



## NEWS ROUNDUP

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#### [Philippines to boost fight vs climate change through sustainable finance: Diokno](#)

By: Jessica Fenol

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### BUSINESS WORLD

#### [Philippines to rejoin Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative](#)

By: Diego Gabriel Robles

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## **ECO-BUSINESS ONLINE**

### **[Across the globe, those harmed by climate change are turning to courts.](#)**

By Doug Johnson

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### **[Climate change threatens small seaweed farmers in the Philippines.](#)**

By Keith Anthony S. Fabro

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## **MANILA BULLETIN**

### **[The art and science of climate change](#)**

By: Jules Vivas

The end is near! The quote from the New Testament that claims the final judgment is more real than we acknowledge it to be. That is, if we don’t do something about climate change.

## **PHILIPPINES NEWS AGENCY**

### **[\\$5-B worth of e-trikes top list of Singapore investments to PH](#)**

By: Azer Parrocha

Manila – The Philippines is poised to reap USD6.54 billion (PHP374.57) of investment deals from the two-day state visit of President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. to Singapore.

### **[Europe records hottest summer in history](#)**

BRUSSELS – This summer has been the hottest in Europe’s documented history with August seeing a record high temperature, the EU’s Earth observation satellite program revealed on Thursday.

## **SUNSTAR**

### **[Extreme weather in Asia](#)**

Two neighboring countries in Asia are currently experiencing extreme weather conditions which experts believe is caused by climate change.

## **THE MANILA TIMES**

### **[Intellectuals, scientists and politicians](#)**

By: Fermin Adriano

In one of our light banterers, former University of the Philippines (UP) president and National Scientist Emil Q. Javier and I spoke about how the country has mistreated its scientists and intellectuals.

### **[Climate deniers' claims: Separating reality from idiocy](#)**

By Ben Kritz

The so-called World Climate Declaration that is supposed to be such a "savage blow" against the "political orthodoxy" of anthropogenic climate change is more like a wet noodle than a whip when it comes to the actual arguments it presents. It bases its assertion that "there is no climate emergency" on five claims, all of which have been repeatedly debunked for years as they are either misrepresentations of scientific findings, outright lies, and in one case, lunacy of a depth that would make Velikovsky look sane.

### **[Demystifying SDG, ESG and DEI](#)**

By Ernie Cecilia, DPM

Sustainability is simply about understanding (and taking positive action on) the organization's impact on the environment, economy and society. Sustainability's scope has broadened beyond the enterprises' environmental footprint. Somewhere along the way, sustainability and the issues of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) collided and began to overlap — in a good way.

### **[Food security: A long-term approach](#)**

By Kay Calpo Lugtu

Just like in other important matters in life, it is essential to approach these efforts on a long-term basis. As an example, when we plan for our retirement, we take note of many things and ensure habits and other behaviors apt for such are put in place; we invest as early as we can to avoid being dependent later on, we decide to invest in our health so we can avoid getting sick, etc. These efforts take time, and the fruit of such labor may only be seen not immediately, but at a much later time.

## **CCC IN THE NEWS:**

### **THE DAILY TRIBUNE**

[Phi calls for climate equity, justice at UN Expert Forum on Climate Finance in Manila](#)

By TDT

The Philippines called for climate equity and justice through the delivery of climate finance at the opening of the Third Technical Expert Dialogue on Climate Finance of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change on 6 September.

**Information and Knowledge Management Division**

## **ABS CBN**

### **[Philippines to boost fight vs climate change through sustainable finance: Diokno](#)**

By: Jessica Fenol

Manila-The Philippines plans to boost its fight against climate change by pushing for sustainable financing, investments in climate resiliency and subsidies in the sector, Finance Secretary Benjamin Diokno said Thursday.

The Philippines in 2022 launched its Sustainable Finance Roadmap with the goal of putting the focus on climate change through the financial sector, Diokno said during the forum "BDO Unlocking Capital for Sustainability Philippines."

"The roadmap strategically lays out our action plan to mobilize financing in order to mainstream climate action initiatives, facilitate investments in climate resilience, public infrastructure, and develop projects that promote sustainable development in the Philippines," Diokno said.

Part of the initiative is the recent issuance of the country's first-ever sustainability global bonds with \$1 billion and the sustainability Samurai bonds worth \$600 million, he added.

The country has committed to reduce gas emissions by 75 percent by 2030. In October 2020, it also issued a moratorium on new coal plants, the Finance chief said, adding that it also signed an ASEAN low-carbon energy pact.

"This program will be instrumental in our feat to promote inclusive economic growth and reduce poverty incidence in the country through increased green finance flows for low carbon energy and increased energy efficiency," he said.

Diokno said the new administration under President Ferdinand Bongbong Marcos Jr vowed to include environmental sustainability meant to address climate change in its legislative priorities.

This includes the proposed imposition of excise tax on single-use plastics and the imposition of carbon tax, he said.

Climate change initiatives have also received a bigger budget allocation for 2023 at P453.1 billion, which is higher than the P289.7 billion in 2022, the Department of Budget and Management earlier said.

Aside from mitigating measures, Diokno said the Philippines would harness the "vast energy sources" available including hydro, geothermal, wind and solar power to bring down energy cost

"We will not sit idly by as the planet burns...We intend to take all necessary steps now and act decisively for the good of our people, our economy and our planet," Diokno said.

BDO Unibank, the country's largest bank in terms of assets, also announced its BDO Energy Financial Statement, which is meant to guide its approach to energy transition, said BDO Senior Vice President and Chief Compliance Officer Atty. Federico Tangcongco.

“BDO recognizes that the banking industry plays a critical role in the Philippines' committed transition to low carbon economy, a transition that will require providing access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and clean energy,” Tangcongco said.

“We declared that BDO commits to reduce our coal exposure to 50 percent by 2033 while ensuring that our coal exposure does not exceed 2 percent of its total loan portfolio by 2023,” he added.

The statement is focused on coal but it would eventually include other fossil fuels in the future, BDO Unibank Vice President and Head of Sustainability Office Marla Garin-Alvarez said.

Finance Undersecretary and economist Cielo Magno said BDO's commitment has set the standard in sustainable finance in the country.

“We are in a middle of a climate crisis so I think with respect to leadership, we need to see convergence of leadership not just from government but from various sectors,” Magno said.

“The announcement of BDO is very good in terms of setting the standard in financial sustainable finance in the country. Particularly right now that the country has made its commitment in reducing carbon emission aligning that with the various initiatives of the private sector,” she added.

Diokno said the country, which is considered among the most vulnerable to climate change, is determined to be a "world leader" in the fight against the crisis.

## **BUSINESS WORLD**

### **Philippines to rejoin Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative**

By: Diego Gabriel Robles

The Philippines has expressed its intention to rejoin the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) after the previous administration withdrew earlier this year, the Department of Finance (DoF) said.

“We submitted our letter of intent last Monday. We hope that its implementation can complement and can strengthen the regulation of the sector in the Philippines,” Finance Undersecretary Cielo D. Magno said at a webinar organized by Eco-Business Philippines on Thursday.

