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By: Cai Ordinario

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By: Lidy Nacpil

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MANILA STANDARD

[Energy experts push nuclear power as game-changing solution in PH](#)

By: Alena Mae Flores

Energy experts gathered on Saturday to offer nuclear power as a “game-changing solution” to help satisfy the Philippines growing power needs.

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Alarming, to say the least.

But the United Nations chief, Antonio Guterres, has warned the world's climate is breaking down – following a bulletin from the European Union's monitoring body which said 2023 is likely to be the hottest year in human history.

[Protesters hold climate rallies vs. US](#)

By: Ronald Reyes

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[Philippine, Bangladesh power giants: Gas needed in green transition](#)

By: Sayumi Take

Booming Asian countries like the Philippines and Bangladesh need natural gas to meet domestic energy demand as they shift to greener sources, according to their leading power providers.

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[PH-based climate advocates demand accountability from US government](#)

Filipino climate campaigners joined Asia-wide lightning rallies near the United States embassy in Manila to demand accountability from US President Joe Biden and his administration to deliver its climate finance obligations to the peoples of the Global South, including the Philippines.

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[Climate change human rights concern – UN](#)

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The United Nations (UN) now recognizes the profound link among environmental health, climate change, and human rights at the international level.

[Envoy pushes climate change initiatives](#)

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British Ambassador to the Philippines Laure Beaufils has pointed out the United Kingdom's efforts and rekindled diplomatic ties in the country regarding climate and environmental actions.

[From pledges to action toward achieving net zero](#)

By: Ludwig Federigan

Extreme weather events and other climate impacts are becoming deadlier and more destructive. Whether this is the new normal, what awaits the world will be much worse and bleaker than it is now if we allow it to be. If there is one thing the global health pandemic taught us it is that we need to look beyond the horizon, and we need to do just that — or further beyond — in this state of global climate emergency.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

[Panel created for Philippines hosting of disaster reduction meeting](#)

By: Helen Flores

President Marcos has created an inter-agency committee to ensure the country will successfully host the Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (APMCDRR) in October next year.

[Spending for environment protection dwindles in 2022](#)

By: Louella Desiderio

Government spending for environmental protection declined by 7.3 percent to P23.83 billion last year from P25.72 billion in 2021, according to the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA).

[Watersheds in Philippines are 'in a state of crisis' — report](#)

By: Gaea Katreena Cabico

Watersheds in the Philippines are facing a dire crisis as over half of these vital basins remain unprotected from destructive activities such as large-scale mining and infrastructure development, a legal and policy research institution said.

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[CCC To Real Estate Industry: Embrace Green Practices](#)

The Climate Change Commission (CCC) has underscored the critical impact of climate change on the real estate and housing industry at the Chamber of Real Estate and Builders' Association Inc.'s (CREBA) 50th National Convention and Housing Expo.

Information and Knowledge Management Division

BUSINESS MIRROR

[ADB lending to PHL could hit \\$20B over next 5 years](#)

By: Cai Ordinario

The Manila-based multilateral development bank Asian Development Bank (ADB) could lend as much as \$20 billion to the Philippines in the next five years once its new Country Partnership Strategy (CPS) is completed next year

ADB Philippine Country Director Pavit Ramachandran recently told reporters the projected annual lending of the bank to the country is \$3.5 to \$4 billion annually. This is the program lending for this year and next year, which could be the same amount for the next CPS.

Ramachandran said the majority (70 percent) of this lending will be dedicated to large project investments while the remaining 30 percent is for budget support. He said the CPS of ADB with the Philippine government is being drafted and may be completed in the second semester of 2024.

“This year, we are looking at about anywhere from \$3.5 to \$4 billion in terms of our lending. Next year, we expect a similar allocation. And a lot of this is on infrastructure, not only urban mobility, connectivity, but also, I mentioned, flood resilience,” Ramachandran told reporters.

“I think we’re looking at that being the lending [for the next few years]. It’s also consistent with what we’ve been doing now [and in] the last two or three years because these are large complex infrastructure projects [and] also some budget support mixed in on some strategic areas,” he also said.

The new CPS, Ramachandran said, will mainly follow the previous CPS but will have a greater focus on climate change-related efforts. These efforts will include financing urban mobility, flood resilience, connectivity, and river basin projects.

“It will have a very, very strong climate change focus; you know, we are aligning with the Philippine development plan, the socioeconomic development agenda, the medium-term fiscal framework,” Ramachandran said.

“It’s very much about trying to support this transition to an upper middle-income country but ensuring strong, sustainable, resilient foundation so that will be social, you know; one pillar will continue to be investing in people, investing in Filipinos that’s the health

education, social protection side, there will be a climate-resilient infrastructure pillar,” he added.

Couple of projects

Meanwhile, Ramachandran said that the ADB Board may approve a couple of projects before the year ends. This includes the \$1.5 billion loan for the Bataan-Cavite Interlink Bridge Project.

The 32-kilometer permanent road link, also called the Manila Bay bridge, will connect the provinces of Bataan and Cavite. This is the missing link in the road network of NCR, Central Luzon, and Calabarzon Regions.

Ramachandran said the ADB Board may also approve financing for projects included in the 197 flagship projects, particularly in tapping the ADB’s Infrastructure Preparation and Innovation Facility (IPIF).

The IPIF Second Additional Financing will comprise a loan worth \$200 million and a Technical Assistance Special Fund for climate-smart infrastructure worth \$500,000.

The facility will finance the preparation of road and bridge projects; water projects; air, active transport, public transport, port, and airport projects; and project management capacity of the government.

