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By: Vince Angelo Ferreras

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THE PHILIPPINE STAR

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By: Rosette Adel

The Philippines, one of the countries most vulnerable to climate change, has pledged to actively participate in the implementation of the United Nations' Pact for the Future, a landmark agreement that aims to address pressing global challenges.

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By: By Vibhu Mishra

Prime Ministers of Vanuatu, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Tuvalu and Tonga underlined the UN's role as a platform for driving unified, decisive action to mitigate this threat.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

GMA NEWS

[Senate panel defers approval of co-op, climate agencies' 2025 budgets](#)

By: Hana Bordey

A Senate Finance subcommittee has deferred the approval of the proposed budgets of the Cooperative Development Authority (CDA) and the Climate Change Commission (CCC) for next year.

MANILA STANDARD

[UNDP initiates development of climate finance strategy for PH](#)

The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) is set to develop a comprehensive strategy for climate finance in the Philippines, marking a landmark effort to consolidate financing solutions for climate change action in the country.

Information and Knowledge Management Division

GMA NEWS

[Action plan vs. climate change must be collab effort among LGUs - Mayor Binay](#)

By: Vince Angelo Ferreras

Local government units must work together in implementing measures to mitigate the effects of climate change, Makati Mayor Abigail Binay said on Monday.

“It has to be a cohesive and collective effort...Kasi lahat naman tayo interconnected (Because we are interconnected),” she told reporters at the sidelines of the Manila Bulletin Sustainability Focus Session.

“Climate change does not just affect Makati, it affects the entire country. Hindi mo naman pwedeng sabihin na ‘Ako may climate action ako, ikaw wala kang climate action’...It really has to be a cooperation among local governments,” Binay added.

(Climate change does not just affect Makati, it affects the entire country. You cannot tell the other cities that ‘I have a climate action and it’s your fault that you don’t have one’.... It really has to be a cooperation among local governments.)

In 2022, Makati City declared a climate emergency in a bid to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Along with the declaration, the city government has implemented several policies and projects to slash carbon emissions such as the installation of solar panels in public schools and government offices, procurement of electric buses, car-free Sunday mornings along Ayala Avenue, among others.

But Binay said that initiatives on climate change must be a priority among localities.

“Kasi kung hindi ‘yan magiging priority or commitment ng nakaupong mayor, hindi magkakaroon ng drive para tugunan yung problema sa climate,” she said.

(If that would not be a priority or commitment of the mayor, there will be no drive at all to address the problem with our climate.)

“Kasi minsan ang sasabihin nila, ang priority namin livelihood, food security (Sometimes, their priorities are livelihood, food security). So unfortunately, they don’t see the bigger picture that it’s actually interrelated - the issues of food security, the issues of disaster are all connected because of the changes in our climate.”

The Makati City mayor noted that the effects of climate change can no longer be reversed, hence, resilience is important.

“So it is a call to action not just for the government, but for every household in the entire country,” said Binay.

“Tayo po ba ay resilient pagdating sa bagyo? Bakit tayo kapag kaunting ulan lang ‘Wala pong pasok?’ We are not being resilient. Climate change, and yung weather patterns are not going to change anytime soon. It’s only going to get worse kaya kailangan natin maging handa at resilient para maging sustainable.”

(Are we resilient during typhoons? When there is rain, why do we always ask, ‘Are classes suspended?’. We are not being resilient. Climate change and our weather patterns are not going to change anytime soon. It’s only going to get worse, so we need to be more prepared and resilient to be sustainable.)

A large majority of Filipinos have felt the effects of climate change, with 87% saying they personally experienced its impact within the last three years, according to a Social Weather Stations survey released last February.

The Philippines is a party to the historic agreement reached in Paris in December 2015 to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in order to keep the rise in global temperatures below two degrees Celsius.

MANILA BULLETIN

[EcoWaste urges 2025 election candidates to 'green' their campaigns](#)

By: Jel Santos

Environmental group EcoWaste Coalition called on all candidates for the 2025 national and local elections to prioritize public health and environmental sustainability throughout their campaigns.

The appeal comes as more than 500,000 individuals are expected to file their certificates of candidacy (COCs) from Oct. 1 to 8 for over 18,000 elective positions nationwide.

“We appeal to all participating individuals, political parties and party-list groups and their supporters to show they truly care for Mother Earth and her people by giving environmental protection due importance in thoughts, words, and deeds,” Aileen Lucero, the national coordinator of EcoWaste Coalition, said in a statement.

