



## NEWS ROUNDUP

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#### [Changing mindset on disasters preparedness difficult but happening: UN rep](#)

By: Raphael Bosano

As the world grapples with the devastating effects of climate change and extreme weather events, the United Nations (UN) admitted having difficulty in changing the public's mindset to prepare for prevention rather than preparing for response and recovery.

### BUSINESS WORLD

#### [Environmental protection sought as solution to disaster risk](#)

By: Beatriz Marie D. Cruz

An Asia-Pacific regional conference on disaster risk management in the Philippines next year should push the country to adopt more environmental protection-based solutions including harnessing renewable energy, environmental groups said at the weekend.

## [High NTMs, red tape make green tech costlier](#)

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### **ECO BUSINESS**

## [\[Opinion\] Breaking the vicious cycle of haze and climate change in Southeast Asia](#)

By: Sharon Seah and Helena Varkkey

Visitors to Southeast Asia may be surprised at the poor air quality recently. The region has enjoyed relatively good air quality for the last few years due to the slowdown of land-use change during Covid-19, and the wetter conditions during the La Nina years. However, many will also remember that the region has been beset with a recurring transboundary air pollution problem for decades. The most critical episodes occurred at various times: 1997-1998, 2002, 2004, 2006, 2010, 2013 and 2015.

### **MANILA BULLETIN**

## [Spotlight on cutting-edge climate tech solutions](#)

The country needs tech-enabled startups capable of delivering solutions that not only facilitate adaptation to climate change but also expedite large-scale decarbonization efforts. This was the main message in a recent conference dubbed, “Unlocking Climate Tech in the Philippines.”

### **NIKKEI ASIA**

## [\[Opinion\] Asia's children belong at the center of climate change discussions](#)

By: Hanneke Oudkerk and Gurpreet K. Bhatia

The impact of climate change is being deeply felt in the lives of people across the Asia-Pacific region. The deepest brunt, though, is being borne by the youngest generation -- those who have contributed the least to global emissions.

## **THE MANILA TIMES**

### **[Pagasa boosts hazard mapping with help from Australia, UNDP](#)**

The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in the Philippines and the Australian Embassy handed over ground survey and office equipment to the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical, and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) to support the generation of severe wind and storm surge hazard and risk maps and localized climate data for provinces.

## **THE PHILIPPINE STAR**

### **[Accessing UN climate financing difficult – President Marcos](#)**

By: Alexis Romero

Developing countries are having difficulty accessing climate financing, President Marcos said as he emphasized the need to act on climate change being felt in the Philippines through frequent and intense disasters.

### **[Climate 'countdown clock' report launched ahead of key UN talks](#)**

Top scientists have launched a yearly report series to plug knowledge gaps ahead of crunch climate talks, with their global warming "countdown clock" vying for the attention of world leaders and ordinary citizens alike.

### **[Climate financing hits record \\$61 billion](#)**

By: Louella Desiderio

Climate finance provided by multilateral development banks (MDBs) to low and middle-income economies hit a new record high of nearly \$61 billion last year, according to a new report.

### **[Timing is everything](#)**

By: Fidel Abalos

Today, disasters, whether man-made or natural, are just so prevalent and dominating. For one, the destructions inflicted by Russia in Ukraine and the carnage in Gaza (Israel) lead all man-made disasters to this day. On the other hand, typhoons and earthquakes and the consequential landslides and floods that are blamed on climate change have become so frequent and seemed the new normal. Though totally different, both disasters destroy lives and properties.

## **CCC IN THE NEWS:**

### **PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY**

#### **[AsPac meet 2024 exhibits PH role as leader in fight vs. climate crisis](#)**

The Climate Change Commission (CCC) supports the Philippines in its role as the host country for the Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (APMCDRR) in 2024.

**Information and Knowledge Management Division**

## **ABS CBN**

### **Changing mindset on disasters preparedness difficult but happening: UN rep**

By: Raphael Bosano

As the world grapples with the devastating effects of climate change and extreme weather events, the United Nations (UN) admitted having difficulty in changing the public's mindset to prepare for prevention rather than preparing for response and recovery.

UN Special Representative for Disaster Risk Reduction Mami Mizutori said while some countries are already making strides towards disaster preparedness and resilience, there is still more to be done in ensuring the impact of disasters are kept low after it happens.

"When you think of policies about disasters, most people still think about response and recovery because that's what we need to do when a disaster strikes. But what we know is that's not good enough anymore," Mizutori said.

Financial capabilities are seen as one of the factors that affect a community or even a country's preparedness as more funds are usually programmed towards disaster response, relief, rehabilitation and recovery.

#### **More extreme weather ahead**

With the global mercury inching its way higher, the UN predicts a wave of even more extreme climate events in the coming years.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has identified a range of assumptions including economic growth, technology developments and lifestyle as some of the reasons behind the 1.5 degree warming above pre-industrial levels.

Experts have warned of more catastrophic events with irreversible effects, should this figure reach even higher.

"What our research found is that if we continue on this path and if we cannot achieve the 1.5 goal, we predict that by 2030 the number of disaster will rise to 1.5 medium to major disasters a day happening somewhere in the world."

"When you look at this global figure and when you take into consideration that Asia Pacific is the most disaster prone region in the world, we can say that this global prediction will impact this region," Mizutori said.

In the Philippines, Department of Science and Technology (DOST) Secretary Renato Solidum said that based on state weather bureau PAGASA's forecasts, the number of typhoons that may batter the country will not increase but rather intensify.

