



NEWS ROUNDUP

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- How climate change is intensifying tropical cyclones like Typhoon Yagi
- Philippines is 'world's riskiest country' for 3rd straight year
- Navigating change: 10 key shifts shaping sustainability in the Philippines
- [Opinion] National Cleanup Month: Better habits lead to efficient waste management
- 3 weather systems to dampen most of PH
- Recto: ADB's new CSP to help address PH's dev't needs
- Subic Freeport seeks carbon-neutral status

CCC IN THE NEWS:

- Bamboo: A vital carbon capturing ally
- Car-free Sundays lead way in making sustainable cities
- CCC: Doctors are climate allies
- Guardians of the sky: Protecting ozone layer for climate health
- CCC highlights PH NDC progress at ADB regional workshop
- CCC: Doctors are climate allies

ABS CBN

[How climate change is intensifying tropical cyclones like Typhoon Yagi](#)

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[Philippines is 'world's riskiest country' for 3rd straight year](#)

By: Raphael Bosano

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BUSINESS WORLD

[Navigating change: 10 key shifts shaping sustainability in the Philippines](#)

By: Bonar A. Laureto

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MANILA BULLETIN

[\[Opinion\] National Cleanup Month: Better habits lead to efficient waste management](#)

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PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

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THE PHILIPPINE STAR

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The Climate Change Commission (CCC) recognized doctors as crucial allies in the fight against climate change during a national convention, emphasizing their vital role in preparing communities for climate disasters and emergencies.

[Guardians of the sky: Protecting ozone layer for climate health](#)

By: Rafael De Leon

Our planet's protectors are losing strength. In today's world, where we increasingly experience intense heat, the depletion of the ozone layer threatens to intensify these extreme temperatures. The ozone layer shields all life on Earth from the sun's harmful radiation, but human activities are destroying this vital barrier.

PHILIPPINE INFORMATION AGENCY

[CCC highlights PH NDC progress at ADB regional workshop](#)

At the Asian Development Bank's (ADB) NDC Advance Regional Workshop, Commissioner Rachel Anne Herrera of the Climate Change Commission (CCC) highlighted the Philippines' ambitious climate targets and implementation strategies.

MINDANAO TIMES

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Information and Knowledge Management Division

ABS CBN

[How climate change is intensifying tropical cyclones like Typhoon Yagi](#)

The likelihood of a very strong tropical cyclone like Typhoon Yagi is increasing due to climate change, which killed at least 179 people in Vietnam.

"So there is general scientific consensus that tropical cyclones are getting more intense, that tropical cyclones are getting wetter, that storm surges are increasing," said climate scientist Nadia Bloemendaal, a researcher at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam.

There is no scientific consensus yet around how climate change is impacting the number of storms in a season, although the timing of stronger storms is changing, as climate warming creates conditions conducive to storms in more months of the year.

Sea surface temperatures in the region remain high, which can contribute to the amount of fuel in a storm, or intensity. If it weren't for the oceans, the planet would be much hotter due to climate change. But in the last 40 years, the ocean has absorbed about 90% of the warming caused by heat-trapping greenhouse gas emissions.

Much of this ocean heat is contained near the water's surface. This additional heat can fuel a storm's intensity and power stronger winds. Storms like Yagi are also getting wetter.

Those rainfall totals that you see in Yagi, which are exceeding 400 millimeters, chances are that we're going to see those rainfall totals more often in the future," said Bloemendaal.

Typhoon Yagi is Asia's most powerful storm this year. The region has also been hit by other notable storms, including Typhoon Gaemi and Typhoon Shanshan.

The world has already warmed 1.3 degrees Celsius above the preindustrial average. Burning coal, oil and gas is the main driver of climate change.

Philippines is 'world's riskiest country' for 3rd straight year

By: Raphael Bosano

The Philippines remains as the country most at risk from the effects of natural events for the third straight year, according to the 2024 WorldRiskReport.

The report, published by the Institute for International Law of Peace and Armed Conflict, assessed 193 countries by looking at their exposure to natural hazards and their vulnerabilities to damage from extreme natural events and negative impacts of climate change.

It explains that exposure is the extent to which “populations in hazard-prone areas are exposed to and burdened by the impacts of extreme natural events” including frequency and intensity of earthquakes, tsunamis, flooding, cyclones, droughts, and sea level rise.

Vulnerability, on the other hand, looks at the three dimensions — susceptibility, coping and adaptive capacities. It considers the structural characteristics and conditions of society and their ability to cope by reducing the immediate aftermath as well as adapt by putting in place strategies to mitigate and prevent future impacts.

The Philippines scored 39.99 for exposure and 55.03 for vulnerability — both considered very high. It also received high numbers for the lack of both coping and adaptive capacities.

Altogether, the country received a WorldRiskIndex score of 46.91.