The group urged candidates to incorporate environmental issues into their platforms, conserve resources, and avoid generating waste during the campaign period.

They encouraged candidates to avoid becoming what the group termed a "garpol"—a politician who pays lip service to environmental protection while contributing to pollution and waste in their pursuit of power.

EcoWaste also called on candidates to file their COCs without fanfare, urging them to avoid pollution-causing motorcades and parades and to ensure that all filing venues remain litter-free.

“Observe the rules set by the Commission on Elections (COMELEC), and please keep the COC filing simple and all filing venues litter-free,” the group stressed.

During the campaign period, EcoWaste urged candidates to minimize plastic use, avoid hazardous materials, and refrain from harmful practices such as nailing posters to trees.

The group highlighted the need for responsible campaigning amid the ongoing global crises of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution.

After the elections on May 12, 2025, EcoWaste emphasized that candidates should lead efforts to clean up campaign materials for safe recycling or disposal, regardless of the election outcome.

First Gen upgrading natural gas plants for emission-free fuel

By: Gabriell Christerl Galang

In an effort to achieve net-zero carbon emissions by 2050, renewable energy (RE) provider First Gen Corporation announced that it is adding another adaptable technology to its natural gas-fired power plants by allowing the facilities to have clean or carbon-free fuel.

On the sidelines of a recent Net Zero Carbon Alliance (NZCA) forum, Federico R. Lopez, First Gen chairman and chief executive officer (CEO), said that the company is working on upgrading its gas plants so they can operate 100 percent emission-free fuel-like hydrogen.

According to Lopez, the firm is also coordinating with its equipment suppliers to ensure flexibility that would extend the shelf life of the gas plants beyond 2050.

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According to Lopez, the firm is also coordinating with its equipment suppliers to ensure flexibility that would extend the shelf life of the gas plants beyond 2050.

“As it [fallin hydrogen] comes you will be able to do it; so you prepare for it,” he added.

First Gen has also announced that it is planning to develop another gas-fired plant with a 1,200 megawatt (MW) capacity in Batangas. This will be in addition to its four other natural gas-fired power plants, which have a total capacity of 2,017 MW.

“Studies have identified carbon dioxide as one of the greenhouse gases behind adverse climate change, but the Philippines today relies heavily on coal as fuel for many power plants. The Marcos administration now wants to reverse this trend. Coal contains massive amounts of carbon dioxide when burned,” First Gen stated.

According to the Philippine Energy Plan (PEP), the government would want the share of coal reduced from 59.6 percent to 14 percent in 26 years while the share of renewable energy (RE) adjusted from 24.6 percent to 50.7 percent.

These clean energy initiatives can be achieved through geothermal, hydro, wind, and solar energy, which would make them an ideal power plant fuel.

The PEP also stated that there is a need to ensure grid stability and reliability since solar and wind are prone to drastically cut back.

“One of the solutions identified in the PEP calls for the development of natural gas,” First Gen said. “The share of natural gas in the country’s gross generation output would expand from 16 percent in 2022 to 35 percent in 2050.”

Furthermore, natural gas is adaptable which can allow power plants to easily ramp up and down output to match solar and wind power, however, Lopez reiterated that this would only play during the energy transition period.

“[Natural gas-fired plants] are probably the best bet for shepherding this transition. [But] they should not be there forever, and at some point, we should really be able to take them down or utilize fuels, say like hydrogen to be able to power them,” Lopez said.

If the firm gets to establish these plants, Lopez hoped that this would ensure that the plants can run on 100 percent carbon-free fuel in the future.

First Gen reported that the company has the largest portfolio of RE in its power plants with 1,651 MW capacity.

PH, Australia prove they can work together to address climate change — envoy

By: Joseph Pedrajas

The newly-inaugurated manufacturing plant for lithium-iron-phosphate batteries in New Clark City in Tarlac is proof that the Philippines and Australia can work together in addressing global concerns, such as climate change.

Australian Ambassador in Manila HK Yu said Monday, Sept. 30, that the StBattalion (StB) Giga Factory, which is the Philippines' first manufacturing plant for lithium-iron-phosphate batteries, "is a fantastic example of how governments and businesses can work together to tackle even the biggest challenge the world is facing right now" while also contributing to the prosperity of both countries.

"It was only just over six months ago that we had the pleasure of citing the signing of the MOU (memorandum of agreement)...and here we are," Yu said.

