



## NEWS ROUNDUP

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- Deforestation spurs wave of fires in Brazilian Amazon
- Grow Asia launches \$1.6M fund to support women in agriculture
- As Pakistan drowns, better climate planning urged to cut risks
- G20 Bali meeting highlights Indonesia's weak climate action
- Slope protection works completed along landslide prone area in La Union
- Caritas Philippines to hold solidarity bike for environment
- Eleventh Hour: Everyone's role in the climate change movement
- Seaweed an increasingly fragile lifeline for Philippine farmers
- PH loss from too much, or zero, water seen to hit \$124B of GDP
- Some G20 nations 'backsliding' on climate targets, says UK envoy
- US to bring wind power project to PH, says envoy
- Explainer: How could Europe cap surging energy prices?
- Peña: More roles for NGO's
- Greenhouse gas, sea levels at record highs in 2021

### CCC IN THE NEWS:

- [Opinion] What is needed in a climate emergency law?

## AL JAZEERA

### [Deforestation spurs wave of fires in Brazilian Amazon](#)

The Brazilian Amazon rainforest is suffering from more fires than at any point in nearly five years, spurred on by a surge in illegal deforestation.

## BUSINESS WORLD

### [As Pakistan drowns, better climate planning urged to cut risks](#)

London— A third of Pakistan is underwater, with at least 1,100 people dead — including 380 children — but monsoon rains “on steroids,” likely fuelled by climate change, are not the only cause of the nation's misery.

### [Grow Asia launches \\$1.6M fund to support women in agriculture](#)

By: PatriciA Mirasol

Grow Asia, an agriculture development platform, launched on Aug. 22 a \$1.6 million impact fund to support women who are working in Asia's food system. It incentivizes public and private investment into gender-inclusive practices and policies, particularly for small rural enterprises.

## **CLIMATE HOME NEWS**

### **[G20 Bali meeting highlights Indonesia's weak climate action](#)**

By Isabelle Kaminski

Indonesia's climate credentials have been questioned as climate and energy ministers from around the world met in Bali to discuss how to tackle the climate crisis.

## **DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS AND HIGHWAYS**

### **[Slope protection works completed along landslide prone area in La Union](#)**

The Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) has completed the construction of a 154-meter slope protection structure along San Fernando-Bagulin Road in Barangay Bacsil, San Fernando City, La Union.

## **INTERASKYON**

### **[Caritas Philippines to hold solidarity bike for environment](#)**

Caritas Philippines is spearheading a 32-kilometer cycling campaign to promote environmental awareness as the Church observes the Season of Creation.

## **MANILA BULLETIN**

### **[ELEVENTH HOUR: Everyone's role in the climate change movement](#)**

The power of sharing and collective work is never more evident than when a major calamity hits the country.

## **MONGABAY NEWS & INSPIRATION**

### **[Seaweed an increasingly fragile lifeline for Philippine farmers](#)**

By Keith Anthony S. Fabro

Balintang, PHILIPPINES — “Seaweeds are important to me because they give me joy when we plant them,” says Melinda Gimotea, as she crouches down among the pile of seaweed seedlings under her stilt house on the southwestern coast of the Philippines' Palawan province. Facing the teal blue sea on a fine July morning, the 55-year-old ties the olive-green plant cuttings to ropes with floaters, each spanning 25 meters (82 feet).

## **PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER**

### **[PH loss from too much, or zero, water seen to hit \\$124B of GDP](#)**

By: Kurt Dela Peña

Manila, Philippines—The Philippines, which is hit by an average of 20 typhoons every year, is expected to lose \$124 billion until 2050 from water-related risks, like strong storms, intense floods and prolonged droughts.

### **[Some G20 nations ‘backsliding’ on climate targets, says UK envoy](#)**

Some of the world’s major economies are “backsliding” on their emissions commitments, Britain’s climate delegate Alok Sharma said on Thursday, a day after a meeting of the Group of 20 (G20) nations failed to adopt a joint communique at climate talks.

### **[US to bring wind power project to PH, says envoy](#)**

By: Vincent Cabreza

Baguio City — The United States is bringing an offshore wind project to the Philippines to help address the extreme weather crisis that is developing globally due to climate change, US Ambassador to the Philippines MaryKay Carlson said here on Thursday.

## **RAPPLER**

### **[EXPLAINER: How could Europe cap surging energy prices?](#)**

The European Union is preparing an emergency plan to separate power prices from the soaring cost of gas – as well as longer-term reforms aimed at ensuring electricity prices reflect cheaper renewable energy.

## **SUNSTAR**

### **[Peña: More roles for NGO’s](#)**

By: Rox Peña

As mandated by Republic Act 9003, the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000, a representative from a non-government organization (NGO) that advocates environmental issues shall sit in the National Solid Waste Management Commission (NSWMC). This is a recognition of the important role of ordinary citizens in governance. The NSWC is the highest policy making body on solid waste management.

## **THE MANILA TIMES**

### **[Greenhouse gas, sea levels at record highs in 2021](#)**

By: Agence France Presse

Washington DC.: Earth's concentration of greenhouse gases and sea levels hit new highs in 2021, a US government report said Wednesday, showing that climate change keeps surging ahead despite renewed efforts to curb emissions.

### **CCC IN THE NEWS:**

#### **RAPPLER**

##### **[\[Opinion\] What is needed in a climate emergency law?](#)**

For a country as vulnerable to climate change as the Philippines, it is surprising that only four local governments have officially declared a climate emergency. The most recent of these is the city of Makati, the country's financial hub, years after Bacolod, Cebu City, and Tolosa, Leyte made their declarations.

### **Information and Knowledge Management Division**

#### **AL JAZEERA**

##### **[Deforestation spurs wave of fires in Brazilian Amazon](#)**

The Brazilian Amazon rainforest is suffering from more fires than at any point in nearly five years, spurred on by a surge in illegal deforestation.

According to Brazil's national space institute, satellites have detected more than 33,000 fires as the rainforest enters the peak of fire season, which often correlates with high levels of deforestation activity.

"The deforestation rate is very high. That means there are many fallen trees ready to burn," Ane Alencar, coordinator of the Mapbiomas Fire project, told The Associated Press. "The fire season will be even more intense in September."

Brazil's far-right President Jair Bolsonaro has been criticised for his failure to combat illegal deforestation and for what critics have alleged is a sympathetic view of such activities. The fires are commonly started by groups making room for cattle to graze, and environmental land defenders and Indigenous groups have faced violence and suppression.

The Amazon experienced the worst August for fire in 12 years, but Bolsonaro has played down the criticisms, pushing for commercial activity in the Amazon and suggesting the criticisms are part of an effort to undermine Brazil's agribusiness sector.

"Brazil does not deserve to be attacked in this way," said Bolsonaro, who is campaigning for reelection.