"There will be changes in precipitation or rainfall patterns in many parts of the country. Hence, we really need to prepare for drought especially in the Southern Philippines. Indeed, climate change and even natural hazards and disaster risk reduction are important efforts that we need to do as a whole of society," Solidum said.

This brings to fore the importance of not just decreasing emissions and mitigating climate risks but even more so looking at the unique and specific needs of groups and individuals.

Environment Secretary Toni Yulo Loyzaga explained that in the case of farmers, their needs to be able to quickly recover from disasters must be identified.

Knowing this earlier on will eventually identify necessary courses of action and required resources to actually prevent the disaster from happening.

"These type of tailor-made sub-national insurance products I think are way of transferring risk prior to a disaster actually happening. But should the hazard hit, the impact of that disaster will be mitigated by the resources they have already available or have invested in because they have such a product in their hands," Loyzaga said.

Risk transfer, as she puts it, requires conditioning everyone's minds into preparing for prevention more than response.

With the Asia Pacific Region, the Philippines in particular, contributing significantly less to emission and climate change but being the most vulnerable to its effects, the need for a coordinated response across many governments becomes all the more important.

Philippines to host conference on disaster risk reduction

On Friday, the Philippines said that it will host the Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (APMCDRR) in 2024.

The APMCDRR is convened by the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction and will bring together global leaders to monitor, review and enhance cooperation for the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 at the regional level.

Mizutori said the conference will build on the outcomes of the midterm review of the Sendai Framework by focusing on priority issues including financing for disaster risk reduction, enhancing gender-responsive and inclusive risk governance as well as localization of disaster risk reduction efforts.

“These are areas where the Philippines can share examples of its achievements, especially around inclusiveness and strengthening of local resilience.”

The Philippines hosting the conference cannot be more apt especially since climate change is said to be on the government’s agenda.

“In the last two State of the National Addresses (SONA), the President has made very clear, his awareness of how climate change and other natural hazards impact our economic growth and development. In the last SONA, he actually said that climate change is actually going to be integrated in every government policy, action and program,” said Loyzaga.

## **BUSINESS WORLD**

### **Environmental protection sought as solution to disaster risk**

By: Beatriz Marie D. Cruz

An Asia-Pacific regional conference on disaster risk management in the Philippines next year should push the country to adopt more environmental protection-based solutions including harnessing renewable energy, environmental groups said at the weekend.

Gerry Arances, executive director of the Center for Energy, Ecology and Development (CEED), said the conference should look at the environmental impacts, not just the “metrics of economic planning targets” of projects such as the construction of gas and fossil fuel plants.

“Only when fossil fuel projects are officially identified as the biggest source of increasing disaster risk and halted for this reason can we say that the world has truly embraced a holistic disaster risk reduction and management strategy,” he said in a Viber message.

“Disaster risk reduction and management resilience are mainly focused on infrastructure instead of reducing the root cause of violent weather phenomena’s increasing frequency and intensity,” he added.

The Philippines is set to host the Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction on Oct. 14 to 17, 2024. Asian delegates will share experiences and innovations to mitigate climate and disaster risks in the region.

“The conference will provide an important opportunity to review ongoing disaster risk reduction efforts, share innovative solutions and make new commitments to accelerate risk reduction in the world’s most disaster-prone region,” Mami Mizutori, special representative of the United Nations (UN) Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction, said at a news briefing last week announcing the Manila conference.

Convened by the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, the conference will refer to the midterm review of the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 at the regional level, Ms. Mizutori said.

The review has raised concerns about climate financing, as well as enhancing a more gender-inclusive and localized disaster risk response.

“The challenges we face are complex and they do not affect everyone equally,” Environment Secretary Maria Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga said in a statement on Friday.



“They require a convergence of efforts, synergies from across sectors so that we are able to respond to each of the different exposures and vulnerabilities.”

Nationwide private sector partnership entails on-the-ground visibility to help raise awareness on disaster preventive measures, according to Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI) President George T. Barcelon.

“The private sector especially organizations like the PCCI have a broad range throughout the country so we have more ground visibility,” he told BusinessWorld on the sidelines of the briefing. “What are the areas that are prone to disaster?” he asked, adding that the government needs preventive action.

Solutions like harnessing clean and renewable energy sources such as solar, wind, geothermal and hydropower, as well minimizing single-use plastics to manage pollution should be discussed in the conference, Gregg Yan, founder and executive director of environmental group Best Alternatives, said.

Mr. Yan also said the illegal wildlife trade in Asia needs urgent discussion. “For decades, it has been depleting Asia’s endangered animals including pangolins, sea turtles and tigers,” he said in an e-mail. “Stronger intergovernmental cooperation to stamp out this silent trade is needed to save our region’s wildlife from forever disappearing from our forests, rivers and seas.”

“If we cannot achieve the 1.5°C goal, we predict that by 2030, the number of disasters will advance,” Ms. Mizutori told last week’s briefing, referring to the Paris Agreement’s goal to limit global warming to 1.5°C by cutting greenhouse gas emissions by 43% by 2030.

“The Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration forecast would show the number of typhoons will not increase but will intensify,” Science and Technology Secretary Renato U. Solidum, Jr. told the same briefing.

Climate change could cut the Philippines’ economic output by 13.6% by 2040, the World Bank said in a report last year.

## High NTMs, red tape make green tech costlier

Costly red tape has made imported green technologies more expensive in the Philippines, thanks to Non-Tariff Measures (NTMs), according to the World Bank.

