



NEWS ROUNDUP

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CCC IN THE NEWS:

- Climate action should also focus on adaptation measures - Dela Cruz

AL JAZEERA

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By: Mark Hertsgaard and Kyle Pope

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FINANCIAL TIMES

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By: Aime Williams

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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By: Joyce Ann L. Rocamora

The Philippine government backed on Tuesday a move urging a United Nations court to provide an advisory opinion to interpret the world's oceans treaty in the context of curbing climate change.

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[Climate action should also focus on adaptation measures - Dela Cruz](#)

Climate Change Commissioner Albert Dela Cruz on Wednesday (20 Sept. 2023) reminded authorities that apart from initiating steps to mitigate the impacts of climate change, focus should be made on the implementation of adaptation measures that would pave the way for a resilient future for Filipinos and the whole country.

Information and Knowledge Management Division

AL JAZEERA

Journalism can't leave the climate crisis to Netflix and Billie Eilish

By: Mark Hertsgaard and Kyle Pope

In much of what we see, hear, and read, the climate crisis has become inescapable. On Netflix, *Don't Look Up* spent weeks as the most-streamed movie ever. Pop star Billie Eilish sings about hills burning in California. At the bookstore, climate fiction has become a genre of its own, while Jeff Goodell's *The Heat Will Kill You First*, a harrowing nonfiction account of what life on a warming planet will mean, is entering its second month on the New York Times Best Sellers list.

But where is journalism in all of this? Despite our living through the hottest summer in history, as well as wildfires, tropical storms and crazy-hot oceans, the news media continue to be outdone by the rest of popular culture when it comes to covering the most urgent story of our time.

Inexplicably, climate change remains a niche concern for most mainstream news outlets. In the United States, most TV coverage of this summer's hellish weather did not even mention the words "climate change", much less explain that the burning of oil, gas, and coal is what is driving that hellish weather. Too many newsrooms continue to see climate as a siloed beat of specialists.

There are, of course, notable exceptions. The Guardian newspaper, the AFP news agency, and Al Jazeera itself are three news organisations that have long delivered science-based, abundant, comprehensive coverage of the climate crisis as well as its solutions.

But as excellent as they often are, they are among the outliers; much of the rest of media — particularly television, which, even in today's digital era, remains the leading source of news globally for the largest number of people — struggle to find their climate footing.

We wish it were otherwise. As founders of Covering Climate Now, a global journalism collaboration formed to break the "climate silence" that long prevailed in the media, we have been working to help our colleagues throughout the news business amp up their coverage of the climate story.

In 2019, the media's climate silence began to break, and in the past four years, we have seen encouraging successes. In the United States, major outlets, including The Washington Post, now treat climate change as a subject to cover every day, and not solely as a weather story. Telemundo 51, a Spanish-language TV station in Miami, is

pursuing an “all of newsroom” approach that encourages reporters on every beat to talk about climate change, including its solutions.

Overseas, France Televisions (France’s counterpart to Britain’s BBC) has jettisoned traditional weathercasts in favour of a daily “weather-climate bulletin” where viewers can track global warming in real time as an eight-digit electronic counter shows how much today’s temperatures exceed the preindustrial average.

Yet while dramatic changes in climate have made increased news coverage of extreme weather unavoidable, explaining the climate connection to extreme weather is a different task. Linking changes in the weather to the decisions being made by industries and governments that have overheated the planet is where news coverage needs to end up.

As journalists, we have to do better. The broad, general public needs to understand what is happening, why it matters, and, above all, that they can fix it — for example, by voting, by not buying unsustainable products, and by talking to friends and family about doing the same.

Journalism is at its best when it effectively explains and connects the dots between seemingly disparate events. That means, for instance, learning lessons from how the media covered COVID-19, also a sprawling, complicated story dictated by science. Nobody in the media debated the need to dedicate resources to helping audiences understand COVID-19 and then playing the story big.

Most outlets ran multiple stories every day, which helped even casual news consumers understand that something important was happening. Journalists grounded our coverage in science, but we did not silo it on the science desk: We covered the pandemic as a health story, a politics story, a business, education and lifestyle story. And we talked not only about the problem but also about its solutions, whether masking and social distancing or vaccinations.

