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By: Hannah Alcoseba Fernandez

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## **MANILA BULLETIN**

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## **NIKKEI ASIA**

### **Ukraine agreement, Global South boost: 5 takeaways from India's G20**

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## **PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER**

### **Bongbong Marcos: New tech needed to tackle unstable rice prices**

By: Jean Mangaluz

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Monday said new agricultural technologies are needed to address problems such as erratic rice prices and climate change.

## **THE PHILIPPINE STAR**

### **[Climate change 'dystopian future already here' — UN rights chief](#)**

Climate change is sparking human rights emergencies in numerous countries, the UN rights chief said Monday, decrying widespread misinformation sowing chaos and confusion to deny that reality.

### **[G20's weak stance on fossil fuels a 'huge blow' to climate-vulnerable communities — groups](#)**

By: Gaea Katreena Cabico

The failure of the Group of 20 leaders to agree to a phaseout of fossil fuels is a setback for communities already reeling from the impacts of the climate crisis, climate campaigners said Monday.

## **CCC IN THE NEWS:**

## **BIG NEWS NETWORK**

### **[GMA-7 report calls attention to El Nino's impact in Mindanao](#)**

CHEERS TO GMA Integrated News Weather Center for a report that checked on the situation of Mindanao agriculture, providing information that identified it as the region that will bear the brunt of El Nino. But it went on to stress the urgency of El Nino as a national issue. The story is part of the network's "Banta ng Nagbabagong Klima" series, which spotlights climate stories.

**Information and Knowledge Management Division**

## AL JAZEERA

### Climate change 'dystopian future already here'

Climate change is causing human rights emergencies around the world, the United Nations human rights chief says, specifically highlighting Iraq's "spiralling damage" from global warming.

Volker Turk pointed to recent examples of the "environmental horror that is our global planetary crisis", including in Basra, Iraq, where "drought, searing heat, extreme pollution and fast-depleting supplies of freshwater are creating barren landscapes of rubble and dust".

"This spiralling damage is a human rights emergency for Iraq and many other countries," Turk told the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva on Monday.

"Climate change is pushing millions of people into famine. It is destroying hopes, opportunities, homes and lives. In recent months, urgent warnings have become lethal realities again and again all around the world," he said.

"We do not need more warnings. The dystopian future is already here. We need urgent action now."

He spoke after the leaders of the Group of 20 (G20) richest countries at the weekend backed the goal of tripling renewable energy capacity by 2030 – but failed to commit to a phase-out of fossil fuels.

The Climate Action Network announced on Monday that millions of climate protesters from around the globe will demand an exit from coal, oil and gas use as soon as possible. The series of demonstrations are to coincide with a key climate summit on September 20 in New York City, hosted by UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres.

In view of the record global temperatures this year, Guterres last week called for much more ambition in the fight against climate change to prevent "the worst climate chaos".

Environmental groups – including Greenpeace, Extinction Rebellion and Friends of the Earth – are behind the global climate demonstrations expected to start on Friday.

'Hypocritically developing more fossil fuels'

The 2015 Paris Agreement on fighting climate change aims to cap the rise in temperatures to as close as possible to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial times

to avoid the most devastating impacts of climate change. To meet the pledge requires net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

To stay at 1.5C of warming, no new fossil fuel extraction projects should be launched, the International Energy Agency warned years ago. Despite pledges by governments, hydrocarbon production plans continue to be rolled out worldwide.

At last year's UN COP27 climate summit, more than 80 countries pushed for its final statement to include a call to phase-out fossil fuels.

Yet, countries such as the United States, Britain, Canada, Australia and Norway – among developed nations historically responsible for creating the current climate emergency – “have turned around and hypocritically continued developing more fossil fuels”, said the group Oil Change International.

A march will be held in southern Pakistan's Sindh province, which was devastated by unprecedented flooding last year.

“We demand a phase-out of fossil fuels now,” said Farooq Tariq from the Kissan Rabita Committee, a collective of farmers in the region.

“The fossil fuel industry and its supporters bear responsibility for the climate crisis and perpetuate a predatory and destructive economic system that harms both people and the planet.”

**CNN**

### [Island states seek climate protection from Law of the Sea](#)

The prime ministers of two small island nations that face ongoing impacts from rising sea levels will appear at legal hearings at an international court in Hamburg, Germany, on Monday, and seek an advisory opinion on the obligations of countries to combat climate change.

