



## NEWS ROUNDUP

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### KHALEEJ TIMES

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By: Nandini Sircar

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## **THE MANILA TIMES**

### **[Climate change pushes SE Asia to share power](#)**

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The urgency for Southeast Asian nations to switch to clean energy to combat climate change is reinvigorating a 20-year-old plan for the region to share power.

## [PH total factor productivity in agri and climate change](#)

By: William Dar

Of the many challenges the global agriculture sector is facing, climate change is perhaps the most magnified. And this is for good reason, as extreme weather conditions can wreak havoc on food systems, affecting both producers and consumers.

### **THE PHILIPPINE STAR**

## [The disaster in Libya puts focus on climate change](#)

By: Mohamed Osman -

On 11 September 2023, Eastern Libya woke up to a natural disaster that exceeded in scope anything historically documented in Libya or any that the living have experienced in their lifetime. Storm Daniel struck the region, leaving massive damage, with the city of Derna suffering the largest share, where the storm turned into a disaster in every sense of the word with the number of victims expected to exceed ten thousand dead or missing, in addition to property destruction.

**Information and Knowledge Management Division**

**[COP28: UAE to 'leave its indelible mark' on global climate action, says top diplomat](#)**

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The UN Climate Change Conference (COP28) will serve as a worldwide platform for the UAE to demonstrate its dedication and 'leave its indelible mark' in promoting the climate agenda, said a former UAE envoy while speaking on the second day of the 21st Arab Media Forum.

Dr Anwar Mohammed Gargash, Diplomatic Advisor to the UAE President and Former Minister of State for Federal National Council Affairs of the UAE, said "action and investment" will be critical following the United Nation's Climate Change conference.

Talking about the UAE's energy diversification, and how the country is rapidly expanding the use of clean energy, he said, "COP28 is among the most important conferences hosted by the UAE. It relates to a cause that concerns the whole world. We are looking at some real milestones and progress. We must maintain a positive perspective when addressing climate and sustainability concerns."

Gargash explained that the UAE has taken steps over 16 years to develop solar panels on a large scale with its R&D and policy work.

"We are among the biggest when it comes to solar plants. In addition, we operate nuclear power reactors and are also prominent when it comes to wind energy."

"After the COP27 at Sharm El-Sheikh we also assessed investments in matters related to climate change," he added.

**COP28 to support action in disaster-affected areas**

He highlighted the conference also comes in support of international efforts for climate action in the Arab region and Africa particularly after the recent natural calamities in Morocco and Libya, and would leverage for international focus on climate action in these regions that need help.

"I am confident that COP28 will be a significant assembly, tackling the challenges and crises that have arisen in locations such as Libya and various other nations. Our aim is to explore potential solutions for this 'humanitarian crisis'. COP 28 will undoubtedly stand as another testament to humanity's efforts in addressing these issues, with the UAE making a notable contribution and leaving its stamp," he added.

International reports apparently indicate that the countries in the Middle East and North Africa region are most vulnerable to climate change risks, as 60 per cent of the region's population lives in areas that suffer severely from water stress, and 20 million people could be displaced due to climate change.

The former diplomat also pointed out that the UAE's strategy for the conference revolves around the importance of collaborations that evolve outside the scope of formal diplomatic discussions.

“We will see a wide range of perspectives that’ll cover a broad range of topics related to climate change and environmental sustainability, including forest and agriculture.”

## MANILA BULLETIN

### [DENR joins hands with Nestle to push EPR law](#)

By:Calvin Cordova

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) continues to encourage the private sector to help the government effectively enforce the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) law.

As part of the efforts to push for the effective implementation of the law, the DENR has partnered with Nestle Philippines in holding a series of registration and information drives.

The second leg of the “Rethinking Plastics: EPR Paving the Way Towards Circularity” roundtable discussion was held in Mandaue City, Cebu recently where the compliance and support among the private sector, especially the obliged enterprises (OEs), were highlighted.

Holding webinars and workshops with various industry associations are meant to spread awareness about the EPR law and its provisions, as well as the EPR registration process.

The DENR aims to encourage OEs to register their EPR programs with the DENR-Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) to meet the law’s required 20 percent recovery and diversion of their plastic footprint by this year.

OEs are large enterprises with total assets of over P100 million and produce, manufacture, import, or put their brand label on plastics. Micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME) are not required, but highly encouraged, to also register their EPR programs.