Last May, ADB said it is the region’s Climate bank as it commits to increase its climate change financing efforts to \$100 billion by 2030.

In a briefing on the first day of the Manila-based multilateral development bank’s 56th Annual Meeting on Tuesday, ADB President Masatsugu Asakawa said the Innovative Finance Facility for Climate in Asia and the Pacific (Ifcap) is a first in the world.

Asakawa said Ifcap aims to use financial guarantees from ADB’s partners to provide financing for climate action across Asia and the Pacific region.

ECO BUSINESS

[\[Opinion\] Why I think the US is the biggest bully and blocker of climate action](#)

By: Lidy Nacpil

United States President Joe Biden was notably absent at the recent United Nations Secretary-General's Climate Ambition Summit on 20 September held in New York.

With two months left until the global climate talks called COP28, the summit was an important space for world leaders to bring their ambitious and concrete plans to fight climate change.

President Biden instead opted to send his climate envoy John Kerry, who did not speak because only leaders from nations with concrete plans to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions were given three minutes to address the gathering.

The world's biggest emitter remains lacking in bold, new climate commitments and action. It is also behind in the delivery of its climate finance obligations. After this week, we shall once again see the US fail to rise to the moment.

The Second Pledging Conference of the Green Climate Fund (GCF) is happening on 5 October in Bonn, Germany. Governments of the Global North are expected to announce their increased climate finance contributions in this conference.

The US government, represented by President Biden, is the biggest bully and blocker of climate action. Despite the worsening climate crisis, the US is yet to deliver on its climate finance obligations while expanding fossil fuel production and continuing with domestic fossil fuel subsidies.

In the years 2020 and 2021, it provided at least US\$165.89 billion worth of conditional and unconditional subsidies for fossil fuels.

The US is the largest emitter of greenhouse gases. A report on the world's key emitters found that it has cumulatively produced more carbon dioxide than any other nation, contributing more to human-caused climate change than any other nation over the course of history.

Countries in the Global South that have the least contribution to the crisis suffer the worst impacts. Communities in Asia are suffering massive losses and damages.

These countries have been demanding the US government to urgently deliver adequate, non-debt-creating, unconditional, and predictable climate finance through the financial mechanisms under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Instead, the US promotes false and highly politicised finance solutions in international climate spaces.

Climate finance is an obligation and part of reparations for historical and continuing harms and injustices. Under the UNFCCC, countries in the Global North, including the US, are responsible for providing climate finance to the Global South. A report estimates that the US owes at least US\$80 trillion in climate debt to developing countries based on their climate fair share.

The transitional committee on loss and damage finance, created last November 2022 by the Conference of Parties (COP) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, is now working on recommendations on the operationalisation of the loss and damage fund (LDF) for consideration and adoption by the upcoming COP28.

The COP27 climate summit finally made a decision to establish the fund, a long standing demand of vulnerable developing countries and climate justice movements. It is aimed at providing finance to cover loss and damage in developing countries.

For a long time the US had blocked the establishment of the LDF, and had opposed any inclusion about liability and compensation for loss and damage in climate agreements.

Last July, during a hearing before a House of Representatives foreign affairs committee on whether the US would pay countries that have been damaged by floods, storms and other climate-driven disasters, Kerry said the US says it will not “under any circumstances” pay reparations to developing countries.

Recently, the US proposed to the transitional committee to have the LDF as a financial intermediary fund (FIF) under the auspices of the World Bank, rather than as an independent and democratically-accessible fund under the guidance of the COP.

This means that the World Bank will be in charge of raising, directing, and disbursing all funding for the LDF. The US is also pushing to resource the LDF through loans from multilateral development banks (MDBs), proceeds from carbon trading, and other financial arrangements.

Approximately US\$2.8 trillion will be needed annually by the Global South in 2030 to mitigate its GHG emissions and roughly US\$300 billion annually for resilience building and adaptation.

Estimates for economic losses and damages from worsening climate impacts are also projected to range US\$400 to US\$900 billion annually by 2030. These figures are poised to surge if climate finance remains insufficient, delayed, and unresponsive to the pressing climate needs of the Global South.

Given the urgency of the climate crisis, the fund must be operationalised as soon as possible. Rich countries largely responsible for warming our planet should immediately mobilise substantial new and non-debt creating climate finance to pay for climate-related damage in vulnerable countries, as well as for reparations for the huge climate debt owed by governments of the Global North to the Global South.

In addition to the US' intransigence are its broken promises: the US government has only provided US\$1 billion out of its already highly inadequate US\$3 billion pledge to the Green Climate Fund (GCF), a commitment announced during the Obama administration.

During the 2021 Climate Leaders' Summit convened by the Biden Administration, the US promised to mobilise US\$11 billion Climate Finance for developing countries by 2024. However, in the fiscal year 2024 budget proposal submitted to the US Congress, only US\$6 billion "development assistance" was requested for the USAID and no new and additional funds through the GCF and other finance mechanisms under the UNFCCC.

The US' bullying and deception have long plagued climate negotiations. To build momentum on climate action, we have to fight the bully. Delayed climate action means more loss and damage and, consequently, sky-high loss and damage finance.

MANILA BULLETIN

[\[Opinion\] Time for our \(Earth\) shot, Philippines!](#)

By: Johannes Chua

Last Sept. 19, 2023, Prince William and The Earthshot Prize announced the 15 finalists for this year's prize during the second Earthshot Innovation Summit in New York. The 15 innovators honored as Earthshot finalists represent six continents and were chosen from more than 1,100 nominees. Each finalist will be in the running to receive one of the five £1 million prizes to be awarded at the third annual Earthshot Prize awards ceremony set to take place in Singapore this November.

