, a meteorologist and lead author of the UN's latest climate assessment.

BUSINESS WORLD

DoE lawyers up ahead of key Malampaya decisions, indigenous energy push

By: Ashley Erika O. Jose

The Department of Energy (DoE) said it has established an advisory panel which includes two retired Supreme Court justices to guide the department on legal issues it is likely to encounter, particularly regarding the endgame for the Malampaya gas project.

“The DoE law and energy advisory panel (will ensure) that the recommendations to the President coming from the DoE are fully grounded in the Constitution,” Energy Secretary Raphael P. M. Lotilla said at a virtual briefing.

Mr. Lotilla said the members of the panel include retired chief justices Renato S. Puno, and Artemio V. Panganiban.

The panel will advise the department on the process of accelerating and expanding the development of indigenous energy resources, and on legal issues that have arisen with regard to the disposition of Malampaya gas to power project.

“These are among the things that are being addressed right now. As you know the Philippine National Oil Company-Exploration Corp. (PNOC-EC) is considering the matter of giving its consent to the sale of Shell’s interest (in Malampaya), and as far as the DoE is concerned, we will have to review the sale, but I can assure you that we will adhere to the timeline,” Mr. Lotilla said.

Mr. Lotilla said that the timetable is “quite tight” on Malampaya, but assured that the DoE will be reviewing the technical and financial aspects of the proposed sale.

Mr. Lotilla said that the DoE will let the Energy Regulatory Commission decide on SMC Global Power Holdings. Corp.’s proposed rate hike.

“I would not want to pre-empt the Energy Regulatory Commission; they are studying these issues intently,” he said.

On Tuesday, SMC Global Power warned that electricity prices in Metro Manila and nearby provinces will rise, pending a decision by the energy regulator on its petition for a temporary rate hike.

CLIMATE CHANGE NEWS

[Germany hypes green hydrogen alliance while shopping for Canadian fossil gas](#)

By Joe Lo

Germany and Canada announced a “hydrogen alliance” this week, in a move that distracted from Germany’s push to buy non-Russian fossil gas.

After meeting with Germany’s leader Olaf Scholz, Canada’s prime minister Justin Trudeau announced Canada would work towards exporting green hydrogen to Germany by 2025.

Energy experts swiftly criticised the idea as unrealistic. A call by Scholz for Canada to expand its fossil fuel infrastructure got less attention.

Bloomberg New Energy Finance founder Michael Liebreich called the alliance “hilarious”. “No more than homeopathic quantities of [hydrogen] will ever move by ship,” he said. On his trip to Canada, Scholz urged Trudeau’s government to build shipping terminals on its east coast to export liquefied natural gas (LNG) to Europe.

“As Germany is moving away from Russian energy at warp speed, Canada is our partner of choice,” he said in Toronto. “For now, this means increasing our LNG imports. We hope that Canadian LNG will play a major role in this.”

Electrical engineering professor Arvind Ravikumar said: “This is more an LNG export deal than a hydrogen one, at least in the short term... Because transporting [liquified hydrogen] like [liquified natural gas] is an expensive, leaky, & uneconomic endeavor.”

It follows a pattern in Scholz’s recent energy diplomacy. He’s encouraged an LNG terminal in Argentina, gas production in Senegal and a pipeline to bring gas from Algeria through Spain and France to Germany. At home, Scholz supports the building of two terminals to import LNG from overseas. Experts warn this infrastructure will take too long to build to help with Germany’s immediate gas demand crunch. In the long run, it will either worsen climate change by prolonging gas use or become worthless as Germany phases gas out of its electricity system by 2035.

Scholz is in coalition with the German Green Party. He has tried to reconcile his support for gas infrastructure with climate action by claiming that the terminals and pipelines can be converted from fossil gas to zero-carbon hydrogen made from renewables.

Hosting a recent G7 summit, he told the press: “When it comes to financing fossil sources of energy, this is something that is to come to an end. But of course, in this very specific situation we are now in, we will be helping many countries, if they need to make investments for being hydrogen-ready.” Hydrogen has different properties to methane gas and switching infrastructure from one to the other is no simple matter. E3G gas analyst Maria Pastukhova told Climate Home: ““There is no such thing as a ‘hydrogen-

ready LNG terminal”. It is cheaper to build a hydrogen terminal from scratch than convert an LNG one to hydrogen, she said.

Scholz and EU Commission chief Ursula Von Der Leyen have claimed that gas pipelines in Europe can be converted to hydrogen. While conversion is possible, Stanford University engineering professor Mark Jacobson told Climate Home that hydrogen in a gas pipeline leaks at seven times the rate of gas, as the molecules are smaller and escape easier. Hydrogen leaks are expensive and dangerous. Jacobson said green hydrogen should be produced near to where it is needed in places like “airports, steel factories, ammonia factories, shipping ports, and truck stops”. The renewable electricity needed to make green hydrogen can be moved by cables. Pastukhova agreed, adding that 85% of hydrogen is currently produced near to where it used.

