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05 SEPTEMBER 2024 [08:00 am]

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By: Beatriz Marie D. Cruz

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By: Chito Chavez

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MANILA STANDARD

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THE PHILIPPINE STAR

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[From emissions to efficiency: Embrace green building practices in the Philippines](#)

By: Shaira Mae Cabañas

Buildings consume about 34 percent of global energy and contribute up to 37 percent of total greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, according to the United Nations Environment Program.

[Marcos signs LDF Board Act](#)

By: Richbon Quevedo and Lade Jean Kabagani

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Wednesday signed into law Republic Act 12019, or the Loss and Damage Fund (LDF) Board Act, according to Presidential Communications Office Secretary Cheloy Garafil.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

[UNDP, DOF to craft climate finance strategy](#)

By: Louise Maureen Simeon

The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the Department of Finance (DOF) will craft a climate finance strategy to mobilize needed resources for the Philippines.

Information and Knowledge Management Division

ABS CBN

[UN weather agency warns of 'red alert' after record heat](#)

Rising temperatures should trigger a global "red alert", the United Nations' weather and climate agency chief said Wednesday, after global heat indices again smashed records in August.

The world saw record average temperatures in August for the second year running, preliminary data from the EU's climate monitor seen by AFP showed.

And Australia, Japan, parts of China and Norway all experienced their hottest August on record, according to meteorological agencies.

The world saw record-high average temperatures in August for the second year running, according to preliminary EU climate data seen by AFP, with Australia, Japan, parts of China and Norway all experiencing their hottest August on record.

"It's clear that the temperatures are rising... above what we would like," said Celeste Saulo, head of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO).

"And it is because the action is not enough."

While the exact average global temperature for August 2024 is not yet known, the EU's Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S) has established it will be above the record 16.82 degrees Celsius (62.28 Fahrenheit) measured in August last year.

"Thresholds are all the time being beaten," Saulo said, speaking in Singapore at a regional climate forum of local meteorological services.

Saulo also called for better monitoring and support for meteorological agencies, adding that "we need more resources".

The forum comes days after the WMO released its latest assessment on the impacts of climate change in Asia and the Pacific, warning that sea-level rise is above average in many areas.

And the record August continues a near-unbroken 15-month streak, where each month eclipsed its own temperature record for the time of year, according to the C3S.

The climate forum also announced the designation of Singapore as a regional hub for monitoring pollution caused by vegetation fire and smoke.

One of only two such centers in the world, the facility will offer better quality information on fires and pollution forecasts, plugging a gap in regional data, officials said.

BUSINESS WORLD

Climate crisis seen as test for digitalization promises

By: Beatriz Marie D. Cruz

Asia-Pacific economies must bolster the use of digital technology to support economic growth while addressing the climate crisis, the Philippine representative to the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) said.

“The true promise of digital transformation lies in its potential to address the most pressing challenges of our times, such as climate change, inequality, and poverty,” Millicent Cruz-Paredes, ambassador of the Philippines to Thailand and Philippine representative to ESCAP, told a forum on Tuesday.

“Our efforts must focus on building a robust digital infrastructure that supports the demands of a growing digital economy while being mindful of the environmental impact.”

She cited the need for governments to deploy digital solutions to the problem of climate and sustainability.

“Digital solutions must be seamlessly integrated into our strategies for climate resilience and sustainability, ensuring that they contribute to reducing carbon emissions and protecting our most vulnerable communities from the effects of climate change,” she said.

Businesses should also be encouraged to promote sustainable practices and adopt green technology to support growth and environmental protection, Ms. Cruz-Paredes said.

The region must focus on enhancing digital skills to ensure inclusive digitalization, she added.

The Asia-Pacific remains one of the most vulnerable regions to climate disasters, with average annual losses estimated at \$1 trillion, according to ESCAP data.

The region is also home to both large- and small-scale emitters, with the latter being the most exposed to climate catastrophes.

