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BUSINESS WORLD

[ESG's advantage for Philippine businesses](#)

By: Kristine I. Aguirre

Sustainability has become a driver to what shapes corporate behavior and decision-making for companies not just in the Philippines, but also globally. According to the "KPMG 2023 CEO Outlook," as much as 69% of CEOs have fully embedded ESG into their business as a means to value creation.¹ As awareness of climate change and sustainable development rises, companies face increasing pressure to adopt more responsible business practices. The same survey mentions that 68% of CEOs deem that their current ESG progress is not strong enough to withstand potential scrutiny.¹ This has shifted how organizations now approach environmental stewardship and social responsibility with ESG and transparency emerging as a key element in building public trust.

[Navigating climate risk in the Philippines through insurance](#)

By: Arup Chatterjee

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GMA NEWS

[ADB crafts new six-year country partnership strategy for PH](#)

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The Asian Development Bank (ADB) on Thursday announced it has crafted a new country partnership strategy (CPS) aimed at setting a fresh transformative agenda for the Philippines in the next six years.

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POLITIKO

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THE MANILA TIMES

[Is the Philippines disaster-prepared?](#)

By: Ludwig Federigan

On Aug. 15, 2024, the Lloyd's Register Foundation released its "World Risk Poll 2024 Report: Resilience in a Changing World," the first global survey of people's perceptions and experiences of risk and safety. Aimed to engineer a safer world, the report reveals the following findings:

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

[The typhoon toll and the call for true climate education](#)

By: Allen Espinosa

As the first of the 'ber' months rolled in, the Philippines found itself grappling with yet another natural disaster—Typhoon Enteng. Coming just after Typhoon Carina struck in July, Enteng brought torrential rains, strong winds, and devastating floods across Northern and Central Luzon. Trees were uprooted, power lines downed, and thousands of residents were forced to evacuate their homes.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

DAILY TRIBUNE

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As the world confronts the worsening impacts of climate change, President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.'s vision and leadership is positioning the Philippines to a more prominent role on the global stage. Our country is stepping up as an active voice and participant in the international arena.

[Ridge-to-Reef: The fight against mismanaged waste](#)

By: Rafael De Leon

Mismanaged waste continues to burden our ecosystems. Last week, tropical storm "Enteng" entered the Philippine Area of Responsibility, affecting regions across Luzon and the Visayas, including Metro Manila. In its aftermath, severe flooding exposed the vast amount of waste that clogged waterways, particularly in Talayan Creek, Quezon City.

South-South Cooperation: Philippines strengthens ties with developing countries

By: Shaira Mae Cabañas

In a world increasingly defined by the interdependence of nations, South-South Cooperation (SSC) embodies the spirit of solidarity among developing countries, also known as Global South countries.

Trash management and cleanup: Keys to resilience

By: Rafael De Leon

As the monsoon season progresses, the Philippines continues to experience thunderstorms, tropical cyclones, and heavy rainfall. This results in widespread flooding, especially in urban areas like Metro Manila.

MANILA STANDARD

Efficient waste disposal is key to cleaner environment—CCC

The lead policy-making government body on climate change called for an effective waste management as part of the long-term solutions to environmental challenges.

PHILIPPINE INFORMATION AGENCY

From emissions to efficiency: Embrace green building practices in the Philippines

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 Programme.

Information and Knowledge Management Division

BUSINESS WORLD

ESG's advantage for Philippine businesses

By: Kristine I. Aguirre

Sustainability has become a driver to what shapes corporate behavior and decision-making for companies not just in the Philippines, but also globally. According to the “KPMG 2023 CEO Outlook,” as much as 69% of CEOs have fully embedded ESG into their business as a means to value creation. As awareness of climate change and sustainable development rises, companies face increasing pressure to adopt more responsible business practices. The same survey mentions that 68% of CEOs deem that their current ESG progress is not strong enough to withstand potential scrutiny.¹ This has shifted how organizations now approach environmental stewardship and social responsibility with ESG and transparency emerging as a key element in building public trust.

The business world is changing as leaders in sustainability drive positive change in their respective organizations. Companies are reducing their environmental footprint and creating efficient and responsible systems. However, this transition is not without challenges, ranging from the implementation of new and complex practices to the need for high-quality data to measure and report on progress.

Over the years, the Philippines has taken significant steps to promote Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) practices. In 2019, the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) issued Memorandum Circular No. 04, which requires publicly listed companies (PLCs) to submit sustainability reports. These reports aim to assess and manage non-financial performance across the economic, environmental, and social aspects of organizations and enable PLCs to measure and monitor their contributions towards achieving universal targets of sustainability as well as national policies and programs.

The Philippine government is actively working to enhance its ESG regulatory framework, thus the country has also expressed its intention to adopt the International Sustainability Standards Board (ISSB) standards, indicating a commitment to align with international best practices.³ Last October 2021, the Sustainable Finance Taxonomy Guidelines (SFTG) for the Philippines were developed through cooperative efforts between the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) and the Insurance Commission (IC). The Financial Sector Forum (FSF) has developed these guidelines extensively drawing on the ASEAN Taxonomy's Foundation Framework. The SFTG will initially focus on the objectives of climate change mitigation and climate change adaptation, with a view to adding ecosystems and biodiversity, and circular economy, as well as potential social objectives in future iterations.⁴ The SEC is also planning to fully implement the Association of Southeast

Asian Nations Sustainable and Responsible Fund Standards (ASEAN SRFS) to enhance transparency and uniformity in reporting.

