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[How limitless green energy would change the world](#)

By: Adrienne Bernhard

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BUSINESS MIRROR

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BUSINESS WORLD

[Germany working to expand PHL environment tech, RE footprint](#)

By: Alyssa Nicole Tan

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CNN PHILIPPINES

[Ecologically destructive projects, attacks continued in Marcos' first 100 days — groups](#)

By: Jelo Ritzhie Mantaring

Metro Manila (CNN Philippines, October 9) — President Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr. has assured that climate change is on top of the national agenda, but environmental groups said “ecologically destructive projects and attacks against environment defenders” have continued in the past three months.

NIKKEI ASIA

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Tokyo -- Japanese sports gear maker Asics has developed sneakers whose carbon footprint is less than half that of those formerly considered the low-emissions record holder.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

[Bankrolling the green economy](#)

By: Tyrone Jasper C. Paid

As climate change continues to rear its ugly head, a drastic shift in championing sustainability measures has been observed in multiple sectors. Increasingly crucial to this fight is the financial industry, which has been making strides to influence the shift to green economy.

[\[Opinion\] Climate agenda](#)

It took only six hours for last month's Typhoon Karding to develop into a supertyphoon — showing how storms have become unpredictable due to climate change. Those who were in its path were not exactly unprepared — previous typhoons have taught them hard lessons — but they were still caught off guard by its intensity. This situation will prevail, with even worse consequences, if the government continues to romanticize Filipino resilience instead of being accountable — and this is as worse as denying that climate change exists.

[Why bleeding PH firms won't go green](#)

By: Alden M. Monzon

Still steeped in the mires of the COVID-19 pandemic, most businesses are setting aside going green to focus on recovery. Sustainability, after all, can not yet be sustained.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

[Samal-Davao bridge project includes environmental protection](#)

By: Che Palicte

Samal City, Davao del Norte – The Samal Island – Davao City Connector (SIDC) bridge construction would push through as planned amid the suggestion of a resort owner for a deviation in the project.

POLITIKO

[Abby Binay flies to Germany for climate change policy forum](#)

The Makati mayor was among the leaders invited from all over the world to share and learn climate change mitigation and adaptation practices.

THE MANILA TIMES

[Biodiversity, reforestation build up resilience to climate change](#)

By: Bella Cariaso

President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. underscored his administration's thrust to preserve the country's forests when he led a simultaneous bamboo and tree planting activity on his 65th birthday last September 13.

[Toward a sustainable future in the energy sector](#)

By: Tony Maghirang

Concerted efforts toward a sustainable future continue to generate significant strides as people and organizations become truly aware of its importance. Nowadays, for instance, more and more companies are joining the sustainability movement, heeding the call to embrace net zero. According to the United Nations, net zero means cutting greenhouse gas emissions to as close to zero as possible.

[Understanding extreme weather events](#)

By Arlie O. Calalo

AS the Earth gets hotter, frequent and more intense weather events have unfolded around the world.

[Waking up to the climate threat](#)

By: Ben Kritz

Extreme weather events throughout 2021 and 2022 have sharpened the focus of world policymakers on the need to address climate change more aggressively, something that — perhaps understandably — took a back seat to public health and economic crises brought on by the Covid-19 pandemic.

WIRED.COM

[Why 'Carbon Emissions' Are Now 'Climate Pollution'](#)

By Kate Yoder

What do you think of when you hear the word pollution—a city smothered in smog, a beach strewn with trash, factories pumping out dark clouds?

CCC IN THE NEWS:

MALAYA BUSINESS INSIGHT

[Time off to clean, protect the coasts](#)

By: Edison Joseph Gonzales

Nestlé Philippines and GMA Network have teamed up for the nationwide coastal cleanup at the Las Piñas-Parañaque Critical Habitat and Ecotourism Area (LPPCHEA) “to tackle the plastic waste crisis in the country.”

SUNSTAR DAVAO

[Siargao islanders rebuild lives after Typhoon Odette](#)

By Yasmin Arquiza, with reports from Daphne Padilla

With scientists warning of more frequent and stronger typhoons as a result of the climate crisis, Siargao’s stakeholders are looking at nature-based solutions to deal with its impacts.

THE MANILA TIMES

[Action urged vs climate change](#)

By: Francis Earl Cueto

Speaking recently at the United Nations General Assembly in New York, President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. decried "historical" injustices brought about by climate change and called on industrialized nations to honor commitments made to address the "greatest threat" to nations.

[PH backs climate initiative](#)

By: Kristina Maralit

The Philippines renewed its call for a stronger global initiative on climate change during a meeting of stakeholders ahead of the Conference of Parties (COP27) climate summit in Egypt next month.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

[In first 100 days, Marcos talks climate change but action still on back burner](#)

By: Gaea Katreena Cabico

Manila, Philippines — President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. has frequently mentioned the need to address climate change in his speeches. He is, after all, leading the Philippines during the most crucial window to avoid or limit some of the worst effects of climate change.

BBC NEWS

[How limitless green energy would change the world](#)

By: Adrienne Bernhard

Limitless renewable energy would offer tantalising benefits: emissions-free heating, greener fertiliser and electric transport. But overcoming the obstacles will not be easy. What would we do with an abundant, cheap, inexhaustible supply of renewables?

Perhaps the desalination of seawater, suddenly cost-efficient, would relieve Earth's water shortages. Rubbish might be recycled on a massive scale, allowing for the extraction of precious trace elements such as rare earth metals, while carbon dioxide (CO₂) could be vacuumed out of the atmosphere to slow climate change. People could live comfortably in Earth's polar regions or travel far and wide in battery-powered vehicles. Goods and services that require electricity might become cheaper, even free. Our emissions footprint could soon be undetectable.

While exciting to contemplate, this sustainable world would be incredibly costly. It would also hinge on a wide range of political, economic and technological factors to ever make it a reality.

Green energy's success depends on people's willingness to adopt the technology in the first place – renewable alternatives would have to promise more convenience, speed, savings and security than the oil, coal and gas on which we've grown so reliant. Lawmakers would also need to combat legislative gridlock to ensure that sustainable energy policies could be implemented. The facilities that combust this green energy – be it solar, wind, geothermal, biomass, or even nuclear fusion or some undiscovered technology – would need to be built and maintained as the planet continued to warm and resources dwindle.

And assuming these obstacles could be overcome, how could limitless green energy change our own consumption, innovation, our economy, public policy and the environment? And what factors might make this hypothetical planet temporarily worse off?

According to the International Energy Agency (IEA), electricity demand is set to grow by 40-60% in some regions in the next 10 years. Researchers predict that mounting prosperity in both the developed and the developing world will continue to drive increased consumer demand for key resources up to at least 2040. At the same time, constraints in energy, water and other natural resources will bring about new and difficult-to-manage instabilities.

Current electricity generation – primarily by fossil fuels – is the single biggest contributor to climate change, responsible for 30% of all greenhouse gas emissions. Green energy could thus represent a radical deviation from business-as-usual, promising a path towards zero-carbon emissions and international energy independence. Without the

concerted efforts of policymakers, investors and citizens, however, limitless green energy could also lead to a world of increased waste and shortages.

"Green energy may be limitless, but certainly not limitless without cost," says Victor B Flatt, professor of environmental law and head of the Environment, Energy and Natural Resources Legal Center at the University of Houston. From the enormous capital outlay required to build renewable power plants – or convert existing ones – to the marketing investments needed to incentivise its use to the emissions-emitting extraction processes needed for new infrastructure, free green energy comes at a high price.

There are no perfect answers. What will be required in the years ahead is a diverse and flexible mix of energy solutions – what Bill Gates calls a "Swiss army knife of energy tools."

Carbon-free energy certainly promises tantalising benefits: total electrification of transport, emissions-free heating and cooling systems to power our homes and businesses, greener fertiliser for our farmlands. If we can manage to produce it, we might also need to use supplementary sources of fusion power. Developing efficient and sustainable methods of burning biomass, and converting methane from crops and sewage, would help to increase our green fuel supply, but we would also need to reduce our total energy and explore ways to turn climate policy into concrete, enforceable action.

As parts of the world begin to wean off fossil fuels, our current fuel supply would become cheaper and cheaper, says Flatt. Oil-rich countries, eager to sell their last barrels to developing nations, would drive the price down further, slowly eliminating liquid-fuel economies. "If green energy is more competitive than fossil fuels, people will move in that direction," says Flatt. "But real-world constraints will start to take over."

Traditional power plants will play a smaller role as decarbonisation objectives and national mandates require their reduced use. Simultaneously, a robust infrastructure of variable renewables plants will become absolutely crucial. These plants will need to be built over a large geographical area in order to ensure minimal power interruption – if it's a grey, windless day in Dublin, electricity might need to be channeled from as far away as Oslo, for example. This boom in manufacturing will likely lead to stable, long-term job creation – a net positive – but could also mean temporary job losses in other sectors, such as coal.

Another formidable constraint is that green energy is notoriously unreliable. Hydropower requires enough rain to propel a constant supply of flowing water and can wreak havoc on native aquatic species and their ecosystems. Solar photovoltaic panels need clear skies and sunshine to harness photons of light required to generate electricity.

Variable renewables are power generators that depend on the availability of intermittent resources; they therefore require complementary technologies to ensure that the balance between supply and demand is maintained at all times – even during seasonal changes or worst-case scenarios. Limitless green energy would almost certainly give

rise to innovative methods to use and store energy cheaply and efficiently, but creating a permanent surplus of power may not be economical at scale.

"There will be times when we will have more energy than we actually need in particular places," says Richard Green, professor of sustainable energy business at Imperial College Business School in London. "Finding ways to use that extra energy at those times is a great idea, but not predictable enough for people to plan their lives around." As such, traditional modes of power could still be needed in limited supply, so that if we are short of green electricity there's a stopgap measure.

Increasing shares of variable renewable energy mean that power systems will likely become more flexible. Of course, demand needs to be flexible as well. "Either people are paying a subscription – a bit like a phone plan where you get free energy up to a certain amount," explains Green, "or it's a pay-as-you go model." Uber's surge pricing might look comparatively generous. "The price would have to go through the roof part of the year, whenever there is a shortage of wind or sunlight."

