



NEWS ROUNDUP

06 OCTOBER 2023 [07:50 am]

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By: Laura Paddison

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By: Liwayway Yparraguirre

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Rappler environment and science desk editor Jee Geronimo was selected to cover the 2023 United Nations (UN) Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP28) in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, as one of the 28 fellows of the Climate Change Media Partnership (CCMP) program.

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Information and Knowledge Management Division

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The Northern Hemisphere may be transitioning into fall, but there has been no let up from extreme heat. New data shows last month was the hottest September – the fourth consecutive month of such unprecedented heat – putting 2023 firmly on track to be the hottest year in recorded history.

September beat the previous monthly record set in 2020 by a staggering 0.5 degrees Celsius, according to data released Wednesday by the European Union’s Copernicus Climate Change Service. There has never been a month so abnormally hot since Copernicus’ records began in 1940.

“The unprecedented temperatures for the time of year observed in September – following a record summer – have broken records by an extraordinary amount,” said Samantha Burgess, deputy director of Copernicus, in a statement.

September felt more like an abnormally hot July with an average global air temperature of 16.38 degrees Celsius (61.45 Fahrenheit), making the month 0.93 degrees Celsius hotter than the 1991 to 2020 average, and 1.75 degrees Celsius hotter than the September average for the pre-industrial era, before the world started burning large amounts of fossil fuels.

That’s well above the 1.5 degrees Celsius threshold to which countries aim to limit global warming under the Paris Climate Agreement. While that agreement focuses on longterm average temperatures, September’s abnormal heat – which followed the hottest summer ever recorded – has given a preview of what the world can expect as soaring temperatures supercharge extreme weather.

September alone brought devastating flooding that killed thousands in Libya and dozens across Greece, Bulgaria and Turkey. Canada grappled with its unprecedented wildfire season, parts of South America were scorched by record-breaking heat and record rainfall deluged New York.

Ocean temperatures were also off the charts in September. Average sea surface temperatures reached 20.92 degrees Celsius (69.66 Fahrenheit), the highest on record for September and the second-highest on record for any month, after August of this year. Antarctic sea ice also reached record lows for this time of year.

“This month was, in my professional opinion as a climate scientist – absolutely gobsmackingly bananas,” Zeke Hausfather, a climate scientist, posted on X (formerly Twitter) on Tuesday.

Even in October, there is little sign of heat dying down. European countries, including Spain, Poland, Austria and France, have already broken their all-time October temperature records, according to Maximiliano Herrera, a climatologist and weather historian who tracks extreme temperatures.

What Europe experienced in the first three days of October was “one of the most extreme (climate) events in European history,” Herrera posted on X on Tuesday.

It now appears all but certain that this year will be the hottest year on record. The US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration puts the chances of reaching this milestone at more than 93%.

The extreme September “has pushed 2023 into the dubious honor of first place – on track to be the warmest year and around 1.4 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial average temperatures,” Burgess said.

“Temperature records continue to be broken because we have not stopped burning fossil fuels. It is that simple,” said Friederike Otto, senior lecturer in climate science at the Grantham Institute for Climate Change and the Environment in the UK.

The significant margin by which heat records are being broken matters, she told CNN. “People and ecosystems are dying.”

Countries will gather in Dubai for the United Nations COP28 climate summit in December where they will assess progress towards climate goals. The world is currently a long way off track, according to a recent report.

“The significant margin by which the September record was broken should be a wake-up call for policymakers and negotiators ahead of COP28,” Otto said, “we absolutely must agree to phase out fossil fuels.”

The high temperatures have been partially fueled by El Niño, the natural climate pattern that originates in the tropical Pacific Ocean and has a warming effect. But underlying that pattern is the longterm trend of human-caused climate change.

FINANCIAL TIMES

UN climate fund fails to secure funding pledge from US

By: Aime Williams and Attracta Mooney

The US has failed to pledge money to the world's biggest multilateral climate fund at its second fundraising conference, highlighting wealthy governments' struggle to support poorer nations suffering from the impact of global warming.