Another option is to use green hydrogen to make ammonia, which is easier to transport and can be used as fuel or in fertilisers. But converting ammonia back to hydrogen for use as a gas is inefficient, Pastukhova said.

DW NEWS

[Philippines spends billions to boost crisis-hit agriculture](#)

By: Darko Janjevic

With climate change threatening crops, the Philippines government has made boosting agriculture one of its top priorities. But this may not be enough to avert the farming crisis.

The Philippine government announced more money to fight the agriculture crisis, raising funding 40% over 2021. About €3.3 billion (\$3.3 billion) will be allocated for agriculture, which has been designated one of the government's top five budget priorities, alongside education, infrastructure, the health sector, and social protection.

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. aims to transform agriculture "from being an economic laggard to one of the main drivers for growth and employment," officials said in a statement. In June, the new president named himself agriculture minister.

Experts welcomed the funding hike with cautious optimism, pointing to devastating losses suffered by farmers from natural disasters. These losses have worsened in recent years due to climate change.

Climate is key

The economist Jan Carlo Punongbayan told DW that the way to help agriculture is to fight the climate crisis.

"Unless the government puts climate change mitigation and management to the fore, agriculture will continue to be in the doldrums in decades to come," Punongbayan said.

Situated in the Pacific Ring of Fire, the Philippines is one of the most disaster-hit countries in the world. The country experiences an average of 20 typhoons each year. According to government data, the country's agricultural output shrank last year by about 2.6% after a decline in crops caused by adverse weather conditions. This comes against the background of international experts, such as the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), warning that stronger typhoons and longer dry spells are likely to massively disrupt agriculture worldwide and cause chronic food insecurity.

Harvest 'literally washed away'

The environmentalist Ryan Bestre told DW that farmers in the Philippines do not get adequate government support in the form of subsidies and insurance to recover from natural disasters.

"Their harvest and everything they have worked so hard for is literally washed away. Before they can even recover, another typhoon comes," Bestre said. The activist is the founder of I Am Hampas Lupa, an organization that advocates for elevating the stature of farming by addressing the links between agriculture, climate change and mindful food consumption.

"Our farmers, among the poorest of society, are the ones continuously whipped by the effects of climate change over and over again," Bestre said. |Where is the justice in that?"

According to the Climate Risk Index, the Philippines is the fifth-most-affected country in the world by climate change, but only contributes about 0.3% of global emissions.

Activists push for climate justice

Bestre and other environmental advocates are calling for "climate justice" and demanding accountability from the big corporations they say are responsible for climate change.

"Climate justice is when Filipinos and other climate-impacted communities around the world are protected with laws and that corporations responsible for climate change are held accountable," said Virginia Benosa-Llorin, from Greenpeace Philippines.

"Filipinos are at the front lines of a climate emergency," she said.

In May, the Commission on Human Rights (CHR) released its National Inquiry on Climate Change report. In the report, they called for enacting laws to curb corporations and businesses from committing human rights abuses.

"The impacts of climate change are cross-cutting among sectors and on the whole gamut of human rights, such as the rights to life, health, water, sanitation, education and healthy environment," Roberto Cadiz, a former CHR commissioner who headed the inquiry, told DW.

"The issue of climate change is also an issue of climate justice, where those who contribute least to it are affected most by it," Cadiz told DW.

Philippines running out of farmers

Agriculture in the Philippines also faces another issue: image. The average Filipino farmer is 57-59 years old. Last year, the Department of Agriculture warned that declining employment in the agricultural sector combined with the aging of farmers would contribute to a critical shortage of farmers in just 12 years.

But there are also youth groups who want to change the image of farming so that it doesn't appear to be only for the old and the poor.

"The climate crisis is the defining crisis of our generation," Antonio Flores, from Farm Lab, told DW.

Flores' NGO works with farmers to implement techniques that are less damaging to the environment.

"Agriculture and our farming communities will be the hardest hit, but it also has immense potential to regenerate the earth," Flores said.

Youth sector infusing hope in agriculture

Activists such as Norhaya Vasquez Demacaling focus on educating a generation of what they call agri-entrepreneurs: a new kind of Filipino farmers.

Demacaling is campus director for School for Experiential and Entrepreneurial Development, which aims to train thousands of students at three locations across the Philippines by 2024.

The 29-year-old told DW that climate change has had an impact on the sustainability of farming as a job. "The loss of income from farming contributes to the lack of confidence among local growers. Their children, who are expected to replace them, are avoiding agriculture-related careers because they see it as a one-way ticket to poverty," Demacaling said.

Government data show that in 2018 the number of Filipinos working in the agriculture sector sank to 9.9 million, the lowest total since 1995. The Philippines is home to about 110 million people.

"Through agri-entrepreneurship, we can make farming and agriculture fun, sexy, exciting and profitable," Demacaling said.

GMA NEWS ONLINE

[Philippines emits the most number of riverine plastic into the ocean, study finds](#)

By: Lou Albano

Here's a recognition we don't really want to be associated with.