Addressing environmental issues, particularly the Philippines' plastic pollution problem, the Extended Producer Responsibility Act (EPRA) of 2022 requires large, obliged enterprises to establish programs for the effective recovery of plastic waste. Under EPRA, companies must meet target recovery rates, 40% in 2024 and increasing by 10% annually until 2028.⁶ These are just some of the mandates that reflect the growing emphasis on sustainability in the Philippine landscape.

CREATING SUSTAINABLE VALUE

While implementing ESG initiatives can seem costly, this should be seen as long-term investments in creating sustainable value for organizations. Companies face many obstacles in implementing these new practices and measuring sustainability progress. However, compliance can bring benefits such as fostering a motivated workforce and increasing public and investor interest.

ESG reporting has gained prominence over the past decade, with a growing trend towards integrating ESG information into mainstream financial reporting. According to "KPMG's 2022 Global Survey of Sustainability Reporting," 79% of leading companies in surveyed countries report on sustainability, while this figure rises to 96% among the world's top 250 companies.³ The demand for ESG information from investors and stakeholders has increased, with 69% of CEOs reporting significant stakeholder demand for increased transparency and reporting on ESG matters.

Companies have encountered challenges in gathering and validating data, particularly for ESG reporting. Despite the growing demand for ESG information, a recent KPMG survey on readiness revealed that only 29% of companies have a clear audit trail to support their non-financial disclosures.⁷ As the amount of reported data increases, ensuring the accuracy and reliability of ESG disclosures has become increasingly difficult. To address this, companies are relying on third-party assurance and verification services. These services validate ESG data, increasing investor confidence and supporting companies' compliance processes. Assurance standards are used to evaluate reporting procedures, controls, and data-gathering processes. This process allows companies to validate their claims and enhance their credibility, ensuring compliance with jurisdictional requirements.

DRIVING POSITIVE CHANGE

Companies are increasingly recognizing the critical importance of assessing and managing ESG risks and integrating it into already existing systems. The climate crisis and recent global pandemic have heightened interest in ESG issues, prompting companies to reevaluate how they conduct business. According to the "KPMG Global Survey on Sustainability Reporting," companies acknowledging that climate change is a

risk to their business has increased significantly, with 64% of the G250 and 46% of N100 companies reporting on environmental risks in 2022. Nearly all of the world's top 250 companies (G250) report on sustainability, reflecting the growing realization that ESG matters are not separate but integral to achieving long-term value creation.

Companies that prioritize ESG have been found to have a positive correlation with financial performance and attractiveness to investors. Many business leaders are aware of the importance of having strong ESG governance, oversight and accountability. There is a growing consensus that sustainability risk is also a financial risk. Company strategies need to consider this expanding scope. By integrating ESG, companies can future-proof their operations against climate-related risks and promote inclusive growth.⁹ By embracing these principles, businesses can drive real and positive change.

Commitments to ESG principles are also driving positive innovation — one example is through the convergence of AI and sustainability efforts. In the Philippines, AI-powered solutions are helping businesses tackle environmental challenges like deforestation, pollution, and climate change through enhanced monitoring and management. Companies are using AI to bridge social gaps by improving access to education and healthcare, further advancing their ESG commitments.

The Commission on Audit of the Philippines has started using AI and data analytics to detect anomalies in government transactions.¹⁰ Their proactive approach helps curb corruption and promote good governance, fostering synergies between technological progress and sustainable development.

This ESG shift impacts how companies now view long-term value creation, helping them attract responsible investors and fostering stakeholder trust. While businesses continue to face new challenges in implementing sustainability, measuring progress, and navigating the complex regulatory landscape, this change remains crucial as part of future-proofing operations.

Technology will play a significant role in advancing ESG, enhancing reporting, scalability of impact, and the effective management of risks. Companies are focusing on preparing accurate and reliable reports as a measure of progress and accountability, often verified by third-party assurance.

ESG is driving a holistic approach to business, emphasizing sustainability, ethics, and long-term resilience. This trend is here to stay and will continue to shape responsible business practices not only in the Philippines but globally.

[Navigating climate risk in the Philippines through insurance](#)

By: Arup Chatterjee

An average of 20 storms and typhoons hit the Philippines each year, leading to flooding, landslides, and storm surges that ravage communities and cause significant economic losses. No other country is more at risk from natural hazards, according to the World Risk Index.

Implementing proper financial protection arrangements is crucial to climate change resilience by better managing residual risks and setting incentives for financial preparedness. The Philippines has an enormous catastrophe protection gap — the difference between optimal and actual insurance coverage — at 98%, compared with the world average of 58%. The insurance penetration rate is currently less than 1%, leaving many people, especially in vulnerable communities, acutely exposed.

Climate risk manifests in two ways. First, physical risks can damage properties and disrupt supply chains, causing enormous economic losses. A lack of climate risk mitigation infrastructure and other capacities exacerbates this. Second, policy, technology, and market sentiment shifts raise costs, reduce incomes, and strand assets amid a transition to a low-carbon economy. Both types of risks impair asset values and the credit quality of loans and investments from banks, financial institutions, insurers, and capital markets.

Without appropriate countercyclical financing mechanisms, such as income-smoothing social safety nets and public insurance schemes it can create sizeable implicit contingent liabilities for the government in its disaster response due to a perceived moral obligation for it to pay for losses.

Yet, national and local governments across Asia and the Pacific have been slow in integrating climate risk into their decision-making and strategies.

As society's risk managers, insurers play a critical role in the intricate web of climate change complexities, ensuring financial stability. The insurance industry's unique expertise enables it to assess and price risk through differential premiums and set deductibles to incentivize climate-resilient and green investments.