The UN's Green Climate Fund, the world's largest fund dedicated to tackling climate change in developing countries, pulled in a total of \$9.3bn from 25 countries by the close of its one-day pledging conference held in Bonn, Germany, on Thursday.

But a divided Congress and fraught battles to avoid a government shutdown have stymied US efforts to secure money for the fund, illustrating the challenges for countries facing an economic slowdown as they begin negotiations for a new climate deal at next month's COP28 summit.

Sultan al-Jaber, president-designate of the UN climate summit, hit out at rich countries for failing to support the fund. The GCF's "current level of replenishment" was "neither ambitious nor adequate to meet the challenge the world faces", the chief executive of Abu Dhabi National Oil Company said on Thursday.

The fund was initially capitalised with \$10.3bn by 45 countries in 2014, followed by a further \$10bn from 32 countries for its first replenishment in 2019. For its second replenishment it attracted significant fresh commitments from Germany, which pledged \$2.2bn, the UK with \$2bn, France with \$1.7bn and Japan with \$1.2bn.

Although the US promised \$3bn to the fund in 2014, it committed no further funding in 2019 under former president Donald Trump, who withdrew the country from the 2015 Paris climate accord. President Joe Biden secured \$1bn for the GCF in December, although the amount went towards fulfilling the US's earlier 2014 pledge.

Although Biden promised the US would spend \$11.4bn annually by 2024 to help developing countries tackle climate change and transition to clean energy, Congressional Republicans have thwarted the president's efforts to secure the money.

A spokesperson for the National Security Council said the US was "steadfastly committed" to "Biden's pledge to increase US climate finance to help developing countries tackle the urgent threat of climate change, but unfortunately is not in a position to make a pledge to [the GCF's second replenishment] at the October 5 pledging conference".

The spokesperson added: “We look forward to sharing our approach to [the GCF’s second replenishment] at a later date.” The fund allows pledges to be made after the completion of its conference.

Emerging and developing economies are responsible for about two-thirds of greenhouse gas emissions, but many are struggling to access the finance needed for the green transition.

The fund disbursed \$2.3bn by the end of 2021, according to its latest annual report. Mafalda Duarte, formerly the head of the Climate Investment Funds at the World Bank, was installed as the new head of the GCF earlier this year.

Last week, US civil society groups including the Center for American Progress, Natural Resources Defense Council, E3G and the Sierra Club wrote a letter to the White House urging the Biden administration to announce “an ambitious pledge” in Bonn.

The groups wrote that a failure to pledge funds would “undercut its negotiating position at COP28 and other diplomatic venues, hamstringing efforts to encourage new donors to contribute climate finance, and send a troubling signal to developing and developed country partners alike about the US’s commitment to multilateral climate progress”.

GMA NEWS

ADB OKs \$300-M loan to support PH's financial inclusion efforts

By: Ted Cordero

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) on Thursday announced the approval of a \$300-million policy-based loan to support the Philippine government's financial inclusion efforts.

In a statement, the ADB said the policy loan Inclusive Finance Development Program, Subprogram 3, is supporting reforms to expand financial inclusion in the Philippines by improving the country's financial infrastructure, including widening the digital financing ecosystem.

The loan program is aimed at aiding the government in "creating a stronger institutional and policy environment to help expand Filipinos' access to financial services, particularly the vulnerable segment of the population, and to promote economic growth," the ADB said.

It will also support efforts to increase the capacity of financial service providers, such as rural banks and non-bank financial institutions, to offer quality products and services accessible through various delivery channels.

"Through this loan, ADB is expanding its partnership with the Philippines to ensure all Filipinos will have access to financial products and services, including via digital platforms, to help improve their lives and livelihoods," said ADB senior financial sector specialist Kelly Hattel.

"Considering the significant impact of climate change on the vulnerable segments of the population, the reform actions supported by the loan will ensure government assistance can reach people faster during crises and emergencies; help raise the climate resilience of farmers and micro, small, and medium-scale businesses through expanded insurance; and promote improved financial stability," she added.