Prime Ministers Kausea Natano of Tuvalu and Gaston Browne of Antigua and Barbuda will give evidence at the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, which will consider whether carbon emissions absorbed by the ocean should be considered marine pollution, and what obligations nations have to protect the marine environment.

The tribunal will issue an advisory opinion, which is not legally binding, but offers an authoritative statement on legal matters that could guide countries as they craft climate protection law.

The prime ministers, representing the Commission of Small Island States on Climate Change and International Law (COSIS), will argue that countries have an obligation to protect the marine environment under the UN convention on the Law of the Sea, including from greenhouse gas emissions.

“We come here seeking urgent help, in the strong belief that international law is an essential mechanism for correcting the manifest injustice that our people are suffering as a result of climate change,” said Tuvalu’s Natano.

Excessive carbon pollution results in damage to the oceans, including coral bleaching and acidification.

Low-lying island states like Tuvalu and Vanuatu are also at risk of becoming submerged by water by the end of the century due to slow-onset climate impacts.

Small island nations have also sought legal clarity on nations’ climate obligations in other courts. Vanuatu led a campaign to ask the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to issue an advisory opinion on countries’ obligations to address climate change.

The UN General Assembly in March voted to refer the case to the ICJ, which will issue an opinion in 2024.

## ECO BUSINESS

### 'We do not just adopt global standards, we respond to domestic challenges': Philippine central bank exec Lyn Javier

By: Hannah Alcoseba Fernandez

The Philippine Central Bank, known as the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas or the BSP launched in July its inaugural sustainability report, one of the only Southeast Asian national regulators besides Singapore to have a publication dedicated to green finance.

The report detailed how it is carrying out its first empirical study of climate impacts on banks through a series of vulnerability and stress tests on its own branches and offices nationwide, after which the study will be applied to other financial institutions across the country.

The first stress test that the BSP conducted was with the help of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank last year, where they measured the economic and financial impact of damage to bank infrastructure from typhoon winds.

BSP is currently conducting another series of tests covering both universal and rural banks. Larger banks can easily apply sophisticated tools to manage such risks, but smaller banks whose depositors are usually small-to-medium sized enterprises are more vulnerable. Using a local online platform, the stress test will calculate the impact of storm surges, severe winds, flooding, landslides and volcanic hazards in bank locations.

The results will lead to a circular guideline which will show the quantitative impact of climate change on banks and instruct them on how to effectively manage climate risk.

The BSP sustainability report also said it is setting up guidelines for the country's first national taxonomy—a tool that can help translate the country's low-carbon commitments into action.

The draft will be released as a “consultative document” within the month, where they will be soliciting insights and inputs from the sector before publication.

In this podcast, Eco-Business talks to Lyn Javier, assistant governor of the BSP, to discuss the significance of these initiatives in helping the country meet its climate ambitions and the challenges faced in achieving them.

Tune in as we talk about:

The challenges and significance of creating the central bank's first sustainability report

The implications of an empirical study of climate impact on banks

Will the Philippines' first national taxonomy include a managed coal phase out?

The BSP's role in the coal phase out pledges of local banks

The challenges of putting climate specific rules and regulations on the BSP agenda

What's on the horizon for BSP's sustainability ambitions?

The edited podcast version:

Thank you so much for being with us today, assistant governor Javier, and congratulations on the Central Bank's efforts in coming up with its first sustainability report, something that not all central banks in Asia have. Tell us about your journey in crafting the report.

The BSP Sustainability report is one of the commitments of the BSP under the sustainable central banking programme. We launched this last December, 2022, and we have 11 commitments already, including the publication of a report that embodies our practices and policies, and how we have embedded sustainability principles in our operations.

All the work actually started with our leadership, the BSP Monetary Board which adopted the sustainability agenda. It started with a tone that came from the top. Now we have implemented capacity and awareness building programmes within the bank to also familiarise the personnel of the BSP with the sustainability agenda. Then we conducted a vulnerability assessment exercise on the branches and offices of the BSP in the region using a local tool called Hazard Hunter.

So we assess the vulnerabilities of these banks then the results of this assessment is fed into our own risk management system. We also did a self-assessment exercise where we identified key operations of the BSP and identified the gaps in terms of adopting our own sustainability agenda.