"None of those who are attacking us have the right. If they wanted a pretty forest to call their own, they should have preserved the ones in their countries," he wrote on Twitter last month.

A recent report by the Igarape Institute, a Brazilian think-tank, found that authorities are doing little to curb deforestation in the Amazon.

The study analysed 302 environmental crime raids carried out by the federal police in the Amazon between 2016 and 2021, and only 2 percent targeted people illegally seizing undesignated public lands.

Fires started to spread rapidly in August following a period of uncommonly high rainfall early in the month, according to Alencar. The blazes have created clouds of acrid smoke that can hover over cities such as Manaus, the largest city in the Amazon region, for weeks at a time.

About 20 percent of the area that has burned in the Amazon this year was recently deforested. Some of it is in areas that are supposed to be protected but are targeted by land-grabbers, according to an analysis by the Center of Life Institute, a Brazilian non-profit, based on NASA's Global Fire Emissions Database.

Deforesters were unleashed on Cristalino II State Park in Mato Grosso, for example, after a state court invalidated the area's protected status. State prosecutors have appealed the decision, but in the last several weeks, flames have consumed nearly 40sq km (15sq miles) according to the Center of Life Institute.

Half of Brazil's carbon pollution is the result of land conversion. As the Amazon burns, areas that once played an important role in absorbing carbon have instead started to release large quantities into the atmosphere.

The Bolsonaro government promised to put an end to illegal deforestation by 2028 at the COP26 climate summit, but forest loss has increased to a 15-year high during his tenure.

"If Brazil wants to reduce its carbon emissions, the number one thing to do is reduce deforestation," Alencar said. "And the second is to reduce the use of fire."

## **BUSINESS WORLD**

[As Pakistan drowns, better climate planning urged to cut risks](#)

London— A third of Pakistan is underwater, with at least 1,100 people dead — including 380 children — but monsoon rains “on steroids,” likely fuelled by climate change, are not the only cause of the nation’s misery.

As with many of the increasingly common disasters around the world, problems from a lack of investment in warning systems to the building of homes in danger zones and a failure of political will to cut fossil fuel use are key drivers, analysts said.

“Disasters are not natural. We are contributing to them with our actions and our inactions,” said Zita Sebesvari, who leads work on environmental vulnerability at the United Nations University (UNU) in Germany.

The good news — as rising fossil fuel use drives stronger floods, heatwaves, droughts, and wildfires in almost every part of the world — is that “there is a lot that can be done to reduce the impacts of a disaster happening,” she said.

The UNU on Wednesday released a study suggesting that measures from better protecting nature to reducing inequality, boosting early warning systems, cutting overconsumption and improving planning for surging risks could have huge payoffs.

A wide range of scientific and economic studies now argue that rising losses caused by climate change will soon far outstrip the costs of boosting resilience and cutting emissions to curb disasters, Ms. Zita said.

In Pakistan alone, losses from the current flooding have been estimated at \$10 billion, a figure the government expects will rise with more rain in the forecast.

“The financial arguments are on the table. The scientific arguments are on the table too” for moving now to cut risks, Ms. Zita told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

Johan Rockström, director of the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research, warned that “pretending business as usual is possible (will) eventually end business as usual”.

### ***PAKISTAN’S RISKS***

Besides endless monsoon rains this summer, dramatic heatwaves in April and May contributed heavily to Pakistan’s drowning, scientists believe.

The heatwaves — which were 30 times more likely to occur as a result of climate change, scientists from the World Weather Attribution group found — accelerated melting of the country’s vast mountain glaciers, leaving waterways fuller than normal.

When months of heavy monsoon rains then poured into streams and rivers already swollen with large volumes of water, floods were the inevitable result, they said.

A lack of consistent government efforts to boost preparedness and cut risks were also a contributor to the losses, according to analysts.

After heavy floods between 2010 and 2012 drowned significant parts of the country, Pakistan's government promised new monitoring systems for glacier melt and flood early warning systems, to help avoid such disasters in the future.

But while some early warning systems saved lives this month, Pakistan has seen five changes of government since 2010 and not all the plans have been implemented, with the debt-ridden nation's limited cash not consistently prioritised for such efforts.

Globally, spending to cut climate risks is only rarely a top priority for countries, analysts say.

"We have seen with the COVID-19 pandemic that we can unlock quite remarkable amounts of money if (an issue) is prioritized," Ms. Zita said, stressing that this has not happened with climate change for the most part.

"I wonder if the losses we are experiencing and seeing now will push us to do that," she added.

## ***FINANCE FEARS***

International finance to help at-risk countries such as Pakistan boost their resilience to climate threats and adopt clean energy has also largely failed to emerge.

The United States has said it will supply \$30 million in support for Pakistan, and UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres this week launched an appeal for \$160 million in aid.

"The Pakistani people are facing a monsoon on steroids — the relentless impact of epochal levels of rain and flooding," he said in a video address.

But as disasters — many at least partially driven by climate change — surge globally, humanitarian aid groups are increasingly failing to raise the resources needed, with gaping shortfalls growing.

Furthermore, the \$100 billion a year by 2020 promised by rich countries responsible for most of the emissions driving climate shifts to help poorer nations deal with climate change remains undelivered, despite promises that it will happen soon.

Efforts to create a global fund to help poorer nations cope with the growing "loss and damage" from climate disasters have also floundered — although Pakistan is likely to help bring this to the forefront at the UN climate talks in Egypt in November.

"The cost of the long-term recovery for a cash-strapped country like Pakistan will be enormous," said Teresa Anderson, climate justice lead at charity ActionAid International.



“The flooding in Pakistan clearly demonstrates why the UN climate talks need to urgently agree on a new funding facility,” she said in a statement, noting that “it’s past time for wealthy, industrialized countries who have done the most to heat the planet to step up”.

Rockström, of the Potsdam Institute, agreed that is likely “there will be drama” at the upcoming UN summit in Sharm el-Sheikh after such dramatic losses and damage in Pakistan.

### ***DIVERSIFYING SOLUTIONS***

One way of making money to cut risks stretch further is ensuring cash spent looks at more than one threat at once, the UNU report noted.

The university examined 10 disasters in 2021–2022, from floods in Lagos to an unexpected heatwave in British Columbia and food shortages in Madagascar, and found that common problems such as destruction of nature, economic inequality and poor planning contributed to many of them.

In Madagascar, for instance, deforestation has contributed to erosion, sandstorms and worsening drought, suggesting that efforts to protect forests could cut food security risks and inequality as well, said Ms. Zita, a lead author of the report.

Worsening global inequality, biodiversity loss and climate change all need attention, but “if we try to address them individually we will fail,” she predicted.