The top countries with the highest risk are:

1. Philippines - 46.91
2. Indonesia - 41.13
3. India - 40.96
4. Colombia - 37.81
5. Mexico - 35.93
6. Myanmar - 35.85
7. Mozambique - 34.44
8. Russian Federation - 28.12
9. Bangladesh - 27.73

10. Pakistan - 27.02

In 2022 and 2023, the country received a score of 46.82 and 46.86, respectively.

Aside from extreme natural events, the report also looked at multiple crises that interact with and reinforce each other and “jeopardize livelihoods and future opportunities but also have a significant impact on (mental) health.”

Such instances happened to some countries which were both burdened by the pandemic and extreme natural events.

“One example is the Philippines, which was hit by 22 tropical cyclones during the COVID-19 pandemic, including Typhoon Goni – one of the strongest storms ever recorded. Hundreds of thousands of destroyed homes, overcrowded evacuation centers and the resulting increase in COVID-19 cases not only led to a dramatic increase in humanitarian needs, but also had a negative impact on the mental health of the population,” the report said.

IMPROVING PH'S RANK

Science and Technology Secretary Renato Solidum believes that country's ranking in the index will improve in the long run, citing the availability of innovations and technology that only need to be maximized to reduce negative impacts of extreme natural events.

These include locally-developed websites like HazardHunters PH and GeoRisk Philippines – which local governments can use to identify the hazards that may affect a certain area.

But more importantly, Solidum cited the need for government to come up with a law on land use.

“Ang land use ay pwedeng tignan sa lebel ng local government. Pero mas maganda kung tayo ay magkaroon ng national land use act upang pare-pareho ang pananaw ng mga local government pagdating sa paggamit ng impormasyon at mas maging ligtas ang ating mga kababayan,” he said.

(Land use can be looked at by the local government. But it would be better to have a National Land Use Act so that all local governments will have the same view when it comes to information on how they can use our land and make it safe for Filipinos.)

The agency, he added, is in coordination with other offices like the Office of Civil Defense and the Department of Human Settlement and Urban Development to provide guidance on land use planning as well as preparation and response to natural hazards.

The science chief also said that improvements have so far been seen especially during extreme weather.

“Sa ibang mga lugar, kahit nababaha ngayon ay napapabilis ang pagbaba ng tubig dahil sa mga interventions na ginagawa.”

(Some areas vulnerable to floods are now seeing that they recede faster because of various interventions.)

“Kelangan natin na mas maigting na implementation para maligtas ang buhay ng ating mga kababayan and that has to be done at the local level. Plus, siyempre ‘yung ating mga kababayan mismo, ‘yung sarili nila nilalagay nila sa risk,” Solidum said.

(We need better implementation of policies to save many lives and that has to be done at the local level. At the same time, Filipinos also have to know when they are putting themselves in risky situations.)

HOLISTIC APPROACH NEEDED

The WorldRiskReport said the multiple crises people continue to face should not be looked at as independent of each other but rather as events that interact and reinforce each other.

Approaches to risk analysis and crisis management, therefore, need to be holistic.

“Close cooperation between research and humanitarian practice must be promoted to strengthen more detailed and comprehensive risk analyses in contexts of multiple crises and to facilitate their translation into concrete humanitarian measures.”

Health care systems, one that is most heavily affected during crisis, should also be expanded and invested upon to strengthen their coping and preparedness capacities.

The report also highlights the need to promote and fund comprehensive climate change adaptation to slow down, if not completely stop, its devastating impacts.

BUSINESS WORLD

[Navigating change: 10 key shifts shaping sustainability in the Philippines](#)

By: Bonar A. Laureto

The Philippines is at a pivotal moment in its sustainability journey, driven by a blend of regulatory reforms, market dynamics, and heightened climate awareness. These developments create both risks and opportunities for businesses operating in the country and global investors interested in sustainable investments.

As the nation confronts the realities of climate change and its potential impacts, there is a growing consensus among policymakers, business leaders, and civil society on the need for a strategic and coordinated approach to sustainability. This collective push towards environmental stewardship is shaping new business models and investment strategies that prioritize long-term resilience and ethical practices. The Philippine commitment to this transition is reflected in a series of progressive policies and initiatives that aim to align economic development with sustainable outcomes.

This first part of the article explores the first five key shifts that are shaping the sustainability landscape in the Philippines, focusing on the implications for businesses and the opportunities for investors in this emerging low-carbon economy. It explores the upcoming Low Carbon Economy Investment Act, the proposed carbon rights legislation, BSP Circulars 1128 and 2022-042, BSP Circular 1187, and the upcoming Philippine SEC sustainability reporting form.

