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By: Oliver Devos

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By: Hanneke Oudkerk and Gurpreet K. Bhatia

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THE PHILIPPINE STAR

[\[Opinion\] Germany's Philippine agenda](#)

By: Andrew J. Masigan

I had the pleasure to meet the new German Ambassador to the Philippines, Andreas Pfaffernoschke, at a diplomatic event last month.

Information and Knowledge Management Division

ABS CBN

Police detain Greta Thunberg at London climate protest

By: Oliver Devos

UK police on Tuesday removed Swedish climate campaigner Greta Thunberg from a protest outside the energy sector's annual London get-together, an AFP photographer reported.

The 20-year-old activist, who has become a key face of the movement to fight climate change, was taken away by two police officers and put into the back of a police van outside the Energy Intelligence Forum.

Joining a mass protest, Thunberg earlier slammed "closed door" agreements struck between politicians and representatives of the oil and gas industry.

"Behind these closed doors, spineless politicians are making deals and compromises with lobbyists from (the) destructive fossil fuel industry," Thunberg told journalists outside the venue hosting the annual gathering, which runs until Thursday.

Several hundred protestors gathered by the InterContinental London Park Lane hotel during the "Oily Money Out" demonstration, organised by pressure groups Fossil Free London and Greenpeace, blocking all entrances to the venue.

The carbon-intensive sector has faced fierce criticism from the green lobby for continuing to invest in dirty fossil fuels and worsen climate change -- instead of accelerating the shift towards cleaner renewable energy.

"The world is drowning in fossil fuels. Our hopes and dreams and lives are being washed away by a flood of greenwashing and lies," added Thunberg.

"It has been clear for decades that the fossil fuel industries were well aware of the consequences of their business models, and yet, they have done nothing.

"The opposite -- they have actively delayed, distracted and denied the causes of the climate crisis and spread doubts about their own engagement in it," she said.

Oil bosses

The gathering will be addressed Tuesday by a host of industry bigwigs, including Shell chief executive Wael Sawan, his counterpart at French group TotalEnergies Patrick Pouyanne, and Saudi Aramco boss Amin Nasser.

Outside the forum, demonstrators banged drums and chanted "stop the oil, stop the gas" and "We are unstoppable, another world is possible".

"I've got six grandchildren. I have nightmares about the future for them," protestor Doro Marden told AFP.

Demonstrators argue that most industry profit is ploughed back into dirty energy that worsens climate change.

"Oil companies have racked up billions upon billions of profit, breaking records across the board last year. Oily CEOs took home multi-million pound pay cheques," Fossil Free London said in a statement.

"The overwhelming majority of this money is going straight back into fossil fuel expansion, not the green energy they claim to support."

Many participants were unable to access the gathering this morning, with five demonstrators arrested on suspicion of obstructing a highway and taken into custody, the Metropolitan Police said.

CNN

[SM Prime, WWF-Philippines join forces to nurture the future sustainability champions](#)

Recognizing today's youth's key role as tomorrow's guardians of the environment, SM Prime Holdings, Inc. (SM Prime) and World Wide Fund for Nature Philippines (WWF-Philippines) have teamed up to launch YOUth are the Future, a leadership program aimed to equip young student leaders on environmental conservation, climate change, and sustainability issues.

"There is no better time than now to educate the youth. As stewards of the planet, it is important that they have an opportunity to learn about environmental conservation, encourage them to voice out their fresh ideas, and share new perspectives," said WWF-Philippines Education for Sustainable Development Project Head Dino Calderon.

"When we provide our young student leaders with learning opportunities and expose them to practical solutions, we have a chance to help them design a sustainable future. We are committed to make sure that things change for the better," says Hans "Chico" Sy, President of SM Engineering Design and Development Corporation (SMEDD) and SM sustainability champion.

Commencing with the grand launch on October 10, 2023, the student ambassadors from various Metro Manila high schools participated in a discovery tour around the SM Mall of Asia Complex, which features SM Prime's sustainability efforts and disaster resiliency practices. The formal introduction of YOUth are the Future Ambassadors was held at the SMX Convention Center and along with a pinning ceremony. Leaders and representatives from SM Prime, WWF-Philippines, government agencies, and foreign dignitaries were also present at the event.

In a message she delivered during the event, Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Maria Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga said, "Our journey is really about the race to resilience, as our climate changes, society is changing. Sustainability is our pathway to survival as a planet and that is what resilience is really about, the ability to withstand the impacts of the hazards that we know and those that we could face in the future."

The youth ambassadors will participate in a three-day eco-camp at Pico De Loro Beach and Country Club in November, where they will learn about waste and energy management, resource optimization, and climate mitigation and adaptation strategies from some of the country's experts.