Climate coverage could take the same approach. In every newsroom in every community, climate change needs to be thought of not as a beat, but as a through line involving everything we do. No corner of the newsroom is exempt — not business or culture, not sports or city hall.

On the national level, journalism has to figure out how to make climate change central to our politics coverage. Next year will bring elections in the US, the United Kingdom, the European Union, India, Indonesia, Mexico and Egypt that will have profound effects on the prospects for global climate action.

Can politics reporters and editors scale back their fixation on horserace coverage and instead provide the kind of coverage that voters need to make informed choices?

Election coverage should help audiences understand what the candidates will do about the climate crisis if elected, not just what they say. It should hold candidates accountable by asking them not — as Fox did at the first US Republican debate last month — whether they believe in climate change but rather, “What is your plan to deal with the climate crisis?”

Overall, we also need much more and better coverage of climate solutions. Our colleagues at the Solutions Journalism Network have rightly criticised news coverage that only talks about what is wrong. Telling the whole story also requires examining how that problem might be fixed. What else does “more and better” climate coverage mean?

We expect some answers to emerge this week at “Climate Changes Everything: Creating a Blueprint for Media Transformation,” a conference at the Columbia Journalism School in New York cosponsored by Covering Climate Now; our founders, the Columbia Journalism Review and The Nation; our lead media partner, The Guardian; and the Solutions Journalism Network.

Reporters and editors from news outlets around the world — large and small, commercial and non-profit — will chart a course for how journalists everywhere can tackle the climate story in ways that drive attention and impact and highlight solutions and justice.

The assembled journalists will draw lessons and inspiration from some of the best climate coverage of the past year, as exemplified by winners of the 2023 Covering Climate Now Journalism Awards, which were just announced. (The conference will be livestreamed and recordings will remain available.)

With the planet on fire, more and better news coverage is itself an essential climate solution. Only when the general public understands what is happening, why, and what needs to be done can large enough numbers of people compel governments and corporations to change course.

Many news outlets have made significant progress in recent years. But the news industry as a whole is still not matching the scale of the crisis with the kind of coverage that is required.

Until that happens, journalism is letting down our readers, viewers, and listeners — and letting Netflix and Billie Eilish handle a job that is ours.

FINANCIAL TIMES

[UN chief criticises 'foot-dragging' and 'naked greed' for lack of climate action](#)

By: Aime Williams

UN secretary-general António Guterres told world leaders that they were still “decades behind” in moving away from fossil fuels as he launched a scathing critique at the UN’s inaugural climate ambition day in New York.

“We must make up time lost to foot-dragging, arm-twisting and the naked greed of entrenched interests raking in billions from fossil fuels,” Guterres told leaders as he kicked off a day-long climate summit held immediately after the UN’s general assembly.

“Humanity has opened the gates to hell,” he warned, noting that the world was on track for a 2.8C temperature rise since pre-industrial times.

The Paris Agreement, signed by almost 200 parties in 2015, agrees to limit the rise in global average temperatures to well under 2C and ideally to 1.5C.

In his address, Guterres called on the countries that had benefited the most from fossil fuels to make an “extra effort” to cut emissions, and criticised “shady pledges” from businesses and financial institutions on attempts to reach net zero greenhouse gas emissions.

Leaders from 34 governments along with seven non-government bodies, including Californian governor Gavin Newsom, London mayor Sadiq Khan, the World Bank president, the chief executive of insurer Allianz and the head of the UN’s Green Climate Fund, addressed the summit.

Several leaders directly attacked the fossil fuel industry, including Newsom, whose state is suing the major oil companies and accused them of “playing each and every one of us in this room for fools.”

“They’ve been buying off politicians. They’ve been denying and delaying science and fundamental information that they were privy to that they didn’t share or they manipulated. Their deceit and denial going back decades has created the conditions that persist here today,” he said.

The most prominent speakers were German chancellor Olaf Scholz and EU president Ursula von der Leyen, who brought more ambitious renewable energy commitments.