UPCOMING CARBON PRICING POLICY – LOW CARBON ECONOMY INVESTMENT ACT (HB 7705)

The proposed Low Carbon Economy Investment Act, or House Bill 7705, is poised to be a transformative force in the Philippines' shift towards a low-carbon economy. This bill requires covered enterprises with substantial contributions to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions develop decarbonization plans aligned with a pathway to limit global temperature rise to below 2°C. Additionally, it introduces a carbon pricing mechanism for emissions that exceeds established milestones, creating a decarbonization fund. This fund will be reinvested into viable low-carbon projects, presenting significant opportunities for enterprises and investors committed to sustainable development.

PROPOSED CARBON RIGHTS LEGISLATION

Congress has introduced the Carbon Rights Act (HB 10635), which aims to address the barriers to investing in carbon forestry and other carbon projects. This legislation seeks to define ownership of carbon rights and establishes mechanisms for their transfer. By clarifying these ownership rights and enabling corresponding adjustments, the bill facilitates Philippine participation in global carbon markets under Article 6 of the Paris Agreement. For investors, particularly those focused on nature-based solutions, this bill

presents new opportunities to invest in carbon projects that are critical to achieving global emission reduction targets.

BSP CIRCULARS 1128 AND 2022-042 ON ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL RISK MANAGEMENT

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) Circulars 1128 and 2022-042 require financial institutions to integrate Environmental and Social Risk Management Systems (ESRMS) into their credit risk assessments. These regulations compel banks to conduct climate risk assessments, including stress testing, as part of their underwriting processes. Companies with strong sustainability and climate risk management practices are likely to benefit from easier access to finance, while those slower to adapt may face higher borrowing costs. These circulars also ensure that climate risks are systematically integrated into the financial sector, promoting long-term resilience and stability.

BSP CIRCULAR 1187 – SUSTAINABLE FINANCE TAXONOMY

BSP Circular 1187 introduces the Sustainable Finance Taxonomy Guidelines (SFTG), a framework that classifies economic activities based on their environmental and social sustainability. The taxonomy uses a “traffic light” system —green for aligned activities, amber for transitional activities, and red for non-aligned activities. This classification is crucial for guiding banks and investors in directing capital toward projects that support climate change mitigation and adaptation. By preventing greenwashing, the SFTG ensures that sustainable finance practices in the Philippines are both transparent and credible.

UPCOMING SEC SUSTAINABILITY REPORTING FORM

The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) is set to introduce a mandatory sustainability reporting form for publicly listed companies, requiring disclosures aligned with International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) S1 and S2. These standards emphasize the identification and management of climate-related risks and opportunities, encouraging companies to integrate sustainability into their core business strategies. For investors, these reporting requirements will provide critical insights into the sustainability practices of Philippine companies, facilitating more informed and responsible investment decisions.

CHARTING A SUSTAINABLE PATH

The Philippines stands at a crossroads in its sustainability journey, with recent regulatory reforms and evolving market dynamics steering the nation towards a greener future. As climate change becomes an increasingly pressing global issue, the country is responding with innovative and comprehensive legislative measures and initiatives that aim to reduce carbon emissions and promote sustainable practices, while fostering economic growth, enhancing community resilience, and ensuring environmental justice.

The impending introduction of the SEC's mandatory sustainability reporting form marks a significant step towards greater transparency and accountability in corporate environmental practices. By aligning with international standards, this move propels companies toward more sustainable operations and equips investors with the requisite information to make responsible decisions. As the nation forges ahead with these regulatory changes, businesses can play a pivotal role in the transition to a sustainable economy, with the potential to set a precedent for other emerging markets in the region.

The second part of this article will discuss the roadmap for IFRS S1 and S2 adoption, the severity of rising climate-related loss and damage, rising growth in electric vehicle (EV) adoption, emergence of green steel in construction, decarbonization of the aviation industry, and the innovative approaches and opportunities that are emerging for businesses ready to adapt and thrive in this new landscape.

MANILA BULLETIN

[\[Opinion\] National Cleanup Month: Better habits lead to efficient waste management](#)

Two recent typhoons have again brought the message of the importance of solid waste management. Specifically, it highlighted the fact that people's behavior has much to do with the problem and yet, it can also provide a long-term solution.

Improper disposal of garbage has been identified as one of the major causes of the recent floodings that severely affected the lives of people, especially those living in Metro Manila. Flooded streets stopped the flow of traffic. Floodwaters damaged houses and vehicles. It has brought water-borne diseases, such as leptospirosis, which caused many deaths. These are now familiar scenes after a heavy rainfall.

After Typhoon Carina in July and Typhoon Enteng in early September, these sad scenes resurfaced. Many photos and videos of tons of garbage, mostly plastic packaging, clogging drainage, flood control systems and rivers presented the problem in stark reality.

These were not the only times that the irresponsible disposal of garbage has been identified as a major cause of floods. After every typhoon dumps heavy rains, the floodwaters rise, and there are reports of the number of tons of garbage, mostly plastics, collected from waterways.