Citing the 2021 Global Findex Database, the ADB said the number of Filipino adults holding an account with a financial institution or mobile money provider has risen from 34% of the population in 2017 to 51% 2021.

The bank added that the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns nearly doubled the number of financial institutions or mobile money accounts for the bottom 40% of the population by income, from 18% in 2017 to 34% in 2021.

The ADB said the Philippine government is targeting raising the number of Filipinos holding an account with financial institutions or mobile money providers to 70% by 2024, aided by streamlined requirements with the Philippine Identification System (PhilSys).

As of September 1, 2023, nearly 88% of the population had registered under PhilSys after launching the program in 2020, according to the lender.

The bank said the new loan builds on ADB assistance provided under Inclusive Finance Development Program Subprogram 1 and Subprogram 2 delivered in October 2018 and August 2020, respectively.

The ADB added that reforms pursued under the latest loan will complement its other programs in the Philippines, such as the Competitive and Inclusive Agriculture Development Program Subprogram 2 approved in January 2023.

INTERAKSYON

[Climate change and its human causes cannot be denied, Pope Francis says](#)

By: Philip Pullela

Pope Francis on Wednesday appealed to climate change deniers and foot-dragging politicians to have a change of heart, saying they cannot gloss over its human causes or deride scientific facts while the planet “may be nearing the breaking point”.

In the new document, released ahead of the COP28 conference starting next month in Dubai, Francis said the transition to clean, renewable energy and the abandonment of fossil fuels was not going fast enough.

He warned against putting too much trust in technology to capture gas emissions, saying that while it was promising, it did not tackle the human causes at the root of global warming.

The 7,000-word document, called *Laudate Deum* (Praise God), is a follow-up to his 2015 encyclical on the environment “*Laudato Si*” (Praise Be). It was prompted by extreme weather events since then, which he called the earth’s “cries of protest”.

“The world in which we live is collapsing and may be nearing the breaking point,” he said. “It is indubitable that the impact of climate change will increasingly prejudice the lives and families of many persons.”

Good will

Addressed to “All people of good will on the climate crisis,” it includes some highly technical sections that read like a scientific or foreign policy paper.

“Despite all attempts to deny, conceal, gloss over or relativize the issue, the signs of climate change are here and increasingly evident,” he said.

“No one can ignore the fact that in recent years we have witnessed extreme weather phenomena, frequent periods of unusual heat, drought and other cries of protest on the part of the earth that are only a few palpable expressions of a silent disease that affects everyone,” he said.

Francis called for an abandonment of “short-term interests of certain countries or businesses,” and political forces, saying it was high time to rise to the occasion. “In this way, may they demonstrate the nobility of politics and not its shame”.

Saying “it is no longer possible to doubt the human – ‘antropic’ – origin of climate change,” he took aim at those who “deride these facts,” saying they use “allegedly scientific data” to show that the planet has always had periods of warming and cooling.

He specifically faulted deniers and sceptics for refusing to acknowledge the speed of the current changes taking place over “one generation – not centuries or millennia”.

“The rise in the sea level and the melting of glaciers can be easily perceived by an individual in his or her lifetime, and probably in a few years many populations will have to move their homes because of these facts,” he wrote.

Timed for effect

“If we are confident in the capacity of human beings to transcend their petty interests and to think in bigger terms, we can keep hoping that COP28 will allow for a decisive acceleration of energy transition, with effective commitments subject to ongoing monitoring,” he said.

Failure in Dubai, he said, “will be a great disappointment and jeopardize whatever good has been achieved thus far”.

Activists groups should not be labeled as “radicalized,” he said, because they are “filling a space left empty by society as a whole”.

The footnotes of the document, which in some parts referred to highly specific projections of temperature increases, statistics about melting icecaps and other technical matters, refer to reports from Catholic sources, the United Nations, specific laboratories and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

Francis acknowledged that even the Church was divided on climate change. He gave no examples but in the United States, for example, former President Donald Trump’s assertion that climate change was “a hoax” was backed by some U.S. bishops.