Renowned for its role in Olive Ridley Sea Turtle conservation, the 3-day eco camp in Hamilo Coast also serves as an immersive natural classroom in environmental conservation. The expected output from the eco-camp is a Green Manifesto that outlines their plans to effect change and a storybook module co-authored by all the participants. The program will culminate in a series of mall and school tours throughout Metro Manila to boost youth engagement and student ambassador recruitment.

In a message sent by her excellency Vice President and Department of Education Secretary Sara Z. Duterte, she said, “This visionary program embodies the transformative power of education and empowerment in shaping a more sustainable and resilient future. Taking advantage of this program will give you all a head start on becoming influential figures in creating a more sustainable and ecologically aware culture.”

Together with its partners, WWF-Philippines hopes to empower young Filipinos further to become the next generation of sustainability champions. Programs like YOUth are the Future, can help succeeding generations become proactive leaders who can lanet.

GULF NEWS

Media role cited in raising climate change, sustainability awareness

Mohammed Jalal Al Rayssi, Director-General of the Emirates News Agency (WAM), has underscored the significant role that media can play in supporting collective efforts and raising awareness about climate change and sustainability.

During lectures delivered to students at Tsinghua University, the Communication University of China, and Beijing Foreign Studies University, Al Rayssi emphasised the crucial importance of media in highlighting these pressing issues, noting its prominent role in enhancing public awareness and encouraging international collaboration to find sustainable solutions.

The lectures revolved around three key topics: the role of media in highlighting climate issues, the significance of specialised media, and the role of national media in bolstering the UAE's efforts in this field.

WAM Director-General invited Chinese students to attend the upcoming Global Media Congress, set to take place in Abu Dhabi from November 14 to 16, 2023, noting that the congress presents a valuable opportunity to stay updated on the latest developments in the media industry and exchange insights with experts and specialists from around the world. He noted that the congress will address several important themes, including environmental media, sustainability, education, sports media, and the roles of new technologies and artificial intelligence.

Al Rayssi reiterated WAM's commitment to enhancing collaboration with media partners in the People's Republic of China, which will contribute to raising awareness about climate issues and sustainable development. He also emphasised WAM's dedication to strengthening its climate change and sustainability efforts by disseminating relevant news and information to raise awareness and foster dialogue and collective action.

During the lectures, the students actively engaged with the topics presented, posing questions about how media can support collaborative efforts, the challenges faced by specialised media, and the role that national media can play in supporting governmental initiatives.

MINDANAO TIMES

Disastrous consequences of climate change for children

By: Fr. Shay Cullen

The low, dark clouds, the rumble of thunder, the flashes of lightning, and the rising wind-bending branches all indicate a powerful typhoon is approaching, and that means danger, worry, and concern for the thousands of small farmers and their families and another week of loss, hunger, hardship, and survival. City dwellers worry less with their strong buildings and water drainage systems to protect them. But living in a bamboo hut with a grass roof or flimsy metal sheet roofing is not secure against the force and might of the all-destructive typhoons and floods that frequently hit the Philippines and other Southeast Asian countries.

The consequence of climate change is here; there is no doubt the Philippines endured 19 typhoons and storms in 2022, and they are increasing in number. Every year, they destroy harvests, houses, roads, and river embankments and cause landslides, floods, death, and destruction. Climate change continues to intensify and grow worse and more intense because of the non-stop burning of fossil fuels like coal and oil to generate electricity. They must be replaced with clean, renewable energy plants.

Yet, wealthy and secure politicians and business leaders ignore the dire threat to the nation and the planet. They do not see or care about the gathering catastrophe that is engulfing the planet and hurting children above all else. Pope Francis does care, and millions more, and he has spoken out in strong criticism of the world order that does too little to stop global warming and save the planet. The United Nations Children's Fund (Unicef) has warned in a new report that children are the most vulnerable of all.

The world temperature is coming ever closer to the tipping point of no return when the global temperature reaches 1.5 degrees hotter since the pre-industrial era and cannot be reversed. That is when one disaster will cause another in an unstoppable chain reaction of destruction. Humans have caused this, and the 10 richest nations are 70 percent responsible for it all.

The children are the most vulnerable to climate change and at risk, according to the recent report from Unicef titled "The Climate Crisis is a Child Rights Crisis: Introducing the Children's Climate Risk Index" launched recently at the UN headquarters in New York. This is part of an ongoing research project that analyses the vulnerability and risk factors of how climate change is endangering children. Children are impacted by storms, floods and landslides.

In other parts of the globe, drought kills everything. Children and people die. There are water-borne diseases from floods, loss of their possessions and flimsy bamboo and grass-roofed homes are blown away. This also causes psychological stress and diminishes their education and well-being. If they are sent away to distant relatives because of poverty, they can suffer malnourishment and the loss of their parents' love and protection. They are even vulnerable to physical and sexual abuse.