The challenge is not in preparing the sustainability report, but signaling and flagging to the organisation that we are doing this, and we are committed to the sustainability agenda.



The self assessment exercise is quite difficult to complete, particularly if you are not aware of what the risks are. That's why it has to be complemented with engagement, as well as partnerships with experts and development partners to guide us in the process.

When you say you had to conduct self assessment exercises and the difficulty was in the particular branches of BSP, was it because maybe not all staff in the offices nationwide understood the sustainability terminologies or concepts?

The self assessment exercises covered all departments and units within the Bangko Sentral. I guess you're correct. We're talking about terms that we're not familiar with. We are looking at targets and objectives that are not part of our day to day operations. That's why it's very important for us to tap the expertise of experts and our development partners to guide us through the process.

Why is it significant for the BSP to have its own sustainability report? Not all central banks in Asia report their sustainability progress.

I think it signals a strong commitment on the part of the BSP to promote the sustainability principles that we are also adopting, and sets out standards for other financial institutions to follow.

The report said the bank is carrying out the first empirical study of climate change's impact on the country, and it will push for lenders to disclose climate assets. What are the implications of this for Philippine banks?

We had the first stress testing exercise under the financial sector assessment programme mission jointly conducted by the IMF and the World Bank. They assessed physical risk and measured the economic and financial impact of physical capital destruction from typhoon winds, and that report has been published.

Now again, with a development partner, we're conducting a stress test for transition risk and a vulnerability assessment exercise. Now, the stress testing for transition risk covers the bigger banks. We're talking about the universal and commercial banks. The vulnerability assessment exercise, now this covers the smaller banks, for instance rural banks.

The results of both of these exercises would be a technical note featuring the methodology that we adopted, as well as an insights paper. We wanted to share our experience in conducting this exercise, with the aim of furthering inform the risk management systems and decisions of our supervised financial institutions.

This would lead to a circular or a policy issue once the guidelines and expectations of the BSP on the conduct of climate stress testing exercises have been carried out. Anything that can be measured can be managed. So when you see the quantitative impacts of climate change, the idea is to facilitate action among financial institutions to effectively manage this risk.

When banks are able to disclose their exposure and potential impact internally, it will drive them to action. They'd be able to measure their progress year by year, and also investors would be more attracted.

We also have to assess the potential impact of climate change on the vulnerable sector, including micro, small and medium enterprises. The bigger banks adopt sophisticated tools to manage these types of risk. But we want to also focus on smaller banks that are frequently affected by extreme weather episodes. We hope that they could further build and enhance their operational resilience so that in the event of a typhoon, they can still provide financial services to households and businesses in their areas.

In cases of extreme weather episodes, we have high levels of non-performing loans and low deposit levels. Because of this experience, BSP has already institutionalised a set of relief measures for the smaller banks so that they could recover from the impact of a typhoon without the stringent requirements of the BSP.

The report touched on how it was setting up the Philippines taxonomy guidelines which it said would be built on the country's nationally determined contributions and the Asean's taxonomy. The Asean's taxonomy is the first one to include a coal phase out. Since you're basing our taxonomy on it, does this mean that you may be also crafting our taxonomy to include a managed coal phase out?

The regulatory framework expects bank to progressively increase their exposures to green and sustainable projects.

We know that change will not happen overnight and we know that the financial institutions continue to support the needs of the economy. So that's a critical balance between transitioning to sustainability and ensuring that the economy has its financing needs supported by the banking industry.

Having said that, we're developing the taxonomy along with other financial sector regulators under the auspices of the financial sector forum, including the Securities and Exchange Commission, the BSP, and the Philippine Deposit Insurance Corporation. It's an important thing in promoting the sustainability agenda.

The taxonomy will involve identifying activities and investments using a traffic light system similar to the Asean taxonomy. The emphasis will be on climate change mitigation and adaptation. We do hope that it will facilitate decision making and promote alignment of the strategic objectives of our financial institutions and their actions and decisions in terms of their exposures. Now, for external stakeholders, the taxonomy will better guide investors in making informed decisions.

So, in short, the taxonomy will not yet specifically include a managed coal transition?

The transition to sustainable operations or to net zero will always be aligned with the energy plans and the national determined contributions of the country.