Among the distinguished 15, the Philippines is proudly represented in the person of Rocky Sanchez Tirona. She is part of non-profit organization Rare, whose project called "Coastal 500" — a global network of mayors and local leaders who have come together to protect the world's coastlines — is among the finalists in the "Revive Our Oceans" category.

According to a statement, "Coastal 500 has 164 members representing eight developing countries and 1.6 million people living near coastlines across the tropics, including some of the communities most at risk from climate change worldwide. Right now, members hail from the Philippines, Indonesia, Brazil, the Federated State of Micronesia, Guatemala, Honduras, Mozambique, and Palau."

"Since its inception in 2021, the quickly growing group has become a vital forum for sharing ideas, enforcing conservation policies, and advocating for coastal protection nationally and globally. Members of Coastal 500 all take a pledge to encourage healthy fishing communities by empowering their people with clear access rights to fisheries and supporting good local governance and leadership."

Founded in 2020 by Prince William, The Earthshot Prize aims to discover and help scale the world's most innovative climate and environmental solutions to protect and restore our planet. The prize is centered around five "Earthshots" — simple but aspirational goals to ensure our communities, oceans, and ecosystems can thrive together in harmony for generations to come: 1) Protect & Restore Nature; 2) Clean Our Air; 3) Revive Our Oceans; 4) Build A Waste-free World, and 5) Fix Our Climate.

In addition to their eligibility for the £1 million prize, all finalists will receive mentorship, resources, and technical support from The Earthshot Prize Fellowship Programme, a

year-long program for each cohort of 15 finalists to accelerate the growth of their groundbreaking solutions.

In the coming weeks, more articles will spotlight the achievements of these 15 finalists. The Manila Bulletin Environment & Sustainability section is set to feature an in depth interview with Tirona, where she will impart her experiences and optimism in the ongoing battle against climate change and how it impacts the coastal communities.

The five winners of this year's prize will be selected by Prince William and the Earthshot Prize Council, a global body of activists, experts, and influencers championing urgent and innovative action to protect the climate and our natural environment.

We fervently hope that Tirona's Coastal 500 emerges victorious — though securing a spot on the shortlist is already a significant honor. Winning this prize would redirect the world's attention and focus onto our vulnerable coastal communities.

MANILA STANDARD

[Energy experts push nuclear power as game-changing solution in PH](#)

By: Alena Mae Flores

Energy experts gathered on Saturday to offer nuclear power as a “game-changing solution” to help satisfy the Philippines growing power needs.

“Nuclear power offers a game-changing solution to our energy needs. It is a clean, dependable and economically feasible energy source that can power our nation sustainably,” Pangasinan 2nd District Rep. Mark Cojuangco said.

Cojuangco is a staunch advocate for nuclear energy and recipient of the American Nuclear Society (ANS) Distinguished Public Service Award.

He chairs the House special committee on nuclear energy and sponsors House Bill No. 8218 which seeks to establish the Philippine Atomic Energy Regulatory Authority (PhilATOM) and provide for a comprehensive legal framework for radiation protection, nuclear security, safety and safeguards in the utilization of nuclear energy.

“We hope to make nuclear a part of the country’s energy mix so Filipinos can enjoy cheaper, cleaner, and more reliable electricity,” Cojuangco said during the event.

Stand Up for Nuclear, the world’s first global initiative advocating for the protection and expansion of nuclear energy, convened on Saturday to discuss the Philippines’ readiness to embrace nuclear power at the SMX Aura in Taguig City.

Organizing this year’s event and the leading voice in the call to Stand Up for Nuclear was ALPAS Pinas, a non-stock, non-profit organization dedicated to promoting nuclear energy as a clean and sustainable source of power.

The event aimed to illuminate nuclear power’s potential in the Philippines and underscore its advantages during critical times.

“As advocates for nuclear energy, our mission is to effectively communicate its benefits and work toward a sustainable energy future for the Philippines. Amid the looming energy crisis, it is high time for us to realize the advantages of nuclear energy,” said ALPAS Pinas lead convenor Gayle Certeza.

The event, with the theme “Nuclear Now: Malinis, Maasahan, at Murang Kuryente para sa PINAS”, featured other eminent personalities in the field of nuclear energy including Cojuangco.

Meanwhile, Radiant Energy founder and managing director Mark Nelson said nuclear energy has proven itself as a powerful tool in the global effort to combat climate change.

“With its minimal greenhouse gas emissions and round-the-clock power generation, nuclear energy is an essential component of a sustainable energy portfolio. The Philippines, in particular, stands to benefit significantly by considering nuclear energy as part of its energy mix, making it a strategic resource to meet its growing energy demands,” he said.

Clean Energy Transition Alliance (CETA) founder Angelica Oung said their group firmly believed that embracing nuclear power could be a game-changer for the Philippines in terms of energy security and decarbonization.

“Beyond addressing immediate energy needs, nuclear energy can pave the way for cleaner and more resilient energy systems, ultimately reducing the country’s carbon footprint and contributing to a greener, more sustainable future,” Oung said.

ALPAS Pinas is among the more than 38 independent grassroots civil society organizations participating in Stand Up for Nuclear across the globe.

[Opinion] Making PH climate-smart

Alarming, to say the least.

But the United Nations chief, Antonio Guterres, has warned the world's climate is breaking down – following a bulletin from the European Union's monitoring body which said 2023 is likely to be the hottest year in human history.