The question of green energy demand won't be limited to households, of course, but would extend to businesses and corporations, particularly tech companies – some of the biggest consumers of electricity. Data centres at leading tech giants such as Amazon, Google, Facebook and Microsoft already require dozens of terawatt hours (a unit equal to one billion kilo-watt hours of electricity) a year to keep their servers cool. As the rise of artificial intelligence and machine learning exacts more computing power, that figure will only increase. Private investments could further accelerate new technologies and change the economics for large companies to deploy them.

If corporations make the switch to carbon-neutral energy, however, they will also put indirect pressure on land already scarce from competing uses, urbanisation and industrial development, because more renewables plants will need to be built to satisfy demand. This, in turn, will put added stress on the planet: many renewable energy forms or their manufacturing processes emit greenhouse gases such as CO₂ or methane into the air, because they rely on minerals (cobalt, lithium, and other rare-earth metals) that can currently only be extracted or built with the aid of fossil fuels. Extraction also has significant potential to irreparably destroy native animal and plant life habitats.

In other words, limitless green energy could actually be harmful to the environment in the short-term. Yet renewables ultimately have the power to reduce or reverse our carbon output and eliminate millions of deaths caused by pollution each year, making the decision to switch one of the most pressing issues of our time.

Fusion power, which generates electricity by using heat from nuclear fusion reactions, is one green technology with incredible promise. This energy format would enable power sources we could turn on and off at will, and eliminate the spent fuel and proliferation concerns of nuclear fission. "Fusion is one pathway to clean forms of energy," says Joshua D Rhodes, a systems-level energy engineer at the University of Texas at Austin. "But thus far, no one has been able to create a fusion reaction that is self-sustaining" (one that produces an energy reaction which generates more energy than it consumes).

If cost is no longer a factor, unlimited green energy in the form of fusion might radically transform different sectors, including transportation, aviation, and manufacturing. The switch would also go a long way towards reducing carbon emissions and overall particulate matter. If we clean up supply chains, we might be able to move away from or eliminate energy sources that emit pollutants into the atmosphere.

"There are always going to be industries that will need a fossil-fuel like substance," says Rhodes, "but we don't have to dig them out of the ground: we can make a synthetic fuel." For operations that require a lot of energy in a confined space, liquid fuels with carbon in their makeup can be useful, because they keep systems stable. Long-haul flights, for example, currently need a fossil-fuel like substance. Rather than jet fuel, however, aircraft could run on methane derived from hydrogen and CO₂, or ammonia made from hydrogen and atmospheric nitrogen, both of which could be created using green electricity. Given the sector's climate contribution – aviation is responsible for 2.5% of annual CO₂ emissions – this change alone would be momentous.

Other green technologies such as carbon capture and storage will likely be necessary to achieve overall net zero emissions. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), "Electrification, hydrogen, bio-based feedstocks and substitution, and, in several cases, carbon dioxide capture, utilisation and storage (CCUS), would lead to the deep emissions reductions required in energy-intensive industries to limit warming to 1.5C."

But the IPCC also notes that those options are limited by institutional, economic and technical constraints – meaning a huge fiscal policy push from government would be crucial. "To keep the global temperature rise to below 1.5C, the world needs to get to net-zero carbon emissions between 2050 and 2070," says Rhodes. "Clean energy is necessary, but not sufficient, to meet that goal."

Nations like Costa Rica and Norway have already met many of their ambitious climate targets; other countries lag far behind the 2050 net zero goals needed to keep global warming below the critical 1.5C threshold, set out in the 2015 Paris Agreement. Even in a world of limitless renewables, stabilising the global energy sector will remain out of reach unless individual countries can agree on comprehensive climate change legislation – and do so quickly. Tax credits for the purchase of low-emission cars and appliances, support for the construction of renewable fuel stations and other infrastructure and financial penalties for fossil fuel use could all accelerate the switch.

"The biggest barrier to green energy is not money or even technology; it's government policy," says Flatt. Energy policies can vary even within one nation's jurisdictions, meaning that progress is often slow. Consider that localities must agree to offshore and onshore renewables power sites before green energy demand increases. "Europe has already agreed to derive 20% of its power from offshore wind," says Flatt. "In the United States, however, with its multiple jurisdictions, any state can veto a power line. Getting lawmakers to agree on where power supplies – hydro dams and windmill farms – will be built is essential if we're to fully embrace a green economy."

Finally, a never-ending supply of renewables would not necessarily solve the world's equity problems in the short term. In some places, the ready availability of lighting, heating, refrigeration and transport is a luxury few can afford. Not everyone would have immediate access to green energy even if it were suddenly abundant, while those who do have access might waste it.

"When any commodity gets cheaper, there's a tendency for people to use more," says Green. Likewise, limitless green energy could lead to similarly poor design choices that would spur waste or even shortages during times of scarcity, even as parts of the world continue to do without. "Humans finding ways of dealing with shortages is what has typically driven progress," says Green.

The issue is less about overconsumption, which tends to describe exhaustion of a resource, than growth of consumption because the resource is abundant in the first place. There would be enough of the resource available overall, but this abundance may lead to new problems. This phenomenon has historically characterised other resource cost decreases: when we made food cheap and abundant by learning how to process and manufacture it at scale, we developed an obesity crisis. When we devised ways to produce cheap plastic, the oceans were suddenly choked with our single-use bags and bottles. Could a similar pattern emerge if we make green energy abundantly cheap?

Switching to renewable power worldwide could alleviate our climate change crisis, bringing about new forms of innovation and commerce in the process. That might free up time and labour to devote to leisure and other pursuits. But we need to remain realistic. "This solves some problems," says Flatt, "but it's not a Nirvana."

BUSINESS MIRROR

[Fast-growing solar and wind are still concentrated in a handful of countries](#)

By: Nathaniel Bullar

There is a succinct way to describe the development of the global power sector over the past decade: more of almost everything. More plants under construction; more generation from those plants; more renewables everywhere—but also more coal and gas.

The recently released 2022 Power Transition Trends report by energy research firm BloombergNEF shows signs of profound change underway in the sector.

Wind and solar now make up 11 percent of global power generation. Of the new power-generation capacity added in 2021, solar was 50 percent and wind was 25 percent. At the same time, thanks to economic rebounds from the worst of the Covid-19 pandemic, last year also saw an unprecedented spike in coal-fired power generation. It was up 750 terawatt-hours from 2020—a very big number, in between the annual power consumption of Brazil and Japan, the world's 6th- and 5th-biggest national electricity consumers. The power sector's carbon dioxide emissions also rose 7 percent year-on-year.

Geographical concentration

A DEEPER dive into the report data reveals some other important dynamics at work. The first is that the development and construction of new power-generation assets is quite concentrated geographically. A small number of markets account for the vast majority of new capacity.

Wind is the most highly concentrated. From 2012 to 2021, the top 10 markets for wind power accounted for 89 percent of all new capacity installed in that time. Solar is only slightly more diffuse, with the top 10 markets in the same period getting 85 percent of all installations. China, the US, Japan and India were the biggest solar markets during that time; China, the US, India and Germany were the biggest for wind.

And then there is coal. Just two markets—China and India—made up a combined 78 percent of all new coal-fired power generation capacity in the past 10 years. China on its own had 62 percent of total installations, with 414 gigawatts (GW). India is the only other market with even 100 GW installed. Vietnam and Indonesia, which each had 21 GW built from 2012 to 2021, run a very distant third.

Another way to look at trends is by the number of countries where assets are being developed at commercial volume (which BloombergNEF classifies as greater than 1 megawatt of construction in a year).

In 2012, more countries were adding hydroelectricity than either solar or wind at commercial scale. Almost 70 countries built hydro in 2012; 55 built solar; and 48 built wind. Ten years on, hydro has shrunk to 47 countries; solar has more than doubled to 112, and wind is more or less the same, now being built in 53 countries.

Shrinking market for fossil-fueled tech

MARKET activity for the three fossil fuel-fired technologies—oil, natural gas and coal—is shrinking. In 2012, there were almost 70 countries building oil-fired power, more than 60 adding gas, and 24 building coal. A decade later, oil-fired power expansion shrank to 30 countries, gas-fired power to 42 and coal-fired power to just 15. Coal is a global climate problem; its expansion is also concentrated in a very few places.

One trend worth noting relates to solar's total market expansion. While development of projects is still highly concentrated, solar generation—the power produced by what has already been built—is becoming less so over time. In 2012, 10 countries generated 90 percent of all solar power, whereas last year, it was 80 percent.

This is certainly a good thing for solar power and the countries building it. Diversifying markets, with a wider distribution of local benefits such as reduced emissions and a buffer against variable fuel costs, is a solar feature.

It is also worth exploring why the number of active wind markets has expanded little since 2012. One reason is simply a matter of methodology. A 1-megawatt (MW) solar project—the threshold to be included in this BNEF report—has thousands of individual panels but is quite small. A single megawatt can be deployed on a roof, a fallow field or a small island.

Conversely, for wind, there basically is no such thing as a 1-MW project using today's utility-scale turbines. One megawatt is a fraction of the capacity of a single turbine, with some new offshore ones under development having as much as 14 MW of capacity. To put it another way, solar scales downward in a handy way for reaching small markets; wind scales up to reach big ones.

Given their different scales, it is a testament to wind power that it continues to create new markets. That means it is competitive on cost in more and more places, and also that the industrial expertise needed for its heavy engineering is diffusing as well.

As for solar, it just keeps on going: more markets, at greater scale. This year, solar installations are likely to hit 250 gigawatts and add a quarter to all capacity installed to date.

BUSINESS WORLD

Germany working to expand PHL environment tech, RE footprint

By: Alyssa Nicole Tan

Germany is encouraging business delegations to explore Philippine partnerships in renewable energy (RE) and environmental technology, the German Embassy in Manila said. In an e-mail, the embassy said other industries it deems promising for collaboration are consumer-related services and goods, and business process outsourcing.