Do you have a timeline for when you will be launching the national taxonomy?

Yes, we will be publishing a consultative document on the taxonomy. We are targeting to launch it this month. So, we will be soliciting insights and inputs from various stakeholders before we publish the document.

In 2020, the central bank started requiring local financial institutions to report on their energy investments. That same year, RCBC became the first Filipino bank to declare that it will stop funding new coal projects. Bank of the Philippine Islands followed suit the year after. In 2022, BDO said that it will cut its coal exposure by half in the next decade. Do you think the BSP circular had a hand in these bank announcements of reducing coal investments?

Even before we issued Circular No. 1085 on sustainable finance we had what we call the “first mover banks”. They are well ahead in terms of developing products and services and promoting the sustainability agenda. They have dedicated offices and sustainability officers already. These banks also facilitated action in the banking industry.

What I could say is that the publication of the sustainability report supports the initiatives and strategies of these financial institutions and highlights that there’s one goal in the financial sector and that is to adopt a sustainability agenda.

So BSP can’t take all the credit for our banks divesting from coal?

No [laughs].

Why is it a challenge to put climate-specific rules and regulations on the BSP agenda?

We are only familiar with the impacts of climate change like the impact of extreme weather episodes. That's why I mentioned earlier that even before we adopted a sustainable finance framework, we have in place regulatory measures for banks affected by extreme weather episodes.

But for the slow onset trends like rising sea levels or temperature, we cannot yet identify these triggers and even before you adopt the sustainability agenda, you have to understand how this would be transmitted to the financial statements of banks. As [former England central bank governor] Mark Carney put it in his Tragedy of the Horizon speech, the time horizon that we are looking at for the impacts of climate change is quite long. It's different from the usual time horizon that we're using for our risk surveillance and assessment.

What's next for the BSP in terms of sustainability?

We are also looking at revising or amending the reports we get from banks. These are prudential reports to capture more granular information to assess the ESG [environment, social, governance] related risk exposures of the banking industry. Right now globally, the reports that regulators are receiving are not designed to capture ESG related risk.

What are you most proud of with Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas that would set it apart from other central banks in Asia?

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas is not just about adopting international standards or being aligned with global best practices. We are sensitive to domestic conditions and challenges. We make sure that the policies we issue and the approach that we are taking is suited to the banking industry and is responsive to the needs of financial institutions. At the end of the day, we wanted to promote a safe, sound, sustainable, resilient financial system to better serve Filipinos.

Join the conversation on how the Philippines can unlock sustainable finance. Register here for [Unlocking capital for sustainability Philippines](#) on 14 September 2023.

## MANILA BULLETIN

### PH strengthens links with Australia, South Korea, Vietnam; closer people-to-people ties is main driver

President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. joined other regional leaders at the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) summit last week and presided over the forging of three key agreements: a five-year rice trading agreement with Vietnam; the establishment of a Free Trade Agreement with South Korea; and the declaration of a Strategic Partnership with Australia.

The Philippine-Australia Strategic Partnership covers cooperation in the following spheres: Politics and strategy, defense and security, economy, development, environment and climate change, and people-to-people links.

The breadth of the two countries' political and strategic relationship includes "defense and security, maritime security cooperation, counter-terrorism and combating transnational and organized crime, critical infrastructure security, non-proliferation, arms and export controls, development cooperation, and consular and crisis management, including traditional and non-traditional crises."

In the economic sphere, the elevated relationship focuses on the following: "developing resilient supply chains, supporting the climate and the clean energy transition, and in mining and minerals processing, education, food security, digital and creative economies, (and) the Blue Economy across various sectors such as fisheries, aquaculture and maritime transport, and high-quality infrastructure development."

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, the first Australian head of government to conduct bilateral talks with a Philippine President in the last 20 years, signed, too, with President Marcos an agreement on a Work and Holiday Visa Arrangement. This is a vital aspect of strengthening people-to-people relations. Lately, many medical doctors, nurses, healthcare and social assistance professionals; as well as those in manufacturing; wholesale and retail trade; and accommodation and food services, have formed the larger segments of Filipinos migrating to Australia.