IMPACT OF EXTREME WEATHER

Moreover, price signaling can incentivize policyholders to mitigate risk and minimize the impacts of extreme weather.

For instance, the International Energy Agency forecasts that renewable energy sources such as solar and wind will contribute 49% of global electricity generation by 2050. By popularizing insurance that covers the entire life cycle of renewable energy projects, the

Philippines can de-risk energy efficiency financing, providing confidence to potential private investors in green technology projects.

Earlier this year, a dangerous heat index of 43 degrees Celsius led to severe livelihood, food, and health insecurities. Innovative heat-stress insurance can reduce these impacts by offering financial compensation and shock-responsive social protection. For example, vulnerable women working in extreme heat can receive multiple payouts to compensate for missed work when temperatures hit a pre-determined level over a pre-defined period.

The International Rice Research Institute estimates that grain yield decreases by at least 10% for each 1-degree Celsius increase in growing-season minimum temperature in the dry season. In the agriculture sector, crop insurance is crucial in securing the livelihoods of Filipino farmers against multiple risks. By offering discounted premiums for climate-resilient measures like sowing drought-resistant seeds, these insurance schemes can significantly increase their overall cost-effectiveness in the face of climate-related risks.

It is important to keep in mind that while climate-related risks present challenges to insurance operations, they also present opportunities for growth and innovation. The insurance sector in the Philippines is currently facing these headwinds, but by focusing on strengthening risk-based and market conduct regulations, developing new taxonomies — a key strategy in addressing climate-related risks, and implementing best practices, the Philippines insurance sector can pave the way for new product development that meets the demands of a changing risk landscape.

These factors can affect the insurability of policyholders' assets and incomes, and insurers' operations and investments. Increased natural catastrophe exposure can lead to significantly greater risk capital requirements, reduced reinsurance capacity for nonlife insurers, or higher premiums.

Policyholders vulnerable to climate-related catastrophes may face financial exclusion as premiums become unaffordable or the cover is not within an insurer's risk appetite. The delicate balance between premium affordability and risk-reduction incentives is critical in this scenario.

ROLE MODEL

The insurance industry should prepare itself to play a pivotal role in reducing residual risks and narrowing the protection gap by actively pursuing financial risk literacy. This is not just a challenge but an opportunity for the industry to make a significant positive impact.

The Philippines is seen as a role model for implementing a toolkit of sovereign disaster risk financing instruments using a risk-layered approach. This involves using multiple financial instruments, each with a different risk profile, to manage and mitigate the

impact of climate change-induced events. By diversifying the risk, the Philippines can reduce the overall financial implications of these events.

Public-private partnerships and pooling mechanisms can provide affordable coverage, helping real-economy actors to absorb shocks and protect their debt-service exposure against climate change-induced events. This underscores the importance of collaboration in addressing climate change risks. The Asian Development Bank (ADB)-supported Philippine City Disaster Insurance Pool project will provide cities with cost-effective insurance and offer near-immediate payouts for post-disaster response.

The Philippine insurance industry must invest in modern data management systems to reshape the insurance value chain. A much greater volume, velocity, and granularity of data is also needed to allow consumers and insurers to understand and price risks. Any successful response must involve compulsory and voluntary measures backed by a robust assessment, implementation, and monitoring framework that leverages the latest technologies — big data, data analytics, automation, artificial intelligence, and machine learning.

Finally, policy reforms are needed to drive climate-sensitive public policies and disaster risk management solutions. Environmental, social, and governance issues are gaining traction with institutional investors on projects that deliver measurable nonfinancial benefits while improving long-term financial returns.

Insurers must shift business models away from transactional risk transfers and indemnity payments toward mitigating physical climate risks. These can include rebates for using resilient construction materials, working with governments to improve land use planning and building standards and policies, and supporting a just transition to clean energy.

Climate action can improve lives, create jobs, build green cities, and protect ecosystems. The Philippine insurance industry is well-equipped to play a crucial role by reducing residual risks and narrowing the protection gap by actively pursuing financial risk literacy.

GMA NEWS

[ADB crafts new six-year country partnership strategy for PH](#)

By: Ted Cordero

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) on Thursday announced it has crafted a new country partnership strategy (CPS) aimed at setting a fresh transformative agenda for the Philippines in the next six years.

In a statement, the Manila-based multilateral lender said the new CPS is “designed to ensure that growth is not only sustained but also inclusive and resilient in the face of climate challenges.”

The new strategy, the ADB said, spans from 2024 to 2029 and will focus on addressing critical development needs and bolstering support on three key areas—human development, economic competitiveness and quality infrastructure, as well as nature-based development and disaster resilience.

The multilateral lender said initiatives that promote digital transformation, gender equality, and improved governance and institutional capacity “are integral to the strategy, ensuring a holistic approach to development.”

“ADB’s partnership with the Philippines is at its strongest. This new strategy will further a flourishing collaboration to support the country in achieving a prosperous future that leaves no one behind, particularly as it faces the dual challenges of accelerating economic growth and addressing persistent poverty and income inequalities,” said ADB country director for the Philippines Pavit Ramachandran.

“We are leveraging our full suite of support modalities—financial and nonfinancial—to deliver transformative impact, ensuring that the benefits of growth reach all Filipinos, particularly the most vulnerable,” said Ramachandran.

The ADB cited the Philippines average 6.3% economic growth from 2021 to 2023, noting it is attracting more foreign direct investments with “robust investment grade rating, dynamic services sector, and higher public investment.”

Moreover, the ADB said it will work to embed climate actions across its engagements and investment plans in the Philippines.