“Finance Secretary (Benjamin E.) Diokno relayed to the international board of EITI that we are rejoining, and therefore we are a member again... We are going to implement the standards set by the international board, and we are again going to subject the country to the regular validation done by the international board,” she added.

The EITI promotes transparency for the mining, oil and gas industries by publicizing how much revenue they generate for their host governments. The DoF heads the body that oversees the implementation of the EITI program.

“We recognize that we actually have a pretty strong policy with respect to the extractive sector. What is needed is for it to be implemented properly, and with the framework of EITI where various stakeholders, including industry and civil society, are involved in governance aspect, we hope to be able to minimize the social and environmental costs coming from the extractive sector,” Ms. Magno said.

Last month, the DoF said that the mining industry can help drive the economic recovery and growth as metal prices boom.

“A World Bank study (points to a) significant increase in demand for critical minerals needed to transition to greener technology. As a country rich in mineral resources, we want to take advantage of that,” Ms. Magno said.

“We want to make sure that we get value for the minerals that we are extracting,” she added, citing the need to make mineral prices reflect the “environmental and social cost” involved in extracting them.

She said a proposal in Congress will allocate an estimated P20 billion from the proceeds of the new mining fiscal regime to sustainable development initiatives.

The Duterte administration withdrew from the EITI in July after the latter downgraded the Philippines’ score to “moderate” in February, claiming that the standards for the engagement of civil society were not sufficiently met.

“We find that the manner by which the EITI board undertakes its validation is unduly subjective, biased and unfair,” former Finance Secretary Carlos G. Dominguez III said at the time. “The Philippines has no confidence in the ability of the EITI to undertake an impartial, transparent, and evidence-based validation process.”

The DoF also reiterated the Marcos administration’s intent to spend P453.1 billion on climate change programs next year, up from P289.7 billion this year.

“Currently, the government’s commitment is to increase the annual budget for climate change programs by at least 15% yearly,” Ms. Magno said, adding that it is reviewing the feasibility of a carbon tax and supporting a tax on single-use plastics.

“These climate change expenditures are focused on food security, water security, ecosystem and environmental stability, human security, climate smart industries and services, sustainable energy, and building knowledge and capacity,” she added.

## ECO-BUSINESS ONLINE

### [Across the globe, those harmed by climate change are turning to courts.](#)

*Climate litigation is on the rise, as is the activism that goes along with it — which some experts say can be just as important.*

By Doug Johnson

In the wake of Typhoon Haiyan, which devastated the Philippines in 2013, a group of organisations and individuals in the country and elsewhere petitioned the Commission on Human Rights of the Philippines to investigate whether fossil fuel companies violate or threaten to violate human rights by contributing to climate change. At least 6,300 people died in the storm, and 29,000 were injured.

In early May of this year, the commission released its report. It found that nearly 50 major fossil fuel companies should be held accountable for the human rights impacts of their carbon-producing activities and alter their practices to reduce climate risk.

Greenpeace, whose Southeast Asia chapter was among the petitioners, calls the report a “landmark.” Some observers claim it provides a legal tool for holding fossil fuel companies accountable for climate impacts in the Philippines. In theory, it could be an important development for climate litigation around the world.

Climate litigation refers to attempts to use a government’s legal system to compel a corporation, government or other party to take responsibility for climate impacts and change behaviour that the plaintiff argues harms the climate; carbon emissions causing sea-level rise, for instance. It’s part of a broader term, environmental litigation, which also incorporates other human activities that hurt the environment, such as pollution in the ocean.

I would say it’s almost certain any time an environmental law is weakened, there’s corporate money behind the effort.

Martin Wagner, director of international programs, Earthjustice

As human actions cause more and more damage to ecosystems and human health, people, environmental organisations, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), nonprofits and others are turning to the courts to right these perceived wrongs.

And while cases of climate litigation have been on the rise around the world, plaintiffs often face an uphill battle against the monied and otherwise powerful entities they’re taking on. But some experts note that the outcome of the trial isn’t the only way to define victory; often, when climate lawsuits are accompanied by activism, the attention that activism raises can be just as important as a win or loss inside the courtroom.

## **Growing trend**

The United Nations Environment Programme's (UNEP's) Global Climate Litigation Report: 2020 Status Review reported some 1,550 cases of climate litigation across 38 countries, nearly twice the number (884) included in UNEP's 2017 report on the topic.

The 2022 Global Trends in Climate Change Litigation report by researchers from the London School of Economics and Political Science found that in the past eight years, more than 1,200 cases of climate litigation were filed, whereas only about 800 had been filed from 1986 to 2014 (totals that may include cases looking to roll back climate regulations as well as those seeking to hold polluters accountable).

More and more countries are seeing such litigation. The 2020 case numbers reported by the UNEP report included 1,200 in the US and 350 in the rest of the world. The current numbers are sitting at around 1,440 in the US and 580 in other countries.

“From something that started very much in the US, now we have climate litigation growing in several countries, also in the Global South,” says Joana Setzer, an assistant professorial research fellow at the Grantham Research Institute and one of the authors of the Global Trends report, which found similar numbers. Of the 2,002 completed or ongoing cases in its database, 1,426 were filed in the US with the remaining 576 happening elsewhere, including 88 in the Global South.

People in developing nations may have different priorities than those in developed nations when it comes to environmental court battles, says Kim Bower, an assistant professor in law at Durham Law School in the UK

In the US and Europe, for instance, individuals or groups may try to litigate a government into changing an environmental policy, while people in developing countries often sue to improve or protect their livelihoods. For example, Setzer says, people in developing nations may focus on things like industry impacts on water quality rather than public policies about greenhouse gas emissions.

That said, often the benefits of winning a climate case can have an impact beyond the plaintiffs. For example, climate litigation can benefit less economically well-off people more than the wealthy because they are more likely to be impacted by the negative effects of climate change, says Martin Wagner, director of the nonprofit environmental law organisation Earthjustice's International program. “The poor are on the front lines of the harms from climate events,” he says.

## **The high cost of court**

Although climate litigation is becoming more commonplace, it can be cost prohibitive for many. But, says Michael Burger — executive director of the Sabin Center for Climate Change Law at Columbia Law School in New York, which contributed data to the Global Climate Litigation and Global Trends in Climate Change Litigation reports — access to high-quality and committed legal support is important in lawsuits against powerful and monied actors, who can usually afford legal fees better than individuals or NGOs.

“It is a huge difference,” Setzer says, adding that accessing the legal system can be cost prohibitive even in developed nations.

Climate litigation can come with other challenges as well. In one case, after the town of Imperial Beach, California, filed a lawsuit against ExxonMobil and various other fossil-fuel corporations that, if successful, would compel them to pay for defending the city from sea-level rise caused by climate change, the oil giant filed its own suit claiming that the Imperial Beach legal actions and those of other California municipalities were part of a collusion effort to extort money from the industry.

The company is also attempting to use a Texas law to force California officials who have claimed fossil-fuel companies have misled the public about climate change to be questioned under oath and provide documents even before any legal action is taken.

In another case, environmental group ClientEarth is gearing up to sue Shell’s board of directors. The group argues that the board has failed to implement a climate strategy that aligns with the Paris Agreement and that this is a breach of their duties under the UK Companies Act. The act states that a company’s board is legally responsible for the company’s success. If ClientEarth loses, it could be responsible for the full cost of the litigation, including the defendants’ legal fees.

