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THE PHILIPPINE STAR

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Information and Knowledge Management Division

BUSINESS MIRROR

[China opposes bid to require nations to protect oceans](#)

By: Malou Talosig-Bartolome

China has opposed efforts by small island nations to require coastal states to protect the oceans and seas to stop the worsening effects of climate change.

Small islands in the Pacific such as Palau, The Bahamas, Vanuatu, Tuvalu, Antigua and Barbuda, are facing the existential threat of rising sea levels caused by climate change.

The island nations formed the Commission of Small Island States on Climate Change and International Law (COCIS) and sought for an advisory opinion of the United Nations maritime tribunal, the International Tribunal on the Law of the Seas (ITLOS), on the obligations of countries to combat climate change.

COCIS argued that ocean warming and ocean acidification have caused extreme weather disturbances that impact health, ecosystems, infrastructure, livelihoods and food all over the world.

In this regard, COCIS wants the ITLOS to determine the specific obligations of the members of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) to prevent, reduce and control pollution of the marine environment, as well as protect and preserve the marine environment to stop ocean warming, sea level rise and acidification.

It cited the ITLOS' Statute that part of its mandate is to issue advisory opinion on provisions related to the implementation of UNCLOS, regarded as the Constitution for the oceans.

COCIS argued that based on the 1999 South China Sea arbitration award, which the Philippines won against China, part of the general obligation of the coastal states is to "ensure that activities within their jurisdiction or control respect the environment of other states or of areas beyond national control."

Since early this month, the seven-member tribunal has been conducting hearings in its courtroom in Hamburg, Germany. Aside from COCIS, other countries and international organizations were allowed to provide inputs to the small islands' request.

Last Friday, China appeared before the Tribunal and expressed its opposition to the COCIS bid.

ITLOS, their diplomats argued, lacks jurisdiction to issue an advisory opinion.

“The full Tribunal does not have advisory competence. The competence of the Tribunal derives from the consent of States as reflected in the authorization given by the Tribunal’s constituent documents. As a matter of fact, UNCLOS and its Annexes, including the Statute of ITLOS (“Statute”), do not confer advisory jurisdiction on the full Tribunal,” Ma Xinmin, Director-General, Department of Treaty and Law, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said.

China also took issue with the arguments of COCIS and other countries that UNCLOS members are obliged to protect the marine environment as cited in the South China Sea arbitration ruling.

“China notices that some States mentioned the so-called South China Sea arbitration awards in their written and oral statements. The position of China on this issue is clear and consistent. The arbitral tribunal in the South China Sea arbitration acted ultra vires, erred in fact finding, misinterpreted and perverted the law in adjudication. The so-called “awards” are null and void and should not be invoked as a legal basis,” Ma stressed.

The Chinese diplomat said while China “fully empathizes with the practical difficulties faced by many developing countries, including island States, in coping with climate change,” Beijing thinks that other international laws, such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, Kyoto Protocol and Paris Agreement are the appropriate international laws that should address climate change.

CNN

[ANALYSIS: World leaders gather at the UN this week. Here's what to watch for](#)

By: Richard Roth

After thousands of speeches, meetings, and receptions next week at the UNGA summit, the United Nations is prepared to announce World Peace at the end of the global event — err, no.

If only. The truth is, topics at the two-week summit appear more numerous, volatile and hard-to-solve than before any other UN General Assembly: Russia's war in Ukraine, lethal floods in Libya, multiple coups on the African continent, North versus South economic funding, violent crisis in Haiti, and climate change, to name a few.

Potentially weakening the impact of the event itself is the fact that US President Joe Biden is to be the only leader of the permanent five members of the UN Security Council to attend. French President Emmanuel Macron is staying home ready to greet King Charles and work on deteriorating situations from Niger to Sudan. British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak too has decided to skip – a rarity for his country – and Russian President Vladimir Putin now risks arrest when he travels. Chinese leader Xi Jinping never comes. (Some UN old hands say having one out of five is nothing unusual in the history of the UNGA).