“We are here to assist. We have EPR clinics. We can help you on the procedures on how to register and we can guide you on the requirements of the EPR law. Together, if we can help each other, perhaps at the end of the day, we can comply with the provisions of the law,” said Undersecretary for Policy, Planning, and International Affairs Jonas Leones.

The roundtable discussion provided participants guidance on the process of registration and presented opportunities on how they can work together with the government to help in ensuring the successful implementation of the EPR Law.

EPR Registry clinics were set up by DENR, in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), to further assist OEs in creating and submitting their EPR programs.

Highlights from the Synthesis Report from the first EPR RTD held in Manila last May were also shared during the program, including the key takeaways and recommendations taken from the panel and roundtable discussions.

Among these are the value of data-driven measures, collaboration between the private and public sectors and among multiple stakeholders, investing in infrastructure for solid waste management and recycling, and driving consumer education when implementing the EPR Law.

After the DENR EPR campaign was launched in August, there has been an increase in EPR submissions from 667 to 709 as of mid-September.

DENR and other government partners in EPR implementation, business groups, and civil society organizations continue to proactively campaign for EPR support, recognizing that cleaning up plastic waste from the environment not only restores the planet but also protects human health, livelihoods, and food security.

The EPR education and registration drive is supported by UNDP, GIZ, the European Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines (ECCP), and Eco-Business. The third leg of the caravan will be held in Cagayan de Oro City on October 6.

## MONGABAY

### [Climate change detectable in daily rainfall patterns, deep-learning model finds](#)

By: Abhishyant Kidangoor

Scientists have long known that global warming is upending not just seasonal climate trends, but also minute weather patterns on a daily basis. However, establishing a strong link hasn't always been easy, which means most research has focused on climate change's impact on long-term trends, such as annual precipitation or monthly temperature increases.

The past few years, though, have seen data and subsequent modeling get more detailed and nuanced. A study published in 2020 in the journal *Nature Climate Change* delineated how the impact of climate change was detectable from the changes in daily temperature and moisture around the world.

On the heels of that research, and partly inspired by it, another group of researchers took up the task of understanding how variations in daily rainfall might be linked to global warming. Using a deep-learning model, the scientists determined how, on any single day, global warming is impacting, and significantly altering, rainfall patterns around the world.

In their study published in August in the journal *Nature*, the researchers described how "daily precipitation has now become more variable due to human-induced global warming." While variability has always been a hallmark of daily weather (think of how often weather forecasts have been off), things like rainfall or snow can generally be narrowed down to a band of probability (hence "a 30% chance of rain," rather than a definitive declaration of rain).

The model that the researchers developed for their study found that every year since 2015, daily rainfall deviated clearly from this band of natural variability more than 50% of the time as a result of rising temperatures. This, the study concluded, showed that "daily precipitation data represented an excellent predictor for observed planetary warming."

"We were surprised to find that this intensification of global daily rainfall variability is dominated on weather-time scales, periods shorter than 10 days," study co-author Seung-Ki Min, professor in the climate change research lab at Pohang University of Science and Technology in South Korea, told Mongabay in an email interview. "This means that global warming is indeed changing our daily weather, making it more variable and inducing increased occurrences of extreme wet and dry conditions."



Monitoring variations in daily precipitation, and why it's happening, isn't an easy task. Studying the trend on a short-term scale, and linking it to climate change — a longer-term phenomenon — can get complicated. Daily precipitation might change drastically over the course of a day, which often means that the unevenness in its pattern isn't always easy to quantify. Additionally, changes in precipitation patterns studied over a longer time are often described in terms of an increase or decrease in a particular month or year. With daily precipitation, which is often erratic and can either increase or decrease in a short span of time, similar ways of measurements often leave out the nuances in the data.

It's to incorporate these "non-linear" trends in daily precipitation and analyze them more effectively that the team decided to use deep learning, a subfield of artificial intelligence.

"The day-to-day variation is way stronger than the changes in the long-term averages," study co-author Yoo-Geun Ham, a professor at Chonnam National University in South Korea, told Mongabay in an email interview. "In this respect, we thought deep learning was the best choice."

The team trained the model to recognize patterns based on data gathered over many years from global climate models. This included daily precipitation maps, along with data on annual global mean temperatures. Once the model was trained, the researchers could feed it global daily precipitation maps, upon which it predicted the annual global mean temperature (AGMT), often considered a good metric for global warming. If the predicted AGMT was found to be higher than what it has been historically, it would not only indicate a change in daily precipitation, but also a link to global warming.

