



NEWS ROUNDUP

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CLIMATE HOME NEWS

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MANILA BULLETIN

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The UK offers £4 billion (about \$4.9 billion) in export finance for renewable energy and digital agriculture infrastructure projects in the Philippines, the British Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines (BCCP) said Monday.

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THE MANILA TIMES

[Japan supports PH efforts to reduce marine litter](#)

Economic Affairs Minister Nihei Daisuke of the Embassy of Japan in the Philippines joined the culmination event of the Healthy Oceans and Clean Cities Initiative (HOCCI) on September 15. The event highlighted the achievements, experiences, and lessons learned of the partner cities and communities in localizing the Philippines NPOA-ML into City Plans of Action for Marine Litter (CPOA-MG).

Information and Knowledge Management Division

CLIMATE HOME NEWS

Ministerial shows fault lines on climate loss and damage fund

By: Matteo Civillini

Governments are starkly divided over plans for a loss and damage fund, with two months to go until it is due to be established.

While rich and poor countries have agreed to set up a fund to address loss and damage caused by climate change, they are miles apart on who pays and who benefits.

At a ministerial meeting on the sidelines of the UN general assembly on Friday, there was little sign of bridging the gap. The event complemented ongoing technical discussions ahead of Cop28 climate talks in Dubai this December, where decisions are due on how to get the fund up and running.

Ana Mulio Alvarez, an analyst at E3G, said the meeting “did not advance negotiations but it served as a political moment to put the cards on the table more publicly”.

A transitional committee has been working since March to draw up the rules for the fund.

Who gets the money?

One of the major sticking points is the question of who should be eligible for help.

The decision adopted at last year’s Cop27 summit in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, says it should assist “developing countries that are particularly vulnerable” to climate change impacts. That is open to interpretation.

For the vast majority of rich countries, the pool of beneficiaries should be limited.

The EU’s interim climate chief Maroš Šefčovič told the meeting that the resources should “explicitly target countries and its communities that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change, such as least developed countries (LDCs) and small island developing states (SIDs)”.

His views were echoed by the representatives of the US, UK and Australian governments, among others.

‘No discrimination’

Developing countries disagree with the position, arguing that all of them should be able to tap into the fund’s coffers.

Speaking on behalf of the G77 group of developing countries, a representative from Cuba said “the fund should operate without discrimination”.

Among the most vocal campaigners for a fund open to all is Pakistan, where devastating floods killed more than 1,700 people and caused damage totaling more than \$30 billion last year. Classed as middle income by the World Bank, it would not automatically qualify for support based on a tight definition of vulnerability.

“All vulnerable developing countries, irrespective of their level of development and geographical grouping, must be eligible,” said Pakistan’s foreign minister Jalil Abbas Jilani. “We would not be able to lend our support to any such select, divisive and exclusionary approach.”

Speaking on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States, Samoa said all developing countries should be eligible, but the fund’s resources should be “allocated equitably” so that the small island states are “not left behind and forgotten”.

Who pays?

The question of who pays into the fund is equally contentious.

When the European Union opened the door to a fund at the Cop27 climate talks last year, its then climate chief Frans Timmermans said large economies like China should also pay. The agreement was eventually struck without that condition, but the same debate has now reemerged.

EU’s Šefčovič said the fund should attract contributions from “all well-resourced governments”, in addition to innovative sources of financing, philanthropies, and the private sector. Spain and France floated the idea of introducing new taxes and levies as a way to bolster resources.

The UK’s energy minister Graham Stuart said governments “must break out” of “outdated categories from decades ago”, to deliver the volume of support needed. His statement was likely referencing the UN classification of developed countries established in 1992. The fund “must be financed by all, all of those capable of doing so,” Stuart added.

Similarly, the US disagreed with the notion that only developed countries would be invited to pay into the fund. “There is no existing donor base for loss and damage funding, it is a new idea,” a government official said.

The counterargument is that history matters. Developed countries got that way by being early adopters of coal, oil and gas. Emissions dating back to the industrial revolution are still in the air causing suffering today.

“Developed countries should effectively fulfill their funding obligations,” said China’s representative. “Developed countries who shoulder historical responsibilities for climate change should provide new additional finance for the funding arrangement of the fund in the form of grants supplemented by concessional loans.”