It said its approach is to connect small and medium enterprises from both countries via the German-Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (GPCCI), noting that such companies make up 99.4% of Germany's economy. The corresponding number for the Philippines is 99%.

A virtual business initiation trip will take place in November on civil security technologies, organized by the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action.

In March 2023, GPCCI will organize another business initiation trip on energy efficiency in buildings, including Photovoltaic hybrid and storage systems.

The first physical business initiation trip took place in late September, focused on recycling and waste management.

“We (conceive of) our role as a door opener, someone who makes the introductions to help companies settle on either side — either in Philippines or in Germany — and help them navigate this process. But in the end, it's up to these companies to build partnerships and develop them,” the embassy's First Secretary Kai Tomzig has said.

“Apart from these visits, both the embassy and GPCCI receive requests by German companies that are interested in the Philippines as a market and potential place for investment on a daily basis,” the Embassy said.

Other than strengthening small and medium enterprises and the industrial sector, the embassy's economic priorities include enhancing post-pandemic recovery, boosting of new investments, shaping digitization, supporting innovative startups and advocating for renewable energy and energy transition.

“The Philippines are a promising market in the Asian-Pacific region,” the Embassy said. “German companies wish to invest in the Philippines for various reasons, including good business opportunities, attractive labor conditions, supplier diversification and other reasons.”

The embassy said it also expected more intensified collaboration in the fields of education and energy, noting that investing in renewable energies will help reduce the cost of energy production, as well as the effects of global warming on the planet.

It welcomed the Philippine government's decision to lower investment barriers for foreign companies.

"Being the largest trading partner of the Philippines among the European Union member states, this might open up new avenues for the business sector in Germany," it said.

The main fields of cooperation between the Philippines and Germany include climate and renewable energy, the peace process in Mindanao, the health sector, and human rights and the rule of law.

CNN PHILIPPINES

[Ecologically destructive projects, attacks continued in Marcos' first 100 days — groups](#)

By: Jelo Ritzhie Mantaring

Metro Manila (CNN Philippines, October 9) — President Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr. has assured that climate change is on top of the national agenda, but environmental groups said “ecologically destructive projects and attacks against environment defenders” have continued in the past three months.

In a joint statement released on Sunday, the Center for Environmental Concerns-Philippines, Kalikasan People’s Network for the Environment, Youth Advocates for Climate Action Philippines, and 350 Pilipinas said repression continued to hamper efforts to stop ecologically destructive projects and reclamation operations.

They cited the arrest of two Lumad youth protesting issues related to their ancestral lands in Davao City during Marcos’ first State of the Nation Address.

They also reported that forest clearing operations related to the Ahunan Hydropower Project have been carried out despite the lack of appropriate permits.

“We...urge our fellow Filipinos to continue to resist the ‘greenwashing’ rhetoric of the Marcos Jr. administration as we approach its first 100 days of office. Despite progressive language in President Marcos Jr.’s recent speeches, ecologically destructive projects and attacks against environment defenders have unfortunately continued in the past three months,” they said.

“As we reach 100 days of the Marcos Jr. administration, we must continue to push for stronger commitments to environmental conservation and action in the face of our climate and ecological crisis,” they added.

According to scholars, greenwashing is a deliberate corporate action to mislead consumers through positive communication and deflection of attention to the company’s poor environmental performance.

There were four speeches where Marcos talked about the importance of climate action and assured that it was on top of the national agenda.

In his inaugural address last June 30, Marcos noted how the Philippines is at the highest risk for climate change despite having a very small carbon footprint. He said he will look to “partners and friends” to help the country in this situation.

In his first SONA last July 25, he stressed the importance of technology that provides more accurate weather forecasts and disaster impacts. He also said his administration

would prioritize renewable energy and reiterated his position to build nuclear power plants in the country.

At the United Nations General Assembly last Sept. 20, Marcos urged developed nations to do their obligations in solving climate change, which he deemed the “greatest threat” affecting the survival of the global community. He also said he is looking forward to hearing concrete outcomes in the Conference of Parties in Egypt in November.

During the Department of Environment and Natural Resources’ (DENR) multi-stakeholder forum last Oct. 5, the President encouraged over 200 industry and sector leaders to identify shared challenges and gather information to include in DENR’s policy agenda. He said a strategic direction must be laid down to maximize the use of the country’s natural wealth for inclusive and sustainable growth.

He also appointed Ma. Antonia “Toni” Yulo-Loyzaga as the Environment Secretary, which was welcomed by environmental groups.

“It was good that he appointed a climate advocate, Maria Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga, as secretary of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, but she would still need a clear directive from the President,” said Greenpeace Philippines country director Lea Guerrero on Thursday.

“While there was an increase in climate-related expenditure for national government institutions, this is actually merely an exercise in budget tagging, rather than climate action planning,” Guerrero added, noting that there was a decrease in the budget of climate-related implementing agencies, particularly the Climate Change Commission, on which Marcos serves as chairperson.

For its part, the DENR is planning to create a natural resources geospatial database, a new experts’ advisory council, and conduct an organizational review to transform itself to “one that is fit for its complex purposes,” Loyzaga said.

“The forum has underscored that inclusive science-based, risk-informed, and equitable policies and programs are integral to the kind of nexus governance we need,” she said during the DENR multi-stakeholder forum.

Greenpeace, on the other hand, called on Marcos to ensure coherent plans for long-term vulnerabilities, recovery, energy transition, and policy implementation as well as direct businesses to comply with the obligations in the Paris Agreement and uphold democracy and human rights.

NIKKEI ASIA

[Asics develops sneakers with world's smallest carbon footprint](#)

By: Rimi Inomata and Yuya Takasahi

Tokyo -- Japanese sports gear maker Asics has developed sneakers whose carbon footprint is less than half that of those formerly considered the low-emissions record holder.

The new sneakers emit 1.95 kilograms of carbon dioxide during their lifetime, from production to use to disposal, because plant-based materials are used for the insoles and cushioning. Having a lower environmental burden is becoming a factor for winning against the competition in the apparel industry.

Asics attributes its success in reducing carbon emissions to joint research with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology that began in 2010.

The previous world's most eco-friendly sneakers emit 4.3 kg of greenhouse gases, according to Asics, and the most eco-friendly running shoes emit 2.9 kg. The carbon footprint of the company's new product is over 30% lower than even that.

President Yasuhito Hirota said, "a healthy environment of the Earth is needed for wholesome body and spirit."

The maker plans to launch the Gel-Lyte 3 cm 1.95 shoes in 2023 with a price tag of "around \$150."

The shoes' main features are the shock-absorbing midsole and insole, for which Asics has achieved carbon negativity -- removing more carbon from the environment than they emit.

The shock-absorbing parts are made with bio-based polymers that Japanese chemical maker Kuraray has developed from sugar cane and other plants. The amount of carbon dioxide absorbed by the plants is, according to Asics, larger than the amount emitted during the sneakers' production process.

The sneakers use yarn colored by the solution dye technique, which uses less water. Some of the fabrics are made with recycled polyester.

Asics discloses emissions of carbon dioxide at the stages of production, transportation, use and disposal. Nearly 70% of emissions come from the production stage, including the procurement of materials. The amount for the new shoes is said to be down 80% from the average for the company's other products.

Asics has set a goal of achieving carbon neutrality by 2050. Hirota said the new sneakers are "just the beginning," and the know-how that went into developing them "will be adopted to all other items."

International shoemakers are pursuing emission cuts and announcing how much they have achieved.

U.S. maker Allbirds also releases emissions data for each of its products. It has teamed up with Adidas of Germany to develop the Adizero x Allbirds 2.94 kg CO₂e running shoes, whose carbon footprint per pair is 2.94 kg. U.S. sports gear giant Nike is collaborating with an American biotech company to utilize eco-friendly materials derived from marine microbes.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

[Bankrolling the green economy](#)

By: Tyrone Jasper C. Paid

As climate change continues to rear its ugly head, a drastic shift in championing sustainability measures has been observed in multiple sectors. Increasingly crucial to this fight is the financial industry, which has been making strides to influence the shift to green economy.

International Finance Corp. (IFC) has been doing its part to enable financial institutions to do so. Most recently, the World Bank's private sector arm launched the "30 by 30 Zero" program, whose goal is to provide financial support to accelerate the financial industry's integration of green financing into their investment plans as a way to cut greenhouse gas emissions.

The program, jointly developed by IFC and the World Bank, is funded by the German government's International Climate Initiative. It enjoins government regulators, international finance institutions and commercial banks, among others, in ramping up the promotion of a low-carbon economy.

"The goal is to work with financial institutions to strengthen their role as aggregators of climate financing by growing their climate-related lending to 30 percent of total portfolio (on average) with near zero coal exposure by 2030," IFC explains.

In line with this, IFC has teamed up with local microfinance institution Card SME Bank to extend funding for "climate-smart" agricultural solutions that will benefit over 3,000 farmers across the country.

The thrift bank, which has a growing presence in the Calabarzon (Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal and Quezon) region, is set to start the financing program this October.

Apart from the Philippines, the program also rolled out in Egypt, South Africa and Mexico.

Inclusive growth

China Bank chief sustainability officer William Wayne Quesang, in an interview with the Inquirer, says financing the agricultural sector will help in promoting inclusive growth and rural development.

In the long run, he points out that extending credit to farmers and rural entrepreneurs will "lift more people out of poverty."

“The partnership would help bring [credit] to the grassroots level, especially in the rural areas,” Michael Ricafort, chief economist at Rizal Commercial Banking Corp., tells the Inquirer.

Ricafort explains, “This would help accelerate the pace and send a stronger message to put into the business mainstream adoption of green financing, in view of increased adoption of ESG (environmental, social and governance) standards in investment decisions.”

Indeed, financing can move the needle for the green initiatives, but there is more that IFC is set to offer.

“While any kind of support is welcome, IFC’s financial support usually comes with a technical advisory as part of the package, which is very much needed especially for financial institutions that may not have a dedicated team of experts in a specific field,” Quesang says.