He also emphasized that a vital part of the new strategic partnership framework is a five-year program that will "help further reduce violent conflict, reintegrate former combatants, and improve community development livelihood, particularly for women and those in vulnerable situations," as well as a memorandum of understanding on National Soil Health Strategy.

The new free trade agreement (FTA) with South Korea — the country’s seventh-largest export market — covers 11,164 agricultural and industrial products. If it is regarded as an executive agreement, it is expected to take effect in January 2024. If deemed a treaty, its effectivity shall be after ratification by the Philippine Senate.

The five-year rice supply deal was announced by Prime Minister Pham Minh Chin after his talks with President Marcos at last week’s ASEAN summit in Jakarta. Vietnam supplies up to 90 percent of the Philippines’ rice imports. Beyond assuring steady rice supply to the country amid supply chain challenges arising from the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict, the rice pact underlines the importance of strong bilateral ties between the Philippines and Vietnam. The two leaders also discussed broader cooperation in agriculture, aquaculture as well as in the digital and green economy.

Indeed, top-level diplomacy is crucial in crafting strategic bilateral agreements. While substantial credit goes to our senior diplomats and government technocrats, the main driver of all these initiatives is the friendship and goodwill that permeate and reinforce enduring people-to-people ties.

## NIKKEI ASIA

### [Ukraine agreement, Global South boost: 5 takeaways from India's G20](#)

The Group of 20 is a forum for leaders of mostly developed economies to discuss how to address challenges of global development. This year's annual summit took place for the first time in India.

While in New Delhi, leaders surprised many by agreeing to wording on the war in Ukraine in a joint statement, while taking steps to broaden the scope of the group to include greater input from the so-called Global South. Other key outcomes included efforts to address the climate crisis by tripling access to renewable energy.

The summit was also the first ever without the Chinese president in attendance.

Here are five takeaways from the Sept. 9-10 event:

#### A controversial consensus on Ukraine

After months of failed India-led negotiations on language concerning the war in Ukraine, G20 members finally found a formulation they could agree on -- toning down wording on Russia included in last year's G20 declaration in Bali.

Nowhere to be found is an earlier acknowledgement that most members "strongly condemned" Moscow's invasion. Vowing to address the war's economic impact and to support efforts toward a "just, and durable peace" in Ukraine, the New Delhi declaration rejects territorial acquisition by force and calls nuclear threats "inadmissible."

Russia called the agreement "balanced," with Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov saying the war had not overshadowed the G20 agenda.

Ukraine was not impressed. Its foreign ministry said the declaration is "nothing to be proud of," and suggested a Ukrainian presence at the G20 would have painted a clearer picture for delegates. Earlier this year, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy made a surprise trip to the Group of Seven summit in Hiroshima, Japan.

But for India, the declaration was a breakthrough that helped Modi frame the summit as a success.

"India's G20 New Delhi Declaration is a truly remarkable feat, considering the deepening divisions over Ukraine," Derek Grossman, a senior defense analyst at Rand

Corp., posted on X, formerly Twitter. "That said, New Delhi took the lowest common denominator approach of not even mentioning 'Russia' as the aggressor -- a big win for Moscow."

### Spotlight on the Global South

India actively championed the so-called Global South before and during the New Delhi gathering, elevating the interests of less-developed countries. One of the key moments of the summit was the G20's acceptance of the 55-member African Union as a permanent member of the group, acting on a Modi proposal.

"I invite the head of the African Union to take his seat," Modi said on Saturday, announcing the G20 consensus on the matter.

South African President Cyril Ramaphosa said his country was "delighted" and that it seeks an enhanced and expanded global partnership for sustainable development.

The term "Global South" itself was not included in the long joint declaration the G20 countries released -- an omission some might find odd given how much Modi has pushed the loosely defined concept this year. India hosted a Voice of Global South summit soon after it assumed the G20 presidency. Nevertheless, the document includes many passages defending the interests of developing countries, on everything from debt to food security, health and climate financing.

At the same time, Global South countries were credited with helping to bridge the gap on the Ukraine language, finding a solution that was amenable to all. A European official said Indonesia, Brazil and South Africa -- the previous, next and future hosts -- were instrumental in this process.

### Counterbalancing China

Initiatives that could balance China's influence over global trade and finance gained momentum, while Beijing kept a relatively low profile in the absence of President Xi Jinping.