Nevertheless, 140 heads of state and government are scheduled to attend. Six vice presidents, four deputy prime ministers and over 30 ministers of state and chiefs of delegations will also stand at the rostrum to deliver remarks for their nations. Even if you're not a regular UN observer, consider tuning in to UNTV on Tuesday, when Brazil kicks off the speechmaking followed by the US, Ukraine and Cuba, among others.

In a first for the annual summit, Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelensky (<https://www.cnn.com/world/europe/ukraine>) will be attending in person. Previously, he has appeared on video monitors in the General Assembly Hall. He is also expected to speak with Biden in Washington on Thursday.

Global disputes between the big powers of the UN are likely to hurt any chance of improving relations and making progress on several issues. Swiss Ambassador Pascale Baeriswyl noted a rising rivalry between the United States and China in the chamber. And advocacy group Human Rights Watch urged nations not to get distracted by politics but to “keep human rights front and center during the week's events.”

“The week is an opportunity for smaller countries for the world to lay out their priorities in front of us. I don’t see the week as being a competition between big powers,” US Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield said last week.

But at a special Ukraine meeting at the Security Council table on Wednesday, prepare for Zelensky to take on Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, should he attend this ministerial meeting. There are also private one-on-one sessions between UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres and Russia, Ukraine and Turkey. The UN would like to get Russia back into the Black Sea grain deal. But Russia and Ukraine will not meet together here in New York.

“It is extremely important to fight those that are abusing their authority to limit democracy,” Guterres told reporters last week. But one Security Council diplomat has said Russia already trampled on the UN charter by invading neighboring Ukraine.

Monday will feature lots of debate on the awfully named Sustainable Development Goals, or SDGs: seventeen different goals established years ago to improve poverty, education and health topics. Only 15 percent of the necessary funding is in place to reach those goals, one ambassador told CNN.

The public, normally allowed to tour the headquarters, is not welcome inside during the big week. Demonstrators may shout and wave signs nearby, but they won’t be heard in the limousines slipping in and out of the UN compound.

Every year, UNGA attracts some unique outsiders (K-pop mega stars BTS thrilled fans by cavorting in the Assembly Hall in 2021). This time around, tennis great Roger Federer is expected be onsite, and Prince William and his wife Catherine, Princess of Wales, will meet the UN Secretary-General Monday afternoon in promotion of William’s Earthshot climate effort.

Thus, UNGA can now be called the Royal Rumble. But nobody slams a diplomatic face into a turnbuckle. Only a week or more of verbal sparring, as the world looks for action on a long roster of crises.

GMA

[Climate change hitting fight against AIDS, TB and malaria —Global Fund](#)

By: Jennifer Rigby

Climate change and conflict are hitting efforts to tackle three of the world's deadliest infectious diseases, the head of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria has warned.

International initiatives to fight the diseases have largely recovered after being badly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, according to the Fund's 2023 results report released on Monday.

But the increasing challenges of climate change and conflict mean the world is likely to miss the target of putting an end to AIDS, TB and malaria by 2030 without "extraordinary steps", said Peter Sands, executive director of the Global Fund.

There are positives, he said. For example, in 2022, 6.7 million people were treated for TB in the countries where the Global Fund invests, more than ever before, and 1.4 million more people than in the previous year. The Fund also helped put 24.5 million people on antiretroviral therapy for HIV, and distributed 220 million mosquito nets.

But in a statement accompanying the report, the Fund said that getting back on track after the pandemic had been made "much more challenging by a combination of interconnected and colliding crises", including climate change.

For example, malaria is spreading to highland parts of Africa that were previously too cold for the mosquito carrying the disease-causing parasite. Extreme weather events like floods are overwhelming health services, displacing communities, causing upsurges in infection and interrupting treatment in many different places, the report said. In countries including Sudan, Ukraine, Afghanistan and Myanmar, simply reaching vulnerable communities has also been immensely challenging due to insecurity, it added.

But Sands said there was still hope, in part due to innovative prevention and diagnostic tools. This week, there is a high-level meeting on TB at the UN General Assembly, and advocates hope for more of a focus on the disease.