Debt trap fears

Developed and developing countries also disagree on what the money should be spent on, how the fund should be governed and whether it should be delivered as grants or loans

Avinash Persaud, special finance envoy to Prime Minister Mia Mottley of Barbados, is on the transitional committee. He told Climate Home he feared some developed countries see the loss and damage mechanism more as a way to coordinate existing funding that is primarily loan-based.

“Countries that are particularly vulnerable are already highly indebted,” he said. “We are going to be drowning in debt if we need to get loans every time get hit by a climate event.”

Time running out

With the clock ticking to the climate summit, the time to strike a compromise is limited.

The transitional committee is holding another round of talks next month, before preparing its recommendations for governments to consider in Dubai.

Persaud said he remained “cautiously optimistic” that countries will reach an agreement.

E3G’s Mulio Alvarez said the disagreements put the negotiations in a “tough position”.

“Real steps need to be taken towards a transformation of the financial architecture in order to meet needs, rebuild trust and increase understanding between parties,” she added. “There is a real risk that the fund could be set up but not adequately funded or truly operational.”

CNN

[The ominous signs pointing to extreme heat and fire in Australia this summer](#)

By: Laura Paddison

It's only early spring in Australia and the country is already grappling with heat and fire, sparking fears of a potentially devastating summer.

Last weekend, more than 20 runners in the Sydney Marathon were hospitalized during a heat wave. Ski resorts, including Perisher, the country's largest, have closed early amid a lack of snow after Australia's warmest winter since records began in 1910.

Then, last week, dozens of bushfires broke out in the country, with more than 60 burning in the densely-populated state of New South Wales.

These are ominous signals for what large parts of the country can expect as spring rolls into summer. The confluence of natural climate phenomena, including El Niño, layered on top of human-caused global warming, is leading scientists to sound the alarm.

"We are in a serious place," said David Bowman, professor of pyrogeography and fire science at the University of Tasmania, Australia. "The climate change monster has woken up and El Niño means it is angry," he told CNN.

Last week, Australia's Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) announced the official arrival of El Niño, a natural weather pattern originating in the Pacific Ocean that tends to bring hot and dry conditions to Australia, especially eastern parts.

On top of El Niño, there's another climate fluctuation in the mix that amps up the likelihood of heat and drought. The positive Indian Ocean Dipole is a climate pattern similar to El Niño, but originates in the Indian Ocean, and can have as large an influence on Australian weather.

This "double punch" is "very unfortunate," Bowman said. And the underlying trend of global heating, as the world continues to burn planet-warming fossil fuels, is further increasing the chances of extreme weather.

"We are already seeing extreme weather conditions in some parts of the continent, particularly in the duration of heat," as well as "catastrophic" fires, said Karl Braganza, head of climate monitoring at BOM, on a call with reporters Tuesday.

He called on Australians "to prepare for a summer of heat and fire hazards."

Fears are particularly high as the memories of the 2019 to 2020 Black Summer fire season – the country’s worst in decades – remain etched in Australians’ minds. The fires burned 10 million hectares (24.7 million acres) to the ground, contributed to the deaths of hundreds of people and killed more than a billion animals.

However, conditions are different this year. While the lead-up to the Black Summer fires was characterized by a 3-year period of drought – “whole, vast landscapes were primed to burn for months,” Bowman said – the last few years have been rainy in Australia due to the influence of El Niño’s cooler counterpart, La Niña.

But experts told CNN there’s no space to be complacent. While a bushfire season as extensive as the Black Summer is unlikely, Robb Webb, CEO of the National Council for fire and emergency services (AFAC) told CNN, “we know that it doesn’t need to be ‘Black Summer’ to be a dangerous fire season.”

AFAC’s fire outlook issued last month warned of an increased risk of fire across large parts of the country, as plants that grew during the rainier years are drying out fast.

“Sustained heat waves can snap dry landscapes so all that lush vegetation can become tinder in days,” Bowman said. A combination of extreme heat and wind would likely fuel very intense fires “that will seem to come from nowhere,” he added.

As well as fire, Australians can expect heat. “This summer will be hotter than average and certainly hotter than the last three years,” Braganza said.

Temperatures are already breaking local records. On Wednesday, Sydney airport reached 35.9 degrees Celsius (97 Fahrenheit), according to BOM, breaking heat records for September. Sydney’s average September temperature is around 20 degrees Celsius (68 Fahrenheit).

Whether summer heat will be unprecedented remains uncertain.

“Every El Niño is different,” said Andrea Taschetto, an associate professor in climate at the University of New South Wales, making it hard to predict exactly how hot things will get.