In its latest Asia-Pacific Digital Transformation Report, ESCAP noted the correlation between a country's digital transformation and its energy transition.

“Notably, digitalization is enabling all infrastructures to become steadily smarter, enhancing efficiencies in energy consumption and supply and facilitating the integration of renewables throughout the lifecycle of infrastructure from the design, construction, operation and management stages to reusing infrastructure waste,” ESCAP Executive Secretary Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana said in the report.

GMA NEWS

Pope Francis says Earth is 'sick' in new climate change warning

Pope Francis on Friday urged people around the world to better protect the environment, ahead of a 12-day trip to Southeast Asia next week in which the pontiff is expected to urge global action on climate change.

"If we took the planet's temperature, it will tell us that the Earth has a fever. And it is sick," the pontiff said in a video message. "We must commit ourselves to ... the protection of nature, changing our personal and community habits."

Francis releases a video message each month to announce his prayer intentions for that month. The intention for September is "for the cry of the Earth".

The 87-year-old leader of the global Catholic Church leaves on Monday to visit Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, East Timor and Singapore.

Francis has stressed the importance of environmental issues throughout his 11-year papacy. Each of the countries on his Sept. 2-13 tour are facing dangers from the warming global climate, including rising sea levels and increasingly severe and unpredictable heat waves and typhoons.

In his video, Francis said climate change required actions "that are not only ecological, but are also social, economic and political".

"The ones suffering most from the consequences of these disasters are the poor, those who are forced to leave their homes because of floods, heat waves or drought," the pope said.

MANILA BULLETIN

Cua asks local execs: Plant “native trees” to maintain ecological balance, fight climate change

By: Chito Chavez

Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines (ULAP) president Dakila “Dax” Cua urged the local chief executives (LCE) to enhance the planting of native trees in support of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources’ (DENR’s) plan to increase the country’s forest cover by an additional three million hectares by 2028 to minimize the effect of climate change.

Cua explained that ecology experts warn about the risk of planting exotics trees, which can lead to “silent forests” that cause the loss of ecological balance.

Kaya silent forests dahil nawawala ang ecological balance, namamatay ang ibang halaman at hayop (Referred to as silent forest, the ecological balance is lost, other plants and animals die),” Cua said.

“According to the One More Tree Foundation, exotic trees disrupt local ecosystems and pose threats to native flora and fauna,” the ULAP noted.

Instead of fast-growing and aggressive Gmelina, mahogany, and other exotic species that lead to the disappearance of native flora and fauna, Cua stated that “we should ensure that native species such as the Lauan, Yakal, Molave, and other hardy or fruit trees, are planted.”

“Mas makasisiguro tayo na makaka-adapt at tutubo ang mga ito (native trees), at makakapag-akit din ng mga wildlife (We are assured that the native trees can adapt and grow and they will attract the wildlife),” Cua explained.

“Instead of fast-growing and aggressive Gmelina, mahogany, and other exotic species that lead to the disappearance of native flora and fauna, we should ensure that native species such as the Lauan, Yakal, Molave, and other hardy or fruit trees, are planted. Mas makasisiguro tayo na makaka-adapt at tutubo ang mga ito (native plants), at makakapag-akit din ng mga wildlife (We can be assured that these native plants can adapt and grow and will also attract the wildlife),” he added.

Cua also emphasized that the goal of reforestation programs should not only be in replanting trees, but in restoring ecological balance.

In supporting the DENR's program, Cua stressed the need for the concerted effort of the local government units (LGUs) to complement, stressing the need for more "green" to "combat the brown mud and flood that have increased in occurrence due to our depleting forests."

Cua has relentlessly called on the government to create a "green wall" that would defend the country against the harsh impact of climate change.

The DENR bared this plan during the recent deliberation of the House committee on appropriations on the agency's proposed 2025 budget of P26.027 billion.

MANILA STANDARD

[Mayor Joy to attend climate change meet in QC](#)

By: Rio N. Araja

Quezon City Mayor Joy Belmonte is set to attend a meeting with other city leaders from Southeast Asia in the upcoming C40 Cities SEA CAI Regional Academy to be held in the locality this week.