Ham said the model could, in the future, be further developed using the latest image-recognition techniques to improve its accuracy. As extreme weather events become more frequent across the globe, Ham said, the model could serve as a tool to make predictions that could help implement policy measures to mitigate the impacts of global warming.

## NIKKEI ASIA

### [Japan launches new decarbonization dialogue with Central Asia](#)

By: Anna Nishino

Japan and five Central Asian nations vowed Tuesday to collaborate on reducing greenhouse gas emissions, creating a new cabinet-level dialogue to help launch specific projects.

Yasutoshi Nishimura, Japan's minister of economy, trade and industry, held the inaugural economic and energy talks here that day with counterparts from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

The move, which builds on the existing Central Asia plus Japan Dialogue, is the latest in growing efforts to counter Russian and Chinese influence in the region.

The six countries will help promote the adoption of renewable energy and efforts to make aging gas-fired power plants more efficient. In a joint statement, they pledged to work together on technological and financial initiatives toward achieving the goal of net-zero greenhouse gas emissions as early as 2050.

They also committed to promote the Joint Crediting Mechanism for reducing developing countries' emissions using decarbonization technologies from Japan.

Interest in Central Asia is growing among Japanese companies, particularly trading houses, that have left Russia since it invaded Ukraine.

As former Soviet republics, the five Central Asian countries maintain strong economic ties with Russia. They are also strategically located for China's Belt and Road infrastructure initiative. The U.S. has also been ramping up efforts to woo the key region, with President Joe Biden meeting with the leaders of the five Central Asian countries earlier this month.

Central Asia is geopolitically in an extremely important position, Nishimura said at Tuesday's meeting. He said he wanted to identify how the public and private sectors in Japan and Central Asia can cooperate toward the energy transition.

## SUNSTAR

### [Landmark case: 6 young activists take on 32 European nations over climate action](#)

Six young people from Portugal will argue that governments across Europe aren't doing enough to protect people from the harms of climate change at the European Court of Human Rights on Wednesday, Sept. 27, 2023 in the latest and largest instance of activists taking governments to court to force climate action.

The lawyers representing the young adults and children will argue that the 32 European governments they're suing have failed to adequately address global warming and therefore violated some of their fundamental rights.

"This is truly a David and Goliath case," said Gearóid Ó Cuinn, director of the non-profit organization Global Legal Action Network that's been crowdfunding to support the group.

"It is unprecedented in its scale and its consequences," he said. "It also makes legal history. Never before have so many countries had to defend themselves in front of a court, anywhere in the world."

Although there have been successful climate cases at national and regional levels — young environmentalists recently won a similar case in Montana — the activists' legal team said that because national jurisdictions did not go far enough to protect their rights the group felt compelled to take the matter to the Strasbourg-based court.

Arguing that their rights to life, to privacy and family life, and to be free from discrimination are being violated, they hope a favorable ruling will force the 27 EU member countries, as well as the United Kingdom, Switzerland, Norway, Russia and Turkey, to accelerate their climate efforts such as building renewable infrastructure and reducing their greenhouse gas emissions.

#### Legally binding

The court's rulings are legally binding on member countries, and failure to comply makes authorities liable for hefty fines decided by the court.

"This judgement would act like a binding treaty imposed by the court on the respondents, requiring them to rapidly accelerate their climate mitigation efforts," said lawyer Gerry Liston. "In legal terms, it would be a gamechanger."

But the plaintiffs — who are between 11 and 24 years of age and are not seeking financial compensation — will need to convince judges that they have been sufficiently affected to be considered as victims. The group will also need to prove to the courts that governments have a legal duty to make sure global warming is held to 1.5 degrees Celsius since pre-industrial times in line with the goals of the 2015 Paris climate agreement.

Science is on the activists' side.

The world is way off track on limiting warming to 1.5 degrees C, scientists say, with global average temperatures projected to rise by 2 to 4 degrees C by 2100 at current trajectories of warming and emissions reductions plans.

As the world warms, climate scientists predict more frequent and more extreme weather events, from heavier flooding and rainfall to prolonged droughts and heat waves and increasingly intense storms.

Speaking at a news conference ahead of the hearing, the activists said climate change affects their daily lives and their studies, and damages both their physical and psychological well-being.

They started judicial action in the wake of a series of deadly wildfires in central Portugal in 2017, where four of them live.

## THE MANILA TIMES

### Climate change pushes SE Asia to share power

By: Associated Press

The urgency for Southeast Asian nations to switch to clean energy to combat climate change is reinvigorating a 20-year-old plan for the region to share power.