“I feel obliged to make these clarifications, which may appear obvious, because of certain dismissive and scarcely reasonable opinions that I encounter, even within the Catholic Church,” Francis wrote.

“Yet we can no longer doubt that the reason for the unusual rapidity of these dangerous changes is a fact that cannot be concealed.”

MANILA BULLETIN

Energy transition to renewables will be costly – DOE

By: Myrna M. Velasco

This early, the Department of Energy (DOE) is keeping consumers up to speed that the country's transition to renewable energy (RE) will not only be a long journey, but there's also high probability that it will add up costs into the electric bills of consumers.

"Nobody is going to tell you that the transition is not going to be costly, it will be costly," Energy Secretary Raphael P.M. Lotilla asserted.

Nevertheless, he qualified that the burden of government leaders as well as investors is to work on a policy structure and investment landscape that will not only scale up the country's energy security leaning on clean energy technologies, but will likewise bring down the pass-on cost to the ratepayers.

"The expectation is: if we have to introduce renewables or cleaner technologies, then we have to find low-cost financing in order to make that affordable to our people," the energy chief stressed.

In the short term, however, DOE officials caution that "there will be price to pay' within the stretch of the transition phase being cast for the Philippine energy sector – or that period when the country will be transforming its energy mix from fossil fuel-dominated regime to one that is anchored on higher integration of renewables.

"We don't know how fast the transition can unfold. There are a lot of uncertainties beyond our control. But as much as possible, we are going to pursue the basic policy which is diversify our sources of power and rely on domestic or indigenous sources of energy," Lotilla stated.

He added "those are important elements that we have to put together – because in the long run, it's going to ensure more affordable power or energy for our people."

Currently, the tariffs being offered under the Green Energy Auction Program (GEAP) being administered by the DOE range from P4.00 to P6.00 per kilowatt hour (kWh), but that does not cover yet the cost of back-up power as well as targeted energy storage coupling to manage the grid imbalances triggered by intermittent renewables.

"Our GEAP price of P4 to P6 (per kWh), that's cheap relative to conventional energy, but it does not factor in the back-up power that is needed," Lotilla expounded.

He further explained that “the battery and energy storage systems and the transmission lines that are also needed – all of these have to be taken into account by us in determining the cost, but it will not distract us from the goal of going for cleaner technologies.”

In the next RE auction planned by the DOE next year, Energy Undersecretary Rowena L. Guevara indicated that energy storage will already be integrated into the RE capacity offers that will be placed on tender.

“We need to stabilize the grid – because if we have to integrate that much variable RE capacities, then there will be strain on the grid,” she emphasized.

It is for that reason, Guevara qualified, that the department is seriously contemplating that the ‘RE plus energy storage’ package will be considered in the bidding covering the unsubscribed capacity in the last auction.

She echoed that with the proposed technology combination, the tendency will be escalation in tariffs for the long-term power supply agreements (PSA) to be awarded from the RE capacity auction.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

Pangasinan eyes 1.5 gigawatt solar power production by 2025

By: Liwayway Yparraguirre

The provincial government of Pangasinan is eyeing to produce 1.5 gigawatts of solar power capacity by 2025 from the five renewable energy companies that are set to construct solar farms in the next few years.

In an interview Thursday, Pangasinan Vice Governor Mark Lambino said abundance of solar power in the province attracts renewable energy companies.

Among the companies that have acquired approval from the Sangguniang Panlalawigan (Provincial Council) to pursue solar energy production are the Sinocalan Solar Power Corporation for its 60-megawatt (MW) solar power project in Barangay Sto. Domingo, San Manuel; Renovable Earth Corporation that proposed the development and operation of 75.014MW peak (MWp) and 49.500 MW alternating power (ac) project in the villages of Pangascasan and 5/5Capantolan in Sual; PV Sinag Power Inc. that proposed the development and operation of 75 MWac and 146 gigawatt hour (GWh) generation capacity of Cayanga-Bugallon Solar Power Project in Barangay Cayanga, Bugallon.