Under the new CPS, the bank said it will also catalyze private sector-led development by supporting policy and regulatory reforms, strengthening of markets and investment pipelines, and expanding funding availability.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

CSC launches nationwide tree-growing initiative for 124th PCSA

The Civil Service Commission (CSC) will lead a nationwide tree-growing initiative from September 15 to 21, 2024 in celebration of the 124th Philippine Civil Service Anniversary (PCSA).

CSC Chairperson Karlo Nograles called on government officials, employees, and individuals from non-government organizations and private institutions to join the event.

The initiative aims to plant at least 10,000 trees while raising funds for the CSC's Pamanang Lingkod Bayani (PLBi) Program, which supports the families of fallen civil servants.

"The third week of the PCSA, themed *Linggo ng Malasakit sa Kalikasan*, highlights the significance of sustainable environmental efforts and natural resource management," Nograles said Monday in a press release.

"This nationwide tree-growing activity not only focuses on environmental conservation but also serves as a tribute to those who gave their lives in service, fostering a sense of patriotism."

CSC Regional Office VI (Western Visayas), in coordination with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), will lead the activity aimed to contribute to climate change mitigation through tree-growing and to promote environmental stewardship, while also raising funds for the benefit of the families of fallen civil servants.

In the National Capital Region and Region IV (Calabarzon), the CSC and DENR partnered with the Laguna Lake Development Authority to plant seedlings along the 28 local government units surrounding Laguna de Bay on September 16.

The location and specific date of the tree-growing activity in other regions will be announced by the CSC Regional Offices via their official Facebook Pages and at PCSA microsite at csc.gov.ph/pcsa2024.

Interested participants may coordinate with the nearest CSC Regional Office for the registration link and payment of PHP250 registration fee.

Walk-in participants may also be allowed at the discretion of the respective CSC Regional Offices.

The CSC said participants will get a certificate of participation while a certificate of appreciation will be awarded to partner agencies and stakeholders.

“As we celebrate another year of successful public service, we also need to remember the critical need to care for our planet. We are excited for the support of both the public and private sector in our goal to promote environmentalism and patriotism,” Nograles said.

The other upcoming activities lined up for the 124th PCSA include the Medical Mission: Medical Relief for the Underprivileged, Bloodletting Activity, National Coastal Clean-up, Awards Rites for the 2024 Outstanding Government Workers, 2024 Leaders & Human Resource Symposium, and the Contact Center ng Bayan Partner Recognition Program.

POLITIKO

Susceptible To Corruption: P23.65B Lump Sum Fund For Climate Change Program Worries Gabriela

By: Billy Begas

House Assistant Minority Leader and Gabriela Women's Party Rep. Arlene Brosas expressed concern about the P23.65 billion lump sum budget allocated for Climate Change Expenditures for next year.

Brosas explained that for next year a total of P1.01 trillion was allocated for the Climate Change Expenditures for 2025 majority of which is earmarked for the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), primarily for flood control projects.

But she said P23.65 billion is in the form of lump sum funds.

"The P23.65 billion earmarked as Special Purpose Funds reeks of 'climate pork,' with P5.41 billion allocated to Local Government Units and P18.23 billion to Government Corporations—both susceptible to corruption," Brosas said.

Special Purpose Funds are lump-sum budget allocations in the General Appropriations Act, with recipient agencies or programs not yet identified during budget preparation.

"The people deserve transparency and accountability in climate expenditures. Funds must be channeled into legitimate climate adaptation programs rather than into the pockets of corrupt officials," she added.

Brosas stressed that the poor, often at the forefront of climate calamities, bear the brunt of ineffective flood control and environmentally destructive practices like quarrying and mining.

This year, P562.29 billion was allocated for the Climate Change Expenditures.

THE MANILA TIMES

[Is the Philippines disaster-prepared?](#)

By: Ludwig Federigan

On Aug. 15, 2024, the Lloyd's Register Foundation released its "World Risk Poll 2024 Report: Resilience in a Changing World," the first global survey of people's perceptions and experiences of risk and safety. Aimed to engineer a safer world, the report reveals the following findings:

- Sixty-two percent of Southeast Asians said they live in a household with a disaster plan known to all members. Two-thirds (67 percent) also believe they could protect themselves and their families from a future disaster.
- Forty percent of Southeast Asians reported experiencing a disaster related to a natural hazard in the past five years.
- Eighty-seven percent of the Philippines have experienced a disaster within the past five years. No other country globally has a higher percentage.
- The top four countries worldwide with the highest proportion of households having a disaster plan are all in Southeast Asia: the Philippines (84 percent), Vietnam (83 percent), Cambodia (82 percent) and Thailand (67 percent).
- Majority of people in all Southeast Asian countries have received at least one disaster warning, with Vietnam (99 percent) and the Philippines (92 percent) ranking highest. This is above the global average for the reach of early warnings, except for Malaysia and Indonesia.

These findings show that Southeast Asia has made significant progress in recent years toward disaster preparedness, with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations playing a key role in disaster risk reduction. Disaster preparedness is crucial in building resilience against natural hazards, as it helps save lives, protect livelihoods and minimize the shock of disasters, and allow people to bounce back faster from them.

The Philippines is one of the countries most affected by climate change, experiencing increased frequency and intensity of typhoons, floods and rising sea levels. According to the Iseas-Yusof Ishak Institute report, 62 percent of Filipinos consider climate change and extreme weather events as their second-biggest challenge.