Global temperatures during the Northern Hemisphere summer have been the warmest on record, with heatwaves, droughts and wildfires whipping Asia, including the Philippines, Africa, Europe and North America in the past three months with what climatologists say is a dramatic impact on economies, ecosystems and human health.

The average global temperature in June, July and August was 16.77 degrees Celsius, smashing the previous 2019 record of 16.48C.

The European Union's Copernicus Climate Change Service said in a report "The three months that we've just had are the warmest in approximately 120,000 years, so effectively human history."

Back home, President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. has encouraged the Association of Southeast Asian Nations member states to motivate developing countries to firm up their climate action commitments.

In his intervention at the 43rd ASEAN Summit in Jakarta, Indonesia, the 65-year-old President noted "the most urgent threat to our progress is the impact of climate change" and added "It is a looming reminder of the injustice of disproportionate impact on our people."

He said ASEAN, during the upcoming COP28 "must call on developed countries to heighten the implementation of their commitment."

He was referring to the United Nations Climate Change Conference, more commonly referred to as COP28, which will be the 28th United Nations Climate Change conference, from November 30 until December 12, 2023, at the Expo City, Dubai.

Among these pledges are climate finance, technology development and transfer, and capacity building, all of which "drive ASEAN's capabilities to prevent, mitigate, manage and adapt to the impacts of climate change."

Mr. Marcos said the Philippines, being one of the most disaster-prone countries in the world, will carry on with international tie-ups aimed at making the region climate-smart and disaster-ready.

“In achieving food security, we must build on cooperation that will harness the transformative potential of our agricultural sector to ensure that food production is responsible and will be of benefit for future generations,” Mr. Marcos said.

The echoes of Guterres warning are reverberating throughout the continents.

“Scientists have long warned what our fossil fuel addiction will unleash...”our climate is imploding faster than we can cope, with extreme weather events hitting every corner of the planet.”

Record-high global sea surface temperatures played a major role in stoking heat throughout the summer, with marine heatwaves hitting the North Atlantic and the Mediterranean Sea.

Climatologists have said, as they look at the additional heat in the surface ocean, the probability is that 2023 will end up “being the warmest year on record.”

The average global temperature through the first eight months of 2023 is the second-warmest on record: only 0.01C below the benchmark 2016 level.

Protesters hold climate rallies vs. US

By: Ronald Reyes

Climate campaigners in the Philippines held lightning rallies near the US Embassy in Manila to demand accountability from President Joe Biden's administration, saying the US government fails to fulfill its climate finance obligations to the peoples of the Global South.

"The United States is the largest emitter of greenhouse gasses. A report on the world's key emitters found that the US has cumulatively produced more CO₂ than any other nation, contributing more to human-caused climate change than any other nation over the course of history," said Lidy Nacpil, coordinator of Asian Peoples' Movement on Debt and Development (APMDD).

"Countries in the Global South that have the least emissions contribution face the worst impacts of the climate crisis. Communities in Asia are suffering massive losses and damages."

"These countries have been demanding the US government to urgently deliver adequate, non-debt-creating, unconditional, and predictable climate finance through the financial mechanisms under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)," she said.

Aside from APMDD, leaders from Oriang Women's Movement, Sanlakas, Bukluran ng Manggagawang Pilipino, and Samahan ng Progresibong Kabataan (Spark), also demanded accountability from the Biden administration.

"The United States government, represented by President Biden, is the biggest bully and blocker of climate action. Despite the worsening climate crisis, the US is yet to deliver on its climate commitments while expanding fossil fuel extraction projects and continuing with domestic fossil fuel subsidies," the group said in a statement.

According to the groups, the US government provided at least \$165.89 billion worth of conditional and unconditional subsidies for fossil fuels in the years 2020 and 2021.

"This is why climate campaigners are ramping up efforts to demand accountability from the US to deliver its climate finance obligations to the peoples of the Global South," Nacpil said.

Her group also accused the US as the largest emitter of greenhouse gasses.

Citing a report on the world's key emitters, the Filipino climate advocates said the US "has cumulatively produced more CO2 than any other nation, contributing more to human-caused climate change than any other nation over the course of history."

"Countries in the Global South that have the least emissions contribution face the worst impacts of the climate crisis. Communities in Asia are suffering massive losses and damages," Nacpil said.

She added that these countries have been demanding the US government "to urgently deliver adequate, non-debt-creating, unconditional, and predictable climate finance through the financial mechanisms under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)."

"Instead, the US promotes false and highly politicized finance solutions in international climate spaces," Nacpil added.

NIKKEI ASIA

[Philippine, Bangladesh power giants: Gas needed in green transition](#)

By: Sayumi Take

Booming Asian countries like the Philippines and Bangladesh need natural gas to meet domestic energy demand as they shift to greener sources, according to their leading power providers.

AboitizPower, the power generation arm of Philippine conglomerate Aboitiz Group, and Bangladesh's largest power provider Summit Power International called for support from global investors as they work to transform their own corporate energy portfolios.

"What you seem to be seeing now is the international community adding pressure, just really pulling out [of fossil fuel projects]," Liza Luv Montelibano, senior vice president and chief financial officer (CFO) of AboitizPower, told Nikkei Asia in a recent interview in Tokyo on the sidelines of an energy event held by Japan's industry ministry.

"You already have a lot of financial institutions that don't support thermal facilities," Montelibano said. "But the existing capacities play the role of buying time to keep the grid stable, so that renewable and low-carbon technologies can develop," she said. "We can't be in a state of brownouts ... it's quite personal to me because I grew up with irritating brownouts."