But signs point to “a good chance for this summer to be the hottest on record,” she said.

Others are more cautious. Jason Evans, also a climate professor at the University of New South Wales, said that while the abnormally hot winter “does raise concerns about extreme heat this summer,” he thinks the recent rainy years make record-breaking

temperatures less likely. But everything depends on how dry the next few months are, he added.

What is clear, he told CNN, is that climate change is making many extreme weather events more intense. "Increasing extreme heat is the clearest example," he said, but it's worsening the impacts of drought and extreme rain too.

"Climate change is now taking center stage," Bowman said. "The past is an increasingly unreliable guide for the future. Expect the unexpected."

ECO BUSINESS

[Ahead of COP28 climate talks, fossil fuels increasingly under fire](#)

Heading into the COP28 conference in Dubai, this week's UN Climate Ambition Summit broke fresh territory by naming and shaming the fossil fuel industry for its role in the climate crisis, according to advocates tracking the talks in New York.

UN Secretary-General António Guterres' summit – though light on ambitious new commitments – featured many speakers who called for a swift drawdown of fossil fuel use, which analysts say will be needed to meet goals under the 2015 Paris Agreement.

“It was a first time I had been in a room where I did feel this shift around the ability to say ‘fossil fuel,’ and say (it) again and again,” said Tina Stege, climate envoy for the Marshall Islands.

That contrasts with the past when fossil fuels might only be mentioned by a lone activist group, Stege said Thursday at a Climate Week NYC event hosted by Climate Analytics, a research group. “You didn't hear a chorus.”

This time, many leaders - notably German Chancellor Olaf Scholz and Kausea Natano, prime minister of Tuvalu - used their speeches to call specifically for phasing down fossil fuels to reach the Paris Agreement goals to curb rising temperatures.

Guterres invited leaders from roughly 30 countries for prime speaking slots at Wednesday's summit - but they collectively accounted for only about 17 per cent of global emissions.

Heads of state of the world's top-emitting nations, including China, the United States and India, were absent.

“Really, it's striking that the leadership ... on display at the summit is primarily coming from Global South countries – and that's a disgrace. That's a shame,” said Romain Ioualalen with Oil Change International, an activist group.

Selwin Hart, a top climate adviser to Guterres, acknowledged Thursday that one summit would not solve the climate crisis, but that the event demonstrated there are leaders willing to up their game and move more quickly ahead of COP28.

“It is in my view ... the most important COP since Paris,” Hart said at the Climate Analytics event.

“Because it’s a COP that sets the stage for what needs to be done to close glaring gaps to meet the temperature goal, the finance and adaptation goals in the Paris Agreement,” he said.

The Dubai COP will be held from Nov. 30-Dec. 12.

Leadership ‘sorely absent’?

California Governor Gavin Newsom received applause at the summit for his remarks labelling the climate crisis a “fossil fuel crisis.”

“It’s not complicated. It’s the burning of oil. It’s the burning of gas. It’s the burning of coal. And we need to call that out,” he said. “For decades and decades the oil industry has been playing each and every one of us in this room for fools.”

Newsom’s state of California recently announced a lawsuit against big oil companies, accusing them of helping drive the climate crisis.

He won plaudits from actress and prominent climate activist Jane Fonda, who complimented the governor for demonstrating “true climate leadership.”

“This leadership is sorely absent at the top of most major oil and gas-producing countries – especially the United States,” she said.

US President Joe Biden, though he has shepherded record amounts of new spending for green initiatives, has also faced intense criticism from activists who say he is not doing enough to stop new oil and gas leasing initiatives.

The Paris Agreement does not mention “fossil fuels” even though coal, oil and natural gas are the main cause of climate change. Opposition from fossil fuel producers means the 2015 text refers merely to “greenhouse gas emissions”.

The UN ambition summit did witness some new commitments and announcements, including an adaptation partnership between Tuvalu and Australia – though advocates say Dubai will be where the lofty statements this week will truly be tested.

“We have two months until COP28 in Dubai where countries will need to agree on a phase-out of fossil fuels,” Ioualalen said.

‘Misleading’ the world?

Sultan al-Jaber, the UAE oil executive who is president-designate of COP28, said at the closing session of the New York summit that a phase-down of fossil fuels is both “inevitable” and “essential” – but also that people need to be clear-eyed about what a green transition will entail.