"I would say that today, we are witnessing our strategic partnership in action," she added.

Yu attended the ceremonial switch-on of StB, which is funded by Australian investment firm St Baker Energy.

The project was part of the investment commitments announced at the ASEAN-Australia Special Summit in March, during which President Marcos Jr. secured P86 billion worth of business deals.

"Together, Australia and the Philippines, we are making important strides towards the world of our dreams," Yu said.

"I believe that with, Mr. President, your staunch support for our bilateral relationship, we will all be inspired and energized to keep this work going, to work together to create the world that not only we deserve, but our future generations deserve," he added.

PCO

[PBBM: Opening of Tarlac battery plant to spur more RE investments in PH](#)

The launching of the PhP7-billion batteries manufacturing plant in the Philippines will entice more investors to enter the country's renewable energy (RE) landscape as it transitions to clean energy amid the threats posed by climate change, President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. said on Monday.

The President stressed StB Giga Factory is the country's first manufacturing plant of advanced lithium iron phosphate batteries.

"This facility runs in tandem with the Philippines' renewable energy landscape, as we transition our country to renewable energy. Your products could help entice more investors in renewable energy facilities in the country," President Marcos said during the StB Giga Factory inauguration in New Clark City.

"The upstream and the downstream businesses that will come from this are just going to be tremendous," he said.

"We also welcome StB Giga's plan to enter the EV product market in the coming years. This aligns with our plans to develop the country's EV industry and produce locally-made EVs and EV components, reducing our reliance on imported fuels."

While renewable energy sources and EVs were once seen as options, their adoption must be prioritized to mitigate the effects of climate change, the President pointed out.

He said every step towards sustainable energy development "is an investment in a brighter, healthier future for our children, for our country."

President Marcos thanked the entire team behind the StB Giga Factory for taking the leap of faith with the Philippines, emphasizing that it has laid a foundation for a cleaner, greener, and a more prosperous Bagong Pilipinas.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

[QC's pioneering efforts in sustainability, environmental action](#)

By: Brian James Lu

QCitizens take pride in Mayor Joy Belmonte's recognition as one of Forbes' inaugural "50 Sustainability Leaders," highlighting her commitment to addressing climate change and promoting environmental sustainability in the city.

Forbes' list acknowledges individuals from various sectors—politics, science, business—who have made significant contributions to mitigating climate change. The recognition emphasizes the global importance of leaders who implement environment-friendly policies and pioneer green technologies, drawing attention to their efforts in sustainability.

As the chairman of the People's Council of Quezon City (PCQC), I have witnessed Mayor Belmonte's dedication to the city's development and her strong collaboration with civil society. The PCQC, representing over 5,300 accredited civil society organizations, actively participates in the deliberation, conceptualization, and evaluation of city projects. In cooperation with the city councilors, Mayor Belmonte has spearheaded various ordinances that directly address climate change and promote sustainable development.

One of Mayor Belmonte's significant initiatives was her 2019 declaration of a climate emergency—the first of its kind by a local chief executive in the Philippines. Later, in August 2022, Makati's Mayor Binay followed suit. Declaring a climate emergency signifies the need for coordinated, multi-level, and multi-stakeholder action to combat climate change and global warming.

Ordinance No. 2868, Series of 2019, solidified Quezon City's commitment to addressing climate change and supported the city's climate emergency declaration. This ordinance aligns with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change's (UNFCCC) global climate emergency declaration, focusing on climate adaptation and mitigation. The ordinance ensures that the city's resources and policies prioritize the climate crisis, allocating 13 percent of the city's budget to climate-related projects. The city aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 30 percent by 2030.

Under Mayor Belmonte's leadership, Quezon City has introduced several groundbreaking initiatives for climate mitigation and sustainable development.

In 2019, the city enacted Mandatory Green Building Standards to promote sustainable urban development. These standards require construction projects to incorporate energy-efficient designs, water conservation measures, and sustainable materials. Both public and private buildings highly encourage the use of renewable energy technologies like solar panels.

In 2020, the city introduced the Active Transport Ordinance, which expanded and improved its bike lane networks, promoting the use of non-motorized transportation. This measure increased bike lanes by 217 kilometers and integrated them with public transportation systems. It aligns with the city's goal of reducing reliance on fossil fuels, lowering carbon emissions, and fostering healthier and more sustainable mobility.

Additionally, Quezon City has a real-time Air Quality Index monitoring system with over 40 sensors scattered across the city—the highest number of air quality monitors in the Philippines.