Considering the different laws and economic situations of countries around the world, geography may also be a factor in legal access and success. Courts in developing nations may have fewer resources than their peers in the so-called Global North, Bouwer says. As such, they might be less willing to take on cases.

While court cases are always going to require a lot of resources, which will usually favour parties with deep pockets, such as corporations, plaintiffs with fewer resources looking to bring forward an environmental case can still hire quality legal representation, and the best lawyers aren’t always the most expensive, Earthjustice’s Wagner says.

Some environmental organisations, such as Ecojustice, regularly offer free legal help, says Jolene Lin, associate professor at the National University of Singapore’s Faculty of Law and co-author of the paper, “Transnational Climate Litigation: The Contribution of the Global South.” As part of their mandates, such environmental organisations may seek out cases against government or business parties to bring forward in developing nations, according to Lin.

### **Beyond the courtroom**

Corporations have tools beyond money to use in the legal sphere. For instance, they can pressure governments into changing laws, according to Wagner. In this way, a plaintiff seeking climate justice might win a court battle, but the victory could evaporate when a government changes laws to favour the private sector.

The Trump administration, for example, weakened environmental protections in the wake of BP lobbying — and Wagner notes that similar things also happen outside the US “I would say it’s almost certain any time an environmental law is weakened, there’s corporate money behind the effort,” he says.

However, effecting change in climate policy isn’t always just about the final decision, Setzer says. Even if a plaintiff loses, there can be gains in the awareness built along the way. For example, in 2017, Plan B, a nonprofit organisation working to counter climate change, filed a case against the UK’s secretary of state for business, energy and industrial strategy, aiming to get the UK to set more robust emission reduction goals. The case was dismissed, and then appealed, but the appeal was ultimately rejected.

Even though the courts appeared uninterested in hearing the nonprofit’s case, Bower notes that the effort came with a good deal of activism and, eventually, the UK announced efforts to reach net zero greenhouse gas emissions. (Though recently, critics say the UK government is defying its own targets by announcing new oil drilling in the North Sea.)

In a report by Bower and Setzer that outlines climate litigation and activism, the UK case is considered a “fail with benefits,” or one that aids climate action or helps create new legal pathways for future cases. “It did work, just not in the courts,” Bower says. “A win in the courts isn’t always the best win.”

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## Climate change threatens small seaweed farmers in the Philippines.

By Keith Anthony S. Fabro

“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).

In her village, Balintang, seaweed farming builds a sense of community and strengthens family ties, as it gives opportunities for community members to connect with each other, Gimotea says: “It’s a time when we get a chance to bond with my neighbours, with my family.”

### Philippines FMA systems

### Philippines relies on new fisheries management system in rocky rollout

Early the next morning, she hops with her husband on a 2-meter-long outrigger boat and paddle a few meters offshore until she reaches her 2,500-square-meter (0.62-acre) farm. There, they drop the prepared seaweed lines and leave them until they’re ready for harvest in 45 days.

This has been her family’s routine for three decades. Earning between 25,000 to 30,000 pesos (\$445 to \$534) every production cycle, the mother of five says seaweed farming has allowed her family to put two children through university and afford relative luxuries like refrigerators and a television. “It is also where we get everything we need at home, and we’re also able to buy appliances that we otherwise couldn’t afford if not for seaweeds,” she says.

Our roadmap is addressing the deteriorating quality of seaweed propagules, one is through strengthening our seaweed culture with the vision of producing climate resilient, fast growing and disease-resistant propagules.

### Demosthenes Togonon, seaweed development program national coordinator, Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources

In the Philippines, over 200,000 coastal families like Gimotea’s engage in commercial seaweed farming, which was first introduced in the country in the early 1970s. Five decades later, the Philippines emerged as the world’s fourth largest producer of aquatic plants, including seaweed. In 2020, the country produced 1.48 million tonnes (1.63 million tons) of aquatic plants, or 4.56 per cent of the total world production of 32.4 million tonnes (35.7 million tons).

The Philippines’ seaweeds are exported to the United States, China, Spain, Russia and Belgium, where they are prized for carrageenan, a gelatin-like additive used as a thickening agent and stabiliser for many food and cosmetic products.

In many coastal communities, seaweed farming also has proven its value as a way to help address poverty and environmental issues, such as illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (IUUF), and degradation of quality of habitat for endangered marine life. However, climate change that triggers seaweed disease and pest problems is becoming a threat to this industry, leaving Gimotea and many others worried about their families' futures.

### Conservation enterprise

In Gimotea's village, women organised themselves into the Cherish Fisherfolk Association. When the group was registered with the Philippines' labour and employment department in 2018, it opened opportunities for scaling up its seaweed production. These included access to production loans, as well as grants to build land-based and floating seaweed dryers with support from USAID Protect Wildlife and the nonprofit Lutheran World Relief and Ecumenical Church Loan Fund.

Such facilities cut short the seaweed drying period from almost a week to two to three days, allowing farmers to increase their production. "By renting out these dryers, as well as our motorised boat, to members and non-members who engage in seaweed farming, we earn additional income," says association president Mardy Montaña.

Recognizing seaweed production as one of the Philippines' most important aquaculture commodities, the government also provides both material and technical support to communities like Balintang. "To intensify seaweed production, we conduct capacity-building training with communities and provide them with planting materials, such as propagules, straws and ropes," says Palawan provincial agriculturist Romeo Cabungcal.

Locally, Cherish is gaining renown for its seaweed noodles and chips. While waiting for their seaweed to mature, women are most often seen at the association's centre, enjoying each other's stories as they manually produce these snacks.

"As more towns are reached by our products, we're glad that locals are patronizing these delicious and healthy foods," says Montaña, whose group was trained by the provincial government in seaweed processing.

According to the FAO, seaweeds are excellent sources of micronutrients such as iron and calcium, as well as vitamins A, C and B-12. Sea plants are also the only non-fish source of natural omega-3 long-chain fatty acids.

With the government's goal to improve seaweed post-harvest in the country, Cabungcal says they connected the association with the World Bank-assisted Philippine Rural Development Project to gain access to grants to scale up the seaweed noodles and chips production and become a provincial seaweed consolidator. "If their proposed project prospers, they will greatly benefit in terms of infrastructure and machinery for the seaweed processing," he says.

Local officials say that seaweed farming has not only helped uplift the socio-economic condition of families in this village, it has also helped in the recovery of its coastal waters from the threats of illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.

Since the association's inception, members have been key partners of the municipality's Bantay Dagat, or a volunteer sea patrol unit, voluntarily monitoring their coastal waters for IUU fishing, explains Pacita Bravo, an agricultural coordinator with the municipal government.

"Seaweed farmers are out at sea almost every day to check on their farms, and their presence there has helped in reducing illegal fishing because they report to authorities whenever they chance upon violators," Bravo says. "So that discourages illegal fishers, and through time they have also shifted to seaweed farming."