But China and the United States, the world's biggest polluters, as well as India and Japan did not speak at the summit. The backtracking on green policies by the UK government, previously regarded as a climate leader, was also reflected in the absence of the prime minister, Rishi Sunak.

Other big polluters that were absent from the UN invitation to bring upgraded climate plans, and pledges to the Green Climate Fund, included fossil fuel reliant countries of South Korea, Australia and Norway.

But US president Joe Biden said in his address to the UN general assembly the previous day that the heatwaves, wildfires, droughts and flooding that had ravaged countries around the world in recent weeks told an "urgent story of what awaits us if we fail to reduce our dependence on fossil fuels".

The world has experienced its hottest June to August season on record, and the world's top scientists have warned that global warming is "more likely than not" in the near-term to reach a 1.5C rise since pre-industrial times.

This is distinct from a long-term rise in average temperatures of 1.5C that was set as a goal in the Paris climate accord in 2015. On this basis, the world has already warmed by 1.1C

GMA NEWS

[Climate change 'is killing us': UN sounds health alarm](#)

By: David Sherfinski

The climate crisis is increasingly becoming a public health crisis, officials warned in New York this week, calling for better training, research, and resilience measures to tackle the twin priorities in the spotlight at the UN General Assembly.

Combating climate change and improving public health are key aims of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for 2030, as governments try to find a path forward on the 17 headline targets, with only 15% of them on track in a crisis-hit world.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), an additional 250,000 people are projected to die each year due to climate change, while statistics show that one in four deaths can be chalked up to "preventable environmental causes."

The UN agency says rising temperatures, extreme weather, air pollution, wildfires, and less secure water and food supplies not only lead to lost lives but also exacerbate infectious and other diseases, provoke heat-related illnesses, and harm pregnant women.

"Make no mistake: it is the use of fossil fuels that is driving climate change that is killing us," Vanessa Kerry, WHO's special envoy for climate change and health, told an event held as part of Climate Week NYC.

For the first time this year, the annual UN climate summit—COP28, starting in late November in Dubai—will have a day dedicated to health, as well as a ministerial discussion on the theme of climate and health.

"The connection between health and climate change is evident, yet it has not been a specific focus of the COP process—until now. This must change," Sultan al-Jaber, an oil executive who will chair COP28 for the UAE, said in a statement.

Poverty, women's rights affected

The negative effects caused by the confluence of climate and health threats are threatening to undermine other key planks in the sustainable development agenda too, including cutting poverty and promoting women's rights, experts warned.

The World Bank projects that up to 132 million people will fall into poverty by 2030 as a result of climate-related health effects and up to 1.2 billion people will be displaced by 2050.

Maliha Khan, president and CEO of the advocacy group Women Deliver, emphasized that the burden of adapting to climate change frequently falls on girls and women, who might be pulled out of school or have to take on more work when male members of the family migrate due to climate pressures.

Khan called for full sexual reproductive rights and health services to help women cope with climate-change ripple effects.

"From a purely justice point of view, we cannot fail them by also then denying them the services that will allow them to become more resilient (to) the face of the climate crisis," she told another event on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly.

Pascal Barollier, chief engagement and information officer for Gavi, the global health group that works to expand vaccine access, pointed to heat having an impact on the incidence of vector-borne diseases, as well as yellow fever in Africa.

He called for additional research on the links between climate shifts and health.

"It's good to have strong narratives about the link between climate and health, but if we cannot really measure the [impact] it will be harder to justify" investments, he said.

From a rise in dengue fever in South Asia to the spread of West Nile virus in West Africa and Europe, scientists are concerned about the shifting profile of mosquito-borne diseases as average temperatures rise in many parts of the world.

The healthcare sector itself, which accounts for about 5% of total greenhouse gas emissions, also needs to shrink its carbon footprint and adapt as demand and pressures grow, the WHO's Kerry said.

"It starts by investing in a healthcare workforce that can meet this growing burden of disease that we're going to see," she added.