PV Sinag Power Inc. also proposed the development and operation of 128 MWac and 254 GWh generation capacity of Laoag-Aguilar solar project in Barangay Laoag, Aguilar; and 3 Barracuda Energy Corporation, which proposed the development of a solar energy plant that have up to 650 MWp with an attached energy storage plant of up to 200 MW.

Lambino said these energy companies have secured the Solar Energy Operating Contract (SEOC) from the Department of Energy (DOE); the required papers from the Bureau of Investments (BOI); have complied or have an ongoing process for the issuance of an Environmental Compliance Certificate from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR); acquired or have an ongoing process for the acquisition of a Special Land Use Permit or a Forest Land Use Agreement.

He said they will continue to issue permits until the national government mandates the province to stop issuing permits.

“As far as the capacity of the province, as Governor Ramon Guico III has always said, the number one product of the province is our heat index or irradiation. Some of the solar farms are being set in the rolling terrains of the mountains,” he said.

Lambino said the provincial government and the Provincial Board are very careful in the approval of any investment being proposed to the province.

"In this administration, we entertain only those proponents who have at least passed the scrutiny of the national government and have gotten clearances from the corresponding national agencies. We have to ensure that they have the capacity of building the project, and they have the capacity to protect the environment when they implement their project," Lambino said.

Meanwhile, DOE-Luzon Field Office Director Renante Sevilla is encouraging government offices and the private sector, both the business establishments and individual consumers, to consider the use of renewable energy.

In an interview also on Thursday, Sevilla said that aside from the generation sector requirement, they also have programs for the demand sector.

"Now that we have the Energy Management Program, we are targeting at least 10 percent production savings. We will be visiting public and private schools and even commercial buildings to encourage them to have their own energy efficiency and conservation program. We will be doing some energy audit. We will help them to consider doable energy conservation methods, not necessarily requiring funding," he said.

Sevilla disclosed that Urdaneta City-based Panpacific University uses renewable energy, with a total of 198 solar panels installed at the rooftop of its basic education building. The solar panels can generate 99 kilowatts (kW).

He said return of investment from the solar panels is projected to be in two-and-a-half to three years while lifespan of the solar panels is around 20 to 25 years.

RAPPLER

[Green Climate Fund's new head seeks to reach left-out communities](#)

The UN's Green Climate Fund (GCF), bolstered by fresh pledges of \$9.3 billion from rich nations on Thursday, October 5, needs to change how it operates so it can work with more local partners and get finance to vulnerable people "that haven't really been reached", said its new head.

Mafalda Duarte said in an interview that the world's largest multilateral climate fund – which had capital of \$17 billion before its latest replenishment – could team up with a wider range of organizations, supporting projects "that are closer to the communities and to the realities on the ground".

"My premise is if we are to achieve the (climate) goals, we have to mobilize as much action as possible, and therefore we can't rely on a network of a few dozen institutions – we really need to work with a much broader network," she said ahead of the pledging conference in Bonn.

That means, for example, channelling more resources from the GCF to support local commercial banks and businesses in places like Kenya that are providing credit to farmers for clean energy equipment such as solar-powered irrigation or to switch to greener practices, said Duarte.

The Portuguese climate finance expert, who took the fund's reins in August, told delegates in Bonn how climate-resilient agriculture projects backed by the GCF had improved the lives of women farmers she met on a recent visit to East Africa.

The GCF backs nearly 230 projects in 129 countries across Africa, Asia-Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean and Eastern Europe, with a roughly even split between helping countries cut their planet-heating emissions by adopting clean energy and efforts to adapt to extreme weather and rising seas.

"It really requires understanding the context, understanding the communities, understanding the business models that will work," Duarte told the Thomson Reuters Foundation, noting that the needs are "much higher than what we are delivering".

The United Nations estimates hundreds of billions of dollars are needed each year to help developing countries tackle global warming. Yet wealthy governments have fallen short on a promise to mobilize \$100 billion annually for that purpose from 2020.

Senior German officials said on Thursday they believed the target would be met this year, with confirmation expected before the COP28 UN climate summit in Dubai, which starts on November 30.