“This is a testament to the city’s commitment in leading the fight against the climate crisis. Together with other cities in the Global South as well as Mayor Aki-Sawyerr’s leadership, we hope to strengthen our initiatives, policies, and programs in promoting and ensuring an inclusive and equal community for all,” she said.

“I am confident that our collaboration will inspire new strategies and strengthen our commitment to combating climate change without leaving anyone behind,” she added.

Freetown’s (Sierra Leone) Mayor Yvonne Aki-Sawyerr will lead the high-level dialogue on integrating Inclusive Climate Action into city governance and climate actions in the Global South.

The Regional Academy running from Sept. 2 to Sept. 6 is part of the Climate Action Implementation Programme supported by the UK government’s Urban Climate Action Programme.

Apart from Mayor Belmonte and Mayor Aki-Sawyerr, British Ambassador to the Philippines, Her Excellency Laure Beaufils, and C40 Cities’ Regions and Mayoral Engagement Managing Director, Shruti Narayan, will also deliver their messages.

Belmonte is the 2023 Champion of the Earth for Policy Leadership of the United Nations Environment Programme.

She strongly advocates for an inclusive and responsive climate action, ensuring that no resident is left behind, and has pioneered the prohibition of single-use plastics while pushing for a circular economy.

These included the creation of over 25,000 good, green jobs, and the integration of the informal waste workers in the solid waste management system of the city government.

C40 is a global network of nearly 100 mayors from the world's leading cities, united in action to confront the climate crisis.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

'Enteng' death toll now 15; PBBM orders tightened dam watch

By: Darryl John Esguerra

The death toll from the combined effects of Tropical Storm Enteng (international name Yagi) and the southwest monsoon or "habagat" has reached 15.

In a situation briefing presided by President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. at the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) office in Camp Aguinaldo, Office of Civil Defense (OCD) Operations Service Director Cesar Idio said the province of Rizal has the highest death count with eight.

Cebu City, Northern Samar, and Naga City recorded two deaths each, while Negros Occidental reported one fatality.

Aside from this, 21 persons were reported missing while 15 persons were also injured, he said.

"These are still subject for validation, Mr. President," the OCD official told the President.

Idio also reported that a total of 1,720,568 individuals or 442,804 families were affected by Enteng, with Bicol region the most affected area, followed by Central Luzon, Eastern Visayas, and Metro Manila.

Enteng also caused PHP350.85 million worth of damage to the agriculture sector, with 13,623 farmers affected and recording a volume of production loss at 14.814 metric tons in 8,893 hectares of agricultural areas of rice, corn and high-value crops.

PHP33-million aid

A total of PHP33 million worth of food and non-food items have been distributed to the typhoon victims, Idio said.

Meanwhile, the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) said it is stockpiling additional food packs in its warehouses nationwide to replenish supply.

DSWD Secretary Rex Gatchalian said this is also in preparation for upcoming storms.

President Marcos assured the public that the government remains on alert amid the inclement weather.

“We are continuing to monitor all the situations everywhere. Hopefully pagdaan nitong weather system na ito, makapunta tayo at makapag-provide ng assistance (after this weather system has passed, we can go and personally provide assistance),” he said.

Tighten dam watch

Marcos also ordered government agencies to prepare for possible flooding in areas near water reservoirs and asked the weather bureau to keep its reports on the dam and flood situations updated.

While Severe Tropical Storm Enteng is already out of the Philippine Area of Responsibility (PAR), parts of the country may still experience torrential rain, Marcos said.

"Although Enteng is still dropping rainfall, this is another aspect of the flood control that we have to deal with. We might have to deal with kung patuloy pa rin ang pag-ulan na mabigat ay kailangan — baka mapilitan tayo na magbitaw ng tubig (if heavy rainfall continue to persist, we might be forced to release water). So, let's watch that closely. We'll keep up to date on that," the President said.