The sideline announcement of a port and rail project that promises to connect India with the Middle East and Europe, for example, could be intended as a counterweight to the Belt and Road Initiative -- China's drive to fund infrastructure construction connecting Asia with Europe and Africa.



The initiative among India, the U.S., Saudi Arabia and the European Union could cut shipping times and costs while accelerating the flow of trade and energy through the Middle East. Laying cables for electricity and data, along with a hydrogen pipeline, are also part of the plans.

In a separate development, the G20 nations agreed to expand the lending capacity of multilateral development banks (MDBs). This, too, may provide a counterweight to China's heavy lending in developing economies, many of which are struggling with their debts.

The G20 nations called for "better, bigger and more effective" MDBs at a time when China has become the world's largest "official creditor," having loaned out about \$1.5 trillion to more than 150 countries.

#### Global South at center of climate narrative

Climate was a key area where the Indian presidency sought to implement its pledge to "give the Global South a voice." The joint statement piled pressure on developed countries to contribute to providing "trillions of dollars" to poorer nations to help them cut domestic carbon emissions and respond to the impacts of climate change.

With the African Union acceding to full G20 membership, Global South countries will have more channels to express their views on energy transition pathways, as many poorer countries struggle to leave behind the fossil fuels they rely on for growth.

The leaders' statement was viewed as a mixed bag of commitments -- a numerical target of tripling renewable energy capacity by 2030, a first for the grouping, but a standstill on phasing down the use of fossil fuels, which a United Nations analysis has underlined as a necessary step to achieving net-zero carbon emissions.

The message from the G20, whose members are responsible for 80% of global carbon emissions, will be consequential in shaping the global climate discussion at COP28, the United Nations annual climate conference, starting in late November in the United Arab Emirates.

"In the run-up to COP28, leaders must steer instead of running behind the restructuring of the global energy economy," said Lisa Fischer, programme lead at climate think tank E3G.

French President Emmanuel Macron hinted at some of the friction points in the debate. "It's too easy for emerging countries to say that developed nations should bear the burden, and they [developed nations] are doing that," he told reporters. But "many countries need to do more. [The energy transition] is expensive for us as well. We want to engage with emerging countries to phase out coal and oil by 2050."

What's next for India

Modi passed the gavel to Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, symbolically transferring the G20 presidency to the South American leader at the end of the two-day conference. But India's G20 presidency is not quite over yet: Officially, it ends on Nov. 30, and the prime minister still has plans.

"There are still two-and-a-half months more to go for India," Modi said in closing remarks. "I propose that we hold a virtual session of the G20 summit at the end of November so that we have another look at the proposals put forward by [attendees], for speeding their progress."

"During that session, we can take stock of the topics decided during this summit," he said, indicating that India still has a major role to play as the G20 chair.

Meanwhile, although not everyone will consider this G20 summit a triumph, Modi can claim a major diplomatic success in forging a consensus just as he ramps up his campaign for a third term in India's elections early next year.

"Now everybody [in India] knows about G20 and ... Modi is the one who organized it," Srikanth Kondapalli, dean of the School of International Studies at the Jawaharlal Nehru University, told Nikkei Asia. "So, it should be seen as Modi's victory as well and will definitely have an impact on elections."

## PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

### Bongbong Marcos: New tech needed to tackle unstable rice prices

By: Jean Mangaluz

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Monday said new agricultural technologies are needed to address problems such as erratic rice prices and climate change.

Marcos, also the concurrent Agriculture Secretary, said the Mariano Marcos State University (MMSU) and Philippine Rice Research Institute (PhilRice) have been making important agricultural research and development efforts that should be applied to rice farms nationwide.

“Nahihirapan tayo dahil sa climate change, we have had to control the prices of rice because the markets are very volatile, so we are trying to stabilize it here in the Philippines,” he said in a speech in Ilocos Norte.

(We are struggling due to climate change; we have had to control rice prices because the markets are very volatile, so we are trying to stabilize it here in the Philippines.)

Marcos was in Ilocos to commemorate Marcos Day, a provincial holiday dedicated to the birth anniversary of his father and namesake, ex-president Ferdinand Marcos Sr.

“We really need new technologies, and that’s the part that institutions like MMSU, like PhilRice and all the other agriculture research universities, stations do all around the country, that’s the part that they play. They then should be able to give it to the government, the new technology to the government, and the government is the one who will take it from the laboratory, the rice field,” Marcos said in a mix of English and Filipino.