Similarly, countries that save cash by limiting their options — from European nations too heavily reliant on Russian gas to Tonga, which lost its sole undersea communications cable to an undersea volcanic eruption in January — may need to invest in more diversity to build genuine resilience, Ms. Zita noted.

“If you’re putting your money in one solution — like Germany on Russian gas — it’s quite cheap as long as it’s actually available,” she said. “Diversifying your basket ... is sometimes more expensive at the beginning but it can pay off.”

[\*\*Grow Asia launches \\$1.6M fund to support women in agriculture\*\*](#)

By: Patricia Mirasol

Grow Asia, an agriculture development platform, launched on Aug. 22 a \$1.6 million impact fund to support women who are working in Asia's food system. It incentivizes public and private investment into gender-inclusive practices and policies, particularly for small rural enterprises.

As the fund's anchor partners, the Government of Canada — through the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) — and Corteva Agriscience are donating \$800,000 each.

"The fund will promote equal opportunities for women within the food value chain, helping them succeed, and in turn, enhance the Philippines' agricultural sector," said Amy Melissa Chua, country director of the Philippines Partnership for Sustainable Agriculture (PPSA), Grow Asia's Philippine chapter.

President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr., has emphasized his intention to restructure the food value chain from research and development to retail, as well as offer support to those who require government assistance, Ms. Chua said in a Sept. 1 e-mail.

"This is where the PPSA will be working with the government, especially as we're also focused on promoting inclusive, sustainable, and climate-resilient agriculture value chains," she added.

Programs under the multi-donor impact fund include:

- AGREE (ASEAN Green Recovery through Equity and Empowerment) — an initiative supported by the International Development Research Centre in Cambodia, the Philippines, and Vietnam to demonstrate how COVID-19 recovery can be gender- and climate-responsive.
- GrowHer — a community-based platform that connects women to learning events, essential resources, and best-practice sharing from other women agripreneurs.
- THRIVE (Train Her to Promote Resilient, Inclusive Value Chains and Economic Empowerment) — a joint initiative between Grow Asia and Corteva Agriscience launched to increase women farmers' farm management and support them with business development and networking opportunities.

Over the next three years, Grow Asia aims to raise \$5.6 million through the fund. It will also launch three complementary multi-donor impact funds to support parallel activities that promote agri-food innovation, responsible agricultural investing, and climate change adaptation and resilience in the region.

This collaboration is "an important step in addressing the needs within Asia's food system," said Ravinder Balain, managing director for ASEAN at Corteva Agriscience, in an Aug. 22 press statement.

“By uniting our efforts with partners like IDRC and Grow Asia, we can drive lasting positive outcomes for women across the agricultural value chain,” he added.

#### **WOMEN AT WORK**

In a separate Aug. 26 video on sustainable rural development produced by Sweden-based development organization We Effect, Ma. Clara Dullas, a woman leader and farmer from the Dumagat-Remontado tribe, explained her relationship to the land she works: “Parang buhay din ang pagmamahal namin sa lupa dahil ito ang aming pinagkukunan at ikinabubuhay para sa aming pamilya ... Dito kami umaasa talaga [We love the land like we love life, because it is how we feed our families ... We really rely on it for our livelihood].”

A 2016 study, “Women at Work in the Farm,” found that despite equal work, women farmers in Quezon and Zamboanga del Norte earn less than their male counterparts by about P108 a day.

According to the 2012 Census of Agriculture and Fisheries, released this August by the Philippine Statistics Authority, there were 4,649,413 and 907,692 male and female agricultural operators in the country, respectively.

#### **CLIMATE HOME NEWS**

[G20 Bali meeting highlights Indonesia’s weak climate action](#)

By Isabelle Kaminski

Indonesia's climate credentials have been questioned as climate and energy ministers from around the world met in Bali to discuss how to tackle the climate crisis.

Indonesian environment minister Siti Nurbaya Bakar, who opened the one-day meeting as part of her country's presidency of the G20, warned the world's leading economies that they must act together to combat a warming planet or risk plunging it into "uncharted territory". But officials were unable to agree a joint communique.

The country submitted an updated nationally determined contribution (NDC) to the UN last year, which brought forward a headline target for reaching net zero by ten years to 2060. It plans to cut national emissions by 29% by 2030 against the business-as-usual scenario. Under a "conditional" scenario, which includes international funding, the target goes up to 41%.

While public perceptions about climate change in Indonesia are mixed, campaigners are mobilising and some are resolutely unconvinced by the government's rhetoric.

In July, 13 citizens, including children, young adults, farmers and fishers, filed a formal petition to the National Commission of Human Rights, asking it to call on Indonesia's president to stop violating Indonesians' human rights by failing to adequately fight climate change.

The petitioners argue that even the updated NDC is inconsistent with a 1.5C pathway, and will lead to national emissions growing rather than falling in the short to medium term. According to Climate Action Tracker, the country's NDC is "highly insufficient" and its plans to continue to expand coal generation until 2027 are "completely diverging" from the Paris Agreement's goals.

Low-lying Indonesia, which is made up of more than 17,000 individual islands, is particularly vulnerable to climate change and the petition to the human rights commission documents the impacts that people living there are already experiencing.

Radith Giantiano, a 29-year-old fisherman and free diver from Kupang, was one of many to experience the devastation of cyclone Seroja in 2021, which destroyed fishermen's boats and homes, as well as fish feeding and spawning grounds.

He has also seen serious coral bleaching as a result of ocean acidification, which makes it much harder for fish stocks to recover. Although he and others are trying to transplant corals from healthy locations, he said the free diving community feels a "tremendous loss" of the beauty that was once there.

Young people also describe their fears for their own future. Fifteen-year-old petitioner Rasya Assegaf lives in Jakarta, which has seen record high temperatures in recent years. "I never thought that I'd be able to make a change through an official pathway, so when I was given this chance, I really jumped on it."

The petitioners want to see more mitigation ambition, including a solid government commitment to ending new coal and decommissioning existing power stations. Inspired by a similar petition brought by citizens to the Philippines Commission on Human Rights, they also want Indonesia's commission to make recommendations for greater transparency about the root causes of climate change.

Margaretha Quina, a Jakarta-based environmental lawyer who works for EarthJustice and is supporting the petition, said one of the low-hanging fruit would be for Indonesia to increase its conditional emission target. "The international community can support this through forestry carbon reduction efforts, encouraging Indonesia to readopt and strengthen its palm oil moratorium and by speeding up clean investment to meet international standards," she said.

Campaigners note that most of Indonesia's contribution to climate change comes from deforestation, and that in terms of land use, land-use change and forestry it is one of the world's top emitters.

The country has been using its G20 presidency to encourage the rehabilitation of mangrove ecosystems, but at the same time it is trying to push through an LNG terminal in a protected mangrove forest on Bali. The plans are being fiercely opposed by local residents, which point out that it is a carbon sink and also protects the island against erosion and extreme weather.