It's as if people have not learned a lesson from the past typhoons.

"Cleanup is a step toward a long-term solution," declares the Climate Change Commission (CCC) in line with the observation of National Cleanup Month.

It is not an easy step to take, though, as government agencies tasked to manage solid waste have experienced. Until now, the segregation of waste is not yet fully practiced by many households and the collection system not yet implemented in many barangays.

September should be a good time to organize community action to raise awareness on proper waste disposal and to initiate cleanup programs. It is National Cleanup Month as declared by Presidential Proclamation No. 244, signed by President Fidel V. Ramos in 1993. A separate proclamation had designated the third Saturday of September as National Cleanup Day.

"As climate change worsens, this National Cleanup Month reminds us that a clean environment is crucial for the health of our ecosystem. It is also an opportunity to encourage individuals, organizations, academe, and communities to take the initiative and engage in sustainable practices."

“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,” the CCC urged.

But more than just preventing floods, the CCC points out: “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 website presents these facts that should encourage more action from communities:

“The World Bank’s 2021 report, ‘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. 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.”

We have to adopt better habits that will lead to efficient waste management practices. When the next typhoon dumps more rain, the floodwaters will come again.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

3 weather systems to dampen most of PH

Three weather systems, including the southwest monsoon or “habagat”, will bring rains across the country, the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) said Monday.

In its 4 a.m. bulletin, the weather bureau said the low pressure area (LPA) was last observed 375 kilometers east northeast of Casiguran, Aurora or 400 km. east of Tuguegarao City, Cagayan.

The LPA is expected to develop into a tropical cyclone within the day and will bring cloudy skies with scattered rains and thunderstorms over Ilocos Region, Cordillera Administrative Region, Cagayan Valley and Aurora.

PAGASA also spotted a tropical storm with international name “Pulasan” outside the Philippine Area of Responsibility (PAR).

PAGASA said Pulasan, located 2,205 km. east of southeastern Luzon with maximum sustained winds of 65 km. per hour near the center and wind gusts of up to 80 kph, has a small chance of entering the PAR but forecast to enhance the habagat.

The northern portion of Palawan, Occidental Mindoro, Antique and Negros Occidental will experience monsoon rains while the rest of Mimaropa, Western Visayas and Negros Island Region will have occasional rains also due to habagat.

Metro Manila, Zamboanga Peninsula, BARMM, Soccsksargen, Caraga, Northern Mindanao, and the rest of Luzon and Visayas will experience cloudy skies with scattered rains and thunderstorms also due to southwest monsoon.

The rest of Mindanao will have partly cloudy to cloudy skies with isolated rain showers or thunderstorms due to habagat.

PAGASA warned the public against possible flash floods or landslides due to moderate to at times heavy rains.

It added that Visayas, the western section of Southern Luzon, and the western, northern, and eastern sections of Mindanao will experience winds heading southwest, and rough coastal waters.

The rest of Southern Luzon and Mindanao will have moderate to strong winds and moderate to rough seas. The rest of Luzon will experience light to moderate winds and slight to moderate seas.

Recto: ADB's new CSP to help address PH's dev't needs

By: Anna Leah Gonzales

The newly-launched Asian Development Bank (ADB) country partnership strategy (CSP) for the Philippines reflects the bank's long standing friendship and deep understanding of the nation's development needs.

"I thank the ADB, who has always been a true friend of the Philippines, for developing this very well-tailored country partnership strategy with us. This not only reflects the Bank's commitment to the Philippines but is also a testament to their deep understanding of our development needs in order to achieve our ultimate goal of lifting 8 million more Filipinos out of poverty by the end of President Marcos, Jr.'s term," Finance Secretary Ralph Recto said in a statement on Friday.

"It was the Marcos, Jr. administration's priorities that drove the ADB's development assistance agenda for the Philippines. It is perfectly aligned with the goals laid out in the Philippine Development Plan 2023 to 2028," he added.

The ceremonial turnover of the ADB's Philippines Country Partnership Strategy (CPS) for 2024 to 2029 was led by ADB president Masatsugu Asakawa and President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. on Sept. 12, 2024 at the Malacañang Palace.

The CPS defines the ADB's medium-term development strategy and operational program for the Philippines for 2024 to 2029.

It was approved by the ADB Board on Sept. 4, 2024, and will be operationalized through the annual conduct of the Country Programming Mission.

The strategy aims to strengthen human development, boost economic competitiveness and quality infrastructure and sustain natural resources and ecosystems, and strengthen disaster resilience.

The CSP was developed through consultations with the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) as the lead implementing agency as well as the Department of Finance (DOF), other government agencies, the private sector, and civil society.

To date, the ADB is the Philippines' second largest source and the top multilateral development partner among 19 official development assistance (ODA) providers in the country.