Marcos recently issued Executive Order No. 39 that put a price cap on rice to arrest the unsteady cost of the country’s leading food staple.

## THE PHILIPPINE STAR

### [Climate change 'dystopian future already here' — UN rights chief](#)

Climate change is sparking human rights emergencies in numerous countries, the UN rights chief said Monday, decrying widespread misinformation sowing chaos and confusion to deny that reality.

Speaking before the United Nations Human Rights Council, Volker Turk pointed to recent examples of the "environmental horror that is our global planetary crisis", including in Basra, Iraq, where "drought, searing heat, extreme pollution and fast-depleting supplies of fresh water are creating barren landscapes of rubble and dust".

"This spiralling damage is a human rights emergency for Iraq, and many other countries," he said in his address opening the 54th council session in Geneva.

"Climate change is pushing millions of people into famine. It is destroying hopes, opportunities, homes and lives. In recent months, urgent warnings have become lethal realities again and again all around the world," Turk said.

"We do not need more warnings. The dystopian future is already here. We need urgent action now."

He was speaking after the G20 at the weekend backed the goal of tripling renewable energy capacity by 2030, but failed to commit to a phase-out of fossil fuels.

At a time when the ravages of climate change are forcing more and more people to leave their homes, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights said he was "shocked by the nonchalance" seen towards surging numbers of migrant deaths.

"It is evident that far more migrants and refugees are dying, unnoticed," he said.

He highlighted the more than "2,300 people reported dead or missing in the Mediterranean this year, including the loss of more than 600 lives in a single shipwreck off Greece in June."

He also pointed to migrant deaths in the English Channel, the Bay of Bengal, in the Caribbean, and along the US-Mexican border.

And he highlighted migrant deaths at "the border of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, where my office is seeking urgent clarification about allegations of killings and mistreatment".

The New York-based group Human Rights Watch last month said Saudi border guards had fired "like rain" on Ethiopians trying to reach Saudi Arabia from Yemen.

Amid these towering problems facing the world, Turk decried "politics of deception".

"Helped by new technologies, lies and disinformation are mass-produced to sow chaos, to confuse, and ultimately to deny reality and ensure no action will be taken that could endanger the interests of entrenched elites," he said.

"The most apparent case of this is climate change."

## [G20's weak stance on fossil fuels a 'huge blow' to climate-vulnerable communities — groups](#)

By: Gaea Katreena Cabico

The failure of the Group of 20 leaders to agree to a phaseout of fossil fuels is a setback for communities already reeling from the impacts of the climate crisis, climate campaigners said Monday.

Leaders of the G20—the world’s largest economies—committed to pursue and encourage efforts to triple renewable energy capacity globally by 2030 during a summit in New Delhi, India over the weekend.

However, the G20 nations—which account for most of the world’s carbon emissions—failed to agree to phase out fossil fuels. A United Nations report released Friday stressed the need to “phase out all unabated fossil fuels” to achieve net-zero emissions.

Instead, the leaders committed only to a “phasedown” of coal “in line with national circumstances.”

“The G20 New Delhi Leaders’ Declaration, touted by India as ‘probably the most vibrant, dynamic and ambitious document on climate action,’ is actually a huge blow to the people and communities of the Global South who are facing the brunt of the climate crisis,” said Lidy Nacpil, a Filipino climate activists and coordinator of the Asian Peoples’ Movement on Debt and Development.

Nacpil said that the commitment of G20 nations to end fossil fuels fast and fairly is “critical” in the fight against climate change.

APMDD also called out the G20 for committing to support the acceleration of hydrogen and ammonia, calling these technologies “false solutions.”

“Putting our bets on unproven, costly abatement technologies that delay the fossil fuel phaseout and just transition to renewable energy systems will further exacerbate the climate crisis,” she said.

‘Step up’ in Dubai

World Resources Institute President Ani Dasgupta also criticized G20 countries for not going far enough on fossil fuels and finance. He urged the G20 economies to adopt concrete actions to address the severe lack of finance and debt crises that climate-vulnerable countries face.

Dasgupta added that these countries must “step up” in a crucial climate summit in December.

“The actions of this group of countries will determine the course of our future,” he said.