While being "disaster-prepared" suggests a sense of readiness and resilience among the population, the reality illustrated by the loss of lives and damages caused by Typhoon Carina reveals significant shortcomings in the nation's disaster preparedness. Several factors contribute to this vulnerability, demonstrating that many Filipinos remain ill-equipped to handle the impact of natural catastrophes despite widespread efforts.

One critical issue that affects disaster preparedness in the country is inadequate infrastructure. Many areas, especially in rural and coastal regions, lack proper drainage systems and resilient structures. Heavy rainfall associated with typhoons, such as the wrath brought by Typhoon Carina, often leads to severe flooding, which is worsened by poorly planned urban developments. As of Aug. 16, 2024, the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council reported that a total of 1,243 areas across 15 regions experienced flooding due to the combined effects of the southwest monsoon and Typhoons Butchoy and Carina.

Another major concern is the accessibility of reliable information regarding disaster preparedness and response. While 92 percent of Filipinos agreed that they have received at least one disaster warning, many communities, especially those in remote areas, may not have received the same. This creates a lack of awareness about impending threats. Moreover, misinformation can spread rapidly through social media, complicating response efforts and leaving individuals unprepared.

Socioeconomic challenges also play a significant role in the country's disaster readiness status. Many communities face poverty in our country which has a poverty incidence of 15.5 percent among the population as of 2023, leading to insufficient resources for disaster preparedness. Families may lack the financial means to invest in safety measures, such as reinforcing their homes or stocking up on supplies. Furthermore, people living in informal settlements are often at higher risk due to their living conditions' unstable and hazardous nature. These individuals may find themselves trapped during disasters, unable to evacuate or access necessary resources.

Environmental degradation, such as deforestation, mining and coastal erosion, further exacerbates the impact of disasters. Communities that once relied on natural barriers such as mangroves or forests for protection find themselves increasingly exposed. This environmental vulnerability makes it challenging for Filipinos to effectively prepare for disasters, contributing to the damages observed during incidents like Typhoon Carina.

While the government has disaster preparedness frameworks, implementation can sometimes be inconsistent. A number of low-income local government units struggle with limited funding or resources to execute disaster management plans effectively. Moreover, while community members often exhibit solidarity and support during crises, the lack of training and preparedness at the grassroots level means that many are still unsure of how to respond optimally.

Though Filipinos are often praised for their resilience in the face of disasters, the reality illustrated by Typhoon Carina highlights serious gaps in preparedness. As of press time, the damages that Typhoon Enteng is wreaking are still being assessed. In a landscape where many Filipinos remain vulnerable and exposed, it is not surprising that the Philippines has ranked first in the World Risk Index for two consecutive years (2022 and 2023).

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

[The typhoon toll and the call for true climate education](#)

By: Allen Espinosa

As the first of the 'ber' months rolled in, the Philippines found itself grappling with yet another natural disaster—Typhoon Enteng. Coming just after Typhoon Carina struck in July, Enteng brought torrential rains, strong winds, and devastating floods across Northern and Central Luzon. Trees were uprooted, power lines downed, and thousands of residents were forced to evacuate their homes.

Despite the yearly onslaught of typhoons, the country remains vulnerable, with each storm leaving a trail of destruction in its wake. This recurring scenario raises pressing questions: Why, despite millions of pesos allocated annually, do the effects of typhoons remain so catastrophic? What has happened to the funds earmarked for flood mitigation?

One answer may lie in the deeper, systemic issues within our disaster preparedness strategies, which are, in part, a reflection of our education system's approach to climate change.

A study conducted by my team in 2023 highlighted critical gaps in how climate change education is integrated into the basic education sector. While initiatives like the Youth for Environment in Schools Organization (YES-O) exist, they are often limited to co-curricular activities, rather than being woven into the core curriculum.

This means that students might engage with climate change issues as an extracurricular interest rather than as an essential part of their education.

Our findings reveal that while schools are making significant efforts to raise awareness about climate change, the overall impact on students' behavior and comprehension of climate-related issues remains somewhat constrained.

This limitation stems not only from gaps in knowledge but also from substantial challenges related to infrastructure. Schools' initiatives are frequently hindered by inadequate resources, which undermine their capacity to effectively implement comprehensive climate education and foster meaningful behavioral change among students.

Moreover, while disaster risk reduction and management (DRRM) is included in the senior high school curriculum, particularly within the STEM strand, the implementation has been inconsistent. This inconsistency leads to confusion and gaps in understanding, leaving students and communities underprepared for the realities of climate change and its impacts.

This brings us to a critical point: real change requires a holistic approach that goes beyond the classroom. The education system must work hand in hand with local government units (LGUs), higher education institutions (HEIs), and community organizations to ensure that climate education is practical, relevant, and impactful.

Immersive learning experiences, where students actively engage with their communities to address climate-related challenges, can foster a deeper understanding and commitment to sustainability.

Our study recommends a thorough reevaluation of the Philippines' sustainability agenda, with a focus on embedding environmental education across all subject areas. This would not only prepare students academically but also cultivate a generation of environmentally conscious citizens who can lead the charge in disaster preparedness and climate resilience.

As the frequency and severity of typhoons increase, it's evident that our current strategies for disaster preparedness are inadequate. To build a truly resilient nation, we must critically examine how funds are allocated and utilized, and rethink how we educate the next generation about climate change.

Given the Philippines' vulnerability, climate change education needs to be deeply integrated into daily life, supported by a systemic approach that spans policy, budget allocations, school curricula, and community action. This integration will ensure that every Filipino remains vigilant and reflective about the environmental impacts of their actions.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

DAILY TRIBUNE

[Phl milestones in climate arena](#)

By: Secretary Robert EA Borje

As the world confronts the worsening impacts of climate change, President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.'s vision and leadership is positioning the Philippines to a more prominent role on the global stage. Our country is stepping up as an active voice and participant in the international arena.