The company, which supplies about one-fifth of the Southeast Asian nation's electricity needs, now has a generation capacity of about 4,500 megawatts, of which about 80% comes from coal and oil, and 20% from renewables. It aims to make that ratio roughly 50:50 while also doubling capacity by 2030.

That will be realized by adding 3,700 megawatts worth of solar and wind energy projects and 1,000 megawatts worth of gas plants at existing thermal facilities, according to Montelibano.

"Gas isn't exactly your best low carbon [fuel] but it's lower than coal, so for us, it's really a critical transition," she said. In her view, the fuel will support the company's reliability as a power provider until renewables develop into an economically viable, baseload source of electricity.

Most of Aboitiz's additional renewable capacity will come from solar, she said. The power source currently makes up just a slim portion of the national energy mix, but the government hopes to ramp up the ratio to account for 15% of generation by 2030.

The company is facing challenges as it seeks land for developing solar projects. "One of the problems is that pretty much all the land in the Philippines that have the irradiance levels to make a solar facility is either agricultural, or forest land," she said, unlike in South Africa or Middle Eastern countries where there is an abundance of flat, non-arable land. "The [climate] commitments asked for should not be totally disregarding of the situation of the countries."

A lack of renewable resources has also posed challenges for Bangladesh, according to Summit Power International, the Singapore-based holding company of Bangladeshi conglomerate Summit Group. Wu Yan Bin, the company's CFO, also spoke with Nikkei at the energy event.

"Land acquisition [for solar energy] can be quite a nightmare because 170 million people are packed in a small country, of which some of the areas can get flooded," said Wu. The monsoon period stretches to nearly six months in Bangladesh, which limits the amount of sun it gets.

Summit Power's energy portfolio consists of two-thirds gas and the rest oil. It plans to shift to a less carbon-intensive portfolio by increasing the number of gas plants that operate more efficiently and emit less carbon. But it has encountered "some resistance from financiers" in the past few years on funding gas-related activities, Wu said.

Rapidly growing South Asian country Bangladesh depended on fossil fuels for 98% of its electricity generation in 2022, while solar and wind energy accounted for just 1%, according to climate think tank Ember.

For such resource-poor countries, "one of the key limbs of decarbonization should be the replacement of some of the more polluting sources [like oil, coal] with gas," according to Wu.

Efforts to define which technologies should be promoted as contributing to the energy transition and be eligible for finance are gaining pace among countries, such as Japan, regional blocs like the EU and ASEAN and other international organizations. But taxonomies differ due to national interests and regional circumstances, meaning a clear standard has yet to emerge.

"Bangladesh is still highly dependent on foreign investment flows, so it's inevitable that we have to rely on the definitions of international financiers," said Wu. "But we also hope to urge them to really consider gas and consider the development stage and local conditions of Bangladesh and Asia ... Gas is a very critical transition fuel for the country and should also be regarded as bankable."

SUNSTAR

[PH-based climate advocates demand accountability from US government](#)

Filipino climate campaigners joined Asia-wide lightning rallies near the United States embassy in Manila to demand accountability from US President Joe Biden and his administration to deliver its climate finance obligations to the peoples of the Global South, including the Philippines.

“The United States government, represented by President Biden, is the biggest bully and blocker of climate action. Despite the worsening climate crisis, the US is yet to deliver on its climate commitments while expanding fossil fuel extraction projects and continuing with domestic fossil fuel subsidies,” said Lidy Nacpil, coordinator of Asian Peoples’ Movement on Debt and Development (APMDD).

“In the years 2020 and 2021, it provided at least \$165.89 billion worth of conditional and unconditional subsidies for fossil fuels. This is why climate campaigners are ramping up efforts to demand accountability from the US to deliver its climate finance obligations to the peoples of the Global South,” she added.

In a statement, the groups accused the US as the largest emitter of greenhouse gasses.

Citing a report on the world’s key emitters, they found that the US “has cumulatively produced more CO₂ than any other nation, contributing more to human-caused climate change than any other nation over the course of history.”

“Countries in the Global South that have the least emissions contribution face the worst impacts of the climate crisis. Communities in Asia are suffering massive losses and damages,” Nacpil said.

She added that these countries have been demanding the US government “to urgently deliver adequate, non-debt-creating, unconditional, and predictable climate finance through the financial mechanisms under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).”

“Instead, the US promotes false and highly politicized finance solutions in international climate spaces,” she said.

Other climate advocates who demanded accountability from the Biden administration include Patricia Racca, Samahan ng Progresibong Kabataan (Spark); lawyer Aaron

Pedrosa, Sanlakas; Flora Santos, Oriang Women's Movement; and lawyer Luke Espiritu, Bukluran ng Manggagawang Pilipino (BMP).

THE MANILA TIMES

Climate change human rights concern – UN

By: Jerico Joshua Kahulugan

The United Nations (UN) now recognizes the profound link among environmental health, climate change, and human rights at the international level.

According to the Commission on Human Rights (CHR), the UN has unequivocally concluded that climate change stands as one of the most significant threats to human rights in our generation.

It added that the adverse impacts of climate change, which are often catastrophic, have jeopardized the enjoyment of a wide range of human rights.

This declaration, firmly anchored on customary international law, puts emphasis on interdependence and indivisibility of human rights.

The central premise is that a clean, healthy and sustainable environment is essential for the full enjoyment of all other human rights.

The CHR reported that in a recent activity in Tuguegarao, scientists from around the world and belonging to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) — the UN body for assessing the science related to climate change — have presented compelling evidence that climate change poses a severe threat to human well-being and planetary health.