“Allow me to be candid. Some say that we can have it all – in fact, some are actually in this room today. Zero carbon economic growth with no up-front costs,” he said.

“That is something I cannot comprehend,” he said after a pause. “There is a cost either way. We must be honest and sober about this very important fact, and we must accept to come to terms with realities.”

“We need to stop misleading this world,” he said. “We all know that this is going to cost trillions – in fact, between four and five trillion dollars annually.”

Guterres, who had to leave the summit after his opening remarks to attend a meeting of the UN Security Council, returned to conclude it with a call to arms.

“To all the first doers that are here today, I say scale up, bring together all those that you can bring together with you. Go for it. Take no prisoners,” he said.

Climate stress is trampling productivity in India's vulnerable livestock sector

By: Vasudevan Sridharan

Ezhumalai, a 63-year-old small-time livestock farmer from the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu, has seen the income he generates from his herd of a dozen cattle fall by a half over the past two decades. The decline has pushed him to gradually shift to other allied professions and sell off his cows over the years.

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Ezhumalai, a 63-year-old small-time livestock farmer from the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu, has seen the income he generates from his herd of a dozen cattle fall by a half over the past two decades. The decline has pushed him to gradually shift to other allied professions and sell off his cows over the years.

“Only in recent years, I put two and two together that climate change is among the reasons for this,” he reflects.

Ezhumalai’s realisation is not far off the mark. Studies indicate that increasing climate stress will pose a severe threat to the livestock sector in India unless credible measures are promptly implemented. A recent global study published in the Nature Sustainability journal has revealed that India’s livestock systems are the most vulnerable in the world. The exposure to damaging climate extremes in the world’s most populous nation exceed those of other countries by at least five times. This study examined emissions and climate risks associated with livestock systems in 132 low- and middle-income countries.

“Drought and heat stress emerge as two critical hazards. Additionally, many areas are exposed to high rainfall variability,” explains Julian Ramirez-Villegas, the lead author of the research.

“The challenge with the Indian livestock sector lies in the conditions in which animals are kept, resulting in low productivity. By improving these conditions, the vulnerability of Indian livestock production to climate change could be significantly reduced,” he suggests.

“The combination of climate conditions, especially drought and heat stress, poses significant challenges, particularly in India’s productive regions such as the Indo-Ganges basin. Even with a 1.5°C global warming scenario, which is alarmingly close, models predict over 100 days of extreme heat annually, posing risks to both animals and humans,” adds the researcher.

India's livestock conundrum

With a population of 1.4 billion, India relies heavily on farming, which contributes over 18 per cent to the country's GDP. The livestock sector is increasingly becoming a pivotal player in the agrarian economy, as other allied farming sectors experience declines.

Livestock management is deeply intertwined with India's farming systems, providing livelihoods and sustenance to millions. With a livestock population exceeding 535 million, India boasts the world's largest farmed animal population.

The country is home to a diverse range of livestock breeds, both indigenous and exotic, encompassing cattle, buffalo, sheep, goats, pigs, poultry, and more.

As the world's leading milk producer, India relies heavily on its rural population's engagement in dairy farming. However, the country's dependence on livestock is problematic in a warming world.

"Milk-producing cattle are particularly vulnerable to heat stress. These animals thrive within a temperature range of 16 to 25°C. Beyond this, heat stress hampers their ability to produce milk and reproduce," explains Dr Amlan Das Gupta, an associate professor at OP Jindal University.

"A comprehensive nationwide study on the precise impact of temperature on milk production and yields is still lacking," Gupta adds. "Some studies report up to a 50 per cent decline in milk production."

Experts note that exotic and hybrid livestock varieties are more susceptible to heat stress than indigenous breeds.

Climate stress and global warming exert both direct and indirect impacts on animals, according to Dr V Beena, a senior officer at the Centre for Animal Adaptation to Environment and Climate Change Studies, a recently established body under the Kerala Veterinary and Animal Sciences University.

"Heat stress is the primary direct impact, while indirect consequences manifest through alterations in the quality and quantity of forage provided to the animals. This, in turn, can lead to sporadic outbreaks of infectious diseases. Climate change can trigger the emergence and resurgence of such diseases," Dr Beena warns.

She notes that while some diseases in domesticated animals have been previously documented, their frequency has escalated in recent years due to rapidly changing

climate conditions. The compromised immune systems resulting from heat stress exacerbate the animals' susceptibility to diseases.