Malaysia and Indonesia inked a deal in Bali, Indonesia, last month to study 18 potential locations where cross-border transmission lines can be set up.

Those links could eventually generate power roughly equivalent to what 33 nuclear power plants would produce in a year. They are economically and technically feasible, and now are supported by regional governments, said Beni Suryadi, a power expert at the Asean Center for Energy in Jakarta, Indonesia.

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations or Asean is a political and economic gathering of 10 countries across a vast region, from tiny Brunei and Singapore to military-controlled Myanmar and fast-rising economic power Vietnam.

Experts describe imports by Singapore of hydroelectric-generated power from Laos via transmissions through Thailand and Malaysia as a "pathfinder" project, marking the first time that four countries in the region have agreed to trade electricity.

Cross-border power purchases accounted for just 2.7 percent of the region's capacity in 2017, according to the Global Interconnection Journal. But those were between two countries, such as Thailand and Laos.

Now, more countries are looking at power-sharing as a way to wean their economies off coal and other fossil fuels. Vietnam would like a regional grid so it could sell clean energy, such as from offshore wind, to its neighbors while the Malaysian province of Sarawak is looking to sell its hydropower to neighboring Indonesia.

The plan for a regional grid between the 10 members of the Asean was conceived two decades ago, but progress has been stalled by various problems including technical barriers and political mistrust.

The region now recognizes it must move faster. Climate change could reduce the region's economic potential by more than a third by the middle of the century, according to a report presented at the 2021 UN climate conference in Glasgow, Scotland.

Demand for electricity is rising, and governments have realized the transition away from fossil fuels requires an interconnected grid, Suryad said.

"It has become a crucial need for every country," he said.

In the past, countries in the region were focused more on energy security, relying heavily on fossil fuels and often building more capacity than they needed. But renewable energy costs are falling, making hydroelectric, solar and wind power more affordable. And all Asean countries apart from the Philippines have pledged to stop adding carbon to the atmosphere by 2050.

So, arguments in favor of an interconnected grid appear to be prevailing.

Tiny, landlocked Laos, with a population of only 7 million, has built more than 50 dams in the past 15 years, relying on its status as the "battery of Southeast Asia" to profit from sales of power to Thailand, Vietnam and China.

It still has surplus power it needs to sell to others in the region.

Singapore — a small city-state of 6 million with nearly no natural resources — must import clean energy to meet its renewable energy goals.

Regional grids can help bridge gaps between where power is needed and where it can be generated, helping countries adjust to outside shocks like big jumps in oil prices. They also can help cut costs: In 2021, for instance, Europe saved \$36 billion by trading power, European regulators have estimated.

Interconnected grids can also deliver reliable electricity to communities in remote regions like West Kalimantan, on the island of Borneo. A life punctuated by rolling blackouts that forced shops to shutter and people to use diesel generators was the norm until a 170-kilometer (105-mile)-long cross-border power line coming from neighboring Malaysia's Sarawak province changed that in 2016.

"This is a no-brainer way to do it... because it's been done elsewhere, and the benefits are obvious," said Rena Kuwahata, an energy analyst at the Paris-based International Energy Agency.

But issues remain.

One of Asean's core policies is noninterference, which means members tend to shy away from joint projects. Domestic energy priorities are sometimes at odds with the potential benefits of an interconnected grid. Nadhilah Shani, another expert at the

Asean Center for Energy, said that this creates a "dilemma" for countries: they could sell clean energy to neighbors for the region to wean itself off fossil fuels, or they could use those resources toward meeting their own climate targets.

Malaysia gets only 1 percent of its electricity annually from clean sources. It banned the export of renewables in 2021 to try and develop a domestic clean energy industry. That ban was lifted this year, but an Indonesian ban on clean energy exports imposed last year remains in effect.

The region's lack of a regulatory framework for such things as installing submarine power cables is another stumbling block.

Not all the technical problems have been ironed out. Voltages used by each country can vary, as do the capacities of their grids. Even countries whose grids span borders, like Thailand, need to upgrade them, said Harald Link, owner of B.Grimm Power and president of Thailand's Association of Private Power Producers.

Projections of where power will be needed must be factored in, for example, plans for power-hungry data centers.

"You need a huge amount of electricity — and they want it green. And where do you get it from? For some countries, it is more difficult to make it green," Link said.

Costs are high: at a minimum some \$280 billion in power sector investments are required, according to the Asean Center for Energy.