“For example, while there are opportunities in renewable energy such as solar power, not all banks have the resources to dedicate a team of experts in solar power, and thus may benefit from the technical advisory from IFC as part of its support in providing green financing,” he adds.

IFC is also set to provide scholarships along with Berlin-based Renewables Academy as a capacity-building opportunity for financial institutions intending to go into green energy and climate finance.

Prior to this, the World Bank Group member also previously launched in 2021 the “Scaling Up Climate Finance through the Financial Sector” program in the Philippines, Egypt, Mexico and South Africa. This aims to reduce their exposure to financing coal projects, in line with the Paris Climate Agreement.

The Washington-based institution earlier said that banks should ramp up climate financing to 30 percent of their portfolio in the next 10 years in order to support renewable energy, energy efficiency, green buildings and sustainable transport infrastructure.

‘Green’ and ‘blue’ bonds

IFC, in a recent report, notes that the Philippines and three other emerging markets across East Asia and the Pacific region will gain \$5.1 trillion in fresh investments should they incorporate green initiatives as part of their recovery plan from the pandemic.

Meanwhile, IFC has been aiding the growth of the climate-themed bond market in the country through its investments.

In 2017, for example, IFC extended \$150 million to BDO Unibank Inc. for its first “green” bond issuance. It also supported the bank’s “blue” bond offer earlier this year, which sought to raise funds to address marine pollution and preserve clean water resources.

BDO aims to reduce “coal exposure by 50 percent by 2033, while ensuring that its coal exposure does not exceed 2 percent of its total loan portfolio by 2033.”

“The BDO Energy Transition Finance Statement is the bank’s holistic and realistic approach on the energy transition that considers the bank’s economic, environmental and social impact, anchored on good governance,” says Federico Tancongco, senior vice president and head of compliance group at the Sy-led bank.

“We want to make our intentions very clear in taking steps to lower greenhouse emissions,” he stresses.

In addition, BDO is committed to providing capital that enables clients to invest in technologies aimed at reducing carbon emissions.

“We see the social impact of the energy transition as equally important, if not more critical, as the economic and environmental impact, if we are to achieve a truly just and equitable transition in the Philippines,” Tancongco says.

China Banking Corp., which is also part of the Sy-led SM group, raised \$150 million in 2018 from its first green bond offering, with IFC as the sole investor.

Rizal Commercial Banking Corp. earlier this year announced its goal of fully eliminating exposure to coal-fired power plants by 2031 as part of its sustainability efforts. To recall, the Yuchengco-led lender had committed back in December 2020 to halt financing for new coal projects.

Bank of the Philippine Islands, meanwhile, has set sights on unwinding its coal financing facility by 2033. This was an accelerated timeline from the original commitment of halving its coal financing by 2026 and full eradication by 2037.

Jean-Marc Arbogast, IFC country manager for the Philippines, recognizes the need for the private sector to step in.

“Achieving the country’s climate targets requires massive financing, which cannot be met by the public sector alone. Private financing is therefore crucial,” Arbogast stresses.

“The financial sector, especially commercial banks, can play a key role in greening the economy by addressing climate-related risks, promoting sustainable development, and decarbonizing industries through financing,” he adds.

China Bank's Quesang underscores that banks have an influence over the development of the green economy.

"For example, banks may decide not to lend to certain sectors that contribute harm to the environment or society, causing the cost of borrowing for that sector to increase and effectively not financially viable in the long run," he says.

But Quesang advises banks to ensure that their efforts in funding sustainability projects would not be tagged as "greenwashing" or the act of appearing as environment advocates even though they are not in reality.

He says this can taint a financial institution's reputation, leading to loss of investor confidence.

"It is therefore encouraged that each bond issued for sustainability be assessed by a third party and be very transparent and clear in terms of impact," Quesang explains.

[Opinion] Climate agenda

It took only six hours for last month's Typhoon Karding to develop into a supertyphoon — showing how storms have become unpredictable due to climate change. Those who were in its path were not exactly unprepared — previous typhoons have taught them hard lessons — but they were still caught off guard by its intensity. This situation will prevail, with even worse consequences, if the government continues to romanticize Filipino resilience instead of being accountable — and this is as worse as denying that climate change exists.

Last Oct. 5, President Marcos Jr. assured that the country's resiliency and adaptation to the new normals of climate change, which he called the world's "first truly global crisis," are on top of his administration's national agenda. This policy direction, however, will remain as mere rhetoric unless matched by tangible programs aimed at not only mitigating the impact of disasters on Filipinos, but equipping them with more knowledge and options to avoid death and damage to property. These could include livelihood initiatives that are insulated from extreme weather events, and better infrastructure in the form of public housing and permanent evacuation centers across the country.

Based on the World Risk Index 2022, the Philippines ranks as the most disaster-prone country in the world, with an index score of 46.82. Each Filipino will have their own disaster story to tell, whether they live in rural or urban areas. Sixty-two percent of the population live in coastal areas, including major cities, where they are likely to experience the full wrath of typhoons. And even those who are not in the coastal zones may be living along fault lines instead, or in areas where human activities such as logging and mining pose risks to their lives.

Ironically, in a survey conducted by Pulse Asia last month, only 9 percent of the respondents believed that "stopping the destruction and abuse of our environment" was an urgent national issue. Understandably, controlling inflation (66 percent), increasing workers' pay (44 percent), creating more jobs (35 percent), reducing poverty (34 percent), and fighting graft and corruption (22 percent) are gut issues that need urgent attention from the government, but environmental issues are part of the chain that impacts Filipinos' lives, their livelihood, and food security.

Aside from stronger typhoons, climate change is expected to bring higher sea levels and storm surges, the main cause of deaths for thousands during Supertyphoon Yolanda in 2013. These climate-related impacts will affect the farming and fishing industries, and reduce the productivity of farmers and fisherfolk impacting the availability and cost of food — which, in fact, is already happening.

Aside from the President, his predecessors have also committed to combating climate change. So have world leaders. But as Foreign Affairs pointed out in an article published in October last year, decarbonization — the central goal of climate policies — has remained unchanged despite international agreements over the last three decades.

It cited three reasons why: lack of incentive to decarbonize, inadequate investment in low-carbon technologies, and the expectation that other countries will act first.

In 2009, the Philippines passed Republic Act No. 9729, or the Climate Change Act, which requires local government units (LGUs) to develop their own local climate change action plan (LCCAP). Government data show that 1,394 out of 1,700 LGUs already have LCCAPs as of 2021. This is an impressive increase from only 137 LGUs in 2015, and hopefully indicates that progress is being made on the local front.

On the national level, however, the government must address the issue of reliance on fossil fuels to generate power and machinery for the transportation and manufacturing industries. World Bank has noted that while the country is a minor contributor to greenhouse gas emissions, it ranks in the top 25 percent among low- and middle-income countries; emissions from the energy sector are projected to quadruple by 2030, making it even more unlikely for the Philippines to meet its commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 75 percent by then.

The President vowed that his administration's climate initiatives will be "smarter, more responsible, more sustainable." He can start by seeing to it that existing environment-related laws — on forestation, mining, waste management, clean water, clean air, wildlife conservation, etc. — are properly implemented to help the country do its part for the planet. Because if there is one catastrophe that must be avoided, it is a climate policy failure.

Why bleeding PH firms won't go green

By: Alden M. Monzon

Still steeped in the mires of the COVID-19 pandemic, most businesses are setting aside going green to focus on recovery. Sustainability, after all, can not yet be sustained.

According to the 2022 edition of a joint survey published by the PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) Philippines and the Management Association of the Philippines (MAP), only 30 percent of the chief executive officers (CEOs) surveyed have incorporated environmental, social and governance (ESG) into their business plans.

ESG offers a framework for businesses to manage risks and opportunities. It is a broad term that ranges from health and safety issues to pollution reduction and other philanthropic programs.

Of the 119 CEOs surveyed from mid-July to August, only 47 percent said climate and environmental damage were factors they consider in strategic risk management

It is a slight improvement from last year's 43 percent, but both figures showed that majority of top business leaders—whose decisions dictate and influence company policies and directions—are still not onboard with the idea.

Survival

“Many MSMEs (micro, small and medium companies) are still of the mind that they need to be viable before they can be sustainable,” PwC Philippines chair emeritus Alex Cabrera explains.

Mary Jade Roxas-Divinagracia, a managing partner at the firm, is of the same mind, adding that priorities have been “distorted” since the COVID-19 outbreak, illustrating the deep cuts suffered by multiple industries.

“In the last two years, most of the companies have been focused on merely surviving ... trying to be feasible and viable first before thinking of sustainability,” she says.

In the same report, 35 percent stated their companies have yet to recover from the pandemic. Only 21 percent said they were back to prepandemic levels.

Still, 38 percent said they were significantly higher than where they were when the pandemic hit in 2020.

Cabrera says this scenario can be viewed with a ‘glass half-full’ point of view, noting that a third of the surveyed CEOs reflects just the beginning of an ongoing “journey” to incorporate ESG into business plans.

“The 30 percent to me is not such a bad start. I really believe that the 70 percent will soon catch up, not because of legal compulsion but because of necessity,” he says.

But there is more to the survey than meets the eye, according to Roxas-Divinagracia.

Not polluters?

“A significant part of those who said that they did not have (such policies) claim that they did not produce meaningful amounts of greenhouse gas emissions; that’s why there’s no need for them to do so,” she says.

A third of the CEOs who said they do have any ESG commitment reasoned that their respective sectors do not have any established and well-defined decarbonization approach, she adds.

She says the other third mentioned they do not have the capabilities to measure their emissions, highlighting the need to consult sustainability specialists—but which can still prove costly to some.

“Even at the firm level, we’ve noticed the lack of experience and capable resources in that area. So hopefully we are able to build that capacity as well,” she says.

According to the same study, only 43 percent of surveyed CEOs said “yes” when asked if they are measuring and reporting the financial impact of their sustainable practices.