Data from the DOF showed that as of June 2024, ADB's total net commitment to the Philippines amounts to USD8.84 billion, consisting of 26 ODA loans and 29 grants.

These include the Bataan-Cavite Interlink Bridge, the Malolos-Clark Railway Project, and the South Commuter Railway Project.

The ADB also supported the country through its Climate Change Action Program Subprogram 1, which made the Philippines a pioneer of its first-ever policy-based loan dedicated to climate action.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

[Subic Freeport seeks carbon-neutral status](#)

By: E.H. Edejer

A senior official of the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority (SBMA) said on Wednesday, September 11, that the Subic agency will reduce greenhouse gas emissions here and bring it to zero balance within 16 years under a program to make Subic the country's first carbon-neutral economic zone.

SBMA Ecology Center manager Amethya dela Llana said Subic agency will balance out carbon emissions by increasing the capacity of Subic's natural ecosystem to absorb greenhouse gases and making carbon-neutrality SBMA's "new way of life."

Dela Llana, who is also SBMA OIC Senior Deputy Administrator for Regulatory, read the agency's Declaration of Carbon Neutrality during the opening of the two-day Central Luzon Sustainable Tourism Summit at the Subic Bay Exhibition and Convention Center here on Wednesday.

She pointed out that SBMA's pledge for carbon neutrality was made in support of the government's 2021 commitment to the Paris Agreement on Climate Change for a 75% reduction of greenhouse gases under the first nationally-determined contribution.

The Subic Bay Freeport, which is located in part in a former military reservation, is now a bustling economic zone with 1,800 business locators, more than 158,000 workers and thousands of residents located in three housing areas.

Dela Llana said that to reduce Subic's carbon footprint, the SBMA utilize as natural carbon sinks the 10,000-hectare Subic Watershed Forest Reserve, some 60 hectares of wetlands and mangroves, and seagrass beds located in the bay area.

She added the SBMA will protect, restore, and expand Subic's natural ecosystem, "so it can do what it does best – capturing carbon emissions."

The SBMA also committed to establish a roadmap for net zero-carbon buildings inside the Subic Bay Freeport Zone; develop a set of supporting incentives and programs that will enable Subic business locators to achieve net-zero targets; and use emerging technologies leveraging renewable energy, Dela Llana also said.

A pioneering project under this program was revealed previously by SBMA Chairman and Administrator Jose Aliño during the "Build Better More" Infrastructure Forum held in July at the New Clark City in Capas, Tarlac.

This is the SBMA's P250-million Carbon Neutral Port project, which Aliño said will make Subic the first Philippine port with shore power connection for ships. The shore power system, he said, will cut air pollution from ships at berth by 95% by providing shoreside electrical power to a ship at berth while its main and auxiliary engines are shut down.

He said Phase 1 of the project will be undertaken at Subic's New Container Terminal in 2025, while Phase 2 will cover both the Naval Supply Depot and Ship Repair Facility from 2026 to 2027.

Other projects in the pipeline for Subic's carbon-neutral program will involve decarbonizing buildings and transportation, adopting low-carbon infrastructure designs, energy efficiency and conservation, leveraging renewable energy sources, as well as solid waste and waste water management, Aliño said.

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DAILY TRIBUNE

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Bamboo has long been recognized as a tool in the fight against climate change due to its ability to sequester carbon dioxide. As a fast-growing plant, bamboo absorbs more carbon than most tree species, which helps reduce greenhouse gas emissions and supports the country's commitments under the Paris Agreement. Studies show that bamboo captures over 5 tons of carbon dioxide per hectare annually.

Beyond carbon sequestration, bamboo's extensive root system prevents soil erosion and enhances water retention, making it a valuable tool in disaster risk reduction, especially in flood-prone and drought-affected areas.

The Philippines ranks as the sixth-largest exporter of bamboo in the world, with bamboo stands covering between 39,000 and 53,000 hectares.

As part of the National Greening Program and the country's reforestation efforts, bamboo is increasingly used to rehabilitate degraded lands and improve biodiversity. The Department of Environment and Natural Resources plans to cover 16,867 hectares nationwide with bamboo trees.

"The versatility of bamboo makes it an ideal ally in our fight against climate change," said Secretary Robert E.A. Borje, vice chairperson and executive director of the Climate Change Commission. "Bamboo serves as a carbon sink and contributes to disaster risk reduction. It strengthens community resilience by providing sustainable livelihoods, reducing the need for wood-based products and preventing deforestation."

Borje further emphasized that "the strategic integration of bamboo in national and local climate initiatives enhances our mitigation and adaptation efforts and empowers communities, especially in rural areas. Through bamboo cultivation, we create economic opportunities and build resilience against the adverse effects of climate change."

Bamboo offers significant economic opportunities as a renewable and versatile material used in construction, furniture, handicrafts, and as an alternative to single-use plastics.