Among the incentives being offered by the Philippines is its distinction of having the lowest tariffs on environmental goods in the region. However, NTMs on these goods are the highest in the region.

The World Bank said the Philippines “is by far the most heavy-handed,” with more than four NTMs on imported environmental goods, compared to the regional average of only 1.2.

“This implies that the imported green technologies are extra costly and face more red tape, to the detriment of Philippine firms,” stated the World Bank’s background paper on Climate Change and Environmental Risks in the Financial and Private Sector and Opportunities for Green Finance for the Philippines.

These NTMs include additional permit requirements as opposed to automatic licensing; quotas; prohibitions; price control measures; and non-tariff taxes and charges.

The Philippines applied tariffs on environmental goods such as renewable energy and resource efficient technologies at 3.8 percent on average in 2019, is lower than the Asia-Pacific regional average of 5.8 percent.

The World Bank noted that tariffs for environmental goods is at 8 percent for Thailand and 6.2 percent for Vietnam and Malaysia.

The government has also passed an Executive Order in 2023 to temporarily reduce tariff on imported electric vehicles to zero for five years from 30 percent.

### Sanctions needed

Meanwhile, the World Bank said the national government’s efforts to offer incentives are not enough to prompt the private sector to adopt green technologies and increase green investments in the country.

The World Bank said sanctions on negative externalities such as pollution are also needed to fast-track its efforts to go green.

“In the Philippines, a lack of pricing of negative externalities of climate change, in the form of a carbon tax or emissions trading scheme, has undermined the business case for green investments,” the paper stated.

“If firms do not have to pay for pollution, they are not incentivized to move towards cleaner and greener projects,” it added.

The World Bank said the government is currently weighing its policy design options for an emissions trading scheme (ETS) to cover the power sector.

The Washinton-based lender said it is possible this may be expanded to include energy-intensive heavy industries.

The report noted that the government collects taxes on energy, through excise taxes on fuels and electricity consumption. It has also been removing fossil fuel subsidies since the 1990s.

“It is expected that introduction of the Philippines ETS or a carbon tax will provide strong incentives for firms to adopt green technologies. Globally, taxation of polluting and CO<sub>2</sub>-emitting activities is seen as a best-practice solution and the most effective way of pricing in externalities,” the report stated.

The World Bank said the government has committed to the Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) of 75-percent reduction in projected cumulative GHG emissions relative to the business as usual (BAU) scenario by 2030.

This emphasized the role that public-private collaboration will play in achieving the country’s climate change adaptation and mitigation ambitions.

This is consistent with an estimated \$168 billion in investment opportunities that can generate three million cumulative new direct jobs in the Philippines between 2020 and 2030.

## ECO BUSINESS

### [\[Opinion\] Breaking the vicious cycle of haze and climate change in Southeast Asia](#)

By: Sharon Seah and Helena Varkkey

Visitors to Southeast Asia may be surprised at the poor air quality recently. The region has enjoyed relatively good air quality for the last few years due to the slowdown of land-use change during Covid-19, and the wetter conditions during the La Nina years. However, many will also remember that the region has been beset with a recurring transboundary air pollution problem for decades. The most critical episodes occurred at various times: 1997-1998, 2002, 2004, 2006, 2010, 2013 and 2015.

In southern Southeast Asia, smoke haze is emitted from massive peatland fires in Sumatra and Borneo, where drainage and land clearance for agricultural plantations have dried out landscapes, making them extremely fire-prone. The problem of transboundary haze pollution is exacerbated during extreme drought periods such as the 1997-1998 and 2013-2015 El Nino years. The dry weather combined with strong winds carried the haze across the region. Meteorologists are reporting developing El Nino conditions this year. The drier conditions may signal a prolonged haze season ahead.

In the past week, Indonesian authorities ordered remote learning for schools in Palembang and Jambi cities due to the haze pollution. Last Friday, Malaysia issued pollution warnings in the western part of Peninsula Malaysia and Sarawak, blaming transboundary haze from Indonesia (which has been denied by the Indonesian authorities). Earlier in March this year, parts of Thailand, Laos and Myanmar were shrouded in haze. Thailand suffered its worst transboundary haze pollution with hazardous air quality levels exceeding World Health Organization limits for more than two weeks.

Climate change compounds the haze pollution problem. By now an oft-cited reason for environmental disasters, climate change acts as an amplifier of bad weather phenomenon — what is bad becomes worse. However, what most do not know is that climate change not only makes the haze worse; the haze itself is a serious driver of climate change.

Researchers are expecting more intense and frequent El Nino events with increased climate change. There is a dynamic and vicious cycle of haze and climate change in the region: balmy conditions further heighten the risk of fire in degraded peatlands, and drier weather means that putting out the fires, either through human intervention or rain, becomes more challenging. This only exacerbates the haze pollution problem.

Southeast Asia is home to approximately 24 million hectares of peatlands, or 40 per cent of the world's total. According to the UNEP, peatlands cover only three per cent of the world's surface but hold almost 550 billion tonnes of carbon. The waterlogged conditions of the peatlands keep the organic material from decomposing, making it a powerful carbon sink. When drained in preparation for planting or other development activities, the organic material is exposed to the air, kick starting decomposition and the release of greenhouse gasses. When burnt, this process is accelerated, further speeding up global warming.