Cherish also advocates for a total ban on the use of aquaculture fertilisers that contain chemicals with potential adverse impacts on human and marine life health. This is being emphasised among members because the seaweed farms end up serving as grazing areas for economically important herbivore fishes and molluscs, and endangered species like Green sea turtle (*Chelonia mydas*) and Dugong (*Dugong dugon*), says Montaña.

Climate-induced disease, pest

For years, Gimotea and other women engaging in seaweed farming in her village enjoyed productive seaweed harvests. But since 2021, they have started feeling the effects of changes in local weather patterns and environmental conditions due to climate change.

In late 2021, Typhoon Rai wiped out their seaweed farms. Just when they began recovering from the devastation and restarted the planting, a warmer than usual dry season came, triggering diseases and pests.

"As the climate continues to change, it's always sunny here, the heat is extreme, the wind blows intermittently, and the ocean warms as well," says Gimotea, as she sits at the far end of her outrigger boat filled with seaweed lines ready for planting. "When the heat is extreme, it can cause seaweed diseases."

She bends and dips her one hand in the sea to grab a seaweed line in her neighbor's farm, which has been afflicted by ice-ice disease or the whitening of seaweed branches. The disease, which is caused by a combination of marine fungi and bacteria, causes infected seaweed to disintegrate and decay.

Joseph Faisan Jr., a seaweed researcher with the Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center's (SEAFDEC) Aquaculture Department, explains that "extreme weather events brought about by climate change make seaweed farms vulnerable to fluctuations in environmental conditions, especially in coastal areas where high temperature or low salinity could be observed the most."

This is why farmers should consider transferring farm sites to deeper areas where the environmental conditions are stable, he says.

When seaweeds are exposed to stressful conditions, seaweed health is compromised, making them susceptible to disease and pest problems, Faisan explains. Ice-ice disease, as well as epiphytic pests (algae that penetrate and damage seaweeds' inner layers) are the common health problems observed in seaweed farms in the Philippines, he says.

“Based on the recent survey conducted, these problems are already prevalent in the major seaweed-producing areas in the country,” adds Faisan, lead author of a 2021 study on seaweed diseases in the Philippines. In times of outbreaks, he says biomass yields are reduced and the carrageenan quality is compromised.

It's concerning, Faisan says, because it can affect the income of approximately 1 million farmers and workers connected to the seaweed industry, a significant Philippine economy contributor. In 2020, the government reported that seaweed was the country's top aquaculture commodity in terms of volume at 1.5 million tonnes (1.65 million tons), and second in export value amounting to \$250 million.

The presence of these diseases in seaweed farms could also, potentially, increase the vulnerability of patches of wild seaweed, which are important marine habitats. “I have yet to read a scientific paper on the horizontal transfer of disease or pest from cultivated seaweeds to the wild or native seaweeds. However, I think the said transfer is highly probable,” says Faisan.

For farmers, monitoring seaweeds is a key activity in order to reduce losses. “They fall into the sea if we fail to monitor them often,” Gimotea says. “Because ice-ice disease spreads fast, if you spot them today in your farm, you should harvest them the next day to prevent them from getting widespread.”

Since outbreaks have become more frequent, she says her family's income has halved, an economic shock worsened by rising inflation in the country. “Our fear, if it's always like this, that the climate changes, we would go into poverty because we won't be able to sell many seaweeds,” she says. “That's why we appeal for help to address this,” she says.

### Interventions and challenges

The Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) developed the Philippine Seaweed Industry Roadmap 2022-2026 to address industry issues, including the prevalence of ice-ice disease and epiphytic pests, and regain the country's international seaweed market position.

“The BFAR, through our roadmap, is addressing the deteriorating quality of seaweed propagules, one is [through] strengthening our seaweed culture with the vision of producing climate resilient, fast growing and disease-resistant propagules,” says Demosthenes Togonon, seaweed development program national coordinator. “So we're on our way, slowly but surely, we're making a little progress on that.”

Currently, the BFAR's National Seaweed Technology Development Center produces what it describes as “healthy and disease-resistant seaweed propagules,” by cutting and

propagating stems from healthy seaweeds. These propagules are distributed to farmers free of charge.

However, the centre aims to go further, utilizing genetic engineering technologies to produce strains of seaweed that are more resistant to pathogens and environmental stresses. This, Togonon says, remains a long-shot initiative that would require outside support, since the country only has seven small labs. “[We] have the technology but the big challenge for us is in the operation and management side, because if we’re envisioning to produce huge quantities, we need a commercial facility.”

This potential solution has also raised concerns among activists. “If ever the BFAR employs genetic engineering in strain development, the potential repercussions of genetically modified seaweeds should be studied first because GMOs have no scientific consensus on safety,” warns Greenpeace Southeast Asia campaigner Wilhelmina Pelegrina. This could also have economic implications as the Philippines primarily exports seaweeds to Europe, where many countries have imposed a ban on GM crops. “So it defeats the competitiveness and purpose of seaweed production,” Pelegrina adds.

Despite the uncertainties brought about by climate change, and the lack of consensus on how to deal with these external shocks, seaweed farmers like Gimotea remain hopeful. “If I’m paddling to the sea to drop the seaweeds, I’m happy seeing the seaweeds; they’re like people who are happy once they reach the sea. I talk to them, I tell them to grow well, hoping they would not catch any diseases, because it’s through our income from seaweed farming we’re able to get our daily needs,” she says.

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## MANILA BULLETIN

### [The art and science of climate change](#)

By: Jules Vivas

The end is near! The quote from the New Testament that claims the final judgment is more real than we acknowledge it to be. That is, if we don't do something about climate change.

On top of the pandemic, there is unequivocal evidence that Earth is getting warmer at an abnormal rate. If we were to save the planet, us along with it, awareness is key.

Serving as a doomsday prophet, Filipino transdisciplinary artist Derek Tumala has created a virtual world, Tropical Climate Forensics, a video game-like web application that portrays the climate emergency as it unfolds in the Philippines.

On Sept. 9, the visual artist will share his creative process in making the digital rendering of a dying planet through a hybrid event from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m.

Derek's online project draws inspiration from his residency at the Manila Observatory. One of the oldest meteorological observatories in Southeast Asia, it was erected in 1865 by Jesuit fathers. The apexart NYC Fellow has done research into the seismographic and meteorological archives, current data, and future forecasts to shed light on shifting patterns of weather and climate in the Philippines and the region.

With diorama as a model, Tropical Climate Forensics explores the climate crisis across the past, present, and a speculative future. Derek produces a taxonomy specific to the Philippines as a tropical site, with biomes to represent his study.

This exploratory sandbox experience is the Philippines' entry at the international online exhibition of 28 arts agencies launched by the World Weather Network, a community of creatives reporting on weather and climate.

The global project has art agencies showcase various atmospheric conditions of participating countries through artworks and images, stories, and reflections to construct an archipelago of world views and voices that better depict the issue of climate change across multiple languages and localities.

Derek was commissioned by the Museum of Contemporary Art and Design (MCAD) of De La Salle-College of Saint Benilde (DLSB). The institute was supported by the British Council's Creative Commissions for Climate Action, a program that dissects climate change through art, science, and digital technology.

His exploratory works, majority of which engage new media, have been presented at the Art Basel Hong Kong, Salzburg Global Seminar, Tokyo Design Week, and Beyond Time Residency Poland. He also initiated Mvltiverse, a group of multimedia artists that probes

the wonders of moving images, as well as STEAM/Projects, a collective of technologists and artists.