Quezon City also enacted measures supporting renewable energy in public buildings. In 2020, the city installed solar panels in 50 public high school buildings, thereby reducing electricity consumption and lowering its carbon footprint. Furthermore, the city enforces a zero-waste ordinance, promoting strict waste segregation and recycling programs. One of these initiatives, "trash-to-cashback," allows residents to exchange segregated waste for cash credits, further institutionalizing recycling and proper waste disposal.

Quezon City's "Enhanced Local Climate Change Action Plan 2021-2050," which aligns with the objectives of the Paris Agreement and the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, encompasses all these efforts. Quezon City proudly champions climate leadership, aspiring to be the leading city in advancing inclusive, ambitious, evidence-based, and transformative climate actions in the Philippines.

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) recognized Mayor Belmonte as a Champion of the Earth in 2023, recognizing her leadership in reducing plastic pollution and greening Quezon City. This award, the UN's highest environmental recognition, celebrates leaders whose measures have a transformative impact on the environment.

These environmental measures are particularly significant considering Quezon City is the most populous city in the Philippines, with a population of 2,761,720. Climate action is critical in Metro Manila, where the dense population exacerbates environmental hazards. The region's overpopulation contributes to increased greenhouse gas emissions, energy consumption, and waste production, making it highly vulnerable to climate change. Extreme weather events, such as typhoons, flooding, and heat waves, have led to loss of life, damaged infrastructure, and economic disruptions in Metro Manila.

Informal settlements, often located in high-risk areas prone to flooding and landslides, further intensify these problems. The lack of adequate drainage systems and green spaces increases the need for sustainable urban planning and disaster preparedness. Implementing climate change action plans that focus on reducing emissions, improving waste management, and enhancing infrastructure resilience is essential for mitigating the environmental and health risks posed by overpopulation.

Quezon City's sustainable practices serve as a model for other local government units across the country. Climate change mitigation, the adoption of sustainable practices, and the battle against global warming are challenges that concern all of humanity.

THE GUARDIAN

[Weather tracker: Typhoon Krathon forecast to batter Philippines](#)

Typhoon Krathon, known in the Philippines as Typhoon Julian, formed in the Philippines Sea last Thursday. Shortly after it was named, the Philippine meteorological institute issued a weather bulletin advising that the typhoon would bring strong winds and heavy rainfall across north-eastern regions, as well as rough seas.

Regions such as Batanes, Babuyan Islands, and Ilocos Norte could get more than 200mm of rainfall by the middle of the week. After moving west-north-westwards, Krathon will then steer more northerly or north-easterly, tracking across southern Taiwan.

While there is still some uncertainty on the track and intensity of Krathon, it is expected to bring significant rainfall totals across northern and eastern parts of Taiwan later this week, with hurricane-force winds near coastal areas and high ground.

The Taiwanese meteorological institute has warned of gusts reaching 85-105mph as Krathon approaches southern parts of Taiwan between Tuesday and Wednesday. Cumulative rainfall totals could reach 200-400mm fairly widely across eastern Taiwan by Thursday.

Heavy rain will continue across parts of south Asia this week. Regions such as eastern India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Bhutan, and Myanmar may receive widely in excess of 150mm by Friday – particularly across northern Bangladesh and eastern states of India such as Assam and Meghalaya, where closer to 200mm is possible by the end of this week.

At least 46 people have drowned so far in the eastern Indian state of Bihar over the weekend as a result of rivers and ponds that have swollen owing to recent floods. Another 23 people have also died in Bangladesh, where flooding has affected 5.7 million people.

With heavy rain also expected across central and eastern parts of Nepal, this is expected to hamper the flood relief effort being carried out in the country's capital, Kathmandu. Heavy rainfall across Nepal has already killed at least 129 people, with 34 deaths in Kathmandu since Friday night as a result of flooding and landslides.

Another 69 people are still missing, and 17 people have been injured. Police have been working to clear debris and reopen roads after landslides blocked highways at 28 locations. It was reported that more than 300mm of rainfall was recorded in a single day on Friday.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

[Manila commits to climate action as UN adopts landmark pact](#)

By: Rosette Adel

The Philippines, one of the countries most vulnerable to climate change, has pledged to actively participate in the implementation of the United Nations' Pact for the Future, a landmark agreement that aims to address pressing global challenges.