China's involvement in building much of the region's energy infrastructure via its Belt and Road Initiative could also be a concern. In 2021, Laos, under pressure from its mounting debts, granted a 25-year concession to operate its power grid to a majority Chinese-owned company.

But despite intermittent tensions between China and some of its neighbors over territorial disputes and other issues, generally Beijing and Asean are working on the basis of "mutual interests and benefits," said Shani.

Given how expensive it is to build power grids, the private financing needed to build it can influence how and where projects are built, said Shani. Still, she said, national priorities play a bigger role than Chinese investments in how electricity is transmitted.

"We are in [a] good place in Asean to have this kind of collaboration in terms of trading, and we have reached a common understanding," she said.

## PH total factor productivity in agri and climate change

By: William Dar

Of the many challenges the global agriculture sector is facing, climate change is perhaps the most magnified. And this is for good reason, as extreme weather conditions can wreak havoc on food systems, affecting both producers and consumers.

A study paper by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) posted on its website clearly states the need to mitigate the impact of climate change and how it affects agricultural total factor productivity (TFP).

Titled "Agricultural Policy Monitoring and Evaluation 2022: Reforming Agricultural Policies for Climate Change Mitigation," it identified the Philippines as among the countries needing climate change mitigation measures and an improvement in agricultural TFP.

Let me first discuss the need to improve the country's TFP. Specifically, the OECD paper said that Philippine TFP growth was slower than the global average.

The United States Department of Agriculture-Economic Research Service (USDA-ERS) has a clear definition of TFP: "TFP measures the amount of agricultural output produced from the combined set of land, labor, capital and material resources employed in farm production. If total output is growing faster than total inputs, then the total productivity of the factors of production (i.e., total factor productivity) is increasing."

The USDA, through its website (<https://www.ers.usda.gov/>), also has findings up to 2020 of the TFP of almost all countries and territories, with the Philippines having a TFP index of 101. More than 400 countries and territories were studied by the USDA-ERS.

In 2016, the Philippines had a score of 99, and 103 for 2017 to 2019. Hence, the TFP score of 103 for three straight years prior to the pandemic was the highest for the Philippines.

Notably, the OECD paper said that from 2019 to 2021, the government's support to farmers was one of the highest among emerging nations as a share of gross farm receipts.

"Support to farmers in the Philippines as a share of gross farm receipts averaged 27.1 percent in 2019-2021. This is higher than the OECD average and one of the highest among emerging economies covered in this report," it added.

What surprised me is the Philippines got a higher TFP index number than Thailand's 98 in 2020 but Myanmar got a higher 103. In Southeast Asia, Brunei has the highest TFP



of 125 followed by Vietnam with 118, Cambodia with 111, Indonesia with 110 and Laos with 108. Besides Thailand, the Southeast Asian countries with lower TFP index numbers than the Philippines were Timor-Leste with 99 and Malaysia with 97.

In Asia, the highest TFP index for 2020 was garnered by Mongolia with 143 while India got 117 for the same year.

#### More reforms needed

While the OECD cited that the Philippines had a better TFP number among some Asian countries, it noted the need to undertake more reforms in our agriculture sector especially now that extreme weather conditions are negatively impacting agriculture.

Here is what the OECD recommended for the Philippine agriculture sector to level up and become resilient to climate change: Accelerate climate change mitigation policies; allocate more funds to deliver more services to food producers to increase their productivity; increase long-term investments in infrastructure and research and development (R&D); institute a holistic approach to disaster risk management where policy objectives cuts across programs and institutions; and enhance biosecurity against diseases and pests.

To accelerate climate change mitigation policies, the OECD said the Philippines needs to accelerate the development and implementation of climate change mitigation policies for agriculture. This includes the commitment of the country under its 2021 Nationally Determined Contribution to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 75 percent by 2020 and 2030 compared to business-as-usual emission projection.

"Current policy settings focus on adapting to climate change rather than mitigating GHG emissions. Given its ambitious but conditional mitigation commitments, the Philippines will benefit from membership in international mechanisms collaborating on mitigation solutions, such as the Global Research Alliance on Agricultural Greenhouse Gases and the newly launched Global Methane Pledge," the OECD said.

There is also a need to shift to a policy to allocate more funds for the increased or expanded delivery of services to food producers to increase their productivity. The OECD even cited funding the interventions of the National Food Authority to support the prices of palay (unmilled rice), through buffer stocking, as money not spent wisely.

"The budget financing these interventions could be more efficiently spent on direct income support and to finance general services to improve productivity and climate adaptation and resilience in the sector, while bolstering social measures for the most vulnerable consumers," it added.