Tropical Climate Forensics is on view until July 2023 at [worldweathernetwork.org/station/mcad/](http://worldweathernetwork.org/station/mcad/)

## PHILIPPINES NEWS AGENCY

### [\\$5-B worth of e-trikes top list of Singapore investments to PH](#)

By: Azer Parrocha

Manila – The Philippines is poised to reap USD6.54 billion (PHP374.57) of investment deals from the two-day state visit of President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. to Singapore.

Marcos' Singapore trip resulted in the signing of several letters of intent to invest in the Philippines during the Singapore business roundtable meeting on Wednesday.

These letters of intent are expected to generate an estimated 15,000 jobs for Filipinos, according to a news release from Malacañang.

Topping the list of Singaporean investments in the Philippines are electronic tricycles valued at USD5 billion.

"This investment in the transportation sector is seen to lessen air pollution emitted by an estimated 3.5 million tricycles nationwide," the Palace said but gave no further details.

Coming second is an investment in renewable energy, specifically the new technology of floating solar valued at USD1.2 billion.

"You will notice that the top two investments of Singapore to the Philippines are both environment-friendly and are aligned with the government's program on climate change," Press Secretary Trixie Cruz-Angeles was quoted saying.

The third top Singaporean investment is the setting up of in-country Data Center valued at USD200 million, which is expected to employ Filipinos, especially in the Information Technology (IT) and creative industry.

Singaporean businessmen also expressed interest in the so-called "Blue Economy" where they are expected to invest from USD10 million to USD100 million in areas such as marine renewable energy, water production, desalination, electric boats as well as aquaculture.

There were also investments pledged in "Innovation Platform for Start-ups" (USD20 million) and "Women in Technology" (USD20 million).

Hiring of workers

The Singapore government also approved the hiring of around 10,000 Filipino workers in the city-state, which is home to around 200,000 Filipino migrant workers.

Department of Migrant Workers Secretary Susan Ople said this developed following her meeting with Manpower Minister Tan See Leng.

Ople also said that the goodwill arising from the President's state visit and the lifting of the 27-year-old guarantee bond would lead to more and better job prospects for Filipinos who wish to work in Singapore.

"Even prior to the President's visit, our Philippine Overseas Labor Office in Singapore had already approved close to 10,000 job orders with 5,000 jobs awaiting aircraft technicians in the aviation industry," Ople was quoted saying.

Approved job orders refer to immediate manpower requirements given by Singaporean employers to the POLO that are expected to be filled up in the next few months.

The breakdown of approved job orders submitted by Singaporean employers are as follows: Aviation industry -- 5,000 aircraft technicians; Medical industry - 3,000 healthcare workers; Engineering industry - 1,000 skilled workers; Education industry - 500 workers; I.T. sector - 300 workers.

Ople said she anticipated a surge in demand for OFWs in Singapore with the success of the President's visit and the reforms in promoting ease of doing business strategies such as digitalization of various recruitment processes.

In a speech during Philippine Economic Briefing at the Shangri-La Hotel, Marcos invited foreign businesses to put their investments in the Philippines, describing the country as "Asia's fastest rising star."

He encouraged businesses to seize the opportunities in the country as he invited strategic investors from the international community to take part in the Philippines' "economic resurgence."

"We are presently on a steady path to a strong recovery from the pandemic and a robust economic expansion. In the next few years, our economy is expected to outperform our regional peers. My administration is committed to establishing an even more competitive business climate conducive to high-value investments," he said.

## Europe records hottest summer in history

BRUSSELS – This summer has been the hottest in Europe’s documented history with August seeing a record high temperature, the EU’s Earth observation satellite program revealed on Thursday.

“In Europe, the average temperature in August was the highest on record for both the month of August and the summer (June-August) as a whole,” the Copernicus Climate Change Service said in its monthly bulletin.

“The average temperature for Europe from June to August 2022 was about 1.34 degrees Celsius above the 1991-2020 average for the season,” it added.

The temperature outranked by 0.8 degrees Celsius (33.44 degrees Fahrenheit) and 0.4 C (32.72 F) respectively, the records for the summers of 2018 and 2021, known by extreme heat waves.

On the global scale, the past month has been the warmest, exceeding by 0.3 C (32.54 F) the 1991-2020 average of the month.

In August, the European Commission’s Joint Research Centre forecast 15 percent lower yield averages in corn, maize, and soybean as “Europe experiences the worst drought in 500 years.”

## SUNSTAR ONLINE

### Extreme weather in Asia

By Rox Peña

Two neighboring countries in Asia are currently experiencing extreme weather conditions which experts believe is caused by climate change.

In China, the Yangtze River, the third-longest river in the world, is drying up due to record-breaking drought. Rainfall in the Yangtze basin is around 45% lower than normal. The drop in water level has affected hydropower generation, shipping, agriculture and domestic water supplies. The river supports more than 450 million people and a third of China's crops. The low water level has even revealed previously submerged Buddhist statues.

It can be said that China is suffering from the effects of its own doing because it is the world's biggest emitter of greenhouse gases (GHG). Global warming, the biggest driver of climate change, is caused by too much GHG in the atmosphere. The thick layer of GHG acts like a blanket which traps the Sun's heat warming the Earth. Most of these GHG are due to man-made activities such as the use of fossil fuels.

According to the World Resources Institute, the top three greenhouse gas emitters namely China, the European Union and the United States, contribute 41.5% of total global emissions, while the bottom 100 countries only account for only 3.6%. Collectively, the top 10 emitters account for over two-thirds of global GHG emissions.

The drought has exacerbated China's GHG emission. Because of the low water level of Yangtze river, hydropower plants are unable to produce electricity. This means China has to rely more on coal-fired power plants which are large emitters of Carbon Dioxide, a GHG.

While China is experiencing severe drought, its neighbor Pakistan, is suffering from record monsoon rains. The flooding has inundated the country, washing away bridges, roads and crop fields. More than 1,100 have died and more than one million homes have been damaged or destroyed as of this writing. Around one third of Pakistan is underwater affecting more than 33 million, over 15% of the country's 220 million population.

Sherry Rehman, Pakistan's climate change minister, called the flooding a "climate-induced humanitarian disaster" of "epic proportions" and appealed for international aid. Ahsan Iqbal, planning minister, said the world owed Pakistan, which was a victim of climate change caused by the "irresponsible development of the developed world." Thus, the world has an obligation to help the South Asian nation cope with the effects of man-made climate change.

Like Pakistan, the Philippines too is a victim climate change. Our country ranked 17th in the world as the most affected country from extreme weather events in the Global Climate Risk Index (CRI) 2021. The Institute for Economics and Peace even ranked the Philippines as the country most at risk from the climate crisis according to a report

published in 2019. This is in spite of the fact that Philippine GHG emissions is just 0.48% of the global total (source: UNDP). Several super typhoons have hit our country, and more will come.

## THE MANILA TIMES

### Intellectuals, scientists and politicians

By: Fermin Adriano

In one of our light banterers, former University of the Philippines (UP) president and National Scientist Emil Q. Javier and I spoke about how the country has mistreated its scientists and intellectuals.