A study published in 2021 the journal Science Advances showed the Philippines topping the list of countries that emit the most number of riverine plastic into the world.

Led by Dutch researcher Lourens Meijer, the study said more than 1000 rivers account for 80% of global riverine plastic emissions and Philippine rivers having mostly contributed to it.

"The largest contributing country estimated by our model was the Philippines," it said.

India ranked second, Malaysia third; and China and Indonesia at 4th and 5th place respectively.

In a recent virtual symposium on microplastics organized by non-profit organization Oceana, Dr. Hernando Bacosa, PhD. of the Mindanao State University-Iligan Institute of Technology delved deeper into the riverine pollution study and pointed out that "the 466 rivers in the Philippines contribute three times the amount of plastics into the ocean compared to India."

He also highlighted another finding of the study: The Pasig River is the most polluting river in the world (though the study noted it used a model that overestimated the plastic emissions of the Pasig River and that measurements were taken at the end of an unusually dry season of 2019).

Speaking to GMA News Online, Bacosa said the Pasig River alone accounts for 6.4% of the 80% riverine plastic pollution.

"That's something like 2 kilos per second of plastic waste emitted to the sea," he estimates.

His students sought to corroborate and verify the findings of Meijer. Judea Requiron looked at the Pulauan River in Zamboanga, Rojin Mondero and Carl Kenneth Navarro at the Agusan River; Arlene Escanan of the Espanola area of Palawan, and Aiza Gabriel of the Cagayan de Oro River, and the all found the same thing: There is so much plastic found in rivers across the Philippines.

"It's really alarming," Bacosa said, citing the fact that we are a tiny archipelagic country dependent on marine resources that are vital to the livelihood of a lot of Filipinos.

"The Philippines is experiencing historical levels of plastic pollution, especially in marine environment," he emphasized.

It's not a surprise. In 2018, a UN report found the Philippines to be among the Top 5 countries producing half of the world's plastic waste.

And according to a 2019 Global Alliance for Incinerators Alternatives report, the Philippines produces some 164M sachets, 45.2M labo bags and 48M shopping bags daily.

We all know where these plastics end up.

Only 9% of plastics used across the world is recycled, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development reported earlier this year.

Meanwhile, Meijer's study estimates about 60% "of all the plastics ever made to date" have been discarded in landfills or in the natural environment.

These "land-based plastics are among the main sources of marine plastic pollution, either by direct emission from coastal zones or by transport through rivers," it said.

The presence of plastic in the marine environment doesn't just endanger aquatic life, as evidenced by a growing number of marine life dying from ingested plastic, it is also very costly to clean up and poses damage to vessels as well as to gears used in fisheries.

But here's another important thing that Oceana's vice president Atty. Gloria Estenzo Ramos said at the symposium: "The plastic crisis is also a climate crisis."

According to the Center for International Environmental Law, "about 99% of plastic is made from chemicals sourced fossil fuels," which as we all know, emit greenhouse gases that contribute to climate change and global warming.

The very presence of plastic confirms a substantial contribution to climate change and global warming.

"In all stages of its life cycle, plastic has a huge detrimental effect on climate change," Ramos continued, as she urged to cut back on plastics and find solutions.

There are the occasional coastal cleanups and a peppering of consumer-led changes such as going from plastic bags to reusable ones, the popular shift to tumblers and water bottles in place of disposable coffee cups and bottled water, as well as the rising acceptance of the refilling model.

There are also nature-based solutions we can turn to, like planting mangroves, which can effectively filter and prevent plastics from entering the ocean — among other amazing things mangroves can do.

And let's not forget the importance of community-led initiatives like the River Warriors of the Pasig River, who already have successful clean-up efforts to their name.

Most importantly perhaps is government action in terms of legislation and implementation. On top of The Philippines' strong solid waste management law that aims to protect the environment through proper solid waste management practices, local government units can also take a more active approach in managing plastics waste and usage.

For instance, Quezon City in 2019 has already banned single-use plastics and disposable materials from hotels, restaurants, and other establishments.

While plenty environmentalists decry it for not being enough, the Extended Producers' Responsibility bill — which makes it the responsibility of companies to properly recover, recycle, treat, or dispose what they produce post-sale and consumption — has already lapsed into law last July.

Meanwhile, Senator Loren Legarda has also filed a bill that aims to regulate the manufacturing, importation, as well as use of single-use products.

At the symposium, Dr. Riley Howard of elaw.org said it most straightforwardly: "It's now important to think about how we can stop creating new plastics."

"We need to focus on turning off input of new plastics," she emphasized.

And if we add — sooner rather than later. Microplastics have already been found in salt and most recently, in human blood.

MANILA BULLETIN

[ELEVENTH HOUR: Uplifting the voices of the climate-vulnerable through the arts](#)

By: Climate Reality Project Philippines

The magnitude and intersectionality of the impacts of the climate crisis require an interdisciplinary collaboration on advancing climate action.