The Indonesian government has been approached for comment.

## **DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS AND HIGHWAYS (PR)**

### **[Slope protection works completed along landslide prone area in La Union](#)**

Works and Highways (DPWH) has completed the construction of a 154-meter slope protection structure along San Fernando-Bagulin Road in Barangay Bacsil, San Fernando City, La Union.

DPWH Region 1 Director Ronnel M. Tan commended DPWH La Union District Engineering Office for the swift construction of the project which was completed within four months.

According to Director Tan, the project utilizes eco-friendly high-tensile wire mesh that keeps rock masses in place and maintains the stability of the slopes without harming the environment.

“With the completion of this eco-friendly mitigation structure, motorists and residents can now safely pass through the mountainous portion of San Fernando-Bagulin Road without worrying about accidents,” said Director Tan.

A total of P49-million was allocated under the 2022 General Appropriations Act (GAA) for the project covering the installation of erosion mats anchored with ground anchor nails along the landslide-prone section of the road.

**INTERASKYON ONLINE**

[Caritas Philippines to hold solidarity bike for environment](#)

Caritas Philippines is spearheading a 32-kilometer cycling campaign to promote environmental awareness as the Church observes the Season of Creation.

The “Bike for Kalikasan” will kick off at 5:00 a.m. from the Manila Cathedral in Intramuros to La Mesa Dam Nature Reserve Park in Quezon City on October 8.

Bishop Jose Colin Bagaforo, Caritas’ national director, said the event is one of the church’s concrete contributions to the global goal of ecological transformation.

“This is to show that we are serious in our stance to fully enforce the 2022 CBCP pastoral statement on ecology, as much as we are demanding in calling on our government to take action against ecological injustices,” Bagaforo said.

The event will also mark the beginning of Caritas’ bamboo forest project nationwide, a flagship initiative in partnership with diocesan social action centers.

“It is time that we invest more work into our ecological advocacies than mere statements,” said Bagaforo, whose diocese In Kidapawan is one of the dioceses that will establish the bamboo forest project.

“After all, we are a working, living Church. What good will our words bring if our planet is dead,” he added.

Fr. Antonio Labiao Jr., Caritas’ executive secretary, said the bike caravan is also a call to action to their environmental advocacy initiatives under the Alay Kapwa – Alay para sa Kalikasan program.

This includes divestment from fossil gas, coal, mining, and other extractive industries, the Rights of Nature policy campaign, just renewable energy transition, and food security via sustainable farming.

He said that Caritas is also taking “principled cooperation” with the government, as they will be working closely with the concerned agencies and the private sector.

## **MANILA BULLETIN**

### **[ELEVENTH HOUR: Everyone’s role in the climate change movement](#)**

The power of sharing and collective work is never more evident than when a major calamity hits the country.

During the wake of Typhoon Ondoy in 2009, many grassroots organizations launched different donation drives. Individuals from all over the Philippines did all that they could to raise funds for the thousands of affected communities. These efforts continued for weeks and the tagline “Where I am from, Everyone is a Hero” was created.

Two years after Ondoy came, Typhoon Sendong ravaged the Philippines just before Christmas, causing many families to lose their homes to floodwaters. In 2013, Super typhoon Yolanda struck, bringing unprecedented loss and damage to our people. It takes many years after each typhoon to rebuild these communities.

During those trying times, one thing was evident: We, Filipinos, have an innate sense of charity and a strong spirit of volunteerism. Even those with little to spare gave an offering or donated their time and energy to help these communities.

Do we need to wait for calamities before we act? Certainly not. Each of us, in our small ways and efforts, can contribute to the lives and well-being of others. We do not need to wait for tragedies to happen. What is important now is that we take on proactive volunteerism, and concretely do our part to prevent these natural disasters from happening, or at least lessen their impact.

In his appeal for ecological conversion, stated in *Laudato Si: On Care for our Common Home*, Pope Francis wrote that “climate change affects the poor the most.” He rightly pointed out that extreme weather events, like typhoons, will only increase in strength and number if humanity does not check its economic activities and how these impact the environment.

While it is true that multinational and transnational corporations are greatly to blame for environmental problems that lead to climate change, ordinary citizens are not aware of the correlation between human activities and climate change. Many Filipinos are not aware that climate change is largely caused by our continued use of fossil fuels and inefficient waste management processes.

As a social worker employed in the solar energy company WeGen Philippines, I have learned to use the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a guide for my work. I see daily the importance of education and advocacy work on environmental issues and concerns.

Students, youth, women in communities, workers, and local government officials are among those we reach out to and engage with on the steps that should be implemented to address climate change. We have witnessed that empowering people with information is an important first step in building awareness, which creates an authentic concern about one’s impact on the environment, even among individuals in the poorest sectors.



More than just selling and installing high-quality solar photovoltaic (PV) systems, we implement an education and advocacy campaign on climate change. Our social transformation agenda is to be a social-good company that upholds values that in turn protect people and the planet. We are in the business of renewable (solar) energy, which we believe upholds environmental rights. We enable companies and communities to undergo the clean energy transition by shifting to solar energy from energy generated by burning fossil fuels.

Protecting the environment is protecting society and future generations by extension. Each employee, student, and individual can be a hero of the environment by spreading the word about the climate emergency.

I have seen children, as young as four years old, collect their plastic trash to recycle. I have seen teenagers celebrate their birthdays by volunteering to plant trees. I have seen young Climate Reality Leaders are passionate about sharing their pro-environment initiatives. I have seen volunteers set up garage sales of pre-loved items that are still valuable, believing that another person's trash can be another's treasure.

There are countless ways to protect the environment and contribute to addressing the climate crisis.

Be a radical force of change and reduce garbage accumulation by cutting down on single-use plastic products and unnecessary consumption. Refusing to buy unnecessary things is the very first step. Remembering that there is no such place as "away" when we throw away things is another step.

Encourage reusing and repairing appliances to prolong their use and maximize the energy that went into their production. Shift to renewable energy sources like solar energy to cut the carbon emissions of your own households. Plant trees and mangroves or donate to organizations that do so as part of their advocacy. Lobby local government officials and lawmakers to prioritize pro-environment programs.

It is already September — heavy rains and typhoons, intensified by the climate crisis, are just around the corner. We need to prepare to take immediate action to help those who will be affected. But we must also invest more time and effort in deepening the awareness of our leaders and communities on the impacts of climate change and the urgent need to build community resilience.

Everyone can be a teacher and or a learner, and anyone can be a volunteer. Let us use the power of sharing and collective work and take care of one another, the environment, and the planet. After all, everyone can be a hero.

**PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER**

[PH loss from too much, or zero, water seen to hit \\$124B of GDP](#)

By: Kurt Dela Peña

Manila, Philippines—The Philippines, which is hit by an average of 20 typhoons every year, is expected to lose \$124 billion until 2050 from water-related risks, like strong storms, intense floods and prolonged droughts.

This was revealed by global professional services company GHD in its study, “Aquanomics: The Economics of Water Risk and Future Resilience,” which presented the future effects of water risks on the economies of countries considered highly vulnerable to water-related disasters.

The \$124 billion translates to an average annual gross domestic product (GDP) loss of 0.7 percent, especially since out of the 20 typhoons ravaging the Philippines every year, the Asian Disaster Reduction Center (ADRC) said five are highly destructive.

The study covered seven countries, including the Philippines, which was ranked as the fifth most vulnerable to water-related risks and disasters that could “wipe out” \$5.6 trillion from the world’s GDP through 2050:

United States: \$3.7 trillion

China: \$1.1 trillion

Australia: \$312 billion

United Kingdom: \$153 billion

Philippines: \$124 billion

Canada: \$108 billion

UAE: \$27 billion

In 28 years, GHD said storms would have the worst direct impact on the economy, with losses reaching \$47 billion, while floods and droughts would cost the Philippines some \$42 billion and \$3 billion.

GHD stressed that as climate change intensifies, extreme weather events are expected to worsen, which will result in greater water risk to the Philippines, especially since storms and floods are seen to amount to over 90 percent of direct losses.

‘Agri faces most risk’

The spiel highlighted the possible impacts of extreme weather events on five critical sectors within the economy—agriculture, banking and insurance, energy and utilities, FMCG and retail, and manufacturing and distribution.

While these sectors are diverse, with very different types and levels of water risk, GHD said they are all expected to face significant output losses through 2050, and this will have a significant impact on the millions of people who work across these areas.

Manufacturing and Distribution: \$4.2 trillion

FMCG and Retail: \$1.1 trillion

Banking and Insurance: \$514 billion

Agriculture: \$332 billion

Energy and Utilities: \$237 billion

The agriculture sector in the Philippines could be hit hardest, with an estimated annual output loss of over 5 percent by 2030 and 8 percent by 2050, equivalent to an average annual output loss of \$23 billion for agriculture.

Back in 2020, the sector generated a gross value added, the value of output less the value of intermediate consumption, of about P1.78 trillion, which is equivalent to a 10.2 percent share of the country's GDP.

But GHD stressed that storms and floods can damage infrastructure, crop lands, livestock and farming equipment, while droughts have devastating effects on crop cultivation and livestock farming.

Based on data from the 2019 Agricultural Indicators System of the Philippine Statistics Authority, there were 9.7 million Filipinos employed in agriculture—7.46 million males and 2.24 million females.

Billions lost

In the last 30 years—from 1990 to 2020—the Asian Development Bank (ADB) said typhoons had cost the Philippines at least \$20 billion and “in the most severe cases, losses can be as high as 23 percent” of GDP.

This, as the ADB explained that typhoons can reduce economic activity by an average of 1.7 percent in the year they hit. The ADRC said an average of nine typhoons make landfall every year.

INQUIRER.net looked back at some of the most destructive typhoons that left the Philippines with billions of pesos worth of damage—Yolanda, Pablo, Rolly, Lawin, Juan, Lando, Rosing, and Ferdie.

Yolanda (Haiyan)

Yolanda, the typhoon that was once considered the “strongest” in the world, ravaged the Visayas in 2013. It affected 14 million people in 44 provinces and left P95.4 billion in damage.

Pablo (Bopha)

Pablo devastated the Visayas and Mindanao in 2012 and displaced 711,682 families in 34 provinces, especially Davao Oriental, Compostela Valley, Bukidnon, and Negros Oriental. It left damage worth P43.2 billion.

Rolly (Goni)

Rolly was the strongest to hit the Philippines and the world in 2020. It affected 68.6 million people, with 24.3 million living in the worst-hit provinces, and left P17.8 billion in damage.

Lawin (Haima)

Lawin hit Luzon, especially Cagayan and Isabela, in 2016, affecting 2.4 million people in five regions. The strongest to hit the province in 2016, it left damage worth P16.26 billion.

Juan (Megi)

Juan made landfall on the island of Luzon in 2010. It destroyed crop lands, which is the main source of livelihood for people in Cagayan Valley, especially Isabela. It left damage worth P12 billion.

Lando (Koppu)

Lando, a Category 3 typhoon that made landfall in Aurora in 2015, displaced 13,000 people. The heavy rains and strong winds that it brought had cost the Philippines some P11 billion.

Rosing (Angela)

Rosing was the third in the consecutive strong typhoons that hit in 1995. It ravaged Luzon, especially Metro Manila, Bicol Region and Calabarzon, leaving damage worth P10.8 billion.

Ferdie (Meranti)

Ferdie devastated Luzon in 2016, displacing 2,891 families, especially in Batanes. The typhoon, which is considered by the National Hurricane Center and the Joint Typhoon Warning Center as one of the strongest, left P835 million in damage.

No one is safe

GHD said the intensifying threats of water-related risks to agriculture need to be discussed immediately with greater focus on water recycling, desalination and smarter irrigation systems.

Rod Naylor, GHD global water lead, proposed that improved sanitation, water supply and sanitation services should be a key focus to address the accelerating climate risks in the Philippines.

This, as three million Filipinos are currently relying on unsafe water sources while seven million are lacking access to safe water sources since the country faces high levels of water pollution, lack of wastewater treatment facilities and inadequate water supply.

“The Philippine water supply and sanitation master plan calls for a total investment of around P1.1 trillion to achieve universal access to water and sanitation for all Filipinos by 2030,” he said.

Since water is essential regardless of the sector where one belongs, GHD said no one is protected against operational disruption in the face of water-related risks and disasters.

“By focusing on economic impacts, as we have done with this study, we aim to help identify and unlock the social and environmental benefits of tackling water risk head-on,” Naylor said.

“As well as highlighting risk, this study explores some of the ways in which our focus countries can adapt to change and build resilience in their water systems. With water risk on the rise, we need to adopt a proactive, holistic and inclusive approach in understanding and addressing fast-developing challenges.”

GHD likewise stressed that to improve flood management in the Philippines, investments need to be made on the construction of infrastructure in the right areas and working with nature to channel water away.

Based on data from the World Bank, the population affected by heavy flooding in the Philippines yearly is estimated at 176,000 and the expected annual damages at \$625 million.

It said the Philippines is highly exposed to flooding, the consequence of severe cyclones and heavy rainfall. The risks from flooding are exacerbated by land-use change such as urbanization and logging.

#### Help the poor

As the devastating impacts of typhoons “mostly burdens the poor, the marginalized, and the isolated,” the ADB stressed that “without preventive action, the havoc wreaked from the most severe disasters remain not just life-threatening, but also poverty-inducing.”