Dr. Javier sarcastically noted that if an international hair stylist or fashion designer was visiting, it would immediately merit front page treatment in the media. If the story was about a local scientist or intellectual, however, he joked that we would likely see it in the inside pages, most probably in the obituary section.

The sad plight of our scientists and intellectuals has been deeply felt by the community in UP Los Banos (UPLB), especially now in the case of Dr. Leocadio Sebastian. The scientific community is hurting and fretting over the fact that an esteemed colleague is being shabbily treated, even demonized, because he allegedly forged the President's signature in approving Sugar Regulatory Authority (SRA) Special Order 4 (SO 4), which allowed the importation of 300,000 metric tons (MT) of sugar to plug a serious supply deficit.

When President Ferdinand 'Bongbong' Marcos Jr. appointed Undersecretary Sebastian — Leo to his close friends — as de facto caretaker of the Department of Agriculture (DA), many in the scientific community lauded it because Leo is a multi-awarded agriculture scientist. The appointment was seen as consistent with the President's earlier move to select only highly competent professionals for his Cabinet, as manifested in his choices of people to man key economic posts under his administration.

Leo graduated from UPLB, the country's premier institution of higher learning in agriculture and forestry. He went on to pursue his doctoral degree in agriculture in one of the top schools in the world, Cornell University in New York. This is where the former minister of science (under President Marcos Sr.), UPLB chancellor and UP president, and now National Scientist Dr. Javier completed his PhD in agriculture. It is also where the late Dr. Gelia Castillo, the queen of Philippine rural sociology, finished her PhD in sociology.

After his stint as the youngest director of the Philippine Rice Research Institute and becoming a Ten Outstanding Young Men awardee for agriculture, Leo was recruited by two international research and development organizations (Bioversity and the International Rice Research Institute) as their expert on genetic resources, climate change and rice production for Southeast Asia. This enabled him to visit and be stationed in Thailand, Myanmar, Malaysia, Indonesia and Vietnam to examine and provide expert advice.

It was in Vietnam where he spent a considerable part of his time and expertise, helping the Vietnamese government raise rice productivity, adapt to climate change and increase farmer incomes.

He enabled the scaling up of the 'early planting season' scheme and promoted crop diversification program. The former program allowed Vietnamese farmers to avoid destructive salinity intrusion, which happens during the dry season, and the latter raised the incomes of rice farmers through the proceeds from the high-value crops intercropped.

For his solid contribution to Vietnam's agriculture sector, Leo was awarded by the Vietnamese Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development the highest honor for individuals who assisted in fostering agricultural development. It was at this point, when his contract was expiring, that former Agriculture secretary William Dar, himself an accomplished agricultural scientist and manager, convinced Leo to join the department late in 2020, during the height of the pandemic.

### Destroying a good man

All these accomplishments and accolades have been forgotten as a result of Leo's 'mistake' of signing, on behalf of the Agriculture Secretary/President, SO 4. He thought that after several briefings in the Palace and with two of Malacañang's appointees in the SRA board together with SRA Administrator signing the order, it was just ministerial for him to also sign. He further thought that the authority bestowed on him via a July 15, 2002 memo issued by the Palace to represent the President in various DA-attached agencies and to sign documents was sufficient legal cover.

Unfortunately, Malacañang interpreted it in a different way. Learning of the President's disapproval of SO 4, Leo immediately instructed the SRA to withdraw circulation of the order in the agency's official bulletin. Ostensibly, no damage was caused because SO 4 never took effect and no sugar imports entered the country.

It takes at least a couple of months for imports to arrive due to logistics issues.

What was baffling was that the press secretary held a press conference a day after, guns ablaze and accused the signatories of the order, Leo, in particular, of forgery or at the very least illegally signing on behalf of the President. She announced that 'heads would roll.' This created the impression that corruption was involved in the 'illegal' signing. Leo was demonized for a number of days after that.

Then came the hearings in Congress wherein lawmakers were obviously not really interested in finding out whether there was a real sugar supply shortage causing pain to millions of Filipino consumers. The usual bleeding hearts were more interested in the legality of the order. They were more interested in grandstanding as they constantly interrupted the resource speakers so that they could have their two to five minutes of glory in the media.

### Little hope for development

Besides destroying his reputation, what is painful to Leo is that the administration ultimately decided to import at least 150,000 MT of sugar. The administration's economic managers are actually recommending a bigger import volume.

Leo and the other SRA signatories now have pending legal cases for the alleged criminal act of abuse of authority. One wonders why they have to be penalized for doing what is right, which is addressing the sugar supply shortage in order to ease the burden of millions of poor consumers. For Leo, I think the worst that he committed was an honest mistake in his eagerness to solve the supply deficit so that the President, being the agri chief, would not be blamed for the soaring prices of sugar.

This 'rookie' mistake is a far cry from the fertilizer and Pharmally scams and the questionable procurement of laptop computers by the Department of Education, among others.

A scientist-colleague observed that the real crimes Leo committed are these: First, he was born from a poor Ilocano family. Second, he is just a scientist. He added that if Leo was a scion of a rich family or a political dynasty, he would not have been treated this way.

'The way we treat nature is a reflection on the way we treat our fellow human beings,' so a saying goes. To that, I would add that the manner by which a country treats its intellectuals and scientists is a clear manifestation of the level of development that country has attained. I believe that for as long as we treat our prestigious scientists like Leo in the manner that our politicians, media and the public have, there is little hope for the Philippines' future development.

## Climate deniers' claims: Separating reality from idiocy

By Ben Kritz

The so-called World Climate Declaration that is supposed to be such a "savage blow" against the "political orthodoxy" of anthropogenic climate change is more like a wet noodle than a whip when it comes to the actual arguments it presents. It bases its assertion that "there is no climate emergency" on five claims, all of which have been repeatedly debunked for years as they are either misrepresentations of scientific findings, outright lies, and in one case, lunacy of a depth that would make Velikovsky look sane.

As I said in my previous column, there is no debate about climate change; the basic premise has already been accepted and made part of the governing policy of the entire world because there is a vast amount of evidence to support it. There may be debate, and there probably should be, about the best ways to respond to the climate crisis, but the question of whether or not there is a crisis has long since been answered. That raises another question, however: Why should anyone continue to try to convince a tiny, malcontented minority that refuses to even read the scientific data lest it threaten their ideology with uncertainty?

It is a fair question, and one that I mentally review every time I take up this subject, especially after reading, and in a few cases responding to the flood of offended comments from climate deniers that inevitably follows. Honestly, I do not expect to "convert" anyone, because I do not believe that it is within the power of human argument to actually do that, at least when it comes to the topic of climate change — it is a bit like trying to convince a deeply religious person that his God doesn't exist.

Fortunately, Earth itself will — in that Darwinian way nature works — sort out the climate deniers without help from me or anyone else. There will inevitably come a time when every climate denier will experience the effects of what Man has wrought on the environment firsthand, and that experience will either compel them to get with the program, or remove them from the human equation entirely. In the meantime, the real point of taking them to task for creating and spreading disinformation is to prevent them from encouraging people to harm themselves and their communities. Practices and policies that lead to a cleaner, healthier environment are good and improve our quality of life, whether there's a specific reason for them or not; exhorting people to resist those practices and policies is simply malicious, sociopathic demagoguery.