According to a February 2016 World Bank report, anthropogenic fires burned 2.6 million hectares of Indonesian land — the size of four and half times of Bali island — between June and October 2015. The economic cost to Indonesia in that year alone was estimated to be US\$16.1 billion, equivalent to 1.9 per cent of the country's GDP. According to the World Resources Institute, Indonesia emitted 1.62 billion metric tonnes of carbon dioxide in 2015, surpassing Russia to become the world's fourth largest emitter. There are also other externalities: school closures, deaths, respiratory and other health costs as well as aviation, economic and tourism disruptions. There are also massive biodiversity losses, not only in Indonesia but in countries suffering alongside with it. For instance, WWF-Malaysia has highlighted the effects of prolonged haze causing the decline of bee colonies which would have a trickling down effect on trees and fruit pollination.

Transboundary haze pollution in Southeast Asia is acknowledged as a multi-faceted problem that requires inter-governmental cooperation and multi-stakeholder engagement with the local communities, provincial governments, corporations and civil society. ASEAN-level engagement over haze has been ongoing since the 1990s, and the Singapore Government enacted a transboundary haze pollution law in 2015. Analysis of the root causes, factors, impacts and implications of the haze have been well examined by scholars for years. Yet, the problem recurs year after year.

It is now time to go beyond the diplomatic and academic space and get on the ground to persuade communities, corporations, and governments that it is in their best interests to conserve peatlands. Put simply, every effort at keeping our store of carbon sequestered in our peatlands will help in our climate and haze mitigation. In this regard, the present momentum in the region in using carbon pricing instruments and the establishment of voluntary carbon emission trading markets (as Indonesia has recently done) could be a window of opportunity to incentivise stakeholders to scale-up their conservation efforts and generate quality carbon credits that can be monetised.

The United Kingdom, for example, has pioneered an innovative natural capital financing mechanism called the Peatland Code using a voluntary standard to provide independent validation and verification for peatland restoration projects. Through this,

the UK has been registering some 200 peatland projects in its national registry and tracking the total peatland area restored and total amount of emission reductions using blended public and private financing. The Code assures investors of good practice and replaces the need for individual project audits.

Progress towards such opportunities in Southeast Asia's peatlands must be inclusive. The results should be measurable, reportable, and verifiable according to global standards. While this may be challenging in the current governance landscape, the benefits are well worth it. For peatland communities, this could contribute to improved livelihoods. For corporations, the same could feed into their sustainability transitions. For governments, they can bolster national carbon inventory accounting. For the region, it could finally mean the achievement of the vision for a "Haze-Free ASEAN".

This commentary was developed under the Asia-Pacific Network for Global Change Research Project on "Policy and governance approaches to cooperative mitigation of peatland carbon emissions and transboundary haze in Southeast Asia", Reference Number CRRP2022-03MY-Muhamad Varkkey.

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## MANILA BULLETIN

### [Spotlight on cutting-edge climate tech solutions](#)

The country needs tech-enabled startups capable of delivering solutions that not only facilitate adaptation to climate change but also expedite large-scale decarbonization efforts. This was the main message in a recent conference dubbed, “Unlocking Climate Tech in the Philippines.”

Digital Pilipinas is the largest private sector-led movement for creating an innovation and technology ecosystem. It is the pioneering ecosystem-builder in ASEAN that is actively engaged and synergized in a global digital economy. Organized by Digital Pilipinas in partnership with The Radical Fund, an early-stage venture capital fund enabling an inclusive climate transition for a resilient Southeast Asia, the event brought together founders and ecosystem players who are actively shaping the climate tech landscape in Southeast Asia and building solutions to combat the climate crisis.

This conference is one of the events leading up to the Digital Pilipinas Festival Year 2 happening on November 21-24, 2023 at SMX Aura and in various co-located venues and innovation hubs across the country. Envisioned as a “festival of festivals”, the Digital Pilipinas Festival is anticipated to be the biggest gathering of industry leaders and country delegations, which aim to set new benchmarks for collaborative progress. It will host the Sustainability and Climate Festival, which aims to showcase more in-depth discussions on sustainability and climate tech solutions and highlight the urgent need for climate innovations, with an emphasis on scaling up these solutions.

Amor Maclang, Convenor of Digital Pilipinas and Co-founder of GeiserMaclang said, “With innovative startups and eager investors at the forefront, there is hope that the Philippines can navigate the challenging climate landscape and emerge as a climate-resilient and sustainable nation.”

Among the speakers at the conference are industry leaders and stakeholders who are championing the fight against climate change through technology including Amor Maclang, Convenor of Digital Pilipinas and Co-founder of GeiserMaclang; Alina Truhina, CEO and Founding Partner of The Radical Fund; Zachary Lee, Head of Investments of The Radical Fund; Marco Concio, CEO and Co-founder of KITA; Jo Ann Eala, Vice President of the Bank of the Philippine Islands; Enrique Gonzalez, Chief Executive Officer of IP Ventures; Karla Delgado, Chief Sustainability Officer of the Transnational Diversified Group; Dustin Jefferson Onghanseng, CEO of UHOo; and Kelvin Lee, Commissioner at the Securities and Exchange Commission. They highlighted the urgent need to build solutions to combat the climate crisis through technology and discussed

the importance of fostering a supportive ecosystem for climate tech startups, including access to funding, mentorship, and partnerships.

“Southeast Asia is one of the most adversely affected regions of the world when it comes to climate change, and yet investment is still predominantly going toward US and European ventures,” said Truhina. “We invest regionally, and at the earliest stages of VC, because we need to build an ecosystem - and a pipeline - of climate-oriented companies with solutions that are appropriate and localized for the Southeast Asia markets.”