“Human intervention has increased. Cyclical patterns due to seasonal changes and livestock lifestyles are disrupted. All of these factors can contribute to the emergence of new variants and diseases. For instance, a sudden surge in vector-borne diseases has been observed in studies conducted in Kerala, with climate stress strongly suspected as a driving factor,” she emphasises. “For every 1 per cent rise in temperature, we observe at least a 10 per cent fall in livestock production across various categories. In some cases, animals experience a 20-50 per cent reduction in food intake,” Dr Beena concludes.

Navigating the future

Researchers stress that urgent corrective measures are imperative in India to mitigate the climate risks faced by livestock – a vulnerability that could reverberate globally. Additionally, India has been identified as a top investment priority for implementing such efforts.

The sector grapples with challenges including low productivity, inadequate infrastructure, limited access to modern technologies, and disease outbreaks. These issues hinder productivity, exemplified by the fact that the average cattle productivity in India was 1,777 kg/animal in 2019, significantly lower than the global average of 2,699 kg/animal.

“We must prioritise the adoption of more thermo-tolerant livestock breeds. Native breeds are generally more adapted to temperature variations, but their productivity is relatively lower. Therefore, among native breeds, those with higher productivity must be identified and promoted for genetic backup. Rigorous research in this regard is essential,” Dr Beena underscores.

Enhancing animal health, modernising infrastructure, streamlining the supply chain, and optimising the genetic pool are cited as critical imperatives.

“We believe that significant opportunities exist in India to mitigate climate risks. For instance, expanding existing crop insurance programmes to encompass the livestock sector could prove beneficial. Moreover, enhancing animal health and feed quality holds considerable potential to positively impact livestock productivity, adaptation, and mitigation,” Ramirez-Villegas concludes.

MALAYA BUSINESS INSIGHT

Climate change no far-off threat

It is a continuing disaster, as climatologists and analysts tell us. And climate change is endangering humans and natural environments in every continent, and the United Nations says the world is running out of time to keep at bay the most devastating consequences of global warming.

Experts have raised the bulletin board that global warming impacts everyone's food and water security.

They add climate change has been a direct cause of soil degradation, which limits the amount of carbon the earth is able to contain, pointing out that some 500 million people today live in areas affected by erosion, while up to 30 per cent of food is lost or wasted as a result.

The report, released by the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, or IPCC, outlines the increasing risk that climate change poses to human health, infrastructure, the stability of food and water resources and the biodiversity of the planet's ecosystems.

The assessment, produced by 270 scientists from 67 countries who make up the IPCC's so-called Working Group II, represents broad consensus within the research community about how global warming is affecting people and the environment – and the potential consequences of inaction.

Beyond doubt, we have seen in recent months increased heatwaves, droughts and floods which are exceeding plants' and animals' tolerance thresholds, driving mass mortalities in species such as trees and corals.

Climate scientists who have been warning about the long-term and inequitable effects of global warming say the need for immediate and comprehensive action cannot be overstated.

Rising temperatures are fueling environmental degradation, natural disasters, weather extremes, food and water insecurity, economic disruption, conflict, and terrorism.

Sea levels are rising, the Arctic is melting, coral reefs are dying, oceans are acidifying, and forests are burning.

The impacts of climate change in the Philippines, which loses P26 billion per year from this weather phenomenon, are immense, including annual losses in GDP, changes in

rainfall patterns and distribution, droughts, threats to biodiversity and food security, sea level rise, public health risks, and endangerment of vulnerable groups such as women and indigenous people.

This is due to the country's high exposure to natural hazards (cyclones, landslides, floods, droughts), dependence on climate-sensitive natural resources, and vast coastlines where all of its major cities and the majority of the population reside.

We note the Philippines submitted its Nationally Determined Contribution to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in April 2021.

It pledged a projected reduction and avoidance of greenhouse gas emissions of 75 percent for the period 2020–2030, of which 2.71 percent is unconditional and 72.29 percent is conditional.

MANILA BULLETIN

[Alliance calls on PH businesses to 'veer away' from greenwashing](#)

By: Myrna M. Velasco

The Net Zero Carbon Alliance (NZCA), which is a pioneering collaboration of Philippine corporates and organizations that are genuine stewards for the environment and the planet, is calling on businesses to pursue veritable net zero goals and for them to veer away from 'greenwashing' duplicity.