Climate-resilient clinics

Health charities and other groups are in the process of standing up new programs to address negative health impacts related to climate and to educate people on the connections.

Americares, the global health group, has partnered with Harvard University to better prepare community health clinics that frequently take on lower-income and uninsured patients who are often hit hard by climate extremes like heat.

At a Climate Week NYC event, officials announced they are launching a pilot initiative aimed at making health clinics in Arizona, Florida, and Louisiana more climate-resilient through heat action plans to help them support vulnerable people.

"The health threats posed by extreme heat are only worsening due to climate change, and we must focus on solutions that extend beyond and complement the care provided in the exam room," said Julie Varughese, Americares' chief medical officer.

Growing awareness and attention to the interaction between climate and health have been clearly on show at the UN this week, laying the groundwork for the UAE's plan to put health front and center at COP28.

"Surprisingly, I've been at Gavi more than a decade now, and it is really the first year that we seem to be truly making the connection between climate change and health," Barollier said.

JOURNAL ONLINE

[SEARCA leads new project to bolster climate resilience in PH](#)

A new project that will enhance climate resilience in agriculture, natural resources, and ecosystems in the Philippines is being led by the Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (SEARCA) in collaboration with NIRAS Asia Manila Inc. and the International Centre for Environmental Management (ICEM).

Funded by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and officially titled “Accelerating Climate Resilience in Agriculture, Natural Resources, and the Environment (ANRE) Project,” the initiative aims to advance the government’s climate resilience reform agenda under the Climate Change Action Program (CCAP).

The project kicked off with an inception workshop held on 8 September 2023. Antti Inkinen, NIRAS Regional Director-Asia and the Pacific, enthusiastically supports the project and encouraged collaborative discussions to propel it forward.

SEARCA Director Dr. Glenn Gregorio said the workshop brought together 47 national and international experts from relevant government agencies and multisectoral institutions in agriculture, natural resources, and the environment to deliberate on the project’s objectives. He said the project focuses on three key areas.

According to Gregorio, the project aims to strengthen climate resilience in agriculture by promoting climate-resilient farming and supporting climate-smart technologies in crops, livestock, and fisheries in collaboration with Climate-Resilient Agriculture Office (CRAO) and National Organic Agriculture Program (NOAP) under the Department of Agriculture (DA), Philippines.

The project also intends to enhance climate resilience in natural resources and ecosystems by expanding the Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Risk Resiliency Program (DENR-RRP) with resiliency roadmaps, guidelines, online monitoring, and capacity building to address climate hazards. This will be implemented in partnership with DENR.

Finally, the project seeks to improve agricultural insurance for climate risk by developing a medium-term insurance roadmap for the Philippine Crop Insurance Corporation (PCIC), exploring innovative financing solutions, and prioritizing financial sustainability and cost-effectiveness with guidance from PCIC.

Project deputy team leader Cesar Umali highlighted the project’s role in advancing the government’s climate resilience agenda as outlined in the CCAP.

“Together, these efforts will strengthen the Philippines’ ability to face climate-related challenges head-on,” Gregorio said.

MANILA BULLETIN

[PH says rising sea levels could shift maritime boundaries](#)

By: Joseph Pedrajas

The Philippines has expressed alarm over the rising levels of waters caused by climate change as it said it could negatively affect the stability of international territorial boundaries.

In its submission for the advisory proceedings before the International Tribunal on the Law of the Sea (ITLOS), the Philippines pushed the tribunal to define the obligations of small island states in protecting the marine environment in relation to climate change.

This came as the Philippines said it was concerned about the “grave consequence of sea level rise to peace and security” as currently, it also faces territorial challenges in the South China Sea.

“The rising levels of the oceans will inundate islands of low-lying coastal states, which could potentially shift maritime boundaries,” the Philippines said in a 33-page submission alternately delivered by Philippine Permanent Representative to the United Nations Carlos Sorreta, Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) Assistant Secretary Maria Angela Ponce and Assistant Solicitor General Gilbert Medrano.

“The potential loss of maritime boundaries as a result of sea level rise will inevitably lead to conflicts in fisheries and other marine resources but more importantly could impact the stability of boundaries,” it added.