Nearly 200 countries meeting in Dubai, United Arab Emirates will assess how far off track they are from fulfilling their commitments to combat global warming. This is part of the process called “global stocktake.”

The world is not on track to meet the long-term goals of the Paris Agreement, including capping global warming at 1.5 degrees Celsius, according to the first UN scorecard of the progress in meeting the climate goals of the 2015 accord.

## CCC IN THE NEWS:

### BIG NEWS NETWORK

#### [GMA-7 report calls attention to El Nino's impact in Mindanao](#)

CHEERS TO GMA Integrated News Weather Center for a report that checked on the situation of Mindanao agriculture, providing information that identified it as the region that will bear the brunt of El Nino. But it went on to stress the urgency of El Nino as a national issue. The story is part of the network's "Banta ng Nagbabagong Klima" series, which spotlights climate stories.

#### What's the Story?

Maureen Schrijvers recalled the impact of the El Nino phenomenon in the past three decades on Mindanao.

She led the report with data from 2019, presenting figures from the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council's (NDRRMC) on the damage in the agricultural sector then; the accumulated loss of PHP7.9 billion at that time and the declaration of "state of calamity" for local government units.

She moved further back into the nineties, referring to areas in Mindanao most affected by the strongest El Nino of the 20th century in 1997-1998. NDRRMC's data showed that the Zamboanga peninsula alone incurred around PHP311 million in agricultural damage.

Ana Liza Solis, climate monitoring and prediction section chief of the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa), told Schrijvers in an interview that Mindanao will be most affected by this year's El Nino due to its lower average rainfall levels in comparison with other parts of the country. Solis added that the current El Nino is expected to linger in the Philippines, potentially going into the first quarter of 2024.

#### What the Story Got Right?

Schrijvers combined research and interviews to present a comprehensive view of the issue. She talked to concerned officials who had authority to speak on the matter. But the presentation gained immediacy with her reports from the ground to check the actual situation.



Schrijvers helped ordinary viewers to understand the phenomenon, using an analogy understandable for the ordinary viewer: "Isipin niyo na parang nagka-lagnat 'yung Dagat Pasipiko at 'yung pag-init na 'yun nag-uwi ng extreme weather patterns na nagdadala ng either tagtuyot o malalakas na pag-ulan." (Imagine that the Pacific Ocean has a fever and its heat creates extreme weather patterns that result in either drought or heavy rains.)

She featured a case study, interviewing Julius Landiang, a small rice farmer in Zamboanga Sibugay, who lost nearly all of his capital of PHP15,000 in 2019. He was forced to plant mung beans instead in his parched fields. While he returned to planting rice, the intense heat this year delayed the planting to July. The report showed his farmland beginning to dry up again, telling more than words the damage already happening in Mindanao.

The report also included Solis' explanation that the climate crisis has shortened the cycle of "strong" episodes of El Nino. Severe El Nino phenomena usually occur every 10 to 15 years. Citing Pagasa's record, Schrijvers noted that the 1997 to 1998 "strong" El Nino was followed 11 years later, in 2009 and 2010. After that, the next "strong" El Nino occurred in 2015 and 2016, showing a shorter gap of five years.

Robert Borje, executive director of the Climate Change Commission, told Schrijvers in an interview that as El Nino becomes more severe, the soil moisture levels of agricultural land will continue to decrease, leading to a gradual loss of arable land.

Why Is this Important?

Schrijvers ended her report with a cautionary note: It is possible that in the near future, the entire nation and not just Mindanao, the entire population, not just farmers will suffer the effects of El Nino that is aggravated by climate change.

Media must continue providing accurate, timely and comprehensive reports on the recurring phenomenon in the context of larger climate change to raise public awareness. An informed public will compel government agencies to align their projects with the needs of farmers, making it possible for the entire nation to overcome crisis.

The report cited assurances from agricultural officials in Zamboanga that they have started exploring drought-resistant crops and seeding clouds, their level of preparedness at "75 to 80 percent." Media should follow up and ask if these are adequate interventions and whether these are applicable to other parts of the country.

Newsrooms must also check whether the mitigating measures laid out in the National Climate Change Action Plan, which Borje mentioned in the report, is actually being enforced.

Faced with the challenge, the entire nation must be involved, media included.

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