So, not for the first time and almost certainly not the last, let us take a closer look at the spurious arguments made in defense of the assertion that "there is no climate emergency":

Natural as well as anthropogenic factors cause warming

This is certainly true, and no climate scientist has ever suggested otherwise; in fact, a large part of what makes climate research so complex is the challenge of accurately identifying natural cycles so that the human impact on them can be likewise accurately

determined. Over Earth's long history, there have been periods of global warming and cooling, many of which were characterized by significant increases or decreases in greenhouse gases. What the climate deniers leave out, however, is that those historic increases in CO<sub>2</sub> and methane led to serious environmental disruptions, including mass extinctions. Far from being evidence that human emissions are inconsequential, the environmental record is even more proof that massive increases in greenhouse gases are lethal to life on Earth.

Warming is far slower than predicted

This assertion is simply a lie. Several research studies already published over the past couple of years, along with ongoing research — which is being continuously conducted for the very purpose of determining whether climate models are accurate or not — show that the warming of the planet has tightly tracked model predictions, dating all the way back to even the comparatively crude models of the 1970s.

Climate policy relies on inadequate models

As the previous assertion is false, so is this one. Climate policy may differ from place to place, and thus be more or less effective, but it is all based on the same set of accurate data.

More CO<sub>2</sub> is favorable for nature, greening our planet

This is the most ridiculous of the claims made in the so-called World Climate Declaration. Plants do indeed need CO<sub>2</sub>, but more CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere does not create more plants. As the world's forest cover disappears at an accelerating rate, the amount of CO<sub>2</sub> that plant life can absorb from the atmosphere is constantly decreasing, while the amount of CO<sub>2</sub> being pumped into the atmosphere by human activity increases — to the point that there is now more CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere than at any time in the past 800,000 years, with far less plant life to absorb it.

Global warming has not increased natural disasters

The best answer to this assertion is "yes and no" because this is the aspect of climate science that is the most complicated and bears the largest degree of uncertainty. While scientists have nailed down broad climate trends — increasing CO<sub>2</sub> levels, increasing sea and atmospheric temperatures — and certain broad effects, such as overall increase in the global average temperature and sea level, the models are not as accurate for predicting short-term, regional effects. It is a matter of scale; a model built on a dataset that encompasses the entire globe over a timescale of millennia has limitations if applied to a specific country or region for a period of decades or years.

Nonetheless, some specific, real-time effects have been accurately connected to the warming of the planet over the past 250 to 300 years since the beginning of the Industrial Age. Global warming has established a hotter baseline for summer temperatures, which

dramatically increases the odds of more frequent, more extreme, and longer-lasting heat waves, which in turn increase the likelihood of more frequent and extreme weather events — including more extreme winter weather, due to the pole-ward shift of warmer sea and atmospheric temperatures altering weather patterns.

## Demystifying SDG, ESG and DEI

By Ernie Cecilia, DPM

Sustainability is simply about understanding (and taking positive action on) the organization's impact on the environment, economy and society. Sustainability's scope has broadened beyond the enterprises' environmental footprint. Somewhere along the way, sustainability and the issues of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) collided and began to overlap — in a good way.

Enterprises today are pressured, or had taken the initiative, to do good and do well. In the not so recent past, some chief executive officers (CEOs) thought that they should do well in order to do good. Lately, more and more CEOs have realized that doing good is the business of business.

As enterprises operate, they must look outward to see how they affect external stakeholders — customers, vendors, communities and the whole planet. At the same time, they must also look inward — at their core purpose, values and practices that affect their employees, their executives and their investors.

Diversity, equity and inclusion were issues taken up separately since many decades ago. The issue of diversity was first felt in the US during the time of then President Harry Truman. In the 1960s, the Civil Rights movement forced government and enterprises to craft policies against racial discrimination. These policies and practices have grown to include gender, sexual orientation, religion, ethnicity and other identities.

The convergence of DE&I issues a few years back sent a strong message to organizations — for profits, nonprofits, nongovernment organizations (NGOs) and other entities. In the world of work, the term "DE&I" usually refers to actions taken by organizations to "shift mindsets, behaviors and practices toward equitable and inclusive leadership for individuals, teams and organizations."

Diversity is about intentionally 1) having a workforce with a variety of people from different races, creed, color, ethnicities, sexual orientation, physical abilities, political persuasions, socioeconomic classes, etc., and 2) having programs that help different types of employees become effective in their jobs despite the differences.

### DE&I policy

Having a diverse workforce and having programs for equity and inclusion usually starts with a simple policy on DE&I. The purpose of the policy is to let all internal and external stakeholders know that: 1) the business treats everyone fairly; 2) it complies with laws and rules against discrimination; 3) it clarifies the behaviors expected of managers and employees, and what are not acceptable or prohibited acts in dealing with people; and 4) it has programs and procedures to enhance everyone's compliance and to resolve DE&I issues. There are available templates for DE&I policies.

In crafting a DE&I policy, it pays to involve and consult with employees or their representatives, give drafts of the policies to each department, conduct focus group discussions, get inputs from employees and managers, and advise everyone how the policy will be implemented and how compliance will be monitored and reported. Once a policy is finalized, it is also best to give copies to employees, post the policy statement in conspicuous places and in the company's web site, and announce the effective date of its implementation. Periodically, the human resources (HR) department or the compliance officer shall run a quick survey to monitor the implementation of and compliance with the DE&I policy.

### Implementing the DE&I policy

In implementing the DE&I policy, the management must show that it has taken "positive action" and not just paid lip service to the policy. This positive action must be shown in every conceivable aspect of the employee experience.

Hiring new staff must be based on clear and reasonable standards that do not specifically disqualify job applicants on the basis of their color, creed, gender, sexual orientation, etc. Job ads must reach a wide area and must not be limited to urban places, must not discriminate against differently abled persons, or limit job applicants in terms of age, education, gender, etc. The hiring managers and recruitment staff must be clear about certain critical qualifications that all job applicants would have a fair chance of meeting or exceeding, such as skills, potential, attitude and what I call "organizational citizenship behaviors" that are all dictated by the market and by organizational strategy and culture.

The same level of meticulous observance of fairness and equity and openness for all should be observed in training, promoting current staff, compensation (pay and benefits), flexible working, and even in retrenchment, redundancy and termination of employment.

In implementing the DE&I policy, there could be certain adjustments to make. Sometimes, these adjustments could already be covered by current laws or practices, such as ramps that can facilitate access to differently abled employees, subtitles in video announcements for the benefit of those with impaired hearing, wearing of pants in lieu of skirts for women with a specific religious belief or impaired legs, etc.

The organization can also tailor-fit their employee programs for the benefit of certain groups of employees with different beliefs (or lack of them), political persuasions, gender preferences, etc. The idea is for the organization to show in positive terms that it does not forget that there are unique needs of different types of employees, especially in today's workplace where the typical workforce is multigenerational, multiracial, or of varied beliefs, orientations and persuasions.