The Radical Fund invests in pre-seed, and pre-series A founders who are either based in Southeast Asia and/or have operations and presence in the region. The Fund backs tech-enabled ventures that deliver scaled commercial returns and climate outcomes to local and regional populations.

Composed of a six-person team based in Bangkok and Singapore, Radical Fund has global team members in London, UK, and is hiring team members in the Philippines, Vietnam, and Indonesia. The Fund is backed by several high-profile regional family offices from the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand, together with individual investors from the US and Europe.

“Radical Fund brings a wealth of experience in investing and supporting startup founders and entrepreneurs,” said Gonzalez, Radical Fund’s Philippine partner. “By investing in the next generation of climate adaptation and mitigation entrepreneurs in Southeast Asia, we are accelerating hyper-local solutions that can scale regionally and across other emerging markets.”

The Radical Fund’s investment goes beyond traditional cleanTech and climateTech verticals but also backs scalable ventures that may not look like traditional climate businesses and have - or may potentially have - climate impact as part of their model and ethos. This includes companies across Agriculture, Food, Circular Economy, Financial and Mobility/Logistics, and other sub-sectors.

Gonzalez also expressed how the Fund can unleash the potential of startups in the Philippines, which has been cited as among the nations “at most risk” of the adverse effects of climate change. He said, “I would like the Philippines, a major victim of frequent calamities, to benefit. The calamities will get more severe with climate change over time. We want to enable and empower Filipino entrepreneurs who are developing innovative businesses that help solve climate change.”

The Radical Fund is part of the Utopia Capital Management (UCM) group of investment vehicles, which has supported over 130 early-stage ventures across multiple emerging



markets. With a team of over 55 full-time experts, UCM has networks across Africa, Europe, Southeast Asia, and the U.S. Other vehicles include Founders Factory Africa and its related funds in Africa, which Truhina and Roo Rogers have co-founded.

## NIKKEI ASIA

### [\[Opinion\] Asia's children belong at the center of climate change discussions](#)

By: Hanneke Oudkerk and Gurpreet K. Bhatia

The impact of climate change is being deeply felt in the lives of people across the Asia-Pacific region. The deepest brunt, though, is being borne by the youngest generation -- those who have contributed the least to global emissions.

Innovative strategies, intergenerational collaborative action and a concerted effort to bring the voices and demands of children to the forefront are needed to mitigate the climate catastrophe.

According to UNICEF, over 1 billion children globally are at "extremely high risk" of the impact of climate change. It is a matter of injustice when children are denied access to clean air, food or water, health care, education or protection.

Inaction on tackling the effects of climate change will further exasperate the injustices children bear and put families living in deprived circumstances into the fringes of poverty. This would bring their children's lives further into jeopardy.

The U.N.'s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has identified Asia as the region most vulnerable to climate change. Indeed, while the Asia-Pacific region is home to the world's fastest-growing economies, it also has 13 of the 30 countries most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.

Extreme weather events such as heat waves, typhoons and floods disrupt food systems, resulting in malnutrition, education discontinuity, displacement, migration, mental health issues, loss of livelihoods, increased risk of violence and exploitation of children.

According to a UNICEF report, over 210 million children in East Asia and the Pacific region are highly exposed to cyclones; 140 million to water scarcity; 120 million to coastal flooding and 460 million to air pollution.

The WorldRiskReport, published last year by Bündnis Entwicklung Hilft, an alliance of German development and relief organizations, ranked the Philippines highest in the world in terms of disaster risk. India and Indonesia were close behind.

Many Asia-Pacific nations have pledged to reach carbon neutrality in their Paris Agreement commitments, but the region is still responsible for more than half of global emissions. It is axiomatic that to mitigate the effects of climate change, countries should

accelerate progress toward achieving net-zero emissions of greenhouse gases by 2050 in compliance with the global target set in 2015.

Immediate action has to be taken toward building the resilience of children, families, communities and social services to reduce the risks children face due to climate change-induced disasters.

ChildFund International's child and youth-led disaster risk management program in the Philippines aims to address their vulnerabilities and those of their communities and to strengthen resilience to the impacts of the climate crisis.

The project marks a paradigm shift toward investing in integrating technology-based interventions into the disaster risk management process and bringing climate-adaptive innovations and technologies to the community level. One result is a mobile application and web portal that allows residents and local government units to share timely and accurate information regarding relief distribution for efficient data management, monitoring and transparency during disasters and emergencies.

To build the resilience of children to respond to the climate crisis, efforts should be made to improve their adaptive capacity and ensure their voices are heard and acted on and also that their education and skills are enhanced so they can participate in creating a sustainable future in climate-change mitigation and adaptation.

ChildFund's efforts to make children more resilient to the impact of climate change resulted in the Youth for Nature campaign in Sri Lanka, which aims to raise awareness among young people so they can lead and advocate climate action in their country.

In Indonesia, Youth Voice Now is an initiative that aims to strengthen youth participation in village decision-making and increase youth awareness about the U.N.'s Sustainable Development Goals.

Ditha, who lives on the island of Flores, said after a Youth Voice Now workshop, "We identified issues that children my age face and that our parent's livelihoods are at stake because our agriculture depends on climate.

"To mitigate the impact of climate change, we should engage in tree planting and reduce the use of plastic. Amplify advocacy efforts to ensure children's voices reach the policymakers."