'Brace for upcoming storms'

The Philippine Atmospheric Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) also reported during the meeting that two tropical cyclones may enter the country next week.

This prompted Marcos to remind concerned government agencies to remain vigilant.

Marcos said weather systems now develop much more quickly than they used to due to climate change, citing the experience of the country with Super Typhoons Yolanda in 2012 and Odette in 2021.

Partial infra damage top P54M

The impact of the two weather disturbances has left an initial PHP54.26 million worth of damage to infrastructure, the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) reported on Wednesday.

Based on the report of the DPWH-Bureau of Maintenance (BOM) as of 6 a.m. the damaged roads, bridges, and flood control structures were reported in the Cordillera, Central Visayas and Eastern Visayas.

Central Visayas incurred the most damage worth PHP25.78 million, followed by Eastern Visayas with PHP23.64 million while Cordillera logged PHP4.8 million.

Meanwhile, one road section in Isabela province is currently closed to all types of vehicles while another road in Mountain Province has limited access due to the effects of bad weather.

The Cabagan-Sta. Maria Bridge, connecting Barangay Casibarag Norte, Cabagan and Barangay Mozzozzin, Sta. Maria, in Isabela is impassable to a high water elevation of 1.2 meters.

On the other hand, the Tabuk-Enrile Road in Tabrak, Anabel, Sadanga, Mountain Province is only passable to light vehicles due to rock/slope collapse.

Navy deploys rescue teams

The Philippine Navy on Wednesday said it deployed disaster response and rescue teams (DRRTs) and surge rapid response teams (SRRTs) to Metro Manila and nearby provinces to help in the ongoing disaster relief efforts.

PN spokesperson Commander John Percie Alcos, in a statement, said the Naval Installation and Facilities Cavite DRRT Team rescued a total of 103 evacuees and transported them to Cavite State University (CAVSU)-Niog, a designated evacuation center.

Aside from this, PN personnel, together with the 404th Solar Wind Task Force Battalion personnel, loaded a total of 430 sacks of relief goods, which will be transported to the Bacoor City Disaster Risk Reduction & Management Office (DRRMO).

"Equipped and prepared for immediate assistance, the PN DRRTs and SRRTs mobilized its resources to mitigate the effects of Typhoon Enteng and provide timely aid to those in need," he added.

PBBM inspects flood-stricken Marikina, Antipolo areas

By: Ruth Abbey Gita-Carlos

President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. on Wednesday conducted an aerial inspection of flood-hit areas in the cities of Marikina and Antipolo during the onslaught of Severe Tropical Storm Enteng (Yagi).

Marcos inspected the areas after holding a situation briefing on Enteng's effects with concerned government officials at the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council headquarters in Quezon City.

He was also supposed to inspect the flood-stricken areas in Bulacan but it did not proceed due to bad weather.

"Yung Bulacan, hindi na natin napuntahan (We were not able to go to Bulacan). At least, we're able to look at Antipolo and Marikina. That's as far as we can go," Marcos said during the inspection.

He said overpopulation, blocked drainage systems, garbage problem and deforestation triggered the massive floods and landslides in many areas in Luzon.

He said his administration would use the large-scale development flood control program initiated by the Aquino government as a "base" to find the solutions with the "most immediate effect" to mitigate floods.

He said the impounding process of dams and river basins is seen as a solution to prevent floods especially in Metro Manila.

"Kapag ganyang highly populated na ito, hindi mo talaga ma-control 'yung tubig. So 'yung pinakamagandang solusyon ay maghuhukay tayo ng mga impounding dam at river dito sa mga river system (When it's so highly populated, you can't really control the water. So, the best solution is that we will dig impounding dams and rivers here in the river systems) that will serve many purposes," Marcos said.