This, as in the coming years, climate change is expected to worsen the intensity and impact of disasters, especially in places considered at-risk: “For small countries, more extreme events mean more massive damage affecting wider swathes of the population.”

GHD said governments need to put regenerative and nature-based solutions first: “A circular economy approach to water management is crucial. Focusing on water recycling and resource recovery, working within nature’s cycle, will improve long-term sustainability.”

It was stressed by the GHD that the diversity of water risk that exists all over the world means there is no one-size-fits-all solution for improving water resilience.

“Resilience in a region that is facing severe water scarcity can mean something very different when compared to a region where the greatest risk is posed by an over-abundance. It has also become clear that we can no longer rely solely on implementing costly, large-scale, engineered interventions.”

## Some G20 nations 'backsliding' on climate targets, says UK envoy

Some of the world's major economies are "backsliding" on their emissions commitments, Britain's climate delegate Alok Sharma said on Thursday, a day after a meeting of the Group of 20 (G20) nations failed to adopt a joint communique at climate talks.

Objections to language on climate targets and the war in Ukraine prevented a joint communique from being issued at the G20 ministerial meeting in Bali on Wednesday, diplomatic sources said.

Sharma, president of the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Glasgow (COP26) and head of the British delegation in Bali, told Reuters the response from the G20 that accounts for 80 percent of global emissions was "incredibly worrying".

"It is certainly the case that what we did see was a number of countries backsliding on the commitments that they made in Paris and in Glasgow," he said in an interview.

"Unless the G20 are willing to act on the commitments they have made in Glasgow I am afraid the prospect of keeping 1.5 degrees within reach is going to slip away very, very fast."

Sharma did not single out any countries, but sources on Wednesday said some members, including China, had objected to previously agreed upon language in COP26 and past G20 agreements on efforts to limit global temperature rises from reaching 1.5 degrees Celsius.

British COP26 President Alok Sharma attends a news conference during the meeting of the G7 Climate, Energy and Environment Ministers during the German G7 Presidency at the EUREF-Campus in Berlin, Germany May 27, 2022. REUTERS/Annegret Hilse/File photo

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G20 climate ministers met on the Indonesian resort island for the talks as extreme weather events – fires, floods and heat waves – pummel several parts of the world, including unprecedented flooding in Pakistan that has killed at least 1,000 people.

Scientists say most such extreme weather events are attributable to human-caused climate change and will only increase in severity and frequency as the globe edges closer to the warming threshold of 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.

In comments ahead of November’s COP27 in Egypt, Sharma said the position some countries had taken in Bali was unacceptable.

“The big emitters absolutely need to look these climate vulnerable countries in the eye and say they are doing absolutely everything they can to deliver on the commitments they have made,” he said.

## [US to bring wind power project to PH, says envoy](#)

By: Vincent Cabreza

Baguio City — The United States is bringing an offshore wind project to the Philippines to help address the extreme weather crisis that is developing globally due to climate change, US Ambassador to the Philippines MaryKay Carlson said here on Thursday.

The climate crisis, Carlson said, is driving extreme weather events and the Philippines is particularly vulnerable to weather-related disasters.

Carlson, speaking at the celebration of Baguio's 113th Foundation Day, cited the impact on Cordillera farms of Severe Tropical Storm "Florita" (international name: Ma-on) last week, saying this was a kind of vulnerability "that you know all too well right here in Baguio."

She said the US signed a new agreement recently that would lay the groundwork for one of the first offshore wind power projects in the Philippines. This agreement is the latest in a long line of US-Philippine clean energy collaborations, she added.

"Clean energy is vital for economic growth, innovation, and [is] of course responding to the global climate crisis," said Carlson.

She did not provide details about the agreement, but a World Bank-financed road map for Philippine offshore wind energy was launched in April that would harness 178 gigawatts of the country's "technical offshore wind potential."

Last month, US President Joe Biden signed his country's Inflation Reduction Act, which has been touted as a climate change law because it provides incentives for developing green energy programs.

Carlson was this year's Baguio Day guest speaker, as the city highlighted its American roots.

Baguio was designed by Chicago architect Daniel Burnham, founder of the City Beautiful movement, and was built from the ground up by the American colonial government in the early 1900s.

#### Summer capital

Designated as the summer capital, Baguio helped birth the country's public government system.

The Second Philippine Commission (also known as the Taft Commission), for example, held its sessions here in 1904 to formulate public policies for what was then America's colony. The Teachers' Camp helped train an army of public school teachers.

"The United States has a long history in Baguio which is reflected in the streets, parks and landmarks that bear American names," Carlson said.



But Burnham's ideal city has evolved into a multidiverse metropolis that is distinctly Filipino, the ambassador said.

"Building on our shared legacy of a Philippine and American experience ... American companies are thriving here in Baguio. Texas Instruments and Moog Controls have established high-tech manufacturing [buildings] that operate state-of-the-art facilities in the city and employ thousands of workers," she said.

Carlson praised Baguio for working on plans to protect its Benguet pine trees, watersheds and forests.

"Forest conservation and watershed preservation are scientifically proven ways to preserve carbon sinks to mitigate climate change," she said.

In his speech, Mayor Benjamin Magalong said the city government was "rebuilding Baguio in a far better way" to curb its projected descent into urban decay because overpopulation and overdevelopment had reduced the carrying capacity of the city's natural resources.

Carlson also credited Magalong's initiative to convert Baguio into an artificial intelligence-governed "smart city," which she described as "a key development marker in meeting some of ... the current and emerging security threats and cross-cutting challenges [confronting the US and the Philippines]."

"We have long shared interests and values, and we are connected by ties of family and friendships that go back generations ... We welcome President Marcos Jr.'s willingness to expand this historic relationship to make it even more relevant to the shared objectives of both our peoples," Carlson said.

#### Outstanding citizens

This year, Army chief, Lt. Gen. Romeo Brawner Jr., joined Baguio's outstanding citizens for 2022, the third member of his family to earn this distinction.

His late father, Court of Appeals Presiding Justice Romeo Brawner Sr., and his mother, the late University of the Philippines (UP) Baguio professor Lenora Fe Brawner who passed away last month, were also declared outstanding citizens.

Also among the outstanding citizens honored this year were former UP Baguio Chancellor Raymundo Rovillos, filmmaker Ferdinand Balanag, veteran photographer Rodolfo "Ompong" Tan, gender and juvenile justice champion Judge Mia Joy Cawed, mental health advocate and nurse Ricky Ducas, architect Dulthe Carlo Munar, and businessperson Marybeth Yu So.

## RAPPLER

[EXPLAINER: How could Europe cap surging energy prices?](#)

The European Union is preparing an emergency plan to separate power prices from the soaring cost of gas – as well as longer-term reforms aimed at ensuring electricity prices reflect cheaper renewable energy.