In the past two years, the government has strengthened the country's climate governance and commitment to build resilience. In his 2024 State of the Nation Address, the President declared, "Our country's geographical location makes us highly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change. Precisely because of our inherent vulnerability, we are proactive advocates for heightened climate responsibility and justice on the global stage."

Proactive actions back this vision. The recent enactment of Republic Act 12019, the Loss and Damage Fund Board Act, marks a turning point in our climate policy. This new law grants juridical personality and legal capacity to the Board of the fund to respond to loss and damage due to climate change.

The Philippines is now in a better position to fulfill its role as the host of the United Nations' Loss and Damage Fund Board. The law empowers the Board's interim secretariat to enter into contracts, manage properties and collaborate with global financial institutions such as the World Bank, to enhance the country's capacity to mobilize and manage climate finance.

The Loss and Damage Fund is a climate finance mechanism designed to assist climate-vulnerable developing countries in addressing and recovering from the economic and non-economic effects of climate change. Hosting the Board underscores the Philippines' commitment to global climate action, particularly in pushing for accountability from countries that have historically contributed the most to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

The Philippines has also aligned its national resilience initiatives with international cooperation. Through the development and implementation of the National Adaptation Plan and the Nationally Determined Contribution Implementation Plan, the country integrates its climate policies with global goals while addressing specific vulnerabilities.

With the guidance and support of Department of Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Maria Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga, who is the Official Representative of the President to the Climate Change Commission, these plans are aligned with the latest

science and international standards, serving as roadmaps to enhance resilience and pursue sustainable development.

At the local level, efforts have been focused on empowering communities through the Local Climate Change Action Plans (LCCAP). These plans serve as critical tools for local governments, enabling them to assess climate risks, prioritize actions and integrate climate resilience into their local development agendas. The compliance rate for LCCAP submission improved significantly in the past couple of years, rising from 41 percent in 2021 to 81 percent in 2022. Last year, submission reached 87 percent or 1,492 out of 1,715 local government units nationwide.

The Philippines also timely completed the GHG Inventories for years 2015 and 2020, which are vital for tracking emissions and ensuring transparency in the country's efforts to meet its climate targets.

On the global stage, the Philippines has actively participated in climate negotiations and emerged as a strong advocate for climate justice. At the 27th Conference of the Parties (COP27) in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt, the Philippine delegation played a key role in establishing the global Loss and Damage fund. This achievement, the result of tireless diplomatic efforts and strategic alliances, sends a clear message: countries like the Philippines, which bear the brunt of climate impacts, will not be passive spectators in these negotiations. We will demand the necessary support and resources to protect our most vulnerable communities.

President Marcos reaffirmed this commitment by emphasizing that the Philippines would continue to pursue "just and equitable climate action" through its multilateral engagements. He urged developed nations to fulfill their responsibility to support countries like the Philippines in mitigating and adapting to climate change. This issue encompasses not just an ecological issue but is primarily about justice and equity.

This signals continuing development across various sectors and ensures that climate adaptation and mitigation remain integral to our country's progress. As we look forward, the Philippine government remains resolute in its commitment to advance a transformative climate agenda by integrating climate resilience into national development plans, strengthening community-based adaptation strategies, and advocating for global climate justice. These initiatives ensure that climate action remains a priority across all sectors of society and lay the groundwork for an inclusive and sustainable future.

The Philippines will not be a mere victim of climate change. Instead, we are proving that through strong leadership, international partnerships and a relentless focus on resilience, our country can be a proactive player in the fight against this global, historic and systemic challenge and eventually emerge as a victor.

We have a choice: to remain reactive or to actively engage in climate action. President Marcos' administration has chosen the latter.

With policies and frameworks put in place, we have established a firm foundation, but there is still much to be done. As we strive for climate justice and work toward a more resilient nation, we must remain committed to a sustainable future — not just for ourselves, but for our communities, our country and the world.

The decisions we make today will shape the future we leave for the next generation and the environment we depend on. By acting now, we are taking crucial steps to protect our ecosystems, ensure economic stability and drive global efforts for climate justice, equity and sustainability.

Ridge-to-Reef: The fight against mismanaged waste

By: Rafael De Leon

Mismanaged waste continues to burden our ecosystems. Last week, tropical storm “Enteng” entered the Philippine Area of Responsibility, affecting regions across Luzon and the Visayas, including Metro Manila. In its aftermath, severe flooding exposed the vast amount of waste that clogged waterways, particularly in Talayan Creek, Quezon City.

The accumulation of waste, coupled with inadequate or outdated drainage infrastructure, significantly contributes to severe flooding in Metro Manila and nearby cities and provinces whenever a typhoon strikes. Typhoon “Carina” and “Enteng” recently exposed this problem. As heavy rains overwhelm drainage systems, the massive volume of improperly disposed plastics, food wrappers and other debris blocks waterways, preventing floodwaters from receding quickly. This leads to inundation of vulnerable areas such as Quezon City, Manila and parts of Bulacan and Rizal, leaving communities flooded and increasing the damage caused by natural hazards.

The World Bank’s 2021 report titled “Market Study for the Philippines: Plastics Circularity Opportunities and Barriers” reveals the country’s heavy reliance on single-use plastics, such as multilayer sachets and pouches. This dependency has earned the Philippines the term “sachet economy,” and further intensifies marine plastic pollution. The Philippines consumes 163 million sachets daily.