Children's rights and voices must be centered and incorporated in the implementation of the Paris Agreement at local, national, regional and international levels for us to halt global emissions and keep the rise in global temperatures below 1.5 C.

Next month, the countries of the world will take stock of progress on their Paris Agreement action plans at the U.N. Climate Change Conference in Dubai. We need to leverage the voices of children and youth at the center of all pathways of future climate action. Every government must advance climate education and green job skills for children and youth so that they may contribute to and participate in climate policy and action.

## THE MANILA TIMES

### [Pagasa boosts hazard mapping with help from Australia, UNDP](#)

The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in the Philippines and the Australian Embassy handed over ground survey and office equipment to the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical, and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) to support the generation of severe wind and storm surge hazard and risk maps and localized climate data for provinces.

As part of the Australian Government-supported Strengthening Institutions and Empowering Localities against Disasters and Climate Change (Shield) Program, one survey-grade drone, one high-end rangefinder, four high-end desktop computers, one high-end laptop computer, ten tablet PCs, and several other ground survey equipment were provided to support Pagasa's climate and disaster resilience initiatives.

Present during the handover ceremony were Department of Science and Technology (DoST) Undersecretary Maridon Sahagun and Assistant Secretary Rodolfo Calzado Jr., Pagasa OIC Dr. Nathaniel Servando, and Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) Director Teresito Bacolcol. UNDP Philippines Resident Representative Dr. Selva Ramachandran was also in attendance, together with the Australian Embassy Counsellor for Development Thanh Le PSM.

Undersecretary Sahagun highlighted the need for generating accurate scientific data and information for local resilience through multi-stakeholder action. "The heart and soul of the Shield Program is collaboration, wherein its outputs will play a pivotal role in supporting local resilience planning, unlocking funding opportunities, and shaping policies for resilience at both national and local levels" she declared.

In his message, Dr. Ramachandran recognized UNDP and Pagasa's longstanding partnership and expressed anticipation for deeper collaboration between the two institutions.

"The cooperative, innovative, and resilience-fostering mentality is embodied through the Shield Program. Today's handover is a demonstration of that collaborative spirit" he said.

Counsellor Le reiterated the Australian Government's commitment to support the Philippines build its climate and disaster resilience.

"We are proud to support Pagasa and highlight the role of science and technology as the foundation for effective and responsive climate action. Australia will continue to be a friend and partner to the Philippines to address these shared challenges" he expressed.

The Australian Government has allocated AU\$18 million for the Shield Program to assist the Philippine government enhance institutional and community resilience to climate change and natural hazards. This handover activity supports one of the Program's main goals, which is to generate more accurate, timely, and relevant scientific data and information on local hazards, risks, and vulnerabilities.

The Shield Program is being implemented by UNDP Philippines, together with consortium partners UN-Habitat, National Resilience Council, Philippine Business for Social Progress, and the Consortium of Bangsamoro Civil Society, in coordination with the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), DoST, and the Office of Civil Defense (OCD). It is being implemented in 11 of the country's most vulnerable provinces to disaster and climate change impacts, as well as in Metro Manila and the Bangsamoro Region.

## THE PHILIPPINE STAR

### Accessing UN climate financing difficult – President Marcos

By: Alexis Romero

Developing countries are having difficulty accessing climate financing, President Marcos said as he emphasized the need to act on climate change being felt in the Philippines through frequent and intense disasters.

Mami Mizutori, head of the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, told Marcos in a meeting last Friday at Malacañang that the international body is ready to assist the country in climate financing as it cited the efforts of the President to mitigate the effects of climate change in the country.

Although Marcos hailed the offer of Mizutori and the UN office, the Chief Executive also “raised the difficulty of developing countries in accessing the financing for climate change,” the Presidential Communications Office said in a statement.

“We are already in the middle of the effects of climate change. It’s time to get it done. But I’m glad that you’re here. As you can see immediately... this is very high on our priority... It is something that we really have to come to grips with. And I know that the UN certainly is providing some financing in terms of green and blue bonds,” Marcos was quoted in the statement as telling Mizutori.

“So, and then there are many, many other requirements that we have to fulfill. And sometimes it seems that it is very difficult to actually qualify for some of these,” he added.

Mizutori said the UN Secretary General wants reform in the international financial institutes and system. She mentioned the plight of middle-income countries like the Philippines that are constantly affected by climate-related disasters.

“This is an area where the United Nations system is working with governments like France, governments like Barbados,” said Mizutori, also special representative of the UN Secretary General for Disaster Risk Reduction.

“So, we will work as a United Nations system on how (to better) access climate financing,” she added.

Marcos, who once called climate change “the most pressing existential challenge of our time,” said there are issues that vulnerable countries like the Philippines are wrestling with.

He said the country has just gone through a difficult time because of a “very rapid” increase in the price of rice because all Asian countries are bracing for El Niño in the first quarter of 2024.

“So, everybody is buying that to build up their reserves, which drives the price up,” the Chief Executive said.

Regions that were not experiencing typhoons and other calamities are now prone to floods and other climate-related disruptions and changes, he added.

“We are always expected to be one of the most vulnerable when it comes to the effects of climate change and we certainly are very concerned. As I’ve said, right now, we are already feeling it because of the frequency and the intensity of these disasters that fall into the country,” the President told the UN official.