The IPCC has also reported with high confidence that there is a rapidly closing window of opportunity to secure a livable and sustainable future for all.

Lawyer Klarise Fortsleza of the Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Center of CHR explained that the impact of climate change is more evident in the Philippines, where adverse effects have imperiled the lives of the Filipino people.

It can be recalled that in response to these devastating disasters, the CHR initiated a petition in 2015 to investigate whether climate change is a human rights issue. Through the National Inquiry on Climate Change (NICC), the CHR has unequivocally concluded that climate change is indeed a grave and urgent human rights concern.

The CHR stressed the importance of documenting and sharing the stories of those most severely affected by climate change.

"This approach aimed to link legal, scientific, and objective realities to ensure a credible, valid, and rights-based process," said Fortsleza.

The commission is now actively seeking ways to enhance responses to the climate crisis. They invite collaboration, recommendations, and genuine climate action to safeguard both the environment and human rights.

In general, CHR officials said that this landmark declaration underscores the urgent need for global action to address climate change not only as an environmental crisis but also as a fundamental human rights issue.

Envoy pushes climate change initiatives

By: Vince Jacob Visaya

British Ambassador to the Philippines Laure Beaufils has pointed out the United Kingdom's efforts and rekindled diplomatic ties in the country regarding climate and environmental actions.

In her Thursday visit to local leaders and late afternoon news briefing with the media, she explained the UK's initiatives in strengthening climate actions to combat various environmental crises in the Philippines.

A \$2-billion fund was pledged by the UK to fund the green climate movement.

Beaufils confirmed that millions from the total fund will go to the Philippines to finance various government programs and projects.

She also discussed strategies to help preserve mangroves in the area to help Cagayan mitigate the effects of climate change, being one of the country's most vulnerable regions in terms of natural disasters.

Aside from environmental movements, education and capacitating the health care system in the Philippines were among the initiatives being pushed, the ambassador said.

"We do have big projects on health that are capacitating the health sector here in the Philippines supporting national health service and the universal health care, so we have these national level performances that are effective with working and benefit the people of Cagayan," Beaufils added.

She also discussed national and local government partnerships on health, mental well-being, education and skills development during a meeting with multi-sectoral stakeholders.

The ambassador also met with Gov. Manuel Mamba and Mayor Maila Ting-Que of Tuguegarao City to discuss diplomatic, relief operations and other matters.

[From pledges to action toward achieving net zero](#)

By: Ludwig Federigan

Extreme weather events and other climate impacts are becoming deadlier and more destructive. Whether this is the new normal, what awaits the world will be much worse and bleaker than it is now if we allow it to be. If there is one thing the global health pandemic taught us it is that we need to look beyond the horizon, and we need to do just that — or further beyond — in this state of global climate emergency.

The GlobeScan Sustainability Study reported in August 2023 that 93 percent of qualified sustainability experts ranked climate change as the most urgent sustainable development challenge.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's (IPCC) Sixth Assessment Report of its Working Group 1, titled "Climate Change 2021: The Physical Science Basis" — by far, our most up-to-date physical understanding of climate change, according to the world's top climate scientists working together — didn't mince words when it said: "[C]limate change is driven by us humans, and that it is happening quickly. This is already being felt in weather and climate extremes in every region of the world."

Zeroing in on net-zero

A few days ago, a consortium of Philippine businesses called Net Zero Carbon Alliance (NZCA) celebrated its second anniversary. NZCA is a private sector-led movement initiated by First Gen-owned renewable energy leader Energy Development Corp. (EDC) that aims to achieve carbon neutrality as a transition to net-zero carbon emissions by 2050.

In his opening remarks, Jerome Cainglet, EDC president and chief operating officer, said: "[T]he Net Zero Carbon Alliance is our response to the collection climate action that the IPCC asked of everyone after they had confirmed that humans are unequivocally increasing greenhouse gas emissions to record levels."

Co-organized in partnership with Eco-Business, Asia Pacific's largest media and business intelligence organization dedicated to sustainable development and ESG performance, and with the theme "Zeroing in on Net-Zero: From Corporate Pledges to Action," the conference featured a panel of company and industry resource speakers that delved into 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.

An analysis released in June found that almost half of the 2,000 largest publicly listed companies in the world have committed to a net-zero strategy. However, the report also revealed 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.

British Ambassador to the Philippines and Palau Laure Beaufile, in her opening keynote, said: "[I]ntent is not enough. Impact is what we are after. We've already seen the outcome firsthand in carbon markets and environmental, social and governance (ESG) frameworks, where investigation after investigation revealed the gap between intention and reality. Sound data must sit at the heart of all net-zero action."

Close to 200 delegates from 69 companies participated in plenary sessions with industry experts and representatives from NZCA member companies on best practices in climate action, as well as existing and emerging solutions to accelerate the Philippines' private sector net-zero journey.

These sessions covered carbon capture technology, green investments and financing, continuing government legislation and incentivization, and greening the supply value chain. The consortium also strengthened its call for vigilance against greenwashing and urged the private sector to increasingly implement measurement, reporting and verification in climate change mitigation efforts.

NZCA is guided by the carbon neutrality framework designed in partnership with Rodel Lasco, executive director of the Oscar M. Lopez Center for Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation. The framework mainly espouses carbon reduction and removal for Philippine businesses that begins with the partner's commitment to achieving carbon neutrality by 2050 at the latest, followed by measuring its climate resilience and carbon footprint, coming up with its road map, implementing it, tracking, disclosing and validating its progress over time.