Each year, the country generates around 2.7 million tons of plastic waste, with an estimated 20 percent ending up in the ocean. Given its more than 7,600 islands, the Philippines’ coastal communities, along with its fishing, shipping and tourism industries, are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of marine debris.

In Metro Manila, human activities in residential and commercial areas lead to plastic waste ending up in waterways, especially creeks that feed into the Pasig River, eventually flowing into Manila Bay.

This situation underscores the urgent need for better waste management practices, heightened public awareness and coordinated cleanup efforts to protect ecosystems. The ridge-to-reef approach highlights the extensive effects of mismanaged waste — from upland areas to coastal communities. Waste discarded in urban centers and upland communities travels through rivers and creeks, like Talayan Creek, and ultimately reaches the oceans.

This waste not only intensifies floods but also endangers coastal ecosystems. In the ocean, it contaminates marine habitats and harms biodiversity. This degradation leads to declining fish populations, threatening food security for communities dependent on fishing.

Addressing this crisis requires comprehensive cleanup efforts across rivers, creeks, upland areas and coastal zones. The ridge-to-reef approach aims to safeguard the entire ecosystem by preventing the spread of waste from land to sea. By adopting proper waste disposal and cleanup practices, we can reduce further ecological damage and foster healthier, more sustainable ecosystems.

Secretary Robert E.A. Borje, vice chairperson and executive director of the Climate Change Commission, emphasized the importance of collective action: “Collaborative efforts are essential in addressing this situation. This includes cleanup initiatives and promoting proper waste disposal practices.”

This highlights the need for individuals to reduce their reliance on single-use plastics and commit to responsible waste management. Small, daily actions can significantly reduce the waste that threatens our environment.

South-South Cooperation: Philippines strengthens ties with developing countries

By: Shaira Mae Cabañas

In a world increasingly defined by the interdependence of nations, South-South Cooperation (SSC) embodies the spirit of solidarity among developing countries, also known as Global South countries.

SSC is a collaborative effort that involves sharing knowledge, resources and technology to address common challenges. Unlike traditional aid models, where wealthier nations assist poorer ones, this type of cooperation is based on equality, mutual benefit and respect for national sovereignty. It allows countries facing similar issues, such as poverty or climate change, to learn from one another, exchange best practices and work together to find solutions that fit their unique needs.

For the Philippines, the SSC has been instrumental in advancing key development agenda, particularly in areas where the nation faces challenges such as climate change and disaster risk reduction.

As one of the most climate-vulnerable countries in the world, the Philippines has actively engaged in SSC to enhance its climate resilience. Through partnerships with other developing nations, the country has shared and gained valuable knowledge, technologies and best practices that have strengthened its adaptive capacities.

A notable example of SSC in the Philippines is the “Towards a South-South Collaboration on Climate Information and Services” (SSCIS) Project. Launched in 2017, this project was commissioned by the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety through the International Climate Initiative.

Together with other development partners, Germany has been a significant ally in mobilizing resources and expertise to bridge the gap of information through this platform for knowledge sharing.

The SSCIS project is a joint effort by the Climate Change Commission (CCC), the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration, and the University of the Philippines, in cooperation with the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit, a key development agency from Germany that provides technical expertise.

The SSCIS project aims to strengthen the capacity of both the Philippines and the member countries of the Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF) in utilizing climate information services for informed decision-making in climate change adaptation and mitigation measures.

With four key outputs — usable climate information, tripartite capacity enhancement, science and evidence-based knowledge products, and the establishment of the CVF

South-South Centre of Excellence — the project aims to develop crucial knowledge platforms, facilitate the exchange of innovative climate solutions, and enhance the resilience of vulnerable nations across the Global South.

Through the SSCIS Project, the Philippines can advance its own climate action and contribute to the global effort by sharing its experiences and solutions with other climate-vulnerable countries.

“The SSCIS Project is an opportunity for the CCC and the Philippine government to further enhance knowledge and capacities in data management, including collecting, generating and analyzing climate data as a basis of climate action. This will allow us to further deepen our engagement with fellow CVF countries and promote a whole-of-world approach in enhancing climate resilience of communities,” said CCC vice chairperson and executive director Robert E.A. Borje.

At the launch of the Transformative Actions for Climate and Ecological Protection and Development Project, H.E. Dr. Andreas Pfaffernoschke, German Ambassador to the Philippines, emphasized the importance of collaboration between nations in addressing global challenges.

“Germany and the Philippines are partners who share the same values and work hand in hand to strengthen the rule base of the national order in Europe, in Southeast Asia. We have a lot in common and we are reliable partners,” he said.

As the Philippines continues to face the complex challenges of climate change, the SSC will remain a vital tool in its development strategy. Strengthening these bonds of cooperation will help ensure that no country is left behind on the path to sustainable development.

The United Nations Day for SSC is observed every 12 September through resolution 58/220. The date commemorates the adoption of the 1978 Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Cooperation among D. This year’s observance, themed “A Better Tomorrow with South-South Cooperation,” offers an opportunity to assess progress and highlight both the opportunities and challenges for South-South cooperation, as well as emerging trends.

Trash management and cleanup: Keys to resilience

By: Rafael De Leon

As the monsoon season progresses, the Philippines continues to experience thunderstorms, tropical cyclones, and heavy rainfall. This results in widespread flooding, especially in urban areas like Metro Manila.

Extreme weather events, including the intensified hanging habagat or southwest monsoon, increase in frequency due to climate change. Compounding the problem is the accumulation of trash clogging urban waterways and streets, which worsens flooding.