Science has already established that the world cannot go on business-as-usual and that we must re-think and re-calibrate the way we live. Poets and other artists, in particular, play a crucial role in opening up and advancing the conversation on the real systemic changes needed moving forward.

It is in this spirit that the Climate Reality Project, with its branches in Africa, Canada, and the Philippines, has joined forces with the Agam Agenda to support “When Is Now,” a global poetry and art movement that links together poems, visual arts, murals, and more forms of creative expressions that depict the realities of change.

The partnership birthed “Poets for Climate,” a program that aims to generate poems and murals that will highlight the need for world leaders to address the vicious cycle of loss and damage experienced by climate-vulnerable communities across the globe.

“We need the humanities and the arts to accompany us through the climate crisis. Our work in the Agam Agenda is to reimagine and widen the storytelling circles around the climate crisis so that more people can speak about it and more people can be heard,” Padmapani Perez, lead strategist of the Agam Agenda, said. “We are so thrilled that Climate Reality Project Africa, Canada, and the Philippines have responded to our invitation to collaborate.”

Since its launch last July 15, Poets for Climate has so far generated more than 60 poems from around 40 climate advocates from Cameroon, Canada, Kenya, Nigeria, Philippines, Sierra Leone, South Africa, and Zambia who attended the three pebble poem workshops conducted on Aug. 4, 11, and 18.

Pebble poems, a term coined by award-winning poet and essayist Jane Hirshfield, are short poems that point the readers toward the plight of the planet.

Mentors, including South African feminist, artist, and community worker Malebo Sephodi, guided the workshop participants in writing about the landscapes and places they live in, how these places are being undone and transformed by climate change, and how they re-imagine place-making in the climate crisis.

The poems that emanated from the workshops are either poem seeds (entirely new poems) or poem sprouts (poems that respond to published poems in the When Is Now digital space or poems created by other participants of the workshops).

Whether a poem seed or a poem sprout, each poem paints the reality of the climate crisis on the ground. Altogether, they showcase the similarities, diversity, and connectedness of the lived experiences of the participants—both from the Global North and the Global South—on how climate change is rapidly changing the places they call home.

Climate Reality Africa, Canada, and the Philippines plan to bring the poems to the 27th Session of the Conference of the Parties (COP27) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change this November in Egypt.

Aside from an exhibit on the sidelines of COP27, the Climate Reality branches are also working with local artists in creating murals that respond to the poems.

To date, murals in the cities of Johannesburg in South Africa, Montreal in Canada, and Iloilo and Isabela in the Philippines have already been unveiled.

A mural in Baybay City in Leyte, one of the foremost coastal communities in the country affected by sea level rise and extreme weather events exacerbated by the climate crisis, is set to be created by local artists and climate advocates this week.

The mural painting will form part of a two-day event co-hosted by Climate Reality Philippines with the Institute for Climate and Sustainable Cities and the Visayas State University that will also feature the presentation of the latest climate science information in Southeast Asia by Filipino scientist and Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change (IPCC) Report author Lourdes Tibig.

Moving forward, Poets for Climate will explore more opportunities and create more platforms that will foster and support the creative and imaginative work needed to address the climate crisis.

PHILIPPINES NEWS AGENCY

1st nanotech center in Mindanao to combat environment woes

By: Christine Cudis

Davao City – The first-ever nanotechnology center in Mindanao is expected to develop technological solutions to environmental problems in the island region.

"I hope the Center of Green Nanotechnology Innovations for Environmental Solutions (CGNIES) will become an example of translating research into meaningful, innovative projects benefiting the community," said Dr. Chosel Lawagon, the facility's director, in an interview on Wednesday.

Launched on Aug. 19, the CGNIES of the University in Mindanao (UM) is the first nanotechnology center in Mindanao.

It is funded by the Department of Science and Technology - Philippine Council for Industry, Energy, and Emerging Technology Research and Development (DOST-PCIEERD) through the Infrastructure Development Program (IDP).

Lawagon, who has been working with UM on converting waste into nanoparticles and generating renewable energy through nanogenerators, bagged multiple awards here.

In support, Dr. Anthony Sales, the director of DOST in the Davao Region, said the agency remains committed to working closely with UM to ensure significant objectives will be delivered.

"We anticipate that UM, together with DOST, will play a key role in promoting green innovations in Mindanao and providing technological advancements that care for the environment and humanity," he said.

The DOST said CGNIES was established to ascertain concerted efforts to use nano-innovations to solve environmental problems in Region 11 by being the premiere center to bolster the capability of UM to undertake science and technology research through the safe use of nanomaterials.

The IDP, meanwhile, provides financial support for the establishment and upgrading of research laboratories and facilities of academic and research institutions in the country.

It was established to highlight green approaches to developing nanomaterials from local resources and their integration into micro and macrostructures for developing technological solutions to environmental problems.

Dagupan to pursue waste-to-energy project

By Hilda Austria

Dagupan City – The city government under the new administration of Mayor Belen Fernandez will continue the W2W waste-to-energy project with the SURE Global Waste to Worth Innovations (W2WI) facility that is expected to end the city's garbage problem.