Zero Carbon Gateway

The NZCA, likewise, developed a Zero Carbon Gateway to help partners track their progress, including computing their Scope 1 and Scope 2 carbon emissions.

"As always, 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. NZCA aims to contribute practical measures toward decarbonization that Philippine businesses can take, starting with interventions such as renewable energy,"

says Allan Barcena, NZCA executive director and EDC assistant vice president, and head of Corporate Relations and Communications.

Many businesses are now aware of the need to step up their decarbonization programs. At present, NZCA counts a total of 18 partners, including ArthaLand Corp., British Standards Institution, Cemex Holdings Philippines, Converge ICT Solutions, Drink Sustainability Communications, ECC International, EC Mobility Ventures, Ecolab, First Balfour, First Philippine Industrial Park, Holcim Philippines, INAEC Aviation Corp., Knowles Electronics, Linden Suites, Menarco Development Corp., Monde Nissin Corp., People360 Consulting Group, SGV and Co., Silliman University and Unilever Philippines. This year, NZCA also enlisted Eco-Business and Ako Ang Bukas as Enabler Partners.

Main takeaway

It has been said that the higher value of a corporate business is not found in the monetary profit it brings nor in the wealth it creates, but in the nobility of its purpose: to improve the quality of life of the people and to build a sustainable and resilient human society.

What could be more rewarding than knowing that one's business, however big or small, has made a difference in making a village community or the country as a whole, a safer and happier place to live in.

The road promises to be filled with stumbling blocks. But instead of slowing us down, these challenges should bring about consensus — an agreement that our country should double, even triple, its efforts to reach our targets.

After each disaster, we rebuild and continue to rebuild. Now is the time not just to build better, but build stronger, using the best standards in light of the crises we face today.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

[Panel created for Philippines hosting of disaster reduction meeting](#)

By: Helen Flores

President Marcos has created an inter-agency committee to ensure the country will successfully host the Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (APMCDRR) in October next year.

Around 3,000 delegates from United Nations member states and other stakeholder agencies and organizations are expected to attend the APMCDRR, which will be held from Oct. 14 to 17, 2024, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) revealed.

Administrative Order 9, signed by Executive Secretary Lucas Bersamin on Sept. 26, stated that the Philippines has accepted the hosting of the 10th session of the APMCDRR in 2024.

“To ensure the successful preparation and hosting of the 2024 APMCDRR, an inter-agency committee shall be constituted to oversee preparatory and organizing activities,” AO 9 reads in part.

The order also holds the inter-agency committee on preparations for the APMCDRR responsible for formulating and implementing plans, programs and activities as well as organizing and managing the requirements for the hosting of the global conference.

The inter-agency committee will be chaired by the DENR secretary and the administrator of the Department of National Defense-Office of Civil Defense.

The APMCDRR is the main regional platform for promoting the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction in the Asia-Pacific region, according to the AO.

It also facilitates exchanges of experiences, sharing of good practices, and identification of challenges and opportunities in disaster risk reduction, as well as promoting political commitment, cooperation and knowledge-sharing to reduce disaster risk and build resilience in the Asia-Pacific region.

The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction was developed to guide efforts on disaster risk reduction between 2015 and 2030.

The Philippines topped the World Risk Index 2022, which assessed disaster risk for 193 countries around the world. The WRI was published by Bündnis Entwicklung Hilft and the Institute for International Law of Peace and Armed Conflict at Ruhr University Bochum in Germany.

In a speech at the Asian Development Bank in May, Marcos said his administration has strategically integrated the climate agenda into its development plan, ramping up annual public infrastructure spending to six percent of the gross domestic product, consistent with its “Build Better More” program.

“It will be implemented in our water sector, in our sanitation, energy and transportation systems, including agri and food production, and many other essential areas. Climate change will be the lodestar for our integral national policies and investment decisions,” the President said.

Spending for environment protection dwindles in 2022

By: Louella Desiderio

Government spending for environmental protection declined by 7.3 percent to P23.83 billion last year from P25.72 billion in 2021, according to the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA).

The Compendium of Philippine Environment Statistics (CPES) Component 6 released by the PSA showed the protection of biodiversity and landscape received the biggest share of 40 percent at P9.54 billion.

The amount was 3.6 percent lower than the P9.9 billion spent in 2021.

Environmental protection not elsewhere classified expenditures fell by 11.2 percent to P6.8 billion from P7.66 billion and accounted for the second largest share of 28.5 percent of the total government spending on environmental protection.

This was followed by waste management expenditure, which amounted to P3.66 billion or 15.4 percent. The amount decreased by 7.3 percent from P3.95 billion in 2021.

Spending for pollution abatement also fell by 18.3 percent to P2.81 billion from P3.44 billion for a share of 11.8 percent.

Expenditures for research and development on environmental protection slipped by 5.3 percent to P728.93 million from P769.47 million, followed by waste water management that accounted for the lowest share of the total government environmental protection expenditures last year with P298.51 million.

Likewise, the government's climate change expenditure jumped 149.7 percent to P444.86 billion. Of the total amount, P341.35 billion went to adaptation efforts and P103.51 billion for mitigation.

In terms of the National Climate Change Action Plan's strategic priorities, water sufficiency had the biggest share of 68.2 percent in total climate change expenditure last year with P303.48 billion.

This was followed by sustainable energy with P103.97 billion or 23.4 percent share and food security placed third with P19.88 billion or a 4.5 percent share.

Data from the PSA showed the number of students enrolled in environment-related education degree programs jumped by 19 percent to 28,784 last year from 24,194 in 2021.