The pact, adopted by world leaders without a vote during the Summit of the Future in New York City on September 23 (Manila time), includes commitments to prioritize urgent action on environmental challenges, disaster risk reduction, and ecosystem restoration. These issues that immediately resonate with the Philippines, which has been ranked as the country with the highest disaster risk in 2022.

The Summit of the Future brought together global stakeholders, including representatives from over 1,000 individuals representing nearly 80 countries from September 22 to 23, to discuss the implementation of the Pact for the Future.

The 61-page pact, that includes a Global Digital Compact and a Declaration on Future Generations, covers commitments addressing issues such as peace and security, sustainable development, climate change, digital cooperation, human rights, gender, youth and future generations and the transformation of global governance.

It is a conclusion of an inclusive, years-long process to adapt international cooperation to the navigate present reality and ensure a sustainable and peaceful future.

Philemon Yang (Cameroon), president of the United Nations General Assembly, said the pact “lays the foundation for a sustainable, just, and peaceful global order for all nations and peoples.”

UN Secretary-General António Guterres, meanwhile, said, “We cannot create a future fit for our grandchildren with a system built by our grandparents.”

Addressing climate issues

One of the actions stipulated in the pact relevant to the Philippines Philippines is the commitment to prioritize urgent action to address critical environment challenges, disaster risk reduction, ecosystem restoration and ensuring a clean sustainable environment.

The agreement included commitment to support effective disaster early warning, early action and crisis response, as well as promotion of a disaster risk-informed approach to

sustainable development that integrates disaster risk reduction into policies, programs and investments.

In his statement, Foreign Affairs Secretary Enrique Manalo, the head of Philippine Delegation to the Summit of the Future, cited local challenges such conflict, disasters, hunger and displacement are also strains on global humanitarian system and the climate resilience framework.

Prior to the adoption of the pact, Ambassador of the Philippines to the UN Antonio Lagdameo at the ambassadorial-level meeting on the pact in May, said the pact's actions resonate with the national interests of the country as it is responsive to global challenges.

He also said the pact must highlight climate action and the urgent need to tackle loss and damage, citing that the Philippines is one of the most vulnerable countries to the adverse impacts of climate change.

Local concerns as global challenges. At least 3,000 young people in the Philippines, have cited climate change as among their top concerns, according to a recent poll organized by the United Nations.

According to the U-Report poll in June, around 26% of young Filipinos believe that “climate change and natural disasters” will be the biggest problem they will face in the future.

The Pact of the Future seeks to address concerns on climate change, confirming the need to keep global temperature rise to 1.5 °C above pre-industrial levels and to transition away from fossil fuels in energy systems to achieve net zero emissions by 2050.

Greenpeace International said record temperatures have left a trail of destruction, citing loss of life, failed crops, forests burned, and millions displaced.

In 2023, USAID also said the Philippines is highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change such as rising sea levels, high temperatures and increased frequency of typhoons and extreme weather events that can cause floods, damage infrastructure, loss of lives and livelihoods, among others.

The World Risk Index also ranked the Philippines as the country with the highest disaster risk in 2022.

USAID's report said that without action, the World Bank has estimated the annual economic damages from climate change in the Philippines could reach 13.6% of the country's domestic product.

Philippines' pledge

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. supports the UN pact, vowing active participation of the country to ensure a "more climate-resilient future."

"As the host of the Board of the Loss and Damage fund, the Philippines will work with member states to ensure that the voices of those most affected by climate change shapes the future of international climate policies," Marcos said in a message to the Summit of the Future Global Call on September 12.

Foreign Affairs Secretary Enrique Manalo also reacted positively to the pact, saying it can "guide the UN in delivering meaningful outcomes for peace and security, for human rights, for fairness and equality, for resilience from crises and disasters and for empowering individuals and all communities in the world."

"The Pact encompasses an agenda where the well-being of present and future generations meet, and where principles and declarations translate into deeds," he said in a statement.

Manalo's counterpart in Malaysia, Mohamad Hasan, also echoed the call to protect the needs and interests of the present and future generations amid the climate change, crisis and conflict challenging nations worldwide.

Hasan stressed that the climate crisis "is not a distant threat. "It is here, it is real," he said.

The Malaysian representative sought for climate financing and a green development pact "that robustly addresses the scientific and technological divide between the North and the South", as well as a global science fund to "encourage diverse and innovative solutions to the challenges we face, leveraging on our collective human capital."

The pact highlights the urgency of addressing the \$4 trillion financing gap to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and meet global climate targets.

What's next?