Climate change laws

The Philippines has at least eight national laws related to mitigating climate change, each offering guidelines in varying degrees. Five of these are industry-specific, but could still be considered as broad enough.

The most notable is Republic Act No. 9729, also known as the “Climate Change Act of 2009,” which incorporates climate change strategies into government policy formulations.

Pursuant to the law, the commission is headed by the president of the country as well as three appointed commissioners.

Depending on who you ask, the broadness of the laws can either be good or bad, resting on the prevailing culture of the mainstream businesses in the country.

The more sector-specific laws include the Philippine Clean Air Act of 1999 (RA 8749), the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000 (RA 9003), the Clean Water Act of 2004 (RA 9275), the Renewable Energy Act of 2008 (RA 9513), and the Extended Producer Responsibility Act of 2022 (RA 11898).

ATR Asset Management head of macro and sustainability research Jose Mari Lacson says the Philippines currently lacks a comprehensive data collection and measurement system that can gauge the effectiveness of local laws and track the progress of local businesses objectively.

“Data [gathering] is the first step toward building sustainability into business. Nobody really collects the data so it can be understood properly,” Lacson says.

“The simplest one would be on emissions, which is one of the primary indicators for greenhouse gas and climate change. If we want to effect change in the way we do things, then you need to understand how emissions are coming from the electric (sector) or from transport and logistics,” he adds.

Snapshot

The Philippine automotive market can offer a glimpse of the green movement in the country.

Rommel Gutierrez, president of the Chamber of Automotive Manufacturers of the Philippines, Inc., says the market for “cleaner” vehicles is expanding, albeit at a slow pace.

Data from the auto industry association shows that electric vehicles, including hybrid electric vehicles, plug-in hybrid electric vehicles and battery electric vehicles are gaining a lot of ground in terms of sales.

“Over the past years, we have seen increasing numbers of buyers of hybrid vehicles. Some buy pure electric (vehicles). But right now, it’s really more of the hybrid (vehicles) that are being sold on the market,” Gutierrez tells the Inquirer.

Electric vehicles went from having a 0.02-percent (86 vehicle units) share to total sales in 2019 to a 0.31-percent (810 units) share in 2021.

Sales are projected to reach a 1.68-percent (2,246 units) share by the end of 2022, displaying the potentially exponential growth in patronage of more environment-friendly automobiles.

“There’s a growing number of people who are more environmentally conscious. Pero hindi pa lahat (But it’s not 100 percent yet),” Gutierrez said.

MAP conference committee vice chair Alma Jimenez says the market will be the “biggest push-pull factor” in the adoption of these sustainable practices, highlighting the driving power of ordinary consumers.

“Once the market is affected, surely, I think, businesses will react,” she says. INQ

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

Samal-Davao bridge project includes environmental protection

By: Che Palicte

Samal City, Davao del Norte – The Samal Island – Davao City Connector (SIDC) bridge construction would push through as planned amid the suggestion of a resort owner for a deviation in the project.

Speaking on behalf of the family, Pura Rodriguez, said in a previous interview that they asked for an alternative landing site in the Island Garden City of Samal as it would damage 300 meters of the Paradise Reef, which they have preserved for almost a century.

Davao del Norte Governor Edwin Jubahib said Saturday some members of the family went with him to the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) in Manila on October 3 to discuss the issue.

“It was explained that the construction includes the protection of the corals and there is no reason for resistance. Let us consider the millions of people who clamor for this project to materialize,” he said during a public consultation.

National Economic and Development Authority Secretary Arsenio Balisacan and officials of the provincial and local governments here met with various stakeholders over the weekend to discuss the concerns about the PHP23-billion four-lane bridge that is targeted for completion in 2027.

Forty-three out of 46 village leaders gave their full support for the project.

Jubahib told the village leaders that the realization of the bridge would boost the economy and tourism of the island.

“Investors would come in and one more thing that we consider is we can transport our residents to big hospitals in Davao City should they need immediate hospital care,” he added.

Joey Tulaylay, Department of Public Works and Highways-Davao (DPWH-11) engineer and SIDC program manager, said the notice to proceed was approved on September 1.

“We assure you that no coral will be affected during the construction phase,” he said.

DPWH has previously allayed fears that the SIDC will have an adverse effect on marine life and affect the mountainous terrain of Samal.

"Part of the requirement complied with before the issuance of the Environmental Compliance Certificate was the creation of the Multipartite Monitoring Team and the

establishment of Environmental Monitoring Fund and Environmental Guarantee Fund,” the DPWH said in a previous statement.

Tulaylay said a land survey and geotechnical investigation using the boring machine are ongoing, along with detailed engineering design activities.

The project has all the necessary permits and requirements from concerned local government units and national government agencies, he added.

THE MANILA TIMES

[Biodiversity, reforestation build up resilience to climate change](#)

By: Bella Cariaso

President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. underscored his administration's thrust to preserve the country's forests when he led a simultaneous bamboo and tree planting activity on his 65th birthday last September 13.

More than 130,000 bamboo culms and native tree seedlings were planted in 111 sites covering an aggregate area of 681.5 hectares. The indigenous tree seedlings included agohe, kalumpit, yakal, molave, narra, bignai and banaba.

For the President, expanding the forest cover and reinforcing forest protection is part of the overall strategy to boost the country's resilience to natural disasters.

He led the kickoff ceremonies at an old sanitary landfill that was being rehabilitated by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in Barangay Pintong Bocaue in San Mateo, Rizal. The landfill was shut down in November 1989.

Planted at the site were 1,613 seedlings, including various species of bamboo and fruit trees.

The event coincided with the celebration of Philippine Bamboo Month.

Environment Secretary Maria Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga said the nationwide tree planting symbolized the Marcos administration's commitment to address climate change, mitigate its effects, and alleviate the risk of vulnerable communities and ecosystems.

Environment Undersecretary Annaliza Teh said that for 2023, at least P2.4 billion was allocated for the National Greening Program.

Under the enhanced greening program, the government targets at least 11,631 hectares of plantation.

"This will include 11,000 hectares for new plantations, and the rest we will focus on the protection and maintenance of the existing reforested areas that we have undertaken in the past years. The National Greening Program is under the forest development, rehabilitation, maintenance and protection [initiative]," Teh said.

The government's greening program started in 2011 and has since covered at least 98,480 hectares with 112.5 million seedlings.

For local wildlife

Planting native trees ensures food and shelter for local wildlife. Insects, birds and small mammals are dependent on the shelter and food sources that trees provide, the DENR said.

Native trees also have a better chance of survival because they have adapted to the environment where they naturally grow. They benefit the local ecosystem and have a better chance for a long and healthy life.

The DENR named among its priorities the conservation of protected areas covering at least 7.79 million hectares.

It said that from 2010 to 2020, the country's forest cover has increased to 5.65 percent totaling 7,226,394 hectares and mangrove forests to 311,400 ha.

Pacific Rim Conservation Executive Director and Haribon Foundation member Lindsay Young said the Philippines is one of the worlds' megadiverse countries.

"There are few islands in the world considered as megadiverse. Despite a relatively small size, the Philippines has the fifth largest coastline in the world, primarily because it has a lot of islands," Young said.

There are also many native land mammals in the Philippines, she added.

"If you look at Palawan, same thing with southern Mindanao, there are migratory pathways for mammals. Palawan did not ever really connect with the northern part, specifically with Luzon Island, so there are unique biographic regions that have a really high rate of endemism, things that are found nowhere else in the world, allowing them to evolve in isolation," Young said.

The country also teems with unique plants and animals.

"The things that make them unique usually make them vulnerable because they have unique niches, and those niches [are destroyed] through habitat loss, and the extinction rate is much higher," she said.

Young said that foreign species are harmful because they threaten the native species.

"If new things arrive, usually one thing must go extinct because it will fill a niche that has already been filled. So these new species compete with the native ones that are there and cause that species to go extinct. That is why invasive species, particularly those that are brought by humans, are such a problem, particularly in the island system," Young said.

She underscored the need to stop the wildlife trade to prevent the spread of more diseases from animals.

"The clear link is the wildlife trade. Reducing the supply outside the demand for wildlife products and not keeping wildlife animals in extremely crowded condition reduce the chances that you are going to have viruses hopping from animals to people," Young said.

Toward a sustainable future in the energy sector

By: Tony Maghirang

Concerted efforts toward a sustainable future continue to generate significant strides as people and organizations become truly aware of its importance. Nowadays, for instance, more and more companies are joining the sustainability movement, heeding the call to embrace net zero. According to the United Nations, net zero means cutting greenhouse gas emissions to as close to zero as possible.

ACEN is among the companies that commit to achieving net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. The listed energy platform of the Ayala Group, ACEN has 4,000 MW of attributable capacity in the Philippines, Vietnam, Indonesia, India and Australia. The company's renewable capacity share is at 87 percent, which is among the highest in the region. Most recently, ACEN announced its new target of 20 GW of attributable renewables capacity by 2030.

ACEN's environment-friendly initiative is built on three foundations — climate change, biodiversity, and resource efficiency. The energy company understands that its green journey should start from within the enterprise by ensuring that the necessary technology and infrastructure are available to improve their processes. That is why ACEN aims to lead the charge by adopting appropriate technologies in the renewables revolution.

In aiming for the leadership goal, ACEN implemented SAP S/4HANA on Azure to create a unified digital business platform covering finance, procurement, inventory and asset maintenance across multiple entities. SAP S/4HANA enabled the company to have visibility across its entities. This is crucial since ACEN teams must collaborate to formulate and execute strategic ways to increase solar and wind plant capacities while reducing inefficiencies and wastages.

In addition, from the usual 12 days of standard financial statements completion, ACEN was able to finish it in a week. There was a notable decrease in the error rate for audit adjustments from 8 percent to less than 5 percent. And within one year, ACEN successfully utilized SAP S/4 HANA in 15 entities.