According to the alliance, while many firms around the world have already advanced commitments to achieve net zero emissions, "a closer look has yet to be done on how Philippine businesses can take concrete actions and veer away from potential greenwash."

As culled from report issued in June this year, it was noted that roughly half of the 2,000 largest publicly listed companies in the world "have committed to a net-zero strategy."

Nevertheless, the hideous truth was also revealed in that same report that "many of these companies either do not count emissions produced by their supply chains, or depend on unreliable strategies to offset their carbon production."

Greenwashing refers to the practice of entities or corporations on creating feigned representation or the provision of misleading information that their products or businesses are environmentally sound – but in reality, the whole chain of their operations and supply chain are not really as 'green' or 'clean' as they claimed to be.

In the Philippines in general, many corporations are known to be using the word 'sustainability' in a very tricky and abusive way -- that even initiatives that do not really count as sustainable are being labeled as such by many firms and organizations.

It is on that account then, the NZCA conveyed, that they will be working toward "accelerating the Philippines' private sector net-zero journey."

Allan V. Barcena, NZCA Executive Director and EDC Assistant Vice President and Head of Corporate Relations and Communications, stated that "climate action is a matter of urgency as we continue to experience the ever-increasing impacts of our warming planet around the world, most especially in the Philippines."

Via the initiative of RE firm Energy Development Corporation (EDC) of the First Gen group, the alliance emphasized that it "aims to engage with corporations in the Philippines to achieve carbon neutrality as a transition to net zero by 2050."

Barcena expounded that NZCA will “contribute practical measures toward decarbonization that Philippine businesses can take, starting with interventions such as renewable energy.”

In a conference convened by the alliance, which focused on the theme “Zeroing in on Net-Zero: From Corporate Pledges to Action,” the various speakers have touched on “the challenges and opportunities for Philippine corporations embarking on a net-zero journey, as well as the available solutions for hard-to-abate and carbon-intensive sectors.”

The ‘carbon neutrality framework’ which will be guiding the initiatives of NZCA has been designed by Dr. Rodel Lasco, executive director of the OML Center for Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation.

Under that framework, it was indicated that the alliance “espouses carbon reduction and removal for Philippine businesses begins with the partner’s commitment to achieving carbon neutrality by 2050 at the latest.”

Then from that initial step, the group added that such shall be “followed by measuring its climate resilience and carbon footprint, coming up with its roadmap, implementing it, tracking, disclosing, and validating its progress over time.”

To aid partners in tracking their progress on the net zero pathway, the NZCA has established the ‘Zero Carbon Gateway’ that will then be useful in calculation of scopes 1 and 2 carbon emissions or the greenhouse gas emissions which are within the control of the company or organization; as well as its indirect emissions that could be coming from purchased energy.

MANILA STANDARD

[UK offers \\$4.9 billion in export finance for renewable energy, digital infra in PH](#)

By: Othel V. Campos

The UK offers £4 billion (about \$4.9 billion) in export finance for renewable energy and digital agriculture infrastructure projects in the Philippines, the British Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines (BCCP) said Monday.

BCCP chairman Chris Nelson said UK Ambassador to the Philippines Laure Beaufilet earlier disclosed plans to extend export finance to the Philippines.

“There is actually £4 billion in potential export finance for the Philippines, one of the areas of focus is renewable energy and on infrastructure,” he said.

The BCCP said the UK is very keen on digital infrastructure.

Nelson said the UK is sustaining long-term trade relations with the Philippines, particularly with the new preferential trade agreement under the Developing Countries Trading Scheme (DCTS).

DCTS preference countries such as the Philippines will receive access to duty-free, quota free trade on 92 percent of eligible goods which are over 99 percent of Philippine exports to the UK in terms of value.

“We’re looking forward to seeing DCTS further boost that along with trying to get investments from the UK and the key sectors in the Philippines,” Nelson said.

He said the UK made preferential trading with partners easier, particularly with developing countries, in terms of country of origin and the reduction of tariffs on 150 more tariff lines.

“So all of these should see a significant boost, particularly in agriculture. And I think it just reinforces potential growth areas between the two countries,” Nelson said.

The DCTS is the UK’s alternative to the EU Generalized System of Preferences Plus (GSP+). The UK said the DCTS is one of the most generous trade preference schemes in the world that benefits 65 countries, 3.3 billion people and over €20 billion of exports to the UK each year.

Philippine exporters are expected to benefit from an estimated combined tariff savings of €21 million for businesses compared to UK global tariff (UKGT).