"That will be for flood control dahil 'yun na nga, 'yung tubig na dapat bababa sa city, hindi na bababa. Nandoon na, maiipon na doon sa mga impounding. Pangalawa, meron tayong tubig pag tag-araw pang-irrigation, pang-water supply (That will be for flood control because that's it, the water that should go down in the city, won't go down. It's already there, it's going to accumulate there in the impounding areas. Second, we have

water in the summer for irrigation and water supply). So, that's the general thinking," he said.

With regard to deforestation, Marcos said the government needs to be "much stricter about it."

He said the government must ensure that the laws on environmental protection are being implemented.

"Because now it's not a question of illegal activities. It's life and death already. Maraming namamatay dahil sa mga ginagawa nila (Many are dying because of what they are doing)," Marcos said.

"The laws are all there. It's in the implementation and enforcement."

Prayers for storm victims

The head of the Diocese of Antipolo offered prayers for those affected by widespread floods in Rizal province.

"Lord, we ask for your peace to surround those who are grieving. May they feel your presence and find solace in your love. Grant them the courage to face each day and the hope to carry on, even in the midst of their sorrow," Antipolo Bishop Ruperto Santos said in an interview over Church-run Radio Veritas.

At least eight of the 15 deaths from the recent calamity are from Rizal province, according to the Office of Civil Defense's latest report.

The victims died mainly due to drowning and landslides.

"We pray for the safety and protection of all those affected by the floods. Provide them with shelter, food, and the support they need to rebuild their lives. Guide the hands of the rescuers and volunteers, giving them the strength and wisdom to help those in need," Santos said.

The Caritas network of various dioceses in the country is also delivering aid to those affected by the recent calamity, especially those staying in evacuation centers.

Cops on alert

The Philippine National Police (PNP) said Wednesday it has sustained its nationwide disaster response efforts, focusing on supporting affected communities and ensuring the safety and security of residents as recovery operations continue amid bad weather.

PNP chief Rommel Francisco Marbil has ordered all regional directors to activate their respective Disaster Incident Management Task Groups (DIMTG) and implement the Critical Incident Management Operational Procedure (CIMOP) to respond to the effects of Tropical Storm Enteng.

He said PNP personnel were deployed to strategic locations, including evacuation centers and critical infrastructure, to maintain order, assist in the evacuation process, and support search, rescue, and recovery efforts.

"The commitment and resilience of our police officers have been crucial in ensuring the safety and well-being of our communities. Their presence in the field, especially in hard-hit areas, continues to provide much-needed support to our fellow citizens," Marbil said in a statement.

He added the PNP's Women and Children Protection Desk (WCPD) continues to focus on safeguarding vulnerable groups during evacuations and in temporary shelters, ensuring that the needs of women, children, and the elderly are met.

Meanwhile, Marbil said the specialized units like the Search, Rescue, and Recovery (SRR) teams are actively engaged in conducting ongoing rescue operations and providing humanitarian assistance in areas most affected by the storm.

Relief distribution

Meanwhile, some 230 families from Quezon City's Barangays Payatas, Commonwealth, and Holy Spirit received relief boxes containing home essentials from the Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development (DHSUD).

Earlier, DHSUD Secretary Jose Rizalino Acuzar ordered regional offices in areas affected to ensure they are ready for Enteng and facilitate emergency response.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

[Climate change fueled deadly Typhoon Carina — study](#)

Climate change turbocharged the winds and rain of Typhoon Carina (international name: Gaemi), which killed dozens of people across the Philippines, Taiwan and China earlier this year, a group of scientists said Thursday.

Carina skirted the Philippines in July, triggering floods and landslides that killed at least 40 people, before making landfall in Taiwan and China.

In China, the weather system caused torrential downpours that killed 50 people and prompted authorities to evacuate 300,000.

World Weather Attribution (WWA), a network of scientists who have pioneered peer-reviewed methods for assessing the role of climate change in extreme events, looked at three regions worst affected by the typhoon: the northern Philippines, Taiwan and China's Hunan province.

It found the system's wind speeds were seven percent more intense due to man-made climate change, and its rainfall was 14% heavier in Taiwan and 9% heavier in Hunan.