While UN Secretary-General Guterres considers the adoption of the Pact for the Future as a landmark achievement, he still pointed out that it “must garner political will and commitment across all levels of global leadership” to ensure that goals set in the pact are achieved.

The UN said national-level engagement, implementation and accountability are also essential to put the agreements into action.

The Pact for the Future was adopted ahead of the 80th anniversary of UN in 2025.

Heads of state and governments are set to meet at the 83rd session of the General Assembly in 2028 for the comprehensive review of the Pact for the Future in 2028.

UN NEWS

[From vulnerability to action: Asia-Pacific leaders urge global responsibility](#)

By: By Vibhu Mishra

Prime Ministers of Vanuatu, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Tuvalu and Tonga underlined the UN's role as a platform for driving unified, decisive action to mitigate this threat.

Indeed, the theme of collective action echoed strongly through the speeches, as they united in their message that without timely action, vulnerable nations like theirs risk further marginalization in an increasingly precarious world.

In their remarks, the leaders highlighted the critical importance of climate resilience and sustainable development, calling for substantial financial support international community.

They implored the global community to heed their warnings and act, not only for the sake of their nations but for the health of the entire planet.

'Zero chance' if things don't change

First among the group, Charlot Salwai Tabimasmal, Prime Minister of Vanuatu, said that while industrialized nations continue to advance their economies, small island developing States bear the brunt of climate change affecting their development and aspirations.

"If the current carbon emissions trajectory continues its dangerous path, Vanuatu stands zero chance to measure up to its recently gained status as a developing state," he said.

Referring to the latest report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), he warned that the window for real action to restore the health of the planet is fast closing.

"The [IPCC] warns us that we are likely to pass a dangerous temperature threshold within the next 10 years," he said, adding however, that "despite this scathing report, the global response to the threat of climate change remains sub-par, undermining sustainable development and efforts to eradicate poverty."

Survival of the fittest' not sustainable

James Marape, Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea, highlighted that amid the existential threat of climate change, the relentless pursuit of wealth and the unsustainable exploitation of Earth's resources is jeopardizing future generations.

He criticized the attitude of “survival of the fittest”, in which nations and corporations compete to extract resources, resulting in environmental degradation, deforestation, fossil fuel burning and pollution, which further exacerbate poverty.

Despite its own economic challenges, Papua New Guinea remains committed to protecting both its marine and forest ecosystems for the benefit of future generations.

However, he noted that accessing climate finance remains a significant challenge, urging world leaders to address this issue urgently. Without assistance, Papua New Guinea may be forced to exploit its forest and marine resources to meet development goals and alleviate poverty.

“It is for this reason, I speak in solidarity with all forest nations, especially those in the Congo Basin and Amazon Basin for adequate compensation if we are to preserve our forests which, in fact, are the lungs of Earth.”

‘Frighteningly disturbing’ estimates

Feleti Penitala Teo, Prime Minister of Tuvalu, said that as a small island, climate change-induced sea-level rise “is and will always be” a top priority for his country.

“Not only a development priority but also a top survivability one,” he stressed, warning that the Pacific Ocean “that used to define us would soon engulf us and determine our future existence”, if sea level rise is not halted and Tuvalu’s coastlines not fortified and reinforced.

He cited “frighteningly disturbing” sea-level rise estimates that by 2050 – 26 years away –more than 50 per cent of his nation’s land territory will be regularly flooded by regular tidal surges.

Fifty years after that, in 2100, more than 90 per cent of the land will suffer the same fate, he added.

These predictions, he said, do not account for severe climatic conditions like cyclones and hurricanes which would “exponentially accelerate” the odds of reaching of those thresholds.

We must ‘turn the tide’

Fiame Naomi Mata’afa, Prime Minister of Samoa, also raised the alarm on climate change, calling for scaling up of investments to adapt to and mitigate its impact.

“We are not even at the end of 2024, yet we have witnessed countries in all corners of the globe endure extreme weather events – from ferocious wildfires to devastating floods and scorching heatwaves,” she said.

She highlighted the vulnerabilities of small island developing States, noting that its impacts are more extensively felt due to their special circumstances and the lack of capacity to respond quickly and effectively.

Outlining the implications of climate change, which could manifest in food insecurity, lack of water or energy supplies, competition over natural resources, loss of livelihoods and forced migration, the Samoan leader called for urgent and substantial investments to mitigate climate change, boost adaptation, and build more resilient economies.