Energy ministers from EU countries will meet on September 9 to discuss how to ease the burden of soaring energy prices on businesses and households as a matter of urgency.

European power costs have surged in the last year, driven by record gas prices as Russia curbed supply to Europe.

European governments have accused Moscow of using energy as blackmail, in retaliation for western support for Ukraine after Russia's invasion. Russian gas giant Gazprom says it is a reliable supplier and has blamed cuts in flows on technical issues.

Changing the 27-country EU's energy systems may be complex and lengthy, as the cross-border trading of energy commodities among the bloc's members has taken two decades to emerge and solidify. But policymakers are racing to find a short-term solution.

Here's why Europe is considering energy market reforms, and what they could entail.

Why is the electricity price linked to gas?

In the EU energy system, the wholesale electricity price is set by the last power plant needed to meet overall demand.

Wind farms, nuclear, coal and gas plants, and all other generators bid into the power market, with the cheapest sources coming in first, followed by pricier sources like gas. Gas plants often set the price in this system.

The idea is that because all generators sell their power at the same price, the cheaper renewables generators end up with a bigger profit margin – a stimulus that incentivizes more investment in the renewable generation Europe needs to reach climate change goals.

But countries including Spain have said the system is unfair, as it results in cheap renewable energy being sold to consumers for the same price as costlier fossil fuel-based power.

Gas prices have soared as Russia has cut the volumes it sends to Europe. Gas prices are determined by global competition for the fuel, and European buyers are competing with firms in other countries to snap up non-Russian gas.

The effect has been to drive up the price of producing power from gas in Europe, resulting in higher overall power prices.

“The current market design offers Russia, for example, a virtual field of action for destructive market manipulation,” Nina Scheer, parliamentary energy spokeswoman of the Social Democrats, the leading party in the Berlin coalition, wrote in the Handelsblatt business daily on Tuesday, August 30.

Other factors boosting power prices include problems with French nuclear plants and severe drought in Europe that hampered hydropower output and affected coal deliveries.

Germany’s benchmark power contract for 2023 on Monday, August 29, hit 1,050 euros a megawatt-hour, 14 times the level a year ago.

How could the EU change energy prices?

EU Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen said on Monday that the EU needed to decouple the price of gas and power, without giving further details.

The Czech Republic, which holds the EU’s rotating presidency, is rallying support for a cap on the price of gas used to generate electricity.

The idea of capping gas or power prices has long had support from Spain, Belgium, and others, and now initially reluctant Austria and Germany. France is among the states in favor of action to separate the price of electricity from the price of gas.

One option, proposed by Italian Prime Minister Mario Draghi, would be for EU countries to agree a cap on the price of gas imported from Russia. Critics say that would risk Russia completely cutting off Europe’s gas supply in retaliation.

Another option could be for governments to cap the gas price, and pay gas companies the difference between the capped price and the higher market price.

Countries, including Germany and the Netherlands, previously opposed that since it would effectively subsidize fossil fuel generation with public funds that they said would be better spent on the shift to cheaper clean energy.

Other options could include restricting financial speculators’ participation in gas markets, or setting up a parallel market for gas-fueled power, separate from the existing electricity market.

What are the potential downsides?

High gas prices provide a financial incentive for industries and households to reduce their gas consumption – a behavioral change governments are trying to encourage to ensure there is enough fuel to get through winter.

Capping the gas price would limit that incentive, and critics say it could even encourage more gas use when governments need to be rolling out policies to reduce consumption.

Some analysts have suggested targeted financial support for low-income households and businesses hit hardest by the soaring prices would be a better option than a hasty market overhaul.

Other questions remain about how governments could cap the cost of gas-fueled power in a way that did not encourage gas plant owners to produce less power when countries urgently need it.

## **SUNSTAR**

### **[Peña: More roles for NGO's](#)**

By: Rox Peña

As mandated by Republic Act 9003, the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000, a representative from a non-government organization (NGO) that advocates

environmental issues shall sit in the National Solid Waste Management Commission (NSWMC). This is a recognition of the important role of ordinary citizens in governance. The NSWMC is the highest policy making body on solid waste management.

Now a new law, Republic Act No. 11898 or The Extended Producer Responsibility Act (EPRA) of 2022, amended RA 9003 and gave more voice to NGO's. From a single seat, there will now be three representatives from NGOs in the reorganized NSWMC. The EPRA is an act institutionalizing the extended producer responsibility on plastic packaging waste. It lapsed into law last July 23, 2022.

I'm proud to say that I started my involvement on environmental issues in the national level as an NGO. I joined the Zero Waste Recycling Movement of the Philippines Foundation, Inc (ZWRMPFI) in the late 90's as a lifetime member and later as an officer and member of the Board of Trustees. Our group was one of the NGO's that pushed for the passage of RA 9003 in Congress.

In the early 70's when garbage disposal is not yet a national concern, Dr. Metodio Palaypay, a resident doctor at the U.P Health Services, started a movement to eliminate waste through simple steps like composting and recycling. In 1978, this movement was formally organized into ZWRMPFI with Dr. Palaypay as Chairman and the late Mrs. Luz Sabas, co-founder, as President.

The ZWRMPFI has trained thousands of people in various schools, universities, markets, barangays, military bases and towns throughout the country on the principles of zero waste management. There was even an instance when members were held hostage in Mindanao during a training stint. My first visit in Mindanao was when I gave a lecture to the soldiers of the 1st Infantry Division on recycling together with members of ZWRMPFI.

Mrs. Luz Sabas, a nurse by profession, made a research on waste through her masteral thesis. Her work featured the Four "Fs" which is a total recycling scheme. Her thesis is still used by many groups advocating solid waste management. Incidentally, the song composed by Mrs. Sabas daughter entitled "Anong Saya", is our jingle in my radio program BUKAS Bayan.

From the ranks of the ZWRMPFI emerged top environment officials of the country like Elizea "Bebet" Gozun who was appointed DENR Secretary in 2002. She went back to NGO work after her DENR stint until she was appointed as Presidential Assistant for Climate Change by President Noynoy Aquino. Our very own Dr. Palaypay became a Commissioner in the NSWMC representing NGO's.

They are volunteers. They work without pay. They put their heart and mind in their advocacies. They are partners in governance. They are the NGO's.

**THE MANILA TIMES**

**[Greenhouse gas, sea levels at record highs in 2021](#)**

By: Agence France Presse

Washington DC.: Earth's concentration of greenhouse gases and sea levels hit new highs in 2021, a US government report said Wednesday, showing that climate change keeps surging ahead despite renewed efforts to curb emissions.