The study could not draw definitive conclusions about the role of climate change on the rainfall in the Philippines, because of the region's complex monsoon rain patterns.

Still, they found the warm seas that helped form and fuel Typhoon Carina "would have been virtually impossible" in a world that had not warmed to the current 1.2 Celsius above pre-industrial levels.

And the group's modelling found this warming has already increased the number of similarly strong storms by 30% -- up from around five a year to six or seven.

"This study confirms what we've expected -- hotter seas and atmospheres are giving rise to more powerful, longer-lived and deadlier typhoons," said Ralf Toumi, director of the Grantham Institute-Climate Change and the Environment, at Imperial College London.

Teasing out the impact of climate change on tropical cyclones is complicated, but scientists are focusing more work on these weather systems.

WWA's method involves assessing how unusual an extreme event is, then modelling the likelihood of a similar event and its intensity in two scenarios: today's world, and one without current levels of warming.

The scientists used that method and a new approach developed by Imperial College London that is tailored specifically to tropical storms.

It uses computer modelling to overcome the relative lack of historical data on tropical cyclones.

While the Asia-Pacific region has long dealt with typhoons, the scientists warned that their work highlighted "gaps in typhoon preparedness and the massive impacts caused by Gaemi."

They called for better urban flood management and targeted warnings that offer more information on the likely impacts of a storm.

The study was released as Typhoon Shanshan made landfall in Japan, which issued its highest level warning for wind and storm surges.

COP29 finance draft reveals divided positions

The UN has published a draft on climate financing due to be presented at the COP29 in November, laying out the conflicting positions from which the main country blocs will try to clinch the next climate deal.

The document, which AFP consulted Friday, is the basis for negotiating an accord that is due to be reached at COP29 in Baku under Azerbaijan's presidency.

The "New collective quantified goal", or NCQG in UN jargon, is intended to replace the engagements made by developed countries to provide \$100 billion a year in financing to help developing countries face climate change.

The draft lays out seven rough options that summarise the opposing positions.

Arab countries say developed countries should commit at least \$441 billion a year in grants between 2025-2029 to mobilise loans and private financing that would bring the annual total to \$1.1 trillion.

African countries insist on an annual objective of \$1.3 trillion.

Over the past months, the donor countries -- which the Rio summit in 1992 identified as the United States, the European Union, Britain, Japan, Canada, Switzerland, Turkey, Norway, Iceland, New Zealand and Australia -- have said these amounts are unrealistic.

Arguing that they now account for less than 30 percent of historic emissions, they want to expand the list of donors to China and Gulf countries, who refuse to consider it.

Canada proposed in the document that the new target be met by countries in the Rio list as well as those that have a gross national income (GNI) above \$52,000 per capita or are in the top 10 cumulative greenhouse gas emitting countries with a GNI of \$20,000 per capita.

The EU, while accepting that "developed country Parties continue to take the lead in mobilising climate finance from a wide variety of sources, instruments and channels", said the "collective goal can only be reached if Parties with high GHG-emissions and economic capabilities join the effort."

The EU wrote that all "global investment flows", public and private together, must reach at least \$1 trillion per year by 2035, without specifying the share that would come from rich countries -- a formulation close to that of the United States.

"We now only have 73 days before COP29 begins and Parties need to accelerate their engagement on this top negotiating priority to reach consensus," COP29 President-Designate Mukhtar Babayev said.

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DAILY TRIBUNE

[Blue skies boost climate-resilient communities](#)

By: Rafael De Leon

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines air pollution as “the contamination of indoor or outdoor environments by any chemical, physical or biological agent that alters the natural characteristics of the atmosphere.” This issue is more than just a smoggy skyline or a foggy afternoon; it poses a significant threat to overall well-being and exacerbates climate change.

Air pollution originates from various sources, including motor vehicles, waste disposal, cooking and heating with wood fuel and kerosene, and industrial factories. These sources and activities release hazardous chemicals that severely compromise air quality, which harm human health and damage our ecosystems.