The Sustainability Slingshot and Bamboo Innovation Initiative, led by Bukidnon 1st District Representative Jose Manuel "Joeman" F. Alba, focuses on engineered bamboo and bamboo charcoal production. This initiative supports local processing industries, creates jobs and provides income streams for farmers and artisans.

“By harnessing the transformative power of bamboo innovation and trade, we can cultivate prosperity from the roots up, lifting communities out of poverty and building a sustainable future for all,” Alba said.

This year’s celebration of Philippine Bamboo Month, themed “Buhay Kawayan: Haligi ng Industriya’t Kalikasan, Pag-asa sa Kinabukasan,” highlights bamboo’s crucial role in driving economic development and addressing environmental challenges.

Car-free Sundays lead way in making sustainable cities

By: Shaira Mae Cabañas

Metro Manila, one of the most densely populated cities in the world, has long struggled with urban challenges. The metro's congested streets contribute to environmental degradation and reduce residents' quality of life.

Manila placed 60th out of 65 cities in the Urban Mobility Readiness Index 2023. The index assesses the readiness of cities for future mobility trends across social impact, infrastructure, market attractiveness, system efficiency and innovation. With over 506,000 registered vehicles, Metro Manila experiences crippling traffic jams, especially during peak hours.

However, the region's total vehicle count far exceeds that number. According to the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority, Metro Manila now has 3.6 million vehicles navigating a road network that spans only 5,000 kilometers. In EDSA alone, over 400,000 vehicles traverse the highway daily, even though its carrying capacity is only designed for 300,000 vehicles.

This excessive volume worsens traffic congestion, hampering productivity and causing billions of pesos in economic losses annually. Commuters spend an average of 16 days per year stuck in traffic, costing them around P100,000 annually in lost income, according to a study by the Boston Consulting Group — a problem exacerbated by the region's growing population.

While private cars dominate the roads, they transport only a small percentage of passengers. In contrast, public transportation — such as jeepneys, buses and trains — serves a significant portion of daily commuters. For example, the average daily ridership of MRT-3 in 2023 reached 357,198 passengers. Despite the high demand for public transit, the imbalance persists.

The constant flow of vehicles emitting pollutants has made Metro Manila a hotspot for air pollution. The Department of Environment and Natural Resources reported that the National Capital Region consistently exceeds safe limits for pollutants like particulate matter, especially PM 2.5 and PM 10 — tiny particles or droplets in the air small enough to be inhaled into the lungs or even enter the bloodstream — resulting in respiratory and cardiovascular diseases. Pollution-related illnesses including asthma, bronchitis and heart disease pose a serious risk, particularly to the next generation and the elderly.

The Department of Transportation (DoTr) has launched a series of programs aimed to modernize and transform the public transport system. These programs focus on sustainable, efficient and inclusive mobility options for Metro Manila residents. These include the Public Transport Modernization Program, EDSA Busway, the Active Transport Program and the EDSA Greenways Project.

"We manage the construction of transport projects — from railways to airports and seaports and road infrastructures. Much of our focus are ordinary commuters who rely on public transport — jeepneys, buses, trains, taxis and today's most popular ride — motorcycle taxis," said DoTr Secretary Jaime J. Bautista at a recent academic event.

To complement these programs, Metro Manila has established car-free zones in key areas. Limiting vehicle access and promoting active transport effectively reduce pollution, improve mobility and enhance public health.

Every Sunday, areas including Roxas Boulevard and Intramuros in Manila, People's Streets in Pasig, Fifth Avenue in Bonifacio Global City, Taguig, Ayala Avenue in Makati, Greenfield District in Mandaluyong, Spectrum Midway in Filinvest, Muntinlupa and the University of the Philippines in Diliman, Quezon City, transform into car-free zones. These spaces allow residents to walk, cycle and engage in outdoor activities without traffic and pollution hazards. Local government units have improved bike lanes and pedestrian-friendly infrastructure to provide safe alternatives to car use.

Car-free zones also encourage physical activity, offering residents a safer, cleaner environment for walking and cycling. With fewer cars on the streets, the risk of road accidents decreases, and the air becomes more breathable, reducing the occurrence of respiratory diseases. Promoting active lifestyles has long-term benefits in addressing obesity and other health conditions tied to inactivity.

Beyond car-free Sundays, the Climate Change Commission (CCC) advocates for more permanent car-free spaces across Metro Manila. Integrating these zones into the metro's urban design will create healthier, more livable neighborhoods. The CCC also pushes for efficient public transportation systems to reduce reliance on private vehicles and provide sustainable mobility solutions.

CCC: Doctors are climate allies

The Climate Change Commission (CCC) recognized doctors as crucial allies in the fight against climate change during a national convention, emphasizing their vital role in preparing communities for climate disasters and emergencies.