Among the programs in the Philippine Standard Classification of Education, the environmental science degree program had the highest number of enrolled students at 11,911 last year, while environmental and sanitary engineering recorded the lowest number of enrolled students at 1,384.

[Watersheds in Philippines are 'in a state of crisis' — report](#)

By: Gaea Katreena Cabico

Watersheds in the Philippines are facing a dire crisis as over half of these vital basins remain unprotected from destructive activities such as large-scale mining and infrastructure development, a legal and policy research institution said.

Watersheds are vital for managing water resources, providing habitats for various species, and controlling floods, droughts and extreme climate events.

Data from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources showed that around 6.8 million hectares of watershed areas were assessed as vulnerable to deforestation, biodiversity loss, erosion, floods, landslides and water pollution, while 14.2 million hectares were identified as critical for the national irrigation system.

However, a report of think tank Legal Rights and Natural Resources Center (LRC) found that at least 9% of ecologically critical and 55% of agriculturally critical watersheds lack protected status.

This means that only 6.5 million hectares or 22% of the country's total land area are protected either through presidential proclamations or coverage under the National Integrated Protected Areas System.

“Watersheds in the Philippines are clearly in a state of crisis,” LRC’s report read.

“This watershed crisis is marked with spatial conflicts that have resulted in the increasing inaccessibility of water supplies; eroding water quality; degrading integrity of ecosystems; and worsening vulnerability to water and climate-related disaster risks,” it added.

Watershed safeguarding struggles

LRC stressed that granting protective status to watersheds has been a challenging process, noting that it took 16 years for Congress to amend the NIPAS Act. Under the Expanded NIPAS Act of 2018, 94 more landscapes and seascapes were declared protected areas.

The most presidential proclamation safeguarding a watershed was the declaration of the Upper Marikina River Basin Protected Landscape as a protected area.

The think tank added that laws such as the NIPAS ACT and the Forestry Code also allow for permits that enable development activities within watershed systems provided that activities are in compliance with legal standards and regulations.

“Backdoor policy provisions still allow harmful activities within watersheds. Indigenous peoples and local communities’ welfare are being displaced by big businesses and other powerful economic and political interests,” said Leon Dulce, campaigns support and linkages coordinator of LRC.

The study cited the case of Masungi Georeserve, located in the Upper Marikina Watershed, which continues to be threatened by illegal encroachments from resorts and land developments.

SPECIAL REPORT: Strong enforcement, halt to destruction needed to reverse decades of neglect of Upper Marikina watershed

Transformative water governance

To achieve a “more robust and transformative” watershed governance in the Philippines, LRC recommended the greater integration of watershed management councils into core local planning processes.

It suggested that a portion of public funds designated for watershed management should be allocated to enhance the capacity of indigenous communities, grassroots organizations, and other organizations engaged in watershed protection and management.

LRC also said that there must be a moratorium on approval or renewal of agribusiness, mining, dam, and other infrastructure projects until a new legislation streamlining watershed regulations is passed.

Local governments were also urged to declare watershed reserves as no-go zones for mining and other destructive projects using their authority granted by the Local Government Code.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

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[CCC To Real Estate Industry: Embrace Green Practices](#)

The Climate Change Commission (CCC) has underscored the critical impact of climate change on the real estate and housing industry at the Chamber of Real Estate and Builders' Association Inc.'s (CREBA) 50th National Convention and Housing Expo.

In his address to industry stakeholders on Wednesday, CCC Vice Chairperson and Executive Director Robert E.A. Borje commended the remarkable achievements of CREBA over the past five decades and emphasized the organization's fundamental role in driving social and economic growth in the Philippines.

Borje, however, highlighted the climate challenges facing the Philippines as typhoons alone have caused significant losses and damage amounting to PHP673.3 billion, affecting the lives, livelihoods and future of millions of Filipinos.

"Adequate housing means having a safe, secure, and affordable place to live with access to basic services. Therefore, measures for climate change adaptation and mitigation must consider this fundamental human right," he said.

Borje outlined several government initiatives aimed at climate-smart adaptation and mitigation, including the National Adaptation Plan (NAP), the Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC), and Green Jobs.

He also cited the importance of incorporating climate-smart standards in buildings and construction to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

"We must decarbonize the building and construction sectors, reduce the waste they generate, and build with less. Collaboration throughout the building sector's lifecycle, involving everyone from architects and designers to contractors and operators, is vital to the success of these efforts," he added.

Borje called for collaborative efforts between the government and the private sector in addressing climate change.

He urged CREBA members and industry stakeholders to prioritize the development of climate-resilient and green communities to protect people and properties from the impacts of climate change, while also reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

“Every brick we lay, every beam we set, carries the hopes and dreams of our nation. As leading figures in the real estate sector, you possess both the influence and the responsibility to mold a brighter, eco-conscious future. Let us pledge to shape a greener, more sustainable tomorrow for every Filipino,” Borje said.

The National Adaptation Plan serves as a long-term support mechanism to enhance community resilience and reduce vulnerability to climate change impacts, while the Nationally Determined Contribution reflects the Philippines’ commitment to progressive climate change mitigation, fostering low-carbon, sustainable and climate-resilient development.

Through Green Jobs, the CCC and other government agencies incentivize environmentally friendly practices within businesses, contributing to job creation and green investments.

CREBA convened the Golden Jubilee National Convention and Housing Expo to celebrate its 50th founding anniversary. The event aimed to reaffirm CREBA members’ commitment to drive land and housing development as a catalyst for economic and social progress.

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