During the 18th East Asia Summit in Jakarta last month, Marcos pushed for a loss and damage fund to support measures designed to mitigate the effects of climate change. He added that climate financing, complemented by viable and effective technology transfer and country specific capacity-building, is needed “to expedite a just transition to a climate-resilient economy.”



## Climate 'countdown clock' report launched ahead of key UN talks

Top scientists have launched a yearly report series to plug knowledge gaps ahead of crunch climate talks, with their global warming "countdown clock" vying for the attention of world leaders and ordinary citizens alike.

In a year marked by devastating extreme weather events, Dubai will host key UN negotiations starting on November 30 aimed at curbing greenhouse gas emissions and helping the developing world deal with climate impacts.

The UN scientific advisory panel in charge of summarising climate change research has produced comprehensive and authoritative assessment reports in cycles of five to seven years since 1988.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has warned the world is on course to cross the key warming threshold of 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels in the early 2030s.

But the lengthy time lag between its gargantuan reports -- drawing from studies that may already have been superseded by new findings -- has sparked concern that backward-looking research is less useful for policymakers responding to a fast-moving climate emergency.

So 50 scientists, many lead IPCC contributors, teamed up to produce a paper on climate change in 2022 to update key metrics from the IPCC report.

"We cannot afford to wait" for the next IPCC assessment report in this "decade of action", said Peter Thorne, a professor of physical geography at Maynooth University in Ireland and co-author of the new report.

"If we are flying blind without information, we're going to make bad choices," he told AFP.

'Countdown clock'

The first peer-reviewed report of the series, published in the journal Earth System Science Data in June, said human-induced warming reached 1.26C in 2022 and increased at an "unprecedented rate" of more than 0.2C per decade in the 2013-2022 period.

These were key updates to the IPCC report published less than a year earlier.

It also said there was evidence that increases in greenhouse gas emissions have slowed, and that a change of direction could be observed in future updates.

"This is an annual timely reminder" of climate change after the initial media frenzy around IPCC findings fades, said co-author Chris Smith, of Britain's University of Leeds.

"We have a much more COP (UN climate talks) and policy focus than the IPCC," which strives for political neutrality and consensus without recommending policies, he told AFP.

Key climate metrics are now being monitored in a more coordinated way thanks to the annual datasets, distinguishing the research from other annual climate reports, Smith added.

The work's strength lies in "the simplicity of updating this handful of key numbers" with "immediate policy relevance" so that negotiations and policy decisions happen with "meaningful and updated information", said Thorne.

"In a rational world, it should be ringing alarm bells."

Smith said the findings were "the closest number we can come up with that tells us where we are in relation to 1.5C... This is like a countdown clock."

The scientists also sought to open the work to a wider public, with web engineers designing an interactive online dashboard to present key results in a user-friendly way.

In contrast, IPCC reports can run to thousands of pages and are "scary to the general public", said Thorne.

Piece of a 'mosaic'

The new project is to "complement" rather than replace other yearly studies and the IPCC, which has given "tacit endorsement", said Smith.

The organisation faces a formidable workload, which is where the new initiative can step in to help.

IPCC reports outside the standard cycle of scheduled assessments can galvanise action. A 2018 paper on 1.5C, the aspirational target of the 2015 Paris Agreement, was seen as jolting businesses and countries into more ambitious change.

But IPCC chair Jim Skea has rejected publishing such reports on a more regular basis, saying they dragged on the organisation's core work and resources.

"Over my dead body will we see lots and lots of special reports," he told AFP in a July interview.

Producing the new work in a short space of time makes it less exhaustive, but it is "one piece in a mosaic" with other research by bodies including the UN's World Meteorological Organization, added Thorne.

Criticism about a lack of geographical diversity and wider engagement with the scientific community is "fair" and will be addressed in future reports, said Smith.

## Climate financing hits record \$61 billion

By: Louella Desiderio

Climate finance provided by multilateral development banks (MDBs) to low and middle-income economies hit a new record high of nearly \$61 billion last year, according to a new report.

The 2022 Joint Report on MDB's Climate Finance showed climate finance allocated for low-income and middle-income economies jumped by 46 percent to \$60.7 billion last year from \$41.5 billion in 2019.

Of the total, 63 percent or \$38 billion was for climate change mitigation finance, while 37 percent or \$22.7 billion went to climate change adaptation finance.

Mobilized private finance reached \$16.9 billion last year.

MDBs also reported that \$48.7 billion of their climate finance went to public recipients, while \$12 billion went to private recipients in low- and middle-income economies last year.

The report covers climate finance committed by the African Development Bank, Asian Development Bank (ADB), Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, Council of Europe Development Bank, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, European Investment Bank, Inter-American Development Bank Group, Islamic Development Bank, New Development Bank and the World Bank Group.

The World Bank Group accounted for the highest climate finance for low- and middle-income economies last year amounting to \$31.7 billion, followed by the ADB with \$7.1 billion.

MDBs are surpassing for the second year in a row the 2025 climate finance targets they set at the UN Secretary General's Climate Action Summit in 2019.

These include a collective total of \$50 billion climate finance for low-income and middle-income economies.

"It is encouraging to see the growth in MDB climate finance for low- and middle-income economies, particularly the rise in the amount of private sector finance mobilized," ADB climate envoy Warren Evans said.

Despite the increase in climate financing, Evans pointed out that much more needs to be done.

“In Asia and the Pacific, home to many of the most climate-vulnerable countries, we will need to mobilize significant amounts of private sector finance to move from the billions to trillions required to cut greenhouse gas emissions and urgently scale up climate resilience both now and into the future,” Evans said.