“According to the SURE Global Waste to Worth website, the principle behind W2W projects is that all waste is viewed as a resource to be recovered and used to stimulate economic development,” Fernandez said in a statement Thursday.

She said the concept originated from Procter & Gamble Co., a multinational consumer goods corporation, which aims to eliminate waste going to landfills and dumpsites through the adoption of innovative solutions.

“The USD11 million W2W facility, to be established at no cost to the city government of Dagupan, can load up (to) 30 tons of garbage daily and can convert plastic wastes into 6,000 liters of diesel fuel, and food wastes into 4,000 kg. of methane gas,” she added.

Fernandez and SURE Global Waste to Worth Innovations founder and chief executive officer Jill Boughton conducted a site inspection at the open dumpsite in Bonuan Boquig, near Tondaligan Beach, on August 21 to oversee the magnitude of the garbage problem.

It can be recalled that Fernandez and SURE Global W2WI entered into a memorandum of agreement in August 2017 to improve the solid waste management in the city and put an end to the open dumpsite, in compliance with Republic Act 9003 or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act.

A groundbreaking activity was held in Sitio Bliss, Bonuan Binloc on a portion of public land segregated in a Presidential proclamation purposely for the project in 2018, according to the City Information Office (CIO).

“The project had already complied with the necessary government requirements, including an environmental compliance certificate issued by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources but was not pursued by the next city administration,” the CIO said.

Finland opens 2 honorary consulates in PH

By Joyce Ann L. Rocamora

MANILA – The Finnish government opened its honorary consulates in Davao and Cebu, signaling Finland's growing presence in the Philippines.

Franco Soberano, chief operating officer of property developer Cebu Landmasters, would be the honorary consul in Cebu while Antonio Peralta, executive director of the Foundation for Rural Enterprise Ecology & Development of Mindanao (FREEDOM), would serve in Davao City.

The two received their exequaturs or official recognition from the Department of Foreign Affairs last July 26.

"(T)he Honorary Consulates are now fully functioning. Official opening ceremonies are planned for later this year both in Cebu and Davao City," Finnish Embassy in the Philippines' Chargé d'Affaires Laura Hassinen told the Philippine News Agency (PNA) on Thursday.

Finland only reopened its embassy in the Philippines in September 2020 after closing in 2012.

Apart from providing visa and consular services to Finns and Filipinos in the country, Hassinen said this is to boost the trade cooperation between the two nations, as well as increase Finnish presence in Southeast Asia, "a region growing in importance."

"Finland and the Philippines have an excellent bilateral relationship. Since the Embassy reopened two years ago, we have already seen great and mutually beneficial cooperation in, for example, education and waste management," she said. "The Embassy works towards even closer relations and further business opportunities also in climate change, renewable energy, circular economy, and smart city solutions."

The envoy said Finland sees Cebu and Davao City as important hubs for business that could attract Finnish companies into the region.

"Finland is very pleased with the experienced and well-connected Honorary Consuls in Cebu and Davao City. We are certain they will use their knowledge and expertise to deepen Finland's business connections in Visayas and Mindanao, finding new and exciting opportunities for Finnish companies and relevant stakeholders in the regions," she said.\

An honorary consul has the role of promoting economic and cultural relations between two countries.

The embassy said they could guide Finnish companies in obtaining information about local business culture and in finding cooperation partners.

[PH, Qatar seek to expand ties on climate change mitigation](#)

By Joyce Ann L. Rocamora

Manila – The Philippine and Qatar governments are looking at expanding their partnership on ways to address climate change, the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) said Thursday.

The two countries explored collaboration in the area during the first Philippine-Qatar Joint Consultation Meeting (JCM) on Political Consultations chaired by DFA Undersecretary Ma. Theresa P. Lazaro and Qatar Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) Secretary General Ahmed Hassen Al Hammadi on August 23.

"Undersecretary Lazaro and Secretary General Al Hammadi reviewed the progress of the two countries' bilateral relations, including cooperation in the areas of culture, tourism, education, sports, trade, investment, and the economy. They also discussed opportunities and ways to enhance and expand partnerships, as well as exchange views on climate change mitigation and regional and international issues," the DFA said.

During his first State of the Nation Address, President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. outlined his plan to increase the country's use of renewables as part of the country's climate agenda.

Although one of the top gas exporting countries in the Middle East, Qatar had repeatedly affirmed its commitment to support the transition to low-carbon energy and backed global efforts to assist countries most vulnerable to climate change.

The JMC, formalized with the signing of a 2019 memorandum of understanding, will serve as the primary dialogue mechanism with Qatar at the vice ministerial level.

The Qatar MOFA hosted the inaugural meeting in Doha, with the second expected to be held in Manila next year.

SUNSTAR (Pampanga)

[New U.S. law to address climate change](#)

By Rox Peña

According to the website worldpopulationreview.com, the United States (U.S.) is the second biggest emitter of greenhouse gases which are causing global warming and climate change.