Such could “trigger conflict” among concerned nations, according to the Philippines.

The country also noted an arbitral tribunal’s concern when it settled a maritime dispute between India and Bangladesh after raising that maritime would be jeopardized if climate-related changes were allowed to influence the delimitation process.

“The Philippines believes that international courts and tribunals, and the world itself, would not necessarily have to face this dilemma if we are able to stay a step ahead of climate change,” it said.

“Staying a step ahead, is the existential challenge for us all, as emphasized by President Marcos at the UN General Assembly last year: ‘There is no other problem so global in nature that it requires a unified effort,’” it added.

Advisory proceedings at the ITLOS, which started on Sep. 11, are being held until Sep. 25 after the Commission of Small Island States on Climate Change and International Law (COSIS) requested the tribunal last year to issue an advisory opinion with regards to the members' obligation in protecting the marine environment.

The Philippines said ITLOS has jurisdiction to and must advise as its decision "could and should be a crucial and pivotal part" of fighting negative effects of marine environment degradation caused by climate change.

[PH prods int'l tribunal to rule on marine protection vs climate change threats](#)

By: Joseph Pedrajas

The Philippines has maintained that the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS) has the authority to release an advisory opinion on the specific obligations of countries in protecting their marine environment against threats of climate change.

Advisory proceedings, which started on Sep. 11, are being held until Sep. 25 after the Commission of Small Island States on Climate Change and International Law (COSIS) requested the tribunal last year to issue an advisory opinion.

The commission wanted to know the members' specific obligations on the following:

How to prevent, reduce and control pollution of the marine environment in relation to the deleterious effects that result or are likely to result from climate change, including through ocean warming and sea level rise, and ocean acidification, which are caused by anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions into the atmosphere ; and

How to protect and preserve the marine environment in relation to climate change impacts, including ocean warming and sea level rise, and ocean acidification

In its submission, the Philippine government said the tribunal "has jurisdiction to give an advisory opinion" and that there "exists no compelling reason for the tribunal to decline giving an advisory opinion."

"What exists are compelling reasons for the tribunal to exercise its discretion and issue and advisory opinion," it added.

The Philippine government was represented by Philippine Permanent Representative to the United Nations Carlos Sorreta, Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) Assistant Secretary Maria Angela Ponce and Assistant Solicitor General Gilbert Medrano, who alternately delivered the country's submission in the proceedings on Tuesday afternoon (Manila time) in Hamburg, Germany.

Citing various international laws and rules that demand countries to protect the marine environment, the Philippines said there already "exist norms in conventional, customary and general principles of international law that support and reinforce these legal obligations."

Among the laws and rules cited were: the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), the Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Paris Agreement and the Agreement on Biological Diversity Beyond National Jurisdiction.

For the Philippines, the tribunal has jurisdiction to issue its advisory because it "satisfies the prerequisites."

"The Agreement for the Establishment of the Commission of Small Island States on Climate Change and International Law is an international agreement between and among small island states whose mandate is related to the purposes of UNCLOS, in particular, the protection and preservation of the marine environment," the Philippine said.

"Moreover, Article 2 (2) of the said Agreement empowers COSIS to request ITLOS advisory opinions "on any legal question within the scope" of UNCLOS. Equally important, the questions posed by COSIS are legal in nature as they require the Tribunal to interpret specific provisions of UNCLOS without implicating any dispute between or among States Parties," it added.

In supporting the tribunal's jurisdiction, the Philippines said the country ranks first among countries most at risk to disasters and extreme natural events, such as tsunamis, floods and drought.

"Such vulnerability is evident in our coastal and marine ecosystems, which are now deteriorating at alarming rates," it said.

The Philippines also expressed alarm on the effects of climate change, which cause the levels of ocean to rise and eventually inundate islands of low-lying coastal states.

"The potential loss of maritime boundaries as a result of sea level rise will inevitably lead to conflicts in fisheries and other marine resources but more importantly could impact the stability of boundaries and trigger conflict," it said.