US pledge awaited

Climate justice groups expressed disappointment that wealthy governments – 25 of which promised a combined \$9.3 billion to the GCF for the 2024-2027 period led by Germany, Britain, France and Japan – had pledged less than in two earlier rounds.

About 45 rich nations committed \$10.3 billion in an initial pledging drive for the GCF in 2014 – and 32 countries gave \$10 billion for its first replenishment in 2019, although the United States has yet to deliver \$1 billion of its original 2014 promise of \$3 billion by former President Barack Obama.

“Despite the small increases announced by many countries pledging finance today, the overall amount pledged to the GCF is nowhere near commensurate with the urgency this crisis and climate justice demands,” said Erika Lennon, senior attorney with the Center for International Environmental Law.

Duarte told a news conference that several more countries – the United States, Italy, Sweden, Switzerland and Australia – were still going through domestic budget processes and the GCF was “very confident” they would make contributions in the run-up to COP28, which would take the total above the 2019 pledges.

Australia’s Labor-led government said it would make a “modest pledge” this year, marking a return to the GCF after a former right-wing government stepped back from funding in 2019.

The US has struggled to get Congress to approve large international climate finance allocations and said on Thursday it was “still working on our announcement” on a new GCF pledge.

President Joe Biden this year delivered \$1 billion of the initial US pledge, on top of \$1 billion under Obama, but the shortfall in US funding has been a political sore-point. Former President Donald Trump opposed GCF funding.

More money, simpler access

The GCF has also been under pressure to make it easier for developing countries to access its cash – something Duarte wants to make progress on under her new “50by30” vision, announced at the UN Climate Ambition Summit in New York last month.

That reform programme aims to enable the GCF to efficiently manage capital of \$50 billion by 2030 and deliver it “with significant impact”, said Duarte, who previously ran the multilateral Climate Investment Funds.

She did not say how much the GCF would seek for its next replenishment from 2028, but noted the GCF aims to expand its pool of donors to include larger developing economies.

Germany’s development minister Svenja Schulze urged China and fossil fuel-rich Gulf states to join the pool of donors. New donors Israel and Mongolia announced GCF contributions on Thursday of \$100,000 each.

The “50by30” vision sets out to boost support for the most vulnerable people and communities, mobilize private-sector participation and investments, speed up review and approvals for projects, and prioritize programs that can transform economic systems over one-off efforts.

The GCF also plans to work differently with its partners, reducing “unnecessary complexity and transaction costs”.

Duarte said the current model had not foreseen the high level of demand for GCF funding and was “not fit for purpose”.

Today the fund has nearly 120 partners that are approved to deploy its finance – from UN agencies to international commercial banks, equity funds and environment ministries in developing countries. But Duarte noted that about 140 more are interested in getting accredited to receive GCF money.

“Because of processes we have established around that, we are not able to respond effectively,” she said, calling for a tailor-made approach that suits the needs of different institutions in the public and private sectors.

“We have to meet the organisations where they are.”

[Rappler's Jee Geronimo chosen for UN climate summit fellowship in Dubai](#)

Rappler environment and science desk editor Jee Geronimo was selected to cover the 2023 United Nations (UN) Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP28) in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, as one of the 28 fellows of the Climate Change Media Partnership (CCMP) program.

For this year's fellowship – led by Internews' Earth Journalism Network (EJN) and the Stanley Center for Peace and Security – 20 fellows from developing countries will attend and report on COP28 in person while eight fellows will cover the conference remotely.

“COP28 will see the first-ever Global Stocktake since the Paris Agreement, assessing the progress by countries to date on climate mitigation, adaptation, and equitable implementation. The fellows will receive support and guidance from seasoned climate journalists affiliated with EJN's global network of trainers,” EJN said in a post announcing the selected fellows on Wednesday, October 4.

The 28 fellows were chosen from a record number of nearly 600 applicants worldwide.