It was therefore a big setback when on June 1, 2017, U.S. President Donald Trump announced that the U.S. would cease all participation in the 2015 Paris

Agreement on climate change mitigation, contending that the agreement would "undermine" the U.S. economy, and put the U.S. "at a permanent disadvantage."

However on January 20, on his first day in office, President Biden signed the instrument to bring the U.S. back into the Paris Agreement. The U.S. became a Party to the international agreement again. As one of the top emitter of greenhouse gases, the participation of the U.S. is crucial in attaining the objective of the Paris Agreement which is to limit the rise in mean global temperature to well below 2 °C above pre-industrial levels.

In fulfilling their commitment, the U.S. made a historic move when President Joe Biden signed into law the 'Inflation Reduction Act of 2022' which targets to reduce the U.S. carbon emissions by roughly 40 percent by 2030. Here are some key features of this law.

-The investments in this law will reduce emissions in every sector of the economy, substantially reducing emissions from electricity production, transportation, industrial manufacturing, buildings, and agriculture.

-It will provide a range of incentives to consumers to relieve the high costs of energy and decrease utility bills. This includes direct consumer incentives to buy energy efficient and electric appliances, clean vehicles, and rooftop-solar, and invest in home energy efficiency, with a significant portion of the funding going to lower- income households and disadvantaged communities. This includes \$4,000 consumer tax credit for lower/middle income individuals to buy used- clean vehicles, and up to \$7,500 tax credit to buy new clean vehicles.

-It will support energy reliability and cleaner energy production coupled with historic investments in American clean energy manufacturing. It includes over \$60 billion to on-shore clean energy manufacturing in the U.S. across the full supply chain of clean energy and transportation technologies.

-It will make historic investments to ensure that rural communities are at the forefront of climate solutions. The investments affirm the central role of agricultural producers and

forest landowners in climate solutions by investing in climate- smart agriculture, forest restoration and land conservation. It also makes significant investments in clean energy development in rural communities.

Small nations are urging developed countries make good on their promises to address global warming.

The Philippines and several island nations, despite emitting small quantities of greenhouse gases, will suffer from the impacts of climate change. Our country is now being hit by super typhoons presumably due to global warming.

THE MANILA TIMES

DAR allots P12M for solar irrigation system

By: Bella Cariaso

The Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) has set aside P12 million to fund a solar-powered irrigation system for farmers in Cavite.

DAR Cavite provincial head James Arthur Dubongco said personnel from the agency and the National Irrigation Administration (NIA) have conducted final inspection of the P12- million solar-powered irrigation system (SPIS) in Tres Cruces, Tanza and Baliwag Magallanes in Cavite.

Dubongco also said the project will soon be turned over to Tres Cruces ARB Farmers Association Inc., headquartered at Sitio Gugo, Barangay Tres Cruces, Tanza, and Barangay Baliwag Farmers Association Inc. in Magallanes.

He added that the project can irrigate 32 hectares of agricultural lands primarily benefitting 24 agrarian reform beneficiary (ARB) households and other neighboring farmers.

"The DAR provincial office with the NIA successfully completed the final inspection of the two SPIS under the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program-Irrigation Component," Dubongco said.

He also said the installation of the SPIS will promote the development and adoption of modern, appropriate, cost-effective, and environmentally safe agricultural machinery and equipment that can enhance farm productivity and efficiency.

Dubongco cited the timeliness of using solar-power irrigation pumps to irrigate farms amid the skyrocketing prices of gasoline and diesel.

He said the SPIS will be able to increase the cropping intensity by continuously providing timely and reliable irrigation water requirements, especially in the once-a-year cropping or rain-fed areas.

The SPIS is a cost-efficient and climate change adaptive technology that does not require the use of fuel, is not affected by power interruptions, is easy to operate, environmentally friendly, suitable for remote watershed and rain-fed areas and requires minimal maintenance.

It is being implemented under the DAR's Climate Resilient Farm Productivity Support Project and is designed to help ARB organizations in remote areas irrigate their farmland to increase their production even during the dry months.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

THE MANILA TIMES

[Opinion\] Drought drives home the threat of climate change](#)

Major parts of the world are in the grip of droughts, the magnitude of which is unprecedented, bringing the specter of a climate crisis dangerously closer.

In China, a nationwide drought alert has been raised after a heatwave has dried up rivers, including the mighty Yangtze. The low water level has slowed hydropower production, hampered inland shipping and temporarily closed down companies.

Similar record-breaking heatwaves have drastically shrunk the flow of the Rhine and the Loire in Europe, and the Colorado River in the United States.

The spate of droughts is not an isolated occurrence. A new UN report says drought frequency and duration has increased by nearly a third since 2000. And climatologists predict that droughts may affect more than three-quarters of the world's population by 2050.

The present figures are already ominous. The drought in China has affected at least 2.46 million people and 2.2 million hectares of agricultural land in at least six provinces.