“We must do more to turn the tide, to honour our commitments and obligations, and to take urgent and ambitious climate action now,” she said.

‘Stand ready’ to contribute

Sonexay Siphandone, Prime Minister of the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, echoed the disproportionate impact on vulnerable nations, his being a landlocked, least developed country.

“Despite being one of the least emissions-polluting countries in the world, the Lao PDR, like many other countries, has encountered severe consequences of climate change and natural disasters,” he said.

Climate change impacts, notably, more frequent and devastating disasters, he noted, represent real threats to international peace and security, as do geo-political tensions, conflicts, economic crisis, and rising poverty.

They also imperil the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

“Notwithstanding the fact that the Lao PDR is landlocked, we stand ready to contribute to the international efforts to protect the environment, while calling for support measures to further increase adaptation capacity and resilience for responding to future impacts,” he declared.

It’s about ‘our very identities’

Siaosi 'Ofakivahafolau Sovaleni, Prime Minister of Tonga, also reiterated that urgency.

“Decade after decade, year after year, we present to this esteemed body the existential threat that climate change poses to the Pacific, including Tonga,” he said, but this year the situation is even more dire.

“Let there be no doubt, we are teetering on the brink of a climate catastrophe,” he declared.

Pointing to the report of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) that confirmed 2023 as the hottest year on record, he added that sea-level rise in the South-West

Pacific is significantly exceeding the global average, reaching as high as 15 centimetres in some areas over the past 30 years.

Rising sea levels are eroding coastlines, swallowing entire islands, and forcing families to abandon their ancestral homes, he said, “this is not just about losing land – it is about our very identities, loosing heritage and culture.”

“For the nations of the Pacific, these changes are not merely environmental issues; they are existential threats that jeopardize the very existence of Small Pacific Island countries, including Tonga,” he said.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

GMA NEWS

[Senate panel defers approval of co-op, climate agencies' 2025 budgets](#)

By: Hana Bordey

A Senate Finance subcommittee has deferred the approval of the proposed budgets of the Cooperative Development Authority (CDA) and the Climate Change Commission (CCC) for next year.

Senator Imee Marcos, chairperson of the subcommittee, made the decision on the CDA after it failed to justify the increase in its traveling expenses for 2025.

"I am unable to endorse your budget to the mother committee. You have to provide a justification, firstly, for doubling your traveling budget expenses given the reduction in your budget," Marcos said.

According to CDA Chairman Joseph Encabo, the proposed budget for the agency in 2024 is set at P933 million under the National Expenditures Program. This is 32% smaller compared to the P1.3-billion budget allocated to the agency for 2024.

The decrease is due to the non-approval of locally funded projects and infrastructure projects, as well as the reduced allocation for cooperative programs, maintenance and other operating expenses, and capital outlay, Encabo said.

Encabo explained that CDA needed the travel funds for the inspection of cooperatives across the country, but Marcos pointed out that there are fewer cooperatives this year compared to last year.

The CDA chairman justified that the travel budget is being distributed to different regional offices and it depends on the number of cooperatives that are operating per region.

The region which has the highest number of cooperatives is in Region 3.

Apart from this, CDA was grilled after Marcos questioned the benefits of the PUV Modernization Program for drivers, particularly on the financial assistance.

"Anong pakinabang para maging co-op ng namamasada? 'Di naman kayo nagbibigay ng financial assistance... Bakit 'di na lang sila manatiling hindi co-op?" she asked, to which Encabo explained that it is the framework of the LTFRB.

(What is the benefit for drivers to join co-ops? You don't give financial assistance...why shouldn't they remain without co-ops?)

Marcos required the CDA to provide a coherent timeline and a procedural format for the PUVMP in coordination with the Office of the Transport Cooperatives and the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB).

The CDA was also asked to provide a report on why the Department of Justice's opinion hindered them from distributing to the coconut farmers the financial assistance from the annual allotment of P250 million under the Coconut Development Fund.

"We terminate the hearing for today but you will have to come back with the documents requested," Marcos said.

'Strange data'

Marcos also deferred the approval of the proposed P170.1-million budget of the CCC for 2025, which she said happens every year.

"I think, I cannot make any headway with your budget and with that, please submit all the required documentation. I am not a patient person. I believe I've been hugely patient but I am unable to derive information or cooperation from your end. That being the case, I defer the budget of the Climate Change Commission," Marcos said.

"This happens every year. I wish you would prepare better and give us more information. Every year we are deferred. This is not how it should be," she added.