RAPPLER

[\[Opinion\] Don't sleep on the NAP: The PH's climate adaptation plan](#)

By: John Leo Algo

“Think globally, act locally” has served as words of wisdom for the environmental movement for decades.

In the case of the climate crisis, many experts have said that the focus of solutions is now shifting from the global negotiating table to national discourse. This is true for the Philippines, whose government is now in the process of finalizing many of the plans that would shape its climate action for decades to come.

One such plan is the National Adaptation Plan (NAP), which will guide national strategies to adjust to the changing climate. It aims to specifically enhance our capacities to adapt and reduce our vulnerability to climate change impacts, and integrate adaptation into other national climate and development plans, new or existing.

It is arguably the most climate policy-making document that the Philippines must properly develop and implement, given our status as one of the countries at highest risk to said crisis. Adaptation has repeatedly been mentioned as the “anchor strategy” for addressing this issue and is expected to continue being so amid projected worsening impacts, from higher sea levels to more intense droughts.

The NAP is expected to be finalized as early as the next round of climate talks this November in Dubai; it would also serve as a negotiating tool to secure from developed countries the needed finance, technologies, and capacity-building mechanisms to implement it.

While the urgency of finishing said plan cannot be understated, all efforts must be exercised to ensure it is as comprehensive, clear, and sustainable as possible. With that in mind, there are a few important points that must be considered in the finalization of the NAP.

Synergy with mitigation

Adaptation and mitigation solutions are not always isolated from one another. For example, forests are important for multiple purposes, such as reducing the likelihood of floods, provide livelihoods for nearby communities, and lower the temperatures within its vicinity. At the same time, it is also vital for mitigation, as it is the main natural means of removing from the atmosphere excess carbon dioxide, the most commonly-emitted greenhouse gas (GHG) that triggers the climate crisis.

As unfortunate and unjust as it is, developing countries like the Philippines still have to deal with the reality that the global funding for enacting climate solutions is not as accessible as it should be. Actions cannot be delayed, not with strong typhoons and an El Niño to be expected in the final months of the year.

This is why it is important for all the identified mitigation sectors known as AWITFE (agriculture, waste, industry, transport, forestry and land use, energy) to also be among the priority sectors in the NAP. Doing so would allow the nation to maximize available resources to address urgent impacts, addressing both adaptation and mitigation needs that are aligned with our pursuit of national sustainable development.

Synchronized with existing plans

There are already existing national strategies that involve adaptation in the Philippines. These include the National Climate Change Action Plan (NCCAP), which outlines specific programs and strategies for climate action on key sectors such as food and water security, ecological stability, and climate-friendly industries and services until 2028.

As NAP is also a self-determined commitment of what the country intends for its adaptation measures, it is necessary for this plan to be harmonized with existing national strategies. This means that it should not worsen existing challenges with the implementation of NCCAP and the corresponding Local CCAPs; for the latter, these include lack of technical capacities among many highly-vulnerable municipalities, lack of access or proper use of available funding, and shortcomings in tracking climate-related spending.

Given its current approach to climate action previously mentioned, it also means that the NAP must be harmonized with existing mitigation strategies. This includes the Nationally Determined Contributions, another self-determined plan wherein the nation committed to reduce its GHG emissions by 75% within the current decade, albeit with support from developed countries.

Sustainable and inclusive

Adaptation, just like any aspect of climate action, is a long-term approach. While there are economic, social, and environmental outcomes that need to be attained within the next few months or years, assessing the true impacts of adaptation interventions would take decades of enforcement, monitoring, and evaluation.

This means that amid changes in governing personnel and generations of participating stakeholders for the next few decades, the NAP must live up to the “whole-of-society”

approach that has been used in other climate-related plans. In line with the “think globally, act locally” mantra, the empowerment and active participation of all Filipinos, especially the most vulnerable peoples, is an imperative the government cannot ignore.