For increasing long-term investments in infrastructure and R&D, the OECD said that both should result in leveling up productivity in the agriculture sector. It cited that decades of not investing adequately for both has resulted in the Philippines having slower TFP growth than the global average and many countries and territories in Asia.

For instituting a holistic approach to disaster risk management, the OECD pointed out that the Philippines was susceptible to typhoons, tropical storms and flooding, necessitating the need to assess the current risk management tools. This includes assessing the extent of insurance and cash-transfer schemes in encouraging risk-reducing decision-making among food producers.

"Evaluation should be used to improve policy design and delivery. Support for climate-smart agricultural innovation and advisory services should be prioritized," it said.

For improving biosecurity and disease control measures, the recommendation is to require coordination among local authorities and providing advisory services to stakeholders.

Measures to mitigate the impact of climate change on agriculture will definitely have a positive impact on agriculture, but let us not also forget the other factors that can also make farming and fishing more productive: Clustering of fragmented farmers, forming partnerships with major private sector players, giving food producers better market access including the export market, crop diversification, more credit support, adapting regenerative agriculture, among others.

While the initiatives I mentioned are primarily aimed at improving the income of food producers, these will also improve their capabilities to deal with extreme weather conditions as they can establish better farming systems that are both profitable and resilient.

## THE PHILIPPINE STAR

### [The disaster in Libya puts focus on climate change](#)

By: Mohamed Osman -

On 11 September 2023, Eastern Libya woke up to a natural disaster that exceeded in scope anything historically documented in Libya or any that the living have experienced in their lifetime. Storm Daniel struck the region, leaving massive damage, with the city of Derna suffering the largest share, where the storm turned into a disaster in every sense of the word with the number of victims expected to exceed ten thousand dead or missing, in addition to property destruction.

The storm had swept other countries in the Mediterranean basin, carrying with it record amounts of rain when it reached land in Libya, filling the usually dry Derna Valley and the pressure of the water level caused the collapse of two dams built in the 1970s to protect the city from floods, unleashing a massive torrent that swept through the city, sweeping away entire neighborhoods with its residents, homes, apartments and cars into the sea.

Rescue teams are still exerting efforts to extract the bodies of these people who, for an hour and a half, found themselves surrounded by water in their homes and vehicles and then carried by this heavy pouring water to their death. The affected neighborhoods are located on both banks of the valley that passes through the city center, and the infrastructure has been subjected to extensive destruction, including the bridges linking the east and west of the city.

Because of the magnitude of this disaster, and because Libyans have no familiarity, knowledge or experience with storms and how to prepare for it – as the worst natural disasters that befell Libya previously was an earthquake in the city of Al-Marj in the 60s of the last century, and the loss of lives and property it caused pales in comparison to this storm. Even then, the elderly still remember the earthquake and pray for mercy for its victims.

In view of all this, the Libyan State announced that this disaster exceeds its capabilities and is beyond its capacity. Many countries rushed to help, including, but not limited to, Saudi Arabia, Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Qatar, Tunisia, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates and Palestine. The Philippines offered to provide monetary assistance, and the United States pledged to provide assistance, while Britain joined Finland, France, Italy and Romania in European aid efforts.

Now that hopes of finding survivors have diminished to a great extent, rescue teams face a major challenge in exhuming the bodies of victims who were swept into the sea,

not to mention lack of body bags and concerns of spreading epidemic diseases due to the large number of bodies that have not been recovered yet.

On the other hand, as the proverb says, “Every cloud has a silver lining,” and this storm has revived noticeably the sense of brotherhood and solidarity among Libyans, with hundreds of young people from all over Libya volunteering to quickly help their eastern brethren. These fraternal human sentiments are a true reflection of the genuine good nature Libyans possess; sentiments which were almost overshadowed by the senseless wars some Libyans were involved in in previous times.

In conclusion, I must emphasize an issue that has become not only urgent but of great importance – that of climate change. While recognizing that this disaster had many causes, the city of Derna has never recorded such a large amount of rainfall of more than 400 millimeters within 24 hours, double what would fall during an entire rainy season in previous years (the average annual rainfall is 274 millimeters), in addition to the fact that the season is not a rainy season.

The disasters resulting from this phenomenon have spared no country nor region in the world, and in recent years its consequences have become more aggravated, requiring us to take urgent steps to save what can be saved if we wish to preserve for our future generations a habitat in which they can live in dignity.

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