Europe is experiencing its worst drought in 500 years, and 47 percent of the continent is under warming conditions.

Drought also has about half of the US sweltering, the worst being in the western, southwestern, and central states. The culprit, of course, is the unabated rise in global temperature, something that countless climate summits have discussed but never fully addressed. Every summit conference ends with pledges from the world's economic giants to set carbon reduction targets, the crucial first step in limiting warming to acceptable levels.

But after the summit hoopla fades, those pledges are promptly forgotten, to be dusted off only when the next conference comes around.

Severe weather crises like droughts are reminders of nature's awesome power to wreak havoc on a global scale, and humanity's indifference to the danger it faces.

A severe drought can cripple energy production and disrupt international supply chains. It can decimate crops and trigger a drinking water shortage. But its biggest impact is hunger. More than 18 million people in Ethiopia, Somalia and Kenya face famine after four consecutive years of lower-than-average rainfall.

Even developed countries are not spared, as a deadly combination of hot weather and heatwaves have spawned massive wildfires in the US and Europe.

Bernice Lee, chairman of the advisory board at the Chatham House sustainability accelerator in London, notes that countries are woefully "unprepared and underprepared" for high-impact, low-probability events like extreme droughts and heatwaves. In 2019, the Philippines was in the throes of a drought that was generated by a severe El Niño episode. At least 10 provinces, mostly in Mindanao, were forced to declare a state of calamity. More than 13,000 hectares of rice and corn fields were parched, and losses ran up to P1.33 billion. Over 16,000 farmers were affected.

Such a devastation should have galvanized the government into reinforcing its climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts. But during the same year, the Duterte administration cut the proposed funding for climate change from P267.09 billion to just P63.6 billion.

The reduction reflected former president Rodrigo Duterte's low regard for climate issues. He once said that climate summits were a "waste of time."

At highest risk

The Marcos government is clearly more attuned to climate developments. In his inaugural speech, President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. said that despite having "a very small carbon footprint," the Philippines "is at the highest risk" for the fallout from climate change.

National Security Adviser Clarita Carlos also considers climate change a high-priority concern, calling it a threat to national security.

Marcos has drawn a basic strategy for tackling climate change: "First, spare victims; then help them recover, and move on to lessen the harmful impact of climate change."

His climate agenda will have to be fleshed out by the Climate Change Commission. Robert Borje, vice chairman of the commission, has said climate change needs to be mainstreamed — making the people more aware of how it affects them and what they can do to mitigate it.

That is a good place to start. But moving the climate agenda forward will require political will and focus. The Marcos administration must have both.

[\[Opinion\] Offset, ban, or tax? New and proposed programs to end plastic waste hotly debated](#)

By Ben Kritz

Last of three parts

ONE way in which companies covered under the EPR Act can meet at least some of the requirements of the law is through a relatively new plastic offset program called Plastic Credit Exchange (PCX), a non-profit launched by social entrepreneur Nanette Medved-Po in the Philippines in 2018.

The program allows a company to achieve "plastic neutrality" — and add a badge certifying that to its brand — by purchasing offsets to its plastic footprint. The corresponding amount of post-consumer plastic waste is then gathered by the collection and processing network coordinated by PCX, either to be recycled or, as is the case for a majority of the low-value plastic waste, "co-processed" as an alternative fuel to coal or oil for cement kilns.

Although PCX has branched out with processing partners in other countries — one in Thailand, and one in India — nearly all of the plastic waste collected as offsets, about 95 percent according to PCX Standards and Compliance Manager Richard de Guzman, is gathered in the Philippines. Since 2019, de Guzman said, 31,063 metric tons of plastic waste have been removed from the environment by the program as of June 30 this year. De Guzman also highlighted that the program seeks to extend collection efforts and provide additional livelihood opportunities for local communities; one of PCX's key partnerships is the Friends of Hope's Aling Tindera Waste-to-Cash Program. PCX has also partnered with SM to provide public collection points at its malls.

"The PCX model provides a systematic, transparent, traceable and scalable mechanism where brands and organizations from anywhere in the world can support grassroots, community-based and circular economy organizations to clean up plastic where they are most needed," de Guzman said. "Plastic credits provide a mechanism where the cleanup of plastics can help provide additional livelihood, drive social behavior change and feed a more circular economy where no plastic ends up in nature."

Producer Responsibility Act lapses into law
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A false solution?

Not everyone is impressed with the PCX model, however. "Policies on EPR [and] plastic off-setting...can help partially address the plastic crisis and encourage producers and consumers to curb their plastic appetite," EcoWaste Coalition Plastic Campaigner Coleen Salamat told The Manila Times. "However, these policies fail to address the

critical problem, which is there is too much plastic being produced. Plastics are made of fossil fuels that emit significant amounts of greenhouse gases right at the very production, which of course is being produced by consistent polluters. EPR follows the polluters pay principle, [but] the law that was recently passed clearly didn't impose hefty penalties for plastic production. The EPR law that we have legitimizes off-setting that only addresses plastic disposal not plastics as a whole and most importantly, its production."