At the recent Midyear Convention of the Philippine College of Chest Physicians (PCCP), hosted by its Southern Mindanao Chapter, the CCC highlighted the need to address climate change through intersectional approaches and sustainable adaptation strategies.

“Medical professionals are uniquely positioned to identify, respond to and prevent health issues worsened by climate change. Together, we can build stronger, more climate-adaptive healthcare systems that protect our people, especially the most vulnerable, from the growing threats of a changing climate,” said CCC vice chairperson and executive director Robert E.A. Borje.

CCC Commissioner Rachel Anne S. Herrera said that doctors understand the links between health outcomes and environmental factors, which shows that combating climate change requires a collective effort.

“We must make our healthcare system more climate-resilient. With stakeholders and frontliners like you on our side, we can achieve this goal,” she said.

“We aim to reduce patient mortality from climate-sensitive diseases by strengthening primary care, improving healthcare accessibility, availability, and affordability,” Herrera added.

The PCCP has consistently engaged with climate change issues in the Philippines and worldwide, integrating climate advocacy into its organizational priorities. The CCC values their active participation in government-led climate adaptation and mitigation efforts, particularly since discussions on the links between health and climate often do not take center stage in climate policy.

“Climate change’s impact on our health and health infrastructure often gets overlooked, even though its implications are significant,” Herrera said. “These connections aren’t always immediate or apparent. It’s difficult for patients to link a chronic illness that emerges weeks after record flooding to the experience of surviving a super typhoon.”

Guardians of the sky: Protecting ozone layer for climate health

By: Rafael De Leon

Our planet's protectors are losing strength. In today's world, where we increasingly experience intense heat, the depletion of the ozone layer threatens to intensify these extreme temperatures. The ozone layer shields all life on Earth from the sun's harmful radiation, but human activities are destroying this vital barrier.

The ozone layer, a thin part of Earth's atmosphere, absorbs harmful ultraviolet (UV) radiation and prevents it from reaching the planet's surface, where it could damage living organisms. However, certain chemicals are rapidly depleting this protective layer.

Chlorofluorocarbon (CFC), used in air conditioning, refrigeration and aerosol propellants, is a major contributor to ozone depletion. Halon in fire extinguishers and carbon tetrachloride in dry cleaning and solvents also weaken the ozone layer. In agriculture, fertilizers and pesticides release methyl bromide and nitrous oxide, accelerating ozone layer damage. Bromine atoms, similar to chlorine, further degrade the ozone layer, although chlorine from swimming pools does not contribute to this depletion.

If we fail to protect the ozone layer, ongoing damage will further harm ecosystems and pose serious health risks. The worsening climate change will lead to droughts, impacting habitats, biodiversity, forests, and crops, which act as carbon sinks and vital food sources. Health risks such as skin cancers, cataracts, and other conditions will increase due to heightened UV radiation exposure.

Experts recognized the dangers of ozone-depleting substances (ODS) and established the Montreal Protocol, a global agreement aimed at eliminating these harmful chemicals. The Protocol controls the production and consumption of ODS, seeking their complete eradication.

In addition to the Montreal Protocol, sustainable practices play a crucial role in protecting the ozone layer. Electric vehicles, public transit and reduced use of harmful chemical fertilizers help lower emissions of ozone-depleting pollutants. Proper disposal of old refrigerators and air conditioners prevents the release of hazardous chemicals into the atmosphere. Reforestation and forest conservation efforts strengthen our natural carbon sinks, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and supporting atmospheric health.

These actions complement the Montreal Protocol's objectives, enhancing the recovery of the ozone layer while addressing broader ecological challenges such as climate change. Reducing ODS aids in ozone recovery and limits global warming by cutting harmful gases that contribute to both issues.

As we observe the International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer, we must remember that our protective shield depends on our actions. By adopting sustainable

practices, we can safeguard the ozone layer and combat the growing threat of climate change, ensuring the planet's long-term health.

“The recovery of the ozone layer is an inspiring example of how global collaboration, anchored on decisive policies and sustained commitment, can heal our planet. But we cannot afford to be complacent. Our collective actions today will determine the future of our next generations,” said Secretary Robert E.A. Borje, vice chairperson and executive director of the Climate Change Commission.

The United Nations General Assembly proclaimed 16 September as the International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer to mark the signing of the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer in 1987.

“Our continued commitment to the Montreal Protocol must be accompanied by our pursuit of broader climate action, including protecting biodiversity, restoring ecosystems and promoting sustainable practices. This is how we will build a truly climate-resilient future,” Borje emphasized.

PHILIPPINE INFORMATION AGENCY

[CCC highlights PH NDC progress at ADB regional workshop](#)

At the Asian Development Bank's (ADB) NDC Advance Regional Workshop, Commissioner Rachel Anne Herrera of the Climate Change Commission (CCC) highlighted the Philippines' ambitious climate targets and implementation strategies.