## Timing is everything

By: Fidel Abalos

Today, disasters, whether man-made or natural, are just so prevalent and dominating. For one, the destructions inflicted by Russia in Ukraine and the carnage in Gaza (Israel) lead all man-made disasters to this day. On the other hand, typhoons and earthquakes and the consequential landslides and floods that are blamed on climate change have become so frequent and seemed the new normal. Though totally different, both disasters destroy lives and properties.

However, while the effects of climate change may take some time to address and nature's wrath will definitely stay for the time being, man-made disasters (like the war in Ukraine and Gaza), can definitely be stopped at once. Sadly, however, it seems that this war has been used by advanced nations to showcase their military technologies so that other wealthy countries may buy their weapons of mass destructions. Undeniably, serving the business interests of these powerful countries' defense contractors.

While the resolution of these conflicts (though totally dependent on the whims and caprices of the superpowers) is seemingly far and the timing is downright unpredictable, let us deal with, for the time being, concerns that more often affect every global citizen. These are natural disasters.

Agreeably, this is due primarily to the indiscriminate disposal of non-biodegradable wastes like plastic bags and any other rubbish that come from fossil fuel. And if in case you missed it, according to the United Nations Environment Program, we produce about 300 million tons (almost the weight of the entire human population) of plastic wastes annually.

These huge emissions did not happen overnight. Decades of greed made it happen. Notably too, more than a decade (2006-2011) ago, a group of start-ups and venture capitalists attempted to solve this malady by pushing the "clean-tech" initiatives (referred to as Clean-Tech 1.0). Sadly though, it never took off and venture capitalists lost billions in investments.

While the technology was there, John Weyant, a professor of management science and engineering at Stanford, said that the "advanced biofuels, thin-film solar companies, and all sorts of energy storage startups of the era were simply too immature and too expensive to be commercialized."

Today, however, Clean-Tech 2.0 is creating a stir. Whether it is driven by the effects of the pandemic, we do not know. There are, at least, two reasons though that might be

credited for that. US President Biden's call for clean energy and the technology that is getting better and cheaper.

As one of the biggest producers and the largest consumer of fossil fuel, that was the right call by Pres. Biden. Whether he should be credited for it, the fact remains that huge and influential investors (like Bill Gates, Jeff Bezos and Richard Branson) are either joining or bolstering their investment in clean technology.

On the other hand, we may have a lot of issues against China, but it is a fact that 8 of the 10 biggest manufacturers of solar equipment (panels, batteries, etc.) are Chinese. This is one of the reasons that clean technology is getting cheaper. Therefore, everything considered, today is the best time to go for it.

Moreover, domestically, there is something going on at the Department of Agriculture (DA) that is worth looking into. Well, it seems positive and a good move. Notably, as El Niño (characterized by low to zero rainfall and temperature that is higher than usual) inevitably comes in November until the first quarter of 2024, DA is advising farmers "to grow short gestation plants and those that do not require so much water and those needing only a shorter time to harvest." Specifically, it recommended crops like "corn, carrots, cabbage, beans, tomato, squash, broccoli, sweet peas, onion leeks, and radish." All of which require less water to grow.

For animal farming, the DA likewise said that "the effects of El Niño can also be lessened by feeding cows with corn and sugarcane as well as legumes, which are good sources of protein for animals." For fisheries, "the recommendation is to choose tilapia and bangus (milk fish) since these are resistant to heat, as well as catfish and mudfish which lives and thrives in muds." If we may add, if a farm is situated in typhoon paths, we should find high value crops that can be planted and harvested in typhoon-free months.

Indeed, just like anything we do in life, this advisory tells us that even in deciding what and when to plant crops or raise animals, timing is important. In fact, not only that it is important, as Garrett Hedlund's (a country singer) put it in his big hit called "Timing is everything," "It can happen so fast or a little too late. Timing is everything."

## CCC IN THE NEWS:

### PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

#### [AsPac meet 2024 exhibits PH role as leader in fight vs. climate crisis](#)

The Climate Change Commission (CCC) supports the Philippines in its role as the host country for the Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (APMCDRR) in 2024.

The conference was launched in Pasay City on Saturday, coinciding with the International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction.

Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction Mami Mizutori, Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro Jr., and Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Maria Antonia Yulo Loyzaga formally inaugurated the conference.

Scheduled Oct. 14 to 17, 2024 in Manila, the APMCDRR will serve as the primary regional platform where global leaders convene to identify solutions to disaster risk issues and promote coordination and cooperation on the implementation of the Sendai Framework in Asia and the Pacific.

The launch witnessed the signing of a partnership agreement by representatives from national government agencies, the private sector, and development partners.

The CCC, one of the member agencies of the 2024 APMCDRR Inter-Agency Committee, recognizes the importance of this conference, especially in the context of the escalating climate crisis.

"The Climate Change Commission fully supports the Philippines' hosting of the Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction. The APMCDRR places the Philippines firmly at the locus of regional and global convergent action on climate change, disasters and biodiversity loss through improved governance and strengthened collaboration toward resilience," CCC Vice Chairperson and Executive Director Robert E.A. Borje said in a news release on Sunday.

Alongside the APMCDRR launch, the CCC actively participated in the Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience Exhibit (Market Place) held as part of the 10th Top Leaders Forum. Mostly students, the visitors explored the CCC's booth, which showcased local climate resilience efforts and initiatives.



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