Therefore, the country said it "stands in solidarity with COSIS, and all the small island states that comprise it, and support their initiative to request the tribunal's advisory opinion."

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

[Party-list pushes crop climate calendars, localized farming info bill](#)

By: Gabriel Pabico Lalu

A proposal to institutionalize the provision of crop climate calendars and other information to farmers in a localized manner has been filed before the House of Representatives to ensure that farmland workers can cope with adverse weather conditions over the year.

In a statement on Wednesday, Bicol Saro Rep. Brian Raymund Yamsuan said that around 9.7 million farmers — around 708,000 of which are in the lawmaker's home region — would benefit if House Bill (HB) No. 9129 or the proposed Climate-Resilient Agriculture Act is enacted.

According to Yamsuan, releasing crop climate calendars and other key information in English, Filipino, and the local dialect of an area would greatly help farmers in calculating their movements and making informed farming decisions.

"The traditional crop calendars distributed to farmers should be improved by coming up with crop climate calendars that would equip farmers with the knowledge they need to make informed decisions in helping secure the country's food production amid the disruptions brought about by climate change on their planting and harvesting schedules," he said.

"Institutionalizing the use (of) crop climate calendars can reduce the risk of crop losses and also assist farmers in determining how best to maximize the use of water and fertilizers in line with the country's commitment to sustainable farming," he added.

Aside from releasing information in different languages, HB No. 9129 also proposes tapping the Department of Agriculture (DA), the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa), and even the Philippine Space Agency to craft a crop calendar for different agricultural areas.

"The [DA] shall establish and promote the use of crop climate calendars throughout the Philippines. In coordination with municipal, city, and provincial agriculturists, the DA shall implement a continuing program for all farmers and farmer's organizations to formulate, use, and interpret crop climate calendars that are tailor-made for each specific locality or community," HB No. 9129 stated.

"[PhilSA] shall provide the DA relevant space data, including but not limited to satellite imagery, that would support the establishment and implementation of crop climate

calendars throughout the Philippines. The [Pagasa] shall provide regular and up-to-date localized weather and climate information to city, municipal, and provincial agriculturist's offices and directly to the farmers themselves through all available means of communication and information dissemination," it added.

These steps and measures, Yamsuan said, will help farmers harness technology to increase agricultural yield.

"The government should be able to catch up with fast-changing technological applications to enable our farmers to harness the power of space and science in developing innovative farming and adapting to the disruptions triggered by climate change," he said.

"The use of crop climate calendars crafted with the use of the latest technologies is a significant first step in making our agriculture sector climate-resilient," he added.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

[PH backs move to interpret UNCLOS for climate protection](#)

By: Joyce Ann L. Rocamora

The Philippine government backed on Tuesday a move urging a United Nations court to provide an advisory opinion to interpret the world's oceans treaty in the context of curbing climate change.

The statement of support was delivered before the Hamburg-based International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS) which has recently begun legal proceedings for a closely watched oceans climate justice case.

The case, brought by the Commission of Small Island States on Climate Change and International Law (COSIS) last December 2022, asks the UN court to determine the specific duties of states parties to the UN on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) in preventing the pollution of the marine environment caused by climate change through the accumulation of anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions.

"As an archipelagic state comprised mostly of small islands, and one of the most vulnerable to and most affected by climate change, the Philippines stands in solidarity with COSIS and all the small island states that comprise it and outside of its membership, and support their initiative to request the tribunal's advisory opinion," said Philippine Permanent Representative to the UN in Geneva Carlos Sorreta in co-delivering Manila's statement.

"Fundamental to our position is that while UNCLOS was not designed as a mechanism for regulating climate change, its mandate is broad enough to consider the connection between climate and the oceans," he added.

Sorreta argued that the 40-year-old treaty must be interpreted "in light of changing global circumstances and changing laws".

"It is, among others a strong, innovative and comprehensive global environmental treaty governing over two-thirds of the planet. It must be interpreted and applied with subsequent developments in international law and policy in mind," he said.

In the Philippines alone, Sorreta pointed out that coastal erosion, the bleaching of coral reefs, loss of seagrass have severely affected the resources and livelihoods of Filipino coastal communities.