Two of the most vulnerable groups whose participation is critical for the NAP (and other Philippine climate and development plans) are indigenous peoples and the youth. They cannot be treated as populations that are either isolated from decision-making process or incapable of enacting solutions; among with other similar groups, they must be supported and empowered to participate in all facets of its implementation, from consultations and forums to implementing and monitoring actions on the ground.

When it comes to the most critical items on the current Philippine green agenda, we should not sleep on the NAP. We cannot measure what we will truly be missing otherwise.

SUNSTAR

[A stern advice from the world body](#)

By: Benjie R. Pangan

In an emphatic statement, United Nations Secretary General Antonio Gutierrez announced that our planet is now entering the global boiling point, from global warming as temperatures rise to unprecedented high especially July this year.

This is an alarming situation but we need no extra proof to know that indeed the heat we have experienced, and continues to experience is becoming unbearable especially for the sickly and weak among us.

The younger ones are most likely to suffer from various diseases especially asthma and severe colds and pain and no palliatives can ease the suffering they encounter.

Thus declared Gutierrez: Humanity is in the hot seat. Climate change is here. It is terrifying. And it is just the beginning. The era of global warming has ended, the era of global boiling has arrived. The air is unbearable. The heat is unbearable. And the level of fossil fuel profits and climate inaction is unacceptable.

Here in the Philippines, figures of the recorded temperatures are simply mind-boggling: 60 degrees Celsius in Casiguran, Aurora; 45 degrees Celsius in Calapan, Oriental Mindoro, Tuguegarao and NAIA in Pasay-43 degrees Celsius and other areas registered high temperature ratings. Whew!

Why, we ask, would this be (hot, very hot) when we experience heavy rainfall and strong winds? Where do these high temperature ratings come from?

The data we all need are well-known to us. Let us therefore savor and appreciate these in our daily battle against the ill effects of climate change. Either we swim or sink and perish.

In sum, we are in a frantic race toward solving the hazardous effect of global boiling or else...

The Philippines is one of the most vulnerable to climate change risks, a so-called carbon sink country.

Gutierrez advises that we should unite and act now before it becomes too late.

Governments must protect children and youth from climate crisis

By: Joshua Villalobos

As the rainy season starts in the Philippines, Filipinos will be again soaked by the harsh reality where floods, diseases, destruction of homes, and strong typhoons are part of the the norm as we live in an era of worsening climate crisis.

We know that climate change is because of global warming.

But as we enter an epoch where typhoons become stronger, droughts are more devastating, and their impact on vulnerable countries and communities become harsher, the United Nations Secretary-General called it “global boiling”

Winners and losers

Yes, even in times of crisis, there are still winners.

This is the industry that birthed this crisis in the first place. The planet-wrecking industry continues to make off-the-chart profits at the expense of vulnerable communities and the future of children and young people.

The segments of our society who are already vulnerable and disadvantaged from the beginning are the most affected during times like these.

This is why the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child recently released authoritative guidance for states to protect the rights of children for a healthy and balanced environment, particularly in the context of climate change.

The UN Committee also called on the states to not only protect the rights of children today but also in the foreseeable future. This means mitigating future damage to the environment to ensure that youth, children, and future generations will still enjoy a healthy and livable planet.

There has been a consensus among the scientific community that children and young people are the biggest casualties of the climate crisis.

But not just victims

But it is also important to recognize that youth and children are not just victims of the climate crisis, but also leaders, who have a prophetic voice - as the voice of the future.

Before the pandemic hindered big gatherings and mobilizations, children and youth went to the streets to demand action from government leaders to take decisive action in the fight against climate change.

A recent document from one of the biggest oil and gas companies revealed that they feared the protests might bring an end to their industry.

Protect children, phase-out fossil fuel

The problem of climate change is simple arithmetic a child can understand.

But it's interesting why governments can't make the most humane, logical, and obvious thing to do.

If governments are indeed sincere about their vocal commitments to protect children's rights, they will address the biggest threat against them - climate change.*

THE MANILA TIMES

Climate change a risk to PH financial sector

By: Niña Myka Pauline Arceo

The growing impact of climate change could pose a significant risk to the stability of the local financial sector, regulators noted in a policy draft.