Mismanaged waste, particularly non-biodegradable plastics, blocks drainage systems, pollutes bodies of water and leads to environmental degradation. It affects public health, reduces air quality and contributes to rising temperatures in cities. This situation calls for urgent efforts to improve waste management, promote climate action and conduct organized cleanup programs to reduce the volume of waste and enhance community resilience.

The Climate Change Commission (CCC) lauds and recognizes initiatives that contribute to sustainable waste management and cleanup efforts. "Waste management is a key element in building climate resilience, and the collaborative efforts of the private sector and communities are crucial to achieve this goal," emphasized Secretary Robert E.A. Borje, CCC vice chairperson and executive director.

Private sectors and various organizations have launched community cleanup initiatives that not only remove waste but also foster environmental responsibility. A notable leader in this area is Nestlé, a Swiss multinational company.

Nestlé is working to create a waste-free future, focusing on reducing plastic waste and promoting a circular economy. In 2018, Nestlé Philippines announced its goal to ensure that 100 percent of its packaging would be recyclable or reusable by 2025, reflecting its commitment to address plastic pollution.

As part of this effort, the company, in collaboration with its partners, collected and processed 18,000 metric tons of plastic waste by August 2020. This initiative not only reduces waste but also provides valuable materials for recycling.

On the other hand, Aboitiz, a conglomerate that actively integrates sustainability into its business practices, recognizes the critical role of environmental sustainability and the significant impact of the power industry on the planet. Aboitiz is at the forefront of the

renewable energy sector, contributing to a more sustainable world through its clean energy initiatives.

As part of its mission, Aboitiz undertakes local action initiatives with ripple effects that extend beyond the immediate community. A key example of this is their coastal cleanup drives, which Aboitiz considers to be a first line of defense in reducing the impacts of climate-induced disasters.

Through its commitment to protecting coastal ecosystems, Aboitiz, in collaboration with its partners and local communities, organizes annual coastal cleanups. These efforts aim to remove litter and debris that threaten marine ecosystems, safeguard biodiversity and promote healthier coastal habitats.

By continuing to advocate for sustainable waste management and responsible consumption, we can contribute to a cleaner, greener future and build climate-resilient communities. The collective efforts of private companies, local organizations, government and individuals are crucial in addressing the challenges posed by climate change.

MANILA STANDARD

Efficient waste disposal is key to cleaner environment—CCC

The lead policy-making government body on climate change called for an effective waste management as part of the long-term solutions to environmental challenges.

The Climate Change Commission made the call in the observance of the National Cleanup Month in September, encouraging communities to actively participate in cleaning and protecting the environment.

The CCC said sustainability demands more than just cleanup activities.

“We must adopt better habits and implement efficient waste management practices. While cleanups are important, they only address the symptoms of a broader waste problem. Every piece of plastic waste we manage brings us closer to reduce the long-term need for cleanups,” the agency said.

“By focusing on effective waste management— through proper waste disposal, recycling, and responsible consumption—we work toward sustainable, long-term solutions to our environmental challenges,” it added.

Proclamation No. 244 declared September as National Cleanup Month, while Presidential Proclamation No. 470 designated the third Saturday of September as National Cleanup Day.

Community cleanups help enhance the resilience of our communities in several key ways: reduce pollution and floods, ignite climate action initiatives, and build local capacity for disaster response.

Through active participation in these cleanups, communities not only beautify their surroundings but also strengthen their ability to recover from climate-induced disasters, such as floods, extreme rainfall and severe weather events.

Inadequate waste management has become a major concern in building a climate-resilient community. Environmental degradation disrupts ecosystems and poses serious risks to public health and safety.

Flooded streets, polluted waterways and the heat-trapping effects of excessive waste contribute to more frequent and severe weather events, underscoring the urgent need for large-scale cleanup efforts.

The CCC asked the public to be mindful of its actions, especially in waste management. Simple steps can make a huge impact on global challenges and contribute to a more sustainable world, it said.

PHILIPPINE INFORMATION AGENCY

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

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 Programme.

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 (CO₂e) 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 (NAP), 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 (NDCIP) 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 Climate Change Commission (CCC) is refining the Green Jobs Assessment and Certification System Technical Guidelines, which are crucial for the implementation of Green Jobs Act of 2016. These guidelines provide a framework to endorse and incentivize green goods, services, technologies and practices across industries, including real estate.

The Green Jobs Act offers significant advantages for businesses, including a dual-incentive system. First, it provides a notable tax benefit that allows businesses to claim a deduction from their taxable income equivalent to 50 percent of the expenses incurred for skills training and research & development initiatives. Second, it offers an importation advantage for capital equipment directly and exclusively employed to support green initiatives, exempting them from import duties.

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 vital to continuously innovate and improve green methodologies. Businesses can further their sustainability endeavors by taking advantage of the fiscal incentives offered by the Green Jobs initiative.

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 regreening efforts, yielding economic benefits, new job opportunities in the housing industry, and increased green investments.

Secretary Robert E.A. Borje, CCC 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.”

To promote the widespread adoption of green building practices, it is crucial to introduce policies and initiatives that advocate for green certification standards, provide incentives for sustainable construction, and support local government units in implementing green building codes.

Green building practices should be integrated across all sectors—residential, commercial, and public infrastructure—by developers, architects, engineers, and homeowners. By doing so, the Philippines can lead the way in sustainable urban development, contributing to global goals while enhancing the quality of life for its citizens.

National Green Building Day is celebrated annually on September 8 as established by Proclamation 1030, s. 2020. The commemoration aims to promote awareness of resource efficiency, proper water and waste management, and the use of eco-friendly practices.

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