Another major sticking point in the plastic offset program from the perspective of environmental advocates is that much of the waste is eventually burned as fuel for cement kilns, creating additional harmful emissions and potentially toxic solid waste in the form of ash.

"Plastic Credit Exchange will collect plastic waste from their partners in the communities in exchange for cash. The plastic waste will be sent to the cement kilns to burn causing toxic pollution. It will be business as usual for the plastic polluter," commented Sonia Mendoza, chairman of Mother Earth Foundation.

Wrestling the plastic monster

A 2013 research paper by the Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives (GAIA) provided some additional details. "Emissions from facilities that burn RDF (refuse-derived fuel) are always laced with dioxins and furan, which are a result of burning plastic and materials with chlorine. The mechanical segregation technologies that form part of RDF production do not have the capacity to eliminate common toxic substances like PVC (polyvinyl chloride) plastic or other domestic hazardous wastes," the report stressed.

In an email statement, GAIA went further in its critique of the plastic offset concept. "[The program] allows plastic pollution to continue in one location as long as it is offset by reductions somewhere else. One bottling company in the US, for instance, can buy offset plastic credits from an offset project that pays for low-value plastic recovery in India. It is this context that could aggravate 'waste colonialism' in the Global South where developed countries as credit buyers continuously take advantage of cheap labor costs, weak regulations, etc., while waste workers and waste pickers in destination countries continue to bear the toxic burden of low-value plastic waste from developed countries."

There are also some problematic market issues with plastic offsets, in part because of their relative novelty, GAIA noted. "The plastic credits market is quite new, and there is no single, globally-codified standard for determining how a credit is defined, approved, generated, verified, or tracked. Instead, dozens of organizations have launched services aimed at the emerging plastic credits market, each with their own set of definitions and standards. Every link in the chain adds complexity and reduces transparency, resulting in a crisscrossed, international system that, as seen with carbon markets, is ripe for miscommunications, misrepresentation, and even fraud."

Asked to respond to the various criticisms, PCX Solutions Managing Director Vincent Kneefel stressed that a key facet of their program is to help companies work toward eventually reducing plastic generation to zero. "We help companies identify tangible action in their value chains, increase circularity, understand the risk and opportunities involved, and how companies can take responsibility for the plastic waste they cannot yet eliminate," Kneefel said.

Making plastic producers pay

PCX's de Guzman added, "Reduction and taking responsibility for plastic footprints requires comprehensive solutions sets which seek to minimize pre-consumer footprints — whatever is left after all other efforts are made, should be responsibility cleaned up and fueled back into the circular economy to prevent leakage into nature. We believe that offsets have a place as a bridge to take responsibility for essential plastics — and never as an excuse to perpetuate irresponsible behavior."

Regulating plastic use

The next likely step the government will take toward the reduction of plastic waste is to either impose a ban on single-use plastics or levy a tax on their use. Bills calling for both have been passed by the House of Representatives — HB 9147 for a ban passed in July 2021, while HB 9171 imposing a P20/kg tax on plastic bags was passed in December — but both are still awaiting counterpart measures in the Senate.

DENR backs tax on single-use plastics

While HB 9147 received unanimous support in the House, and was likewise endorsed by the Climate Change Commission under the Duterte administration, it would appear that preferences in the Marcos administration are for the tax measure rather than the ban. Earlier in August, Finance Secretary Benjamin Diokno said that a tax on single-use plastics was "worth considering" as a pollution control method, a proposal that was quickly backed by the DENR.

"Imposing tax on single-use plastics is a positive development for the environment in several ways. It can promote the use of reusable packaging, reduce single-use plastic wastes, and extend the life of sanitary landfills," Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) Director William Cuñado said in reaction to Diokno's comments.

Environmental watchdogs view the proposed ban, even if it is imposed in phases, as the ultimate goal of reducing plastic waste, and a necessary measure for the country to get the most out of the recently enacted ERP Act. The tax proposal, however, is seen as problematic at best.

Break Free From Plastic's Miko Aliño said that the proposed tax "is a welcome measure," but suggested that the actual tax rate should be much higher.

"The cost of producing and handling plastic materials, including external cost, [should be] carefully considered by regulators. Ellen MacArthur Foundation, for instance,

suggests raising the EPR fees for plastic flexibles (e.g. sachets, plastic packaging) to EUR 1,100 (P62,400) per metric ton, to address the need for additional collection, sorting and recycling infrastructure," Aliño said.

Ecowaste Coalition's Coleen Salamat was more critical of the tax proposal. "The EPR law that we have legitimizes off-setting that only addresses plastic disposal not plastics as a whole and most importantly, its production," she said. "Taxing single-use plastic will just be passed to the consumers, failing to recognize again the major responsibility of corporations driving plastic production.

Clearly, through EPR law and taxing single-use plastic, polluters are not being held accountable. These attempted steps pose more harm than good to the environment and undermine our attempt to achieve climate justice."

=END=