A consultation document released by the inter-agency Financial Sector Forum (FSF) said that the Philippines was particularly at risk from natural disasters, being located in the Pacific Ring of Fire and regularly visited by destructive storms, among others.

"The disruptive effects of climate-related disasters have the potential to adversely affect production and the economy more broadly," added the FSF, which is composed of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, Securities and Exchange Commission, Insurance Commission, and the Philippine Deposit Insurance Corp.

It noted that the country had set out policy responses to deal with the effects of climate change, including committing to a 75-percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030.

Given the financing challenges involved, the FSF said that it was setting up "an extensive engagement in greening" the local financial sector.

"The overall objective of the program is to advance the financial sector's understanding and management of climate-related risks, while also growing sustainable finance opportunities," it said.

"A key component focuses on supporting efforts to develop a sustainable finance taxonomy for the financial sector with a view to mobilizing and scale sustainable finance and would be significantly informed by the Philippine's Sustainable Finance Roadmap and Sustainable Finance Guiding Principles," it added.

The establishment of the taxonomy, it noted, would help companies, investors, financial institutions and others to make informed decisions. Supporting policies and incentives will also boost financial flows that can be directed towards environmental and socially sustainable objectives.

The consultation paper, for which comments have been solicited up to October 6 this year, involves recommendations for the design of the Philippines Sustainable Finance Taxonomy Guidelines (STFG).

The proposals were said to have been drawn from experiences by other countries and regions, among others, and also extensively draws on the Association of Southeast Asian Nation's framework.

"Initially, the SFTG will focus on the objectives of climate change mitigation and climate change adaptation, with a view to adding biodiversity and circular economy, as well as potential social objectives in future iterations," the FSF said.

"Other environmental and social considerations are proposed to be considered through additional screening based on the 'do no significant harm' principle, and minimum social safeguards appropriate to the Philippines context," it added.

Among others, certain "prohibited activities" have been proposed for exclusion. A transition category is also on the table and guide questions and decision trees have also been included to guide users.

The FSF said that particular focus had been given to the significant role of MSMEs in the economy and it thus sought feedback on how these could benefit.

"Financial inclusion considerations are also critical, ensuring that the impact of a taxonomy can bring along all members of society in its sustainability journey," it added.

Lastly, it said that FSF members were also considering potential regulatory measures to "activate" the potential of the taxonomy to increase and redirect fund flows.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

The ASEAN Business and Investment Summit 2023

By: Mike Toledo

The ASEAN Business Advisory Council (ABAC) is the apex private sector body of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and was established by the ASEAN heads of state and government at the 7th ASEAN Summit in November 2001 in Brunei.

This is not to be confused with the APEC Business Advisory Council, which is also known as ABAC. (Usually, the ASEAN Business Advisory Council is known as ASEAN-BAC, but for brevity we will use ABAC here).

Launched in April 2003, ABAC was set up with the mandate to provide private-sector feedback and guidance to boost ASEAN's efforts towards economic integration.

Aside from providing private-sector feedback on the implementation of ASEAN economic cooperation, the Council also identifies priority areas for consideration of the ASEAN Leaders.

Accordingly, ABAC's activities are primarily focused on reviewing and identifying issues to facilitate and promote economic cooperation and integration.

In the Philippines, ABAC is composed of Joey Concepcion, GO Negosyo founder and Presidential Adviser for Entrepreneurship, who served as the ABAC chairman in 2017; George Barcelon, chairman of the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry; and Michael Tan, president of the LT Group.

Just recently, ABAC convened the ASEAN Business and Investment Summit 2023 (ABIS 2023) in Jakarta, Indonesia, with the theme of "ASEAN Centrality: Innovating Towards Greater Inclusivity."

It brought together more than 2,000 world leaders, CEOs and senior executives representing multinational and regional corporations. ABIS 2023 seeks to instill business confidence in the growth potential of the region amid global headwinds, lingering geopolitical tensions, and fragmentation of the global economy.