According to the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), air pollution causes one in nine deaths globally. Exposure to fine particulate outdoor pollution caused around 4 million deaths in 2019, with East Asia and Central Europe registering the highest death rates.

Data from UNEP also indicate that poor air quality is linked to a third of deaths from stroke, chronic respiratory disease and lung cancer, as well as a quarter of deaths from heart attacks.

Pollutants like black carbon, methane and ground-level ozone, classified as short-lived climate pollutants, significantly contribute to air pollution-related deaths and exacerbate climate change. Their presence accelerates global warming, leading to more extreme weather events, rising sea levels and disruptions in food security. The impacts on agriculture are particularly alarming as these pollutants impair the health of vital food sources and threaten community livelihoods.

Concerns arose recently when the active Taal Volcano in Batangas released volcanic smog, commonly called “vog.” The Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) explained that vog consists of sulfur dioxide (SO₂) and other volcanic gasses, which interact with atmospheric oxygen, moisture, dust and sunlight, posing health risks. This phenomenon reached areas around Taal, including parts of Cavite, Laguna and Metro Manila, prompting the suspension of face-to-face classes in those locations.

However, Phivolcs later revealed that the suspected vog or haze observed in Metro Manila was unrelated to volcanic activity at Taal. Instead, local pollutants caused the poor air quality in the metropolis.

The Environmental Management Bureau of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources supported this assessment, with air quality monitoring stations in Caloocan, Parañaque and Pateros recording unhealthy air quality levels for sensitive groups. Meanwhile, Makati logged a “very unhealthy” air quality level, underscoring the severity of the pollution crisis.

This situation highlights the ongoing struggle with air pollution in Metro Manila, where emissions from factories, vehicles and other urban sources continue to threaten public health and ecosystems.

Given this, individual responsibility is crucial. Collective efforts in climate action initiatives are necessary to safeguard our ecological resources and human health. Sustainable practices, such as proper waste disposal, using mass transportation and consistently monitoring industrial emissions, are vital to significantly reduce pollution.

Moreover, investing in and adopting renewable energy sources will decrease reliance on fossil fuels and help curb the release of harmful pollutants.

However, this challenge requires more than individual actions.

“It demands cooperation from both the government and society as a whole. Together, we can reduce the effects of climate change and enhance the resilience of our communities, making them more equipped to face climate-induced disasters,” said Robert E.A. Borje, the vice chairperson and executive director of the Climate Change Commission.

As we commemorate the International Day of Clean Air for Blue Skies, let us remember that our collective commitment to sustainable practices plays a vital role in combating climate change. Blue skies symbolize clean air, which protects our ecosystems and strengthens food security, paving the way for a more sustainable and resilient world.

The International Day of Clean Air for Blue Skies was established by the UN General Assembly through Resolution 74/212. It recognizes that healthy air is essential for mitigating climate change and is crucial for the health and livelihoods of people.

[From emissions to efficiency: Embrace green building practices in the Philippines](#)

By: Shaira Mae Cabañas

Buildings consume about 34 percent of global energy and contribute up to 37 percent of total greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, according to the United Nations Environment Program.

In the Philippines, the energy sector, which includes residential and commercial buildings, is the largest emitter of GHG, contributing 74.89 teragrams (Tg) of carbon dioxide equivalent in 2015 and 99.85 Tg of CO₂e in 2020.

As the country continues to experience the adverse impacts of climate change, the need to transition to green building practices has never been more urgent. Green buildings — structures that adopt measures which prioritize energy efficiency, and use renewable energy sources and sustainable materials — are crucial to reduce GHG emissions and create healthier, more resilient communities.

The National Adaptation Plan, which outlines the Philippines' strategy for adaptation and resilience, emphasizes the integration of climate-smart standards in building and construction. The goal is to encourage and incentivize the adoption of green and circular economy principles across housing programs and value chains at every level.