According to Delaware Managed Services and IT Consulting Inc., ACEN established an impactful work for its shareholders, employees, and society. The Ayala energy platform embarked on a greenfield implementation of S/4HANA for the Financials, Materials Management, and Plant Maintenance modules. Phase 1 focused on establishing a golden template while Phase 2 was a template rollout to 11 entities, focusing on renewable solar and wind plants. From 2022 onwards, 25 more companies will follow suit.

ACEN embarked on a mission to achieve efficiency in day-to-day operations with streamlined processes on a digital platform. Core objectives include improved corporate governance, reduced cybersecurity risks, and minimum paper wastage. In addition,

learning new skill sets with SAP S/4HANA contributed to employee empowerment in the workplace.

For its green efforts, ACEN was a finalist in SAP's "Best Run Awards 2021 for SEA: Making the World Run Better" and among the finalists for the "Sustainability Award — The Future Maker," a new category in the SAP Best Run Awards. SAP continues to celebrate businesses and individuals that lead the way by recognizing the enterprises in SEA that are driving their organizations purposefully toward sustainability to preserve the environment for future generations.

SAP's strategy is to help every business run as an intelligent enterprise. As a market leader in enterprise application software, it helps companies of all sizes and in all industries run at their best: SAP customers generate 87 percent of total global commerce.

Understanding extreme weather events

By Arlie O. Calalo

AS the Earth gets hotter, frequent and more intense weather events have unfolded around the world.

Extreme weather events are considered by the United States' National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine as those that produce unusually high or low levels of rain or snow, temperature, wind or other effects.

The collective said that global warming had contributed to the intensity of heat waves by increasing the chances of very hot days and nights. Warming air also boosts evaporation, which can worsen droughts.

Global warming increases water vapor in the atmosphere, which can lead to more frequent heavy rain and snowstorms. It also causes sea levels to rise.

That rise, along with more rainfall, can result in destructive flooding. And while global warming is likely making hurricanes more intense, scientists don't know yet if it increases the number of hurricanes each year.

The effect of global warming on the frequency, intensity, size and speed of hurricanes remains a subject of scientific research.

The Philippines, which is lashed by at least 20 typhoons a year, has seen its share of extreme weather events.

The most recent storm to have pounded Luzon — "Karding" ("Noru") — is in this category, having gained intensity so fast that it became a super typhoon in just six hours.

Weather-related extreme events are often short-lived and include heat waves, heavy downpours, tornadoes, tropical cyclones and floods, Science and Technology Secretary Renato Solidum Jr. said.

The former chief of the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) said that these extreme events either persist longer or emerge from an accumulation of weather or climate events.

Situated between the South China Sea and the Western Pacific Ocean, the Philippines is more prone to typhoons and storm surges than some countries.

One of the world's most disaster-prone nations, the Philippines is located along the boundary of major tectonic plates and at the center of a typhoon belt. Its islands are

regularly hit by floods, typhoons, landslides, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions and droughts.

Typhoons are the most common disasters in the country, followed by earthquakes and volcanoes.

"The climate change that is happening now is attributed to the rapid increase in the concentration of greenhouse gases (GHGs) in the atmosphere. Future climate change conditions are therefore projected based on different possible scenarios or changes in GHG concentrations that are influenced by the level of mitigation that humans could implement," Solidum said.

"Extreme heat is a definite threat to people living in warm countries, which is those along the equator and within the tropics, which includes the Philippines. Sea level rise is also a threatening issue for coastal communities and requires a lot of attention, especially for an archipelagic country such as ours," he added.

The National Capital Region is one of several areas often hit by floods. Other areas most prone to floods are the Bicol Region, particularly the province of Camarines Sur; Agusan del Sur; Surigao del Sur; and the cities of Manila, Mandaluyong, Makati, Marikina, Caloocan, Malabon, Navotas and Valenzuela.

The National Academies said that understanding global warming's impacts on extreme weather is important because it can help inform choices about managing risks.

For example, if a community knows that increased rainfall from global warming had turned what was previously a "500-year flood" into a "100-year flood" (more accurately, a flood with a 1-in-500 chance of happening each year now having a 1-in-100 chance), it may make different choices about how to manage land, what and where people can build, or whether to build a flood wall.

It said that extreme weather events were influenced by many factors in addition to global warming, including seasonal and natural climate patterns such as the El Niño or La Niña.

Waking up to the climate threat

By: Ben Kritz

Extreme weather events throughout 2021 and 2022 have sharpened the focus of world policymakers on the need to address climate change more aggressively, something that — perhaps understandably — took a back seat to public health and economic crises brought on by the Covid-19 pandemic.

But while actions such as the passage of a sweeping climate bill in the United States and record-high funding for vulnerable countries' climate change mitigation and adaptation needs are encouraging, there is a great deal of concern that not enough is being done fast enough to prevent a global climate catastrophe.

Current conditions

Ahead of the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's 6th Assessment Report that will be published later this year or early next year, the most recent comprehensive update on the condition of Earth's climate was the 2021 State of the Climate report, published in August by the Bulletin of the American Meteorological Society. The annual report, which is led by scientists from the United States' National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), collates research and observational data from more than 530 scientists in 60 countries as well as data collected by thousands of environmental monitoring stations on land, sea, the polar regions, and aboard satellites.

The report paints a rather alarming picture. The concentrations of the two most dangerous greenhouse gases, carbon dioxide (CO₂) and methane, reached their highest levels in 2021. CO₂ levels hit 414.7 parts per million, not only the highest since modern measurements began but also the highest in at least the past one million years based on paleoclimatic records. Methane concentrations of 18 parts per billion were also the highest ever recorded and the report noted that this had increased at a faster rate every year since 2014.

The warming trend also continued at a rapid pace last year, with annual global surface temperatures ranging from 0.21 to 0.28 degrees Celsius above the 1991-2020 average. The past seven years (2015-2021) have been the warmest on record and global warming has more than doubled its pace since 1981. The global annual surface temperature now stands at 1.1 to 1.3 C above the pre-industrial average, meaning there is virtually no chance of limiting warming to the +1.5-C target of the 2015 Paris Accord and other agreements. At the current pace of warming, the threshold will be crossed before the end of this decade.

As predicted by climate models, the world's oceans have responded to the general warming by rising. The mean sea level was at a historic high in 2021 and is now at an average of 3.8 inches or 97 mm, higher than it was in 1993 when highly accurate measurements from satellites first began.

In one slight bit of relief for the planet, the report noted that sea surface temperatures were slightly lower last year than in 2019-2020 due to the cyclical La Niña weather pattern. However, they were still 0.29 C higher than the 1991-2020 average, with about 57 percent of the total ocean surface experiencing at least one marine heat wave, i.e., much higher than average temperatures for a given time of the year, at some point in 2021.

Finally, the report revealed that 2021 was another unusually active year for tropical storms, with a total of 97 named storms during the Northern and Southern Hemisphere storm seasons. This was less than the 104 recorded in 2020 — again, due to the La Niña — but well above the 1991-2020 average of 87. Three of the five busiest storm years between 1980-2021 have occurred since 2018 and the report made a special note that Super Typhoon "Odette" ("Rai") in December 2021 was the third-costliest storm on record for the Philippines.

In a statement following the release of the 2021 State of the Climate report, NOAA Administrator Dr. Rick Spinrad said: "The data presented in this report are clear — we continue to see more compelling scientific evidence that climate change has global impacts and shows no sign of slowing. With many communities hit with 1,000-year floods, exceptional drought, and historic heat this year, it shows that the climate crisis is not a future threat but something we must address today."

Addressing the climate crisis

The landmark 2015 Paris climate accord established two key principles. First, every country accepted responsibility for reducing its own emissions of greenhouse gases. Second was the recognition that the developed world, which is responsible for the bulk of climate damage, must assist more climate-vulnerable developing countries with their climate adaptation and mitigation efforts.

Thus, for example, the Philippines' nationally determined contribution (NDC) of a 75-percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2035 is largely conditional on receiving aid from the developed world. In its NDC, the government only commits to about a 2.75-percent reduction without outside assistance. This is considered reasonable because the Philippines and other developing countries in similar situations contribute very little of the annual global greenhouse gas emissions.

Global climate action carries a hefty price tag, so another key part of the Paris agreement was the setting of a target of \$100 billion in annual contributions from the developed world. This has yet to be reached. In 2019, climate funding pledges — but not actual contributions — reached \$79 billion, the highest to date; the amount dropped considerably the next year due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

There are signs, however, that recent alarming assessments of the state of the environment are encouraging more aggressive efforts. The World Bank Group recently announced that its climate-related funding for 2021 had increased by 19 percent to \$31.7 billion in fiscal year 2022 and now accounted for 36 percent of its financing.

Similarly, the Asian Development Bank reported earlier in the year that it had distributed \$4.7 billion in climate financing in 2021, about three-fourths of which was for climate mitigation projects.

A notable example of one of these in this region was the launch of the Energy Transition Mechanism in the Philippines and Indonesia, which provides funding support to retire coal generating plants and replace them with renewable energy. Other multilateral development banks and dedicated climate financing vehicles such as the Green Climate Fund and the Global Environment Fund have also ramped up their spending.

On a national level, however, responses have been mixed. One move seen as significant progress was the recent passage of the Inflation Reduction Act in the US, which contains \$369 billion in spending for climate and clean energy programs. While the planned programs are intended for domestic use in the US, the fact that the world's biggest economy is also the world's biggest polluter has not been lost on overseas observers.

Elsewhere, some countries such as Japan and Australia have increased climate-related spending in their official development assistance programs (ODA), while others are scaling back. Germany recently announced that it would be cutting its ODA budget for the coming year, largely due to the economic downturn caused by Russia's invasion of Ukraine. So far, Germany is the only major European funding source to make such an announcement, but it is widely expected that others will follow suit.