ABIS believes that the amplification of private-sector voices is vital to drive policy reforms and position ASEAN at the epicenter of global economic interconnectedness.

Among the world leaders who attended the summit were: Rishi Sunak, the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom; Fumio Kishida, the Prime Minister of Japan; Pham Minh

Chinh, the Prime Minister of Vietnam; Tony Blair, the former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom; Sonexay Siphadone, the Prime Minister of Laos; and Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr., President of the Philippines, together with First Lady Louise “Liza” Araneta Marcos.

The President and the First Lady were, of course, joined by House Speaker Martin Romualdez, as well as Trade Secretary Fred Pascual. Aside from Concepcion and Barcelon, other members of the Philippine delegation were former Foreign Affairs Secretary and Ambassador Delia Albert, former Agriculture Secretary Dr. William Dar, and myself.

Our Philippine Ambassador to the United States Jose Manuel “Babe” Romualdez was also present to give support to the President.

While in Jakarta, I also wore my hat, so to speak, as chairman of the Chamber of Mines of the Philippines. Aside from being able to voice out some points on mining and mineral processing in the Philippines, I was also able to discuss with the President: One, that mining in the Philippines is robust and this, to a large measure, is due to the fact that under the Marcos Jr. administration there is clarity, predictability, and transparency — clarity, because President Marcos Jr. and his economic managers have unequivocally identified mining as an industry that will help the country recover quickly from the ravages of the pandemic; predictability or consistency, because the mining law, its internal rules and regulations, and related laws are followed with no flip-flopping; and transparency, because DENR Secretary Maria Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga bases her decisions on empirical data and with prior consultation with all stakeholders.

Two, mining, which was once treated like a pariah because of its environmental impact, is now an indispensable part of our fight against climate change.

Three, the industry supports President Marcos Jr.’s directive for high value processing and to make the country a vital component of the electric vehicle and battery production ecosystem.

And, lastly, we are open to a joint mineral resource management in the ASEAN.

I mention of these points on mining and the mining industry because today is the first day of the Mining Philippines 2023 international conference and exhibition of the Chamber of Mines of the Philippines with the theme “Seeing Green: Shaping a Sustainable Minerals Development Industry.”

Mining Philippines 2023 is the most anticipated event in the minerals, metals and ores industry that emerged from a three-year hiatus due to the COVID-19 pandemic for a

two-day discussion on the intensive exploration, development, and utilization of minerals, all in consonance with sound economic, environmental, and social policies.

Aside from being a key driver for economic recovery and national growth, mining can also be a key driver for climate change and the environment.

Because even in the quest for ASEAN economic integration, which is the business of ABIS 2023 and of ABAC, we still need minerals. We still need mining.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

METRO SUN DAILY

[Dela Cruz warns on human rights emergencies triggered by climate change](#)

choing the statement of United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Turk on climate change sparking human rights emergencies in numerous countries, Climate Change Commissioner Albert Dela Cruz Sr. has expressed alarm over the complacency of most Filipinos in responding to the impacts of the global climate phenomenon.

At the UN Human Rights Council, the rights chief decried widespread misinformation that is sowing chaos and confusion to deny the reality of the situation even as he pointed to recent examples of the “environmental horror that is our global planetary crisis” that includes drought, super typhoons, flooding and food shortages in several countries.

“The spiraling damage is a human rights emergency for all of us. 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 had described in his message.

In reaction, Commissioner Dela Cruz stressed that “people no longer need to be warned but should instead take immediate action to arrest the fast approach of the climate crisis that hints on a dystopian future and the possible extinction of the human race.”

“Actually, we are already feeling the impacts of the global warming and we see it in the rising sea level that cause floods and the extreme increase in global temperatures that are causing drought in many regions, including the Philippines,” the climate official added.

Dela Cruz noted that there is still prevailing complacency even as he recalled that after the Group of 20 (G20) forum backed the goal of tripling renewable energy capacity by 2030, it 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 poverty and hunger, I am shocked by the nonchalance seen toward surging numbers of climate-induced deaths,” he concluded.

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