### Leadership accountability

The CEOs, COOs, CHROs and functional heads of organizations must realize that they have specific responsibilities and accountabilities for DE&I compliance. They must: 1)

champion the DE&I policy, plans and programs, and quickly flag issues that need to be addressed; 2) be role models for inclusive behavior, and must promote diversity and equity at all times; 3) train and encourage all management staff to take the lead in compliance and observance of DE&I rules; and 4) ensure that DE&I initiatives work well in their turf, and show that full compliance is good for the business and for the soul.

Every manager must do his/her duty to make employees, and other people they meet in business, 1) feel valued by the organization; 2) clear about the organization's vision, mission, goals and values; and 3) understand clearly how each and everyone's role will contribute to the organization's overall success.

Today, when communication and learning are more open than ever before, employees discern great management practices. They also know that elsewhere, there's a war for talent. Now, more than ever, employees have found more freedom to choose which company to work with, where they work, how they work and, perhaps sooner than we think, when they work. They also want to work with companies that care for their well-being, career and pocket.

Before he was silenced by an assassin, Martin Luther King Jr. was a staunch advocate of DE&I. He called for reforms in the 1960s and said, "The time is always right to do what is right."

## Food security: A long-term approach

By Kay Calpo Lugtu

Just like in other important matters in life, it is essential to approach these efforts on a long-term basis. As an example, when we plan for our retirement, we take note of many things and ensure habits and other behaviors apt for such are put in place; we invest as early as we can to avoid being dependent later on, we decide to invest in our health so we can avoid getting sick, etc. These efforts take time, and the fruit of such labor may only be seen not immediately, but at a much later time.

The same thing goes in this case with food security. Many of us, especially homemakers, restaurateurs and other business people in the food and beverage or F&B space can relate to the recent shortages we have been experiencing. News on shortages of sugar, flour and even salt take priority on national television as these affect the entire citizenry and show how we remain food insecure.

One of the challenges why it takes forever to chart our food secure path is because of short-term thinking applied by our national leaders for the many government administrations that have been in place post Marcos Sr. era. Short-term thinking has been evident in policies that are, well, shortsighted, too. For example, the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program law distributed land to farmers who unfortunately cannot scale their operations. The law has been in effect since 1988 but close to four odd decades later, we have not seen any industrial farms that are big enough to address demand and sustain supply to avoid any food shortages similar to the ones we are experiencing now. In a way, many of the laws may need to be revisited and reassessed to ascertain if these are still relevant at this point in time.

Our policies should be long term, and especially applicable for those concerning our national food security that could be affected by many other global issues such as global warming and changing climate conditions. Case in point: we experience typhoons year in, year out with an average of about 26 typhoons annually. Agricultural lands are typically damaged in the process with residents being evacuated to appointed evacuation centers (typically a multipurpose gym or building in a barangay). However, we are failing to address the gap on how to avoid agricultural crops getting damaged in the first place. Typhoons are a natural occurrence, and mitigating risks on food supply should be included in the process as part of disaster risk management reduction.

How to go about this? Technology could be one way in making our approach in food security more long term. However, not all farmers may be open to this idea given that the average age of a Filipino farmer is age 53 and that technology aptitude may be a bit asking for too much. There is hope though in our young farmers, as evidenced by some programs present in Department of Agriculture's Young Farmers Program where technology is widely used, accepted and well-received as far as agricultural efforts would be concerned. In fact, one kagawad in our barangay (village) has also taken the lead in putting up an aquaponics/hydroponics set up at the unused part of the barangay roof deck to plant lettuce. As a resident in the barangay, we do get to enjoy lettuce on a more

sustainable basis at only P10 per cup. This program can be replicated and done by other barangays as well and becomes an absolute direct contributor in addressing the fiber dietary needs of our citizenry at a cost that every Juan can afford.

As a call to action, it is imperative for our leaders to apply more long-term thinking in terms of policymaking, especially for key areas such as food security. The overall government must be in place, aligned and can last and span different administrations moving forward.

## CCC IN THE NEWS:

### THE DAILY TRIBUNE

#### [Phi calls for climate equity, justice at UN Expert Forum on Climate Finance in Manila](#)

The Philippines called for climate equity and justice through the delivery of climate finance at the opening of the Third Technical Expert Dialogue on Climate Finance of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change on 6 September.

Robert E.A. Borje, Climate Change Commission Vice Chair and Executive Director, said that the dialogue is an “opportunity to advance inclusive climate finance” driven by a process that ensures “balanced geographical participation, particularly of developing states in the Asia-Pacific region.”

As vulnerable countries like the Philippines bear the brunt of climate change, Borje emphasized the need for methodological approaches that will produce pragmatic solutions to address the impact of climate change.

Borje also said that the Philippines will continue to do its part, consistent with the pronouncement of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.

Borje pointed out that under President Marcos’ administration, there is a proposal to increase national budget allocation for climate change-related programs, projects, and activities.

The Philippines will also pursue stronger collaboration with partners and stakeholders “to implement more climate actions with results,” he added.

Borje emphasized the need for and the importance of all nations working together to fight the impacts of climate change. “But we, the at-risk developing nations, cannot do it alone. And even if any of us can, we should not do it alone. We should work together for our One World, for One Humanity.”

The 3rd TED, as a gathering of global climate finance experts, was described as an important venue to call on the NCQGFC to look beyond what specific countries can afford.

According to the Germanwatch Index, the Philippines ranked the fourth most vulnerable country to climate change. The country faces an average of 20 typhoons a year, with losses and damage in the past decade amounting to a 0.5 percent loss in the Philippines’ Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Borje pointed out that the NCQGFC should focus on providing financial assistance to more vulnerable and less endowed countries, in fulfillment of the Paris Agreement.

TED3 likewise provides the opportunity “to be influenced by the best available science, to rectify past mistakes on not considering uncertainties, costing for externalities, and affording ample space to innovate – so that rehabilitation is not the norm.”

Borje closed his speech by challenging participating climate finance experts to focus on a paradigm shift for climate finance and investment: “This is what we mean by Build Right at First Sight: to build justly and efficiently at first sight, with a long-term horizon in mind. Our discussions will go beyond dollars and cents.

It will be recommendations for actions that will affect the lives and livelihood of nations. Today is an opportunity to get things right. To secure climate equity and justice for all.

The Ad Hoc Work Program on New Collective Quantified Goal on Climate Finance created under the Paris Agreement is tasked to conduct four TEDs annually until 2024. The first and second TEDs were hosted by South Africa and Germany, respectively.

As the UNFCCC National Focal Point for the Philippines, the CCC is co-hosting the TED3, in partnership with the UNFCCC Secretariat and the Asian Development Bank.

In the lead up to the 27th Session of the Conference of Parties to the UNFCCC in Egypt this November, the four-day TED3 is expected to identify the needs and priorities of developing countries, including their scope, and quantitative and qualitative aspects for equitable and resilient climate action.

TED3 is also seen to advance discussion on the roles of public and private sectors toward efficient delivery and mobilization of climate finance, for low carbon and climate-resilient development.

For more information about the TED3 and the Philippine Government’s preparation for COP27, visit [www.climate.gov.ph](http://www.climate.gov.ph).

**- END -**