With an ever-increasing body of scientific data showing that effects of climate change are accelerating, scientists are now warning that some long-feared impacts, such as significant sea level rise and more widespread droughts, almost certainly will occur at temperature increases lower than most climate models have predicted up to now. In that light, news that some countries are scaling back their efforts, even if for otherwise understandable reasons, is cause for alarm. Increased efforts elsewhere to accelerate the pace of climate action may not be enough to prevent serious economic and social disruptions.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

MALAYA BUSINESS INSIGHT

[Time off to clean, protect the coasts](#)

By: Edison Joseph Gonzales

Nestlé Philippines and GMA Network have teamed up for the nationwide coastal cleanup at the Las Piñas-Parañaque Critical Habitat and Ecotourism Area (LPPCHEA) “to tackle the plastic waste crisis in the country.”

Dubbed the “Kapuso at Kambuhay ng Kalikasan,” Kais Marzouki, Nestlé chairman and chief executive officer, underscored how important sustainability is for them as a company. “As you know, we will be plastic neutral for a couple of years.”

Marzouki said: “We have collected 52 million kilos of plastic waste and diverted them from the environment through co-processing.”

“The company is pleased that it has continued on this journey as well as made strides and efforts in sustainability,” he also said.

He stressed it was not how many kilos they picked up during that initiative, rather “we all felt with our sweat, bodies and minds how big the task of sustainability is.”

He noted that every effort and every little step counts, and individuals can make a difference at the end of the day.

Kapuso stars took a break from glitz and glamour for the coastal cleanup. Joy Marcelo, Sparkle GMA Artist Center assistant vice president, mentioned the importance of the cleanup activities.

“Protecting the environment is a cherished value of the television network,” Marcelo said, adding they do what they can to help inform and educate – in the news that they report as well as programs they present.

Robert Borje, Climate Change Commission secretary, said the Philippines has the fifth longest coastline in the world, and that is something that Filipinos should be proud of.

“But it also makes us realize that we have an important responsibility toward nature,” Borje also said. “Human beings are responsible for climate change and they have the important role to be stewards of our environment.”

“When we clean up, protect, and manage our coastline, we protect ourselves as well,” he pointed out.

Pure Oceans, led by its founder and chief executive officer Pia Ocampo, shared some important instructions and reminders for the participants.

Ocampo cited the importance of LPPCHEA. “It is a critical habitat for bird life; one of the last remaining protected areas for mangroves. It has one of the biggest biodiversity for mussels and shellfish,” she said.

Every piece of plastic one picks up from the beach is one piece of coral he or she is saving. Every piece of plastic they retrieve is one person and also one bird they are saving from the ill effects of plastic pollution, she explained.

A total 1,307 kilograms of plastic waste has been collected by 207 participants during the said initiative.

SUNSTAR DAVAO

[Siargao islanders rebuild lives after Typhoon Odette](#)

By Yasmin Arquiza, with reports from Daphne Padilla

Adapting to climate change

With scientists warning of more frequent and stronger typhoons as a result of the climate crisis, Siargao's stakeholders are looking at nature-based solutions to deal with its impacts.

Del Carmen, for instance, is actively campaigning for its 4,000 hectares of mangrove forests to be included in the global listing of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance. During the celebration of International Mangrove Day on July 26 last year, the local government of Del Carmen joined the National Research Council of the Philippines (NRCP) in presenting the recorded 110 species of plants and 403 species of animals found in the mangrove forests. The field surveys that were conducted and funded by NRCP, which is part of the Department of Science and Technology, found 14 species of plants and 56 species of animals that are endemic to Siargao.

"The results suggest that the mangrove forests of Del Carmen host a diverse assemblage of organisms both for terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems. Hence, future recognition as a new wetland of international importance will reinforce sustainable conservation and protection plans for these treasured mangroves," the NRCP report said. Some of the data in the study have been used to create educational materials, such as a Grade 1 book on Bakhaw (Mangroves) that was launched early this month.

Del Carmen occupies almost one-third of Siargao's land area, the largest municipality in terms of size. In 2016, it became the first local government to avail of the People's Survival Fund from the national Climate Change Commission for its field school for fishers and farmers, which aims to share knowledge on weather patterns that affect livelihood practices.

In the wake of typhoon Odette, one of the challenges for Siargao's officials is the directive from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to strictly observe "no-build zones" near the sea and rivers due to the risk of floods and storm surges. On the island of Caub, Barangay Captain Barquilla said typhoon Odette served as validation for the government's warning that seawater can go up to 40 meters inland when there's a storm, as she experienced in her own seaside property. She is negotiating with the DENR to begin the measurement from the seawall in front of Caub, or else she will have to tear down half of the concrete and wooden house. At least 192 out of 500 families in Caub are slated for relocation as their houses are too close to the sea. All over Siargao, local governments are scrambling to relocate around 1,000 families that are affected by DENR's restriction, said Mayor Coro of Del Carmen.

Although parts of their concrete seawall crumbled during the typhoon, Barquilla believes the structure is still their best protection against storms because it helped save houses, including her own. While waiting for the national government to provide an estimated P50 million to rebuild the seawall, she has mobilized the villagers to repair its cracks using discarded shells and doing cleanup and community gardening to augment food supply.

In General Luna, entrepreneur Honasan is also pushing for seawall construction to protect their beachside property. “Kahit lagyan mo ng breaker and mangroves, porous pa rin siya so eventually, maso-slowdown pero may erosion pa rin,” he said. Taking advice from a California architect, he said, “At some point, there has to be a seawall here, hanggang saan mo gustong tumigil ang tubig.”

Mayor Coro disputes the idea though, saying, “We cannot fight the oceans.” He said resorts in other destinations such as Boracay and Bantayan island have had to comply with the law due to the worsening impact of climate change.

For their MPAs, however, barangay captain Barquilla is advocating natural regeneration of the coral reefs. This is welcome news for fisher Tarepe, who said their fishing grounds along the rocky shoreline had been damaged by artificial reefs put up by the government in the past.

The researchers from MERF, along with their local government and NGO partners, have also warned against a new national government program to undertake coral restoration using transplanted materials. While the strategy may help damaged reefs to recover, it can also destroy the source reef and introduce fewer species to the target area. It would take millions of pesos per hectare to rehabilitate corals through transplantation, but the high cost cannot be justified due to low chances of success, the MERF report said. Allowing for natural species richness to rebound through time is the best option, and with stronger typhoons expected in the future, “frequent severe disturbance may result in reefs adapting to such by growing more robust lifeforms that are less susceptible to wave mechanical damage.”

Mayor Coro says the Caub MPA had been recovering naturally for seven years before its coral reefs were damaged by Odette. During the MERF survey, divers found plenty of new growth on the bed of dead corals, indicating the path to recovery, and patches of damaged spots. However, the storm surge toppled massive colonies of branching corals. The survey team urged the resumption of strict protection inside MPAs to speed up rehabilitation.

To keep algae from occupying dead reefs, which prevents natural regrowth of coral larvae, fishers were urged to refrain from catching herbivorous reef fishes such as parrotfish. The MERF team also encouraged donors to equip municipal fishers with boats that can go to deeper waters so they can fish in the open sea where commercially important species such as sailfish and yellowfin tuna are abundant, allowing nearshore fisheries to recover faster.

As the island continues rebuilding efforts, pollution from resorts and households may affect the recovery of marine ecosystems, the survey team noted. Mayor Coro says Del Carmen has the only septage treatment plant on the island so far, making waste facilities a potential priority for government assistance.

A day after the typhoon, Honasan recalled that a lot of choppers arrived to fetch stranded residents. “Dahil maraming bigtime na dito nakatira, kanya-kanyang sundo,” he said. With so much at stake, he feels the private sector will have a major role in charting the future of Siargao. “Yung titimon kung saan pupunta yung island will be the business owners na residents, yung nakatira talaga dito,” says Honasan, who has been living there since 2017.

Mayor Coro recognizes the aspirations of migrants who have made Siargao their home. “People who live in islands, we have a different outlook in life. We are resilient in a way because there is a level of contentment, we are in the dream that others want and spend their whole life trying to achieve,” he said.

With tourism fast becoming a major draw, Del Carmen is encouraging homestay programs and looking for corporate partners that can help manage their mangrove boardwalk. However, the mayor cautions against industries that could harm Siargao’s natural assets, especially its watersheds and marine life, as construction for a cruise ship and cargo terminal is starting to carve a gaping scar on the slopes near the town of Dapa.

Instead, Mayor Coro is making use of his computer engineering background to develop what he calls “blue e-commerce” through information technology hubs that would complement tourism in a protected landscape. “There’s a very big market, it’s low carbon, and it’s something big that can be replicated elsewhere,” he said. (This story was produced through a fellowship from the Earth Journalism Network.)

THE MANILA TIMES

[Action urged vs climate change](#)

By: Francis Earl Cueto

Speaking recently at the United Nations General Assembly in New York, President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. decried "historical" injustices brought about by climate change and called on industrialized nations to honor commitments made to address the "greatest threat" to nations.

Those who are least responsible are suffering the most, he stressed, pointing out that the Philippines — ranked the fourth most vulnerable to climate change worldwide — was absorbing more carbon dioxide than it emitted.

"The time for talk about if and when has long since passed. It is here, it is now. Climate change is the greatest threat affecting our nations and our peoples. There is no other problem so global in nature that it requires a united effort, one led by the United Nations," Marcos said.

"This injustice must be corrected and those who need to do more must act now. We accept our share of responsibility and will continue to do our part to avert this collective disaster," he added.

The Philippines, which is visited by around 20 typhoons every year, has seen storms get stronger and inflict more damage, as seen in the destruction caused by typhoons "Yolanda" ("Haiyan") in 2013, "Ondoy" ("Ketsana") in 2009, and most recently "Odette" ("Rai") last year.

The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) said the Marcos government was taking the issue of climate change seriously and was mapping measures to protect Filipinos.

As the lead agency that deals with natural calamities and disasters, the NDRRMC said it was ensuring that needed information is fully disseminated. Government agencies, along with the private sector and stakeholders, have been enjoined to come up with plans, programs and equipment to address the impacts of disasters.

In October 2020, the NDRRMC adopted the updated National Disaster Risk Reduction Management Framework and Plan 2020-2030. It targets 23 outcomes, 50, outputs and 206 activities that will be assessed in three separate reviews during implementation.