Foreign Affairs Assistant Secretary for Maritime and Ocean Affairs Maria Angela Ponce added that by its nature, greenhouse gas emissions qualify as “pollution of the marine environment”.

“[T]he science behind climate change and the effects of greenhouse gas emissions on the marine environment is unassailable,” she said, reiterating ocean warming, ocean acidification, and sea-level rise as examples.

In a July 2023 piece published in *The Conversation*, Ellyscia Harrould-Kolieb and Margaret Young of the University of Melbourne explained that advisory opinions are not legally binding but they provide guidance to states and international organizations about the interpretation of international law.

In their oral and written statements, the European Union and New Zealand cited the 2016 Arbitral Ruling on the South China Sea and suggested adopting its general interpretation of a state’s obligation under UNCLOS.

China, meanwhile, argued that ITLOS lacks jurisdiction to issue the requested opinion and pointed out that there are other international laws -- the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, Kyoto Protocol, and Paris Agreement -- that are appropriate in dealing with climate change and its adverse effects.

Manila, on the other hand, believes ITLOS has “advisory jurisdiction” given that COSIS is empowered to request the UN court advisory opinions “on any legal question within the scope” of UNCLOS.

“The Philippines does not see any compelling reason for the Tribunal to refuse its advisory jurisdiction. Rather, what exists are compelling reasons for the Tribunal to exercise its jurisdiction and carry on with its advisory competence,” Assistant Solicitor General Gilbert Medrano said.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

MAHARLIKA

[Climate action should also focus on adaptation measures - Dela Cruz](#)

Climate Change Commissioner Albert Dela Cruz on Wednesday (20 Sept. 2023) reminded authorities that apart from initiating steps to mitigate the impacts of climate change, focus should be made on the implementation of adaptation measures that would pave the way for a resilient future for Filipinos and the whole country.

The climate official's call came after the Asian Development Bank (ADB) reportedly approved a USD303 million (₱17.2 billion) loan to address the persistent flooding problem in the country amidst worsening climate change.

Earlier, the ADB disclosed that the approved loan will be allocated for efforts to reduce flood and climate risks, as well as protect people and livelihoods in three major river basins in the country even as the Philippines remains one of the most climate-vulnerable countries over the past two decades.

ADB senior water resources specialist Junko Sagara cited that the multi-billion peso loan will be earmarked to finance the first phase of the Integrated Flood Resilience and Adaptation Project which aims to reduce flood risks in three major river basins, namely Abra, Agus (Ranao), and Tagum-Libuganon River Basins, and enhance flood and climate change resilience.

In reaction, Commissioner Dela Cruz lauded the initiative because this would pave the way for the upgrading and construction of flood protection infrastructures in the three major river basins in Luzon and particularly Mindanao, which is currently experiencing severe flooding in several areas.

"These will reflect to adaptation measures that we need to put in place immediately. This infrastructure takes into account future climate change impacts and incorporates nature-based solutions such as restoring and reconnecting old river channels for natural drainage and reinforcing riverbanks with mangroves and vegetation planting," he pointed out.

Based on studies, the river basin communities in the identified areas are highly vulnerable to climate-related hazards, especially as climate change is expected to raise risks from extreme weather events.

“We need to lessen these risks and improve income and livelihood opportunities, especially for the poor and vulnerable, and only through proper implementation and sound management can we truly achieve resiliency through a whole-of-nation and -community approach in addressing and responding to the adverse effects of climate change and global warming,” Dela Cruz stressed.

“The same river infrastructure (to be constructed for adaptation and mitigation) should be coupled with a total water ecosystem approach that aside from putting concrete walls and dike reinforcement structures should include mangrove restoration and propagation as well as bamboo and tree-planting as part of the nature-based system prescribed by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC),” he added.

In ending, the climate official underscored the importance of strengthening the country’s capacity to perform flood risk management planning through extensive training for government officials and all stakeholders, installing equipment for weather and river flow monitoring and early flood warning, as well as introducing an asset management information system.

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