The Nationally Determined Contribution Plan also recognizes green building practices as part of the policies and measures that will help the country meet its commitment to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The plan highlights the importance of retrofitting existing buildings to improve energy efficiency and reduce waste, as well as constructing buildings that meet green building standards.

The re-greening of metropolitan areas not only enhances their aesthetic appeal but also brings profound environmental and economic dividends. Integrating R&D components is crucial to continuously innovate and improve green methodologies.

These strategies generate economic benefits by creating new job opportunities in the green sector and encouraging green investments. As we shift from business-as-usual and move towards a more eco-friendly, low-carbon economic framework, we can transform the real estate landscape. By incentivizing the production of green products and ecologically beneficial services, we create an environment where sustainable business practices thrive.

There is optimism that cities, as engines of innovation and progress, will take the lead in greening efforts, yielding economic benefits, new job opportunities in the housing industry, and increased green investments.

Secretary Robert E.A. Borje, Climate Change Commission vice chairperson and executive director, emphasized the importance of this transformation.

“By embracing green building principles, we not only reduce our carbon footprint but also ensure our infrastructure withstands the challenges of a changing climate.”

Marcos signs LDF Board Act

By: Richbon Quevedo and Lade Jean Kabagani

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Wednesday signed into law Republic Act 12019, or the Loss and Damage Fund (LDF) Board Act, according to Presidential Communications Office Secretary Cheloy Garafil.

The LDF is an international financial mechanism designed to provide support to climate-vulnerable countries recovering from losses and damage caused by climate change.

Garafil said the new law grants the Philippines a juridical personality and legal capacity in the Loss and Damage Fund Board.

“With the passage of RA 12019, the Board, as the governing body of the Fund, shall have the juridical personality with full legal capacity to contract, acquire, and dispose of immovable and movable property, as well as institute legal proceedings,” Garafil said.

The Board will also have the legal capacity to negotiate, conclude, and enter into a hosting arrangement with the World Bank as interim trustee and host of the Fund’s secretariat and undertake activities as necessary for discharging its roles and functions.

In 2023, Environment Secretary Ma. Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga announced that the Philippines had secured a spot on the LDF.

Last July, Marcos announced that the country was elected to host the climate disaster fund board out of eight contenders.

“Hosting the LDF Board reinforces our dedication to inclusivity and our leadership role in ensuring that the voices of those most affected by climate change shall shape the future of international climate policies,” he said in a social media post on X (formerly Twitter) in July.

The decision was lauded by the Climate Change Commission (CCC).

“The unanimous decision by the LDF Board affirms the Philippines’ leadership under President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. in transformative climate action and demonstrates stakeholder confidence in the country’s commitment to constructively contribute towards global efforts to address climate change,” the CCC said.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

[UNDP, DOF to craft climate finance strategy](#)

By: Louise Maureen Simeon

The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the Department of Finance (DOF) will craft a climate finance strategy to mobilize needed resources for the Philippines.

In a statement, UNDP said it would develop a comprehensive strategy for climate finance in the Philippines in a bid to consolidate financing solutions for climate change action in the country.

UNDP Philippines representative Selva Ramachandran said the Sustainable Development Goal 13 or climate action is urgently needed in the country, evident in the effects of recent typhoons.

Aside from adaptation and mitigation measures, Ramachandran said the climate crisis demands financing to make all actions possible.

As such, the climate finance strategy aims to mobilize resources for climate action projects, consolidate funding from disparate sources, align public spending to the national development agenda and encourage climate-friendly investments and innovations from the private sector.

The new strategy carves out a financing program from the Sustainable Finance Roadmap by the Green Force to focus on climate finance solutions.

It also builds on funding opportunities for projects drawn from the National Adaptation Plan and the Nationally Determined Contributions Implementation Plan by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and the Climate Change Commission.

The DOF, for its part, maintained that financing projects are commitments to empower local government units and national government agencies to stand on the forefront of climate action.

Further, the UNDP and DOF aim to bridge the gap on how the Philippines can access the international climate finance fund

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