Aside from Geronimo, 19 other CCMP fellows will be covering COP28 in person:

- Ahang Habib Hawrami (Iraq)
- Chiamaka Okafor (Nigeria)
- Daniela Quintero Díaz (Colombia)
- El Mahjoub Dasaa (Morocco)
- Erika Kurnia (Indonesia)
- Eugenia Akorfa Kumi (Ghana)
- Fredrick Kusu (Solomon Islands)
- Jacob Walter Ochieng (Kenya)
- Jamaila Maitland (Jamaica)
- Kann Vicheika (Cambodia)
- Kannikar Petchkaew (Thailand)
- Letícia Klein (Brazil)
- Matias Avramow (Argentina)
- Muhammad Iftikhar Khan (Pakistan)
- Sahar Mohammed Al-Shameri (Yemen)
- Sarah Khazem (Syria)
- Simrin Sirur (India)
- Uzmi Athar (India)
- Zeina Moneer (Egypt)

Eight fellows from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) and Lower Mekong countries will be covering remotely:

MENA cohort

Undisclosed

- Mohamed Ouerghi (Tunisia)
- Hadeer Elhadary (Egypt)
- Sanar Hasan (Iraq)

Mekong cohort

- Kieu Thoan Thu (Vietnam)
- Quach Thi Kieu Mai (Vietnam)
- Samanachan Buddhajak (Thailand)
- Sutheemon Kumkoom (Thailand)

The fellows covering in person will be in Dubai during the two-week conference from November 30 to December 12.

Geronimo has led Rappler's environment coverage since 2018, including regional reporting with other newsrooms that won several The Society of Publishers in Asia awards in 2020 and 2022. She is also one of the hosts of Rappler's environment show, The Green Report. She has been covering COPs remotely since 2021.

Follow Rappler's coverage of climate change and other environmental issues [here](#).

THE MANILA TIMES

[Searca pushes climate-smart agri](#)

By: Leander Domingo

The Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (Searca) conducted virtual learning sessions on climate-smart villages (CSVs) to enhance the capacities of participants to promote, disseminate and advocate for local platforms for scaling inclusive forms of climate-smart agriculture (CSA) and anticipatory climate adaptation.

Searca Director Glenn Gregorio said these learning sessions jointly offered with the International Institute of Rural Reconstruction (IIRR) from Sept. 19 to 20, 2023, via Zoom, were part of an eight-day blended course "Climate-Smart Villages as Platforms for Community-Level Anticipatory Climate Adaptation to Improve Food Security and Resiliency."

A module was delivered virtually with 22 participants attending the sessions from academic institutions, nongovernment organizations, the private sector and government agencies from Cambodia, Indonesia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand and Germany.

Other modules were provided onsite through a roving workshop from Sept. 25 to 30, 2023, where participants visited sites in Bailen, General Emilio Aguinaldo in Cavite; Pagbilao and Guinayangan in Quezon; and Los Baños, Laguna.

The six-day roving workshop allowed participants to witness firsthand how food systems-sensitive climate change adaptation platforms are established, sustained and scaled at community levels.

On behalf of the Searca director, the webinar participants were welcomed by associate professor Joselito Florendo, Searca deputy director for administration. He highlighted the role of a village in scaling CSA, emphasizing that "it takes a village to scale up climate-smart agriculture."

During the online session, Emily Monville-Oro, IIRR-Asia acting regional director, provided an overview of the hybrid methodology used in the course covering various concepts on CSVs.

Packed with knowledge sharing and learning from both the speakers and participants, the online sessions with selected participants also discussed climate change interventions of their organizations, the challenges they encountered and the lessons they learned.

Experts also made presentations on CSV, agrobiodiversity, nature-based solutions, food systems and community-based adaptation.

They included Julian Gonsalves, IIRR senior advisor; Danny Hunter, Alliance Biodiversity International and CIAT senior scientist; Dindo Campilan, regional director for Asia and hub director for Oceania of the International Union for Conservation of Nature; Alice Ilaga, director of Climate Resilient Agriculture Office of the Department of Agriculture and Asean Climate Resilience Network focal point for the Philippines; Jessica Fanzo, University of Columbia professor in New York; and Magnolia Mosimo, IIRR operations director.

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