"The data presented in this report are clear — we continue to see more compelling scientific evidence that climate change has global impacts and shows no sign of slowing," said Rick Spinrad, administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

"With many communities hit with 1,000-year floods, exceptional drought and historic heat this year, it shows that the climate crisis is not a future threat, but something we must address today," he said in a statement.

The rise in greenhouse gas levels comes despite an easing of fossil fuel emissions the previous year as much of the global economy slowed sharply due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The US agency said that the concentration of greenhouse gas in the atmosphere stood at 414.7 parts per million in 2021, 2.3 parts higher than in 2020. The level is "the highest in at least the last million years based on paleoclimatic records," the annual State of the Climate report found.

The planet's sea levels rose for the 10th straight year, reaching a new record of 3.8 inches (97 millimeters) above the average in 1993 when satellite measurements began.

Last year was among the six warmest on record since the mid-19th century, with the last seven years all the seven hottest on record, it said.

The less headline-grabbing average temperatures were in part due to La Niña, an occasional phenomenon in the Pacific that cools waters, which took place early in the year and contributed to February being the coldest since 2014.

But water temperatures were also at records, with exceptionally high recordings documented in particular in lakes in Tibet, an environmentally crucial region as a water source for many of Asia's major rivers.

Rising disasters and fears of tropical storms, which are expected to increase as the planet warms, were sharply up in 2021, the report said. They included Typhoon "Rai," which killed nearly 400 people in the Philippines in December, and "Ida," which swept the Caribbean before becoming the second-strongest hurricane to hit Louisiana after "Katrina."

Among other extraordinary events cited in the report, the celebrated cherry trees in Kyoto, Japan, bloomed at their earliest since 1409.

Wildfires, also expected to rise due to climate change, were comparatively low following recent years although devastating blazes were witnessed both in the American West and Siberia.

The 2021 report comes days after a study said Greenland's ice sheet is already set to melt at dangerous levels, even without any future warming, with major effects on low-lying areas around the globe that are home to hundreds of millions of people.

The planet remains far off track from an ambition set by the Paris climate accord in 2015 to aspire to limit warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) above pre-industrial levels to avoid the worst effects of climate change.

In August, the United States under President Joe Biden pushed through the most expansive government package ever to address emissions from the world's largest economy.

The effort will invest heavily in clean energy and comes as California moves to require all cars to be zero-emission by 2035, a decision with far-reaching consequences for the automobile industry.

## **CCC IN THE NEWS:**



**[\[Opinion\] What is needed in a climate emergency law?](#)**

For a country as vulnerable to climate change as the Philippines, it is surprising that only four local governments have officially declared a climate emergency. The most recent of these is the city of Makati, the country's financial hub, years after Bacolod, Cebu City, and Tolosa, Leyte made their declarations.

It is painfully evident that more is needed moving forward.

No matter which angle is used to view this problem, the message is clear: climate change is an emergency that warrants urgent and effective interventions. Too many lives have already been lost from the disasters we have experienced. Too much loss and damage has already been incurred, which disproportionately burdens those with no contribution to the carbon emissions that triggered this crisis in the first place.

Several bills have been filed in both houses of Congress in recent years, aiming to officially declare a climate emergency, including those authored by Sen. Imee Marcos and Rep. Rufus Rodriguez. These aim to build up on House Resolution 1377 passed on November 2020, which did recognize climate change as a crisis that needs an urgent and effective scaled-up response. However, resolutions lack the force of law, which a new law would rectify.

What is missing

Among the salient features of these bills are the enhanced mandates for national government agencies upon the declaration of a climate emergency. These include the Climate Change Commission as the lead advisory policymaking body for climate issues, the Department of Education's integration of climate change into school curricula, and PAGASA's analyses into current climate change impacts.

However, several key national agencies are missing from these bills. Perhaps the most important of these is the Department of Energy, which is instrumental for enabling the inevitable just transition to a Filipino economy and society powered by renewable energy.

Doing so is necessary for reducing our carbon emissions and upholding the moral imperative for a vulnerable country like the Philippines to avoid following the same pollutive development strategies that caused the climate emergency in the first place. It would also help reduce the high energy and electricity prices, of which many of us are currently enduring.

There is also a lack of emphasis on climate justice and human rights, which are part of the core basis for declaring a climate emergency. Implementing adaptation and mitigation solutions is aimed at reducing vulnerabilities and risks imposed on most-

prone sectors like women, children and youth, senior citizens, indigenous peoples, and the urban poor.

While climate justice has been championed by the government at the global policymaking arena, allowing human rights to be abused or violated due to the actions of fossil fuel industries contradicts its position. More importantly, it limits the capacity of the youth of today and future generations to pursue a high quality of life in the next few decades.

These bills also call for a multi-sectoral approach in addressing the climate emergency, yet they only highlight the role of the private sector in environmental protection. The lack of emphasis on the role of civil society organizations, communities, academia, and the media in solving related issues is more notable due to a decrease in inclusive climate-related decision-making from the previous administration. Addressing this is not an option but a necessity if the government is serious about implementing the “whole-of-nation” approach it has been highlighting for the past few years.

What is needed

For the next few months of debates over these bills, a key amendment involves empowering local stakeholders to enforce their own climate solutions as part of more inclusive decision-making. As frontliners in experiencing and responding to climate change impacts, lawmakers must highlight the importance of decentralizing powers and instead enhancing support for local governments, communities, and other local sectors.

Forms of support include more funding, technical aid, and capacity-building, to be coordinated with the Department of Interior and Local Government. Local decision-makers should be enabled to issue resolutions declaring a climate emergency, avoiding coal projects, and improving Local Climate Change Action Plans, in close collaboration with non-government actors.

Another important addition to said proposed legislation is to mandate national government agencies to finalize decarbonization pathways for the Philippine economy as part of its development plan and overarching climate action strategies. Departments with mandates on agriculture, waste, industry, transport, forests, and energy need to establish and publicly disclose the country’s strategies to reduce carbon emissions, especially its self-determined target of 75% decrease within the current decade.

Key to reducing emissions is to hasten the end of the era of fossil fuels through a just transition to renewable energy. These include a stricter enforcement of the coal moratorium, the Renewable Energy Act, and the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Act, and avoiding further investments in pollutive and/or high-risk energy sources.

It is also important that these bills enable the government to uphold and implement policies aligned with the findings of the Commission on Human Rights’ inquiry into climate change. The commission found that carbon majors can be held liable for human rights violations linked to climate change impacts, including on the now universally-

recognized right to a healthy environment. This development is vital in the pursuit of climate and intergenerational justice and avoiding further loss and damage.

The time is long overdue for the Philippines to officially recognize that we are in the era of the climate emergency. There is simply too much at stake for the country to regard it as simply another item on the governance agenda or an occasional threat that comes and goes with the seasons.

When all is said and done, it is one thing to pass another law. Implementation is an entirely different matter.

**- END -**