There were more than 300 British investors in the Philippines as of end-2022. Trade between the UK and the Philippines reached £2.4 billion last year.

PHILIPPINE INFORMATION AGENCY

DOE pushes for RE-centered Western Visayas

By: Easter Anne Doza

The Department of Energy (DOE) during the 3rd Quarter Regional Development Council (RDC) 6 meeting revealed that Western Visayas is poised as the Renewable Energy (RE) center of the country with a total of 113 renewable energy service contracts already awarded.

As of June 2023, these renewable energy projects progress through different stages of permitting and development with an existing installed capacity of 775.7 Megawatts (MW) and a potential capacity of 16,500.7 MW, and DOE awaits its integration into the local communities.

According to DOE, most of these contracts are wind energy sources, with a vast potential capacity of 14,943 MW.

Energy Secretary Raphael Perpetuo Lotilla, in his message read by Undersecretary Giovanni Carlo Bacordo during the RDC meeting, said that renewable energy is the way forward and the DOE is amplifying efforts to advocate for greater utilization of renewable energy, aligning with our overarching government objectives.

“Our shared goal is to achieve 35 percent renewable energy (RE) in our power generation mix by 2030, with an ambitious target of 50 percent by 2040. These targets are not arbitrary. They are enshrined in both the Philippine Energy Plan and the National Renewable Energy Plan, reflecting our commitment to combating climate change and transitioning toward a more sustainable and environmentally friendly power generation landscape,” Lotilla added.

DOE urges the local government units (LGUs) in the region to actively participate in the Energy Virtual One-Stop Shop (EVOSS) System by incorporating their permitting processes into the System while also encouraging all permitting agencies to take a proactive role in guiding and facilitating these renewable energy initiatives.

“By doing so, we can expedite the permitting process for these energy projects that will provide livelihood and development opportunities to the host communities sooner, rather than later,” Lotilla said.

DOE also gave updates on the high-impact energy projects mentioned during President Ferdinand Marcos Jr’s second State of the Nation Address (SONA) like the Mindanao-

Visayas Interconnection Project and the Cebu-Negros-Panay (CNP) Transmission Line Project.

The MVIP with a transfer capacity of 450 MW, will link Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao, facilitating power sharing and optimizing energy resources at a current load of 270 MW, the interconnection is targeted to be fully operational by October 2023.

On the other hand, the Cebu-Negros-Panay (CNP) Transmission Line Project, designed at 800 MW, will enhance the efficient transfer of energy within the Visayas sub-grid, particularly from Negros Island which is currently operating at 270 MW, the CNP Stage 3 Project is targeted for full operation by National Grid Corporation of the Philippines in October 2023.

Lotilla shared that RDC VI is showing what the energy future will be like and how it will be done, and this must be replicated by other RDCs.

THE MANILA TIMES

Japan supports PH efforts to reduce marine litter

Economic Affairs Minister Nihei Daisuke of the Embassy of Japan in the Philippines joined the culmination event of the Healthy Oceans and Clean Cities Initiative (HOCCI) on September 15. The event highlighted the achievements, experiences, and lessons learned of the partner cities and communities in localizing the Philippines NPOA-ML into City Plans of Action for Marine Litter (CPOA-MG).

The activity also featured the emerging approaches explored by partner cities, such as customized integration of digitization and digital transformation in plastic waste diversion and Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) readiness of local government units.

A regional initiative by UN-Habitat in the Philippines and the government of Japan, HOCCI addresses the growing concern over marine plastic pollution that endangers the environment, marine ecosystems, and public health. While the Philippines has among the highest trash collection rates in Southeast Asia, it remains the world's third-largest source of marine litter.

With UN-Habitat Philippines' lead, the Government of Japan funded \$3 million for this project and the project ran for three and a half years, from April 2020 to September 2023, and was piloted in the cities of Cagayan de Oro, Calapan, Davao, Legazpi, Manila, and Ormoc. The project primarily provided support for improved governance structures and capacities for the localization of the National Plan of Action for Marine Litter (NPOA-ML) and the vertical integration of the marine plastic litter response.

The project also assisted the cities in improving technology and systems for marine plastic litter reduction.

In his speech, Minister Nihei expressed his hopes that the gains and lessons learned from the implementation of HOCCI will inspire synergies and deepen partnerships at the community, national, and international levels to work hand in hand in reducing marine litter.

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