The recently concluded three-day event gathered climate experts and policymakers from across Asia and the Pacific to discuss effective implementation of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).

NDCs are climate action plans for reducing emissions and adapting to climate impacts, updated every five years by each Party to the Paris Agreement. The Philippines submitted in April 2021 its initial Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC), aiming for a 75% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from 2020 to 2030 across crucial sectors such as agriculture, waste, industry, and energy. Of this target, 2.71% is unconditional, meaning it will be achieved using national resources alone, while 72.29% is conditional that will depend on support from developed countries through climate finance, technology transfer, and capacity building.

"We are committed to bold action but recognize the need for global cooperation," Herrera stated.

In her address during the plenary opening session, Herrera outlined the Philippines' comprehensive climate approach. The CCC, with stakeholder support, has developed an NDC Implementation Plan and an NDC Gender Analysis and Action Plan to coordinate efforts across all sectors. The CCC is also developing an NDC Partnership Plan to leverage support for implementation, monitoring and evaluation (M&E), and capacity-building. These initiatives reflect a broader strategy that prioritizes adaptation while pursuing mitigation for its co-benefits.

Herrera emphasized the urgent need for climate finance, estimating that US\$ 72 billion is required for priority climate measures. This amount highlights the scale of the challenge facing the Philippines and other developing nations in the region.

She also presented projections of climate change's potential economic impact. "Our analysis shows that climate change could affect 7.6% of the Philippines' GDP by 2030, escalating to 13.6% by 2040," Herrera warned. "These figures underline the critical importance of collective action. Events like this build the partnerships and knowledge base needed to achieve our ambitious climate goals."

The workshop provided the Philippines a platform to share its experiences and learn from regional peers.

Arnold Grant Belver of the CCC Policy Research and Development Division detailed the Philippine vision and early experience in designing an effective NDC. He explained the development of the NDC Implementation Plan and emphasized the crucial need for international support in finance, capacity, and technology development and transfer.

The CCC's participation underscores the Philippines' proactive stance on climate action and its emerging leadership role in regional climate initiatives.

"As we advance our NDC implementation, collaboration and partnership remain critical. We must secure the future of vulnerable communities and ensure that no one is left behind in the global fight against climate change. The Philippines is committed to fostering regional cooperation to build resilience, enhance capacity, and mobilize the resources necessary to meet our collective climate goals," said CCC Vice Chairperson and Executive Director Robert E.A. Borje.

As countries in the Asia-Pacific work to enhance their NDCs, the Philippines' comprehensive approach to planning, financing, and monitoring climate action offers valuable insights for nations facing similar challenges.

For more information on the CCC's climate mainstreaming activities, visit www.climate.gov.ph and www.facebook.com/CCCPhl. (CCC)

MINDANAO TIMES

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At the recent Midyear Convention of the Philippine College of Chest Physicians (PCCP), hosted by its Southern Mindanao Chapter (PCCP SMC), the CCC highlighted the need to address climate change through intersectional approaches and sustainable adaptation strategies. CCC Commissioner Rachel Anne S. Herrera emphasized that the expertise of medical professionals strengthens these efforts.

“Climate change affects human health both directly and indirectly,” Herrera said. “Extreme weather events increase the risk of vector-borne diseases, waterborne infections, and heat-related disorders.”

She stressed that doctors understand the links between health outcomes and environmental factors, which shows that combating climate change requires a collective effort. “We must make our healthcare system more climate-resilient,” Herrera stated. “With stakeholders and frontliners like you on our side, we can achieve this goal.”

She further noted, “We aim to reduce patient mortality from climate-sensitive diseases by strengthening primary care, improving healthcare accessibility, availability, and affordability.”

The annual convention brought together pulmonologists from across the Philippines, along with internists, family medicine physicians, general practitioners, Department of Health personnel, and residents and fellows from pulmonary medicine training institutions.

The PCCP has consistently engaged with climate change issues in the Philippines and worldwide, integrating climate advocacy into its organizational priorities. The CCC values their active participation in government-led climate adaptation and mitigation efforts, particularly since discussions on the links between health and climate often do not take center stage in climate policy.

“Climate change’s impact on our health and health infrastructure often gets overlooked, even though its implications are significant,” Herrera said. “These connections aren’t always immediate or apparent. It’s difficult for patients to link a chronic illness that emerges weeks after record flooding to the experience of surviving a super typhoon.”

The CCC is committed to supporting medical professionals and public health experts in pushing for policies that address the intersection of climate change and health.

“Medical professionals are uniquely positioned to identify, respond to, and prevent health issues worsened by climate change. Together, we can build stronger, more climate-adaptive healthcare systems that protect our people, especially the most vulnerable, from the growing threats of a changing climate,” said CCC vice chairperson and executive director Robert E.A. Borje.

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