The lawmaker hit the CCC's failure to provide complete information to the committee and the submission of "strange and deceptive data."

"I think, I am obliged...to recall you subject to the submission of the information requested," she said.

Among the concerns that Marcos raised against the CCC is the lack of dates and confusing information in the projects that it listed, as well as its low disbursement and obligation rate this year.

Marcos added that some ongoing projects were being as among the CCC's accomplishments.

The senator also questioned the existence of the CCC after the commission reported that the Philippines has yet to access the UN's Adaptation Fund.

"So what's the role of your commission? Are you more appropriately abolished and then located in the DENR? Kasi di ko maintindihan kasi nagra-rightsizing yung gobyerno," Marcos said.

CCC Executive Director Robert Borje explained the need for CCC to remain as there are "cross-cutting issues that ideally...are better addressed by the commission."

However, Marcos said the CCC's performance "wouldn't prove that."

Marcos pointed out that the CCC is like the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council which is only a policy-formulating body that does not provide results.

The CCC was also grilled over the foreign travels which Marcos tagged as "excessive."

The issue was raised after the senator cited a Commission on Audit report which, she said, found that the foreign travels were "not liquidated within the time period [and] they were not bought and procured properly."

"You have 42 foreign travels in 2023. How many in 2024 and how many are booked in 2025? Sana all," Marcos said.

Borje was not able to respond immediately to Marcos which prompted the senator to require the submission of relevant documents.

"It's not a trick question. Dapat alam ninyo kung umalis kayo. At tsaka 2025, all the meetings are scheduled three years in advance. Bakit wala kayong bilang diyan?" she quipped.

It was also revealed by COA in the hearing that the CCC was not able to provide justification on the audit report that flagged the purchase of airline tickets.

Marcos, citing the COA report, said the airplane tickets were not procured and were only paid through reimbursement.

According to Borje, they will submit the additional justifications to COA within the week.

MANILA STANDARD

[UNDP initiates development of climate finance strategy for PH](#)

The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) is set to develop a comprehensive strategy for climate finance in the Philippines, marking a landmark effort to consolidate financing solutions for climate change action in the country.

UNDP and the Department of Finance (DOF) in a strategy workshop led the Inter-Agency Task Force on Sustainable Finance or “Green Force” and other stakeholders to advance the climate finance agenda from public, private, and alternative sources for climate action.

“The effects of the recent typhoons remind us why Sustainable Development Goal No. 13 or Climate Action is urgently needed in the Philippines. Aside from adaptation and mitigation measures across infrastructure, industry, agriculture, energy, and transportation, the climate crisis also demands financing to make all these actions possible,” said Dr. Selva Ramachandran, UNDP Philippines resident representative.

The UNDP bared the financing strategy through the Climate Finance Network (CFN) and the Accelerating Green and Climate Finance (AGCF) Project funded by the United Kingdom Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (UK-FCDO) and the Canadian government, respectively.

At its core, the Climate Finance Strategy connects funding to action. It aims to mobilize resources for climate action projects, consolidate funding from disparate sources, align public spending to the national development agenda and encourage climate-friendly investments and innovations from the private sector.

The new strategy carves out a financing program from the Sustainable Finance Roadmap by the Green Force to focus on climate finance solutions. It also builds on funding opportunities for projects drawn from the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) and the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) Implementation Plan by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the Climate Change Commission (CCC).

“All these financing projects are commitments to empower the local government units and the national government agencies to stand on the forefront of climate action. We look forward to identifying possible needs to bridge the gaps in our shared financing requirements to implement our climate action through a whole-of-nation approach,” said Finance Undersecretary Maria Luwalhati Dorotan Tiuseco of the department’s Climate Finance Policy Group (CFPG).

The UNDP and DOF also aim to bridge the gap on how the Philippines can access the international climate finance fund. Locally, the Green Force seeks to support

communities access the People's Survival Fund (PSF) amid the country's growing cost on disaster response, mitigation, and future-proofing cities amid climate change.

"This year, the UK FCDO identified that finance for climate action is a key pillar in our partnership with the Philippines, where increasing the quantity, quality, and accessibility of financing is a priority," said Alistair White, UK FCDO deputy head of mission.

"Canada, through its global climate finance commitment, will continue to support countries including the Philippines in their efforts to transition to low-carbon, environmentally sustainable and climate-resilient economies," said John Lok, head of Cooperation Embassy of Canada to the Philippines.

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