The plan's prevention and mitigation pillar seeks to enhance the use of science, technology and innovations in disaster risk reduction and management. Among its flagship programs is the GeoRisk Philippines, a multi-agency initiative that serves as a central information resource.

"In our pursuit of capacitating our LGUs (local government units) ... the OCD (Office of Civil Defense) together with the DoST (Department of Science and Technology) with support from World Bank is providing technical assistance to LGUs in updating their local DRRM plans using the GeoRisk PH this year," the NDRRMC said.

Another continuing initiative is the installation and improvement of multi-hazard early warning systems, including rain radar and flood forecasting and warning centers in select river basins. Because the Philippines is part of the Pacific Ring of Fire and the typhoon belt, the NDRRMC is studying every possible scenario and preparing measures to deal with each.

"While we could not stop geological and hydrological hazards from happening, we can increase the ability of every Filipino by making them aware of what they are supposed to do, how they are supposed to prepare, and where they are supposed to go in case of a disaster," it said.

"The government continues to collaborate with other countries and institutions to ensure that we keep up with the latest innovations and relations to disaster risk reduction and management."

The NDRRMC gave assurances that the government was committed to integrating more accurate, science-supported, evidence-based, and risk-based data in local DRRM plans. To this end, a GeoRiskPh platform is being developed that "makes hazard-related information available to everyone to allow local government units to plan and prepare for natural hazards."

Everyone is urged to join quarterly nationwide earthquake drills and participate in other activities like Fire Prevention Month and local programs related to disaster preparedness, risk reduction and environmental protection.

For now, the main role of the NDRRMC is to develop assessment tools on existing and potential hazards and risks in coordination with the Climate Change Commission.

Its mandate is not just to protect the citizenry from the effects of climate change but to look at how the shifting climate affects the agricultural sector. The 2020-2030 plan prescribes that all stakeholders cooperate in lowering the risks to agricultural areas.

The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) said the Marcos government was taking the issue of climate change seriously and was mapping measures to protect Filipinos.

PH backs climate initiative

By: Kristina Maralit

The Philippines renewed its call for a stronger global initiative on climate change during a meeting of stakeholders ahead of the Conference of Parties (COP27) climate summit in Egypt next month.

In the PreCOP27 summit held in DR Congo last week, Robert Borje, vice chairman and executive director of the Climate Change Commission (CCC), stressed the importance of reaching an agreement and urgent collective action to address climate change and its impacts.

"PreCOP27 in Kinshasa provides parties and partners a vital opportunity to discuss at length what is important for all in order to make significant headway in addressing climate change and its impacts, particularly for developing at-risk and vulnerable states like the Philippines," he said, adding that developing nations suffer the most while contributing the least to climate change.

On adaptation, Borje said the Philippines pushed for fast-tracking finance, technology and capacity development to build adaptive capacities, improve resilience and reduce vulnerabilities of developing countries, in accordance with the Global Goal on Adaptation.

On mitigation, the official stressed that emissions avoidance must be part of the mitigation action to accelerate just transition to low carbon development in developing nations.

Regarding climate finance, he pointed out that the New Collective Quantified Goal must include the key elements of transparency, responsiveness, and scale.

It emphasized that climate finance must be accurately reported while being needs-based and commensurate to the needs of potential recipients.

From the \$100 billion climate finance commitment of developed countries under the Paris Agreement, the New Collective Quantified Goal must set a higher target for climate finance to help implement climate change-related strategies and measures.

With a view to realizing climate justice for vulnerable and at-risk developing nations, the Philippines underscored that access by least developed and developing countries to financial mechanisms must be streamlined and simplified.

On loss and damage, the Philippines raised concern that least developed and developing countries can no longer absorb and afford the cost of further losses and damages due to climate change and its impacts.

Borje argued that there must be an agenda item on loss and damage, as well as dedicated space to discuss the operationalization of the Santiago Network.

Targeted to be fully operationalized by 2023, the Santiago Network is meant to catalyze technical support of organizations, bodies, networks and experts for developing countries to avert, minimize, and address climate change-related loss and damage.

Additionally, the Philippine government underlined that dedicated discussion space must be provided for the financing for loss and damage, and the governance structure of the Warsaw International Mechanism as established to implement approaches to loss and damage — all in line with the Paris Agreement and the Glasgow Climate Pact, among other international frameworks and commitments.

The Democratic Republic of Congo, in partnership with the Arab Republic of Egypt as the incoming COP27 Presidency, and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, convened 60 countries in Kinshasa for PreCOP27.

COP27 will be held on November 6 to 18 in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

[In first 100 days, Marcos talks climate change but action still on back burner](#)

By: Gaea Katreena Cabico

Manila, Philippines — President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. has frequently mentioned the need to address climate change in his speeches. He is, after all, leading the Philippines during the most crucial window to avoid or limit some of the worst effects of climate change.

In his first State of the Nation Address, Marcos said that increasing the use of renewable energy sources—a mitigation strategy—is at the top of his climate agenda, and mentioned the need to have investments in science and technology to help save lives.

Addressing world leaders present at the UN General Assembly in September, the chief executive stressed that “climate change is the greatest threat affecting our nations and our peoples.”

Like his predecessor Rodrigo Duterte, he called on developed nations to cut their greenhouse gas emissions and provide financial assistance to countries like the Philippines that bear the brunt of climate change impacts even though they are least responsible for the heating of the planet.

But for environment group Greenpeace Philippines, none of the president’s rhetoric has translated into meaningful action so far.

“If Greenpeace were to grade Mr. Marcos Jr.’s performance on climate in his first 100 days, he gets failing marks,” said Lea Guerrero, country director of Greenpeace Philippines.

“Just empty and misleading promises. All talk but zero action. We haven’t even seen a shadow of a climate plan, or even a hint of an actual directive.”

Beyond rhetoric, how has the Marcos administration fared in terms of tackling climate change, and protecting the environment and its defenders?

Back-burner budget

Only two measures related to the climate agenda are included in Marcos’ priority legislative measures: the creation of the Department of Water Resources and the proposed National Land Use Act.

Under the National Expenditure Program, the proposed budget of the DENR for next year is P23.04 billion, which is lower than this year’s P25.45 billion.

Meanwhile, the Climate Change Commission's 2023 budget is only P128.2 million. The amount is 8.42% lower than this year's P140 million funding. CCC, which is chaired by the president, is the lead policymaking body on climate change.

"As indicative of its budget, it seems to be at the bottom of the president's priorities," Greenpeace noted.

The government, however, allotted P453 billion for climate change expenditures. Of the allocation, P265 billion will go to water sufficiency projects, while P169 billion will be earmarked for the flood management program of the Department of Works and Highways.

Non-profit IBON Foundation said the proposed climate change expenditures was an attempt of the Marcos administration to make themselves "green."

Groups such as the Climate Reality Project Philippines are also calling for concrete policies and programs that will enable climate-smart agriculture and support farmers post-disaster. Super Typhoon Karding (Noru), the strongest typhoon to hit the country this year, battered the heavily agricultural region of Central Luzon.

Marcos also heads the Department of Agriculture.

Genuine transition or detour?

Marcos is pushing to adopt nuclear and develop fossil gas alongside renewables.

In his first SONA, Marcos called on Congress to enact a law seeking to foster the midstream natural gas industry "by diversifying the country's primary sources of energy and promoting the role of natural gas as a complementary fuel to variable renewable energy."

He also said "it is time to re-examine our strategy towards building nuclear power plants."

Climate and clean energy campaigners said that nuclear and fossil gas will impede the genuine transition to renewable energy and threaten host communities.

"If the president is serious about providing the Filipino people access to clean, reliable, and affordable electricity, he will not direct investments on nuclear and fossil gas which will pose the same problems that coal is giving us right now," said Nazrin Castro, branch manager of The Climate Reality Project Philippines.

Continued attacks vs environmental defenders

While Marcos likes to talk about climate change and environmental conservation, he is silent about the threats faced by Filipino climate advocates and environment defenders.

Last month, Masungi Georeserve Foundation reported the presence of armed men who encamped within the vicinity of its conservation site and allegedly planned to take over a huge portion of land in the protected area.

Groups also reported that individuals opposing the Ahunan pumped-storage hydropower plant project in Laguna and fisherfolk opposing reclamation projects were harassed.

The Philippines has been listed the deadliest country in Asia for land and environmental defenders for the ninth consecutive year, international organization Global Witness said in its latest report. Nineteen environmentalists were killed in the Philippines last year, making it the fourth deadliest country in the world.

High hopes for DENR chief

Green groups welcomed the appointment of Maria Antonio Yulo-Loyzaga as the secretary of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. She headed the National Resilience Council and the scientific institution Manila Observatory.

Yulo-Loyzaga stressed the need for science-based governance, and for consultation and collaboration with stakeholders. Her priorities also include building resilient communities, implementing practical climate change adaptation measures, and enhancing the accounting of the country's natural resources.

DENR recently held a multistakeholder forum attended by environmental groups, government officials, and even heads of big businesses.

"We have yet to see whether this will be a DENR that will put people and the planet before big business," Greenpeace said.

Groups are urging Marcos and the new DENR leadership to take a stand against destructive reclamation and mining projects.

"[Marcos] has continued the business-as-usual approach of natural resources utilization under President Duterte. The mining operations and additional applications are abound with the lifting of the mining moratorium," said Lia Alonzo, executive director of the Center for Environmental Concerns-Philippines.

What needs to be done

Greenpeace Philippines said the new administration should ensure that Marcos' actions are consistent with his rhetoric by doing the following:

- Institute climate action as the central policy of the state
- Put in place coherent strategies beyond disaster response
- Rapid and just transition to a low-carbon pathway
- Mandate businesses to align with the 1.5°Celsius commitment in the Paris Agreement

- Fully implement and strengthen the country's environmental policies
- Support and protect environmental and rights defenders

"The climate crisis is more than just a social, political and economic issue. It is about our survival and existence. The Philippine government needs to ensure the survival and existence of all Filipinos," the group said.

=END=