The Unicef report finds “approximately 1 billion children — nearly half the world’s 2.2 billion children — live in one of the 33 countries classified as “extremely high-risk.” The Philippines is 31 in ranking of this “high-risk” list of countries due to natural disasters caused by climate change.

A few wealthy nations are causing the most climate damage. Ten industrial rich nations are responsible for 70 percent of the massive amount of global emissions of CO2 that causes global warming and disastrous climate change. Just nine percent of the damaging CO2 emissions are caused by the 33 nations that are suffering most of the damage to their environment by climate change. Children suffer the most devastating consequences.

Pope Francis in his most recent encyclical letter on climate change named *Laudate Deum* (Praise God) pinned the blame for the growing climate crises on the irresponsibility of and uncaring attitude of big business and government officials that seek their own wealth gain at the cost to the planet and the poor. “Our responses have not been adequate, while the world in which we live is collapsing and may be nearing the breaking point,” he wrote. He pointed out the irreversibility of the damage. “Some effects of the climate crisis are already irreversible, at least for several hundred years, such as the increase in the global temperature of the oceans, their acidification and the decrease of oxygen,” he said in a profound statement.

It is the higher temperatures of the oceans that are greatly contributing to the more frequent and more powerful storms and typhoons. When governments and industry leaders ignore the truth and continue to rely and subsidize oil exploitation and promote fossil fuel, they cause climate disasters to develop. To promote fossil fuels such as coal, oil and gas, they slow down investment and development of renewable sources of energy like wind and solar power, geo-thermal, hydropower, bio and hydrogen power plants. They leave the problems unresolved and, as Pope Francis says, the result is more disastrous effects of global warming that creates “the probability of extreme phenomena that are increasingly frequent and intense.”

The Catholic Church has its ultra-conservative elements which Pope Francis referred to as “certain dismissive and scarcely reasonable opinions that I encounter, even within the Catholic Church.” For those in the Church and outside it that deny and ignore the

crises of global warming and its effects, he had this to say. “Despite all attempts to deny, conceal, gloss over or relativize the issue, the signs of climate change are here and increasingly evident. No one can ignore the fact that in recent years we have witnessed extreme weather phenomena, frequent periods of unusual heat, drought and other cries of protest.”

The greed and exploitation of liberal capitalism has much to answer for, the Pope said. The money moguls and investment gurus that ignore the global crises must be challenged. Pope Francis challenges them: “Regrettably, the climate crisis is not exactly a matter that interests the great economic powers, whose concern is with the greatest profit possible at minimal cost and in the shortest amount of time.”

Government and industry have to accelerate investment in the expansion of renewable energy projects. It seems some government officials are part of the problem protecting the coal and oil industry. The Philippines has massive wind, solar, geo-thermal and hydro possibilities and resources that are inexhaustible sources of clean energy. These are the safest and most economical alternatives to coal and oil-burning power stations. Instead of these natural forces of nature destroying us, we must turn them into positive, life-saving sources of clean energy, promoting life and the well-being of people, protecting children and the planet.

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 Bundnis 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.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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By: John Thwaites

The Asia-Pacific's greenhouse gas emissions keep rising and in some respects, the region is going backwards. Climate action was the only Sustainable Development Goal (SDG 13) in which outcomes went backward in the Asia-Pacific between 2015 and 2023.

Progress toward SDG 13, taking “urgent action to address climate change,” has been a case of two steps forward, one step back in the Asia-Pacific. Over the past two years, countries in the Asia-Pacific have made strides: China and Indonesia have undertaken to transition their economies to net zero by 2060, Australia and most Southeast Asian countries by 2050. China has massively invested in renewable energy. Indonesia has slowed deforestation, Vietnam has significantly expanded solar energy and Australia is aiming for more than 80 percent of electricity to be renewable by 2030.

But a 2023 United Nations report said SDG 13 is “slipping away” and the Asia-Pacific was “both a victim ... and a perpetrator of climate change.” There's work to do in getting SDG 13 back on track.

Climate finance has increased but falls short of what is needed for both mitigation and adaptation efforts. The financing gap is widening in emerging and developing economies due to discrepancies in financing costs.

For example, the estimated cost of capital for a solar PV panel in key emerging economies was between two and three times higher than in advanced economies and China.

The Asia-Pacific has vast potential to accelerate climate actions with strengthened collaboration. Increasing grid connectivity across Southeast Asian countries through the Asean Power Grid initiative can enhance energy security, increase efficiency of power procurement, and increase renewable energy uptake.

Increasing knowledge sharing and capability development is also critical to progress in the region. For instance, the Asean Green Future project, a collaboration between the Sustainable Development Solutions Network, Climateworks Centre, and research groups across Southeast Asia, has shown coordinating to build and strengthen low-carbon value chains can catalyze a rapid transformation of Southeast Asia into a global low-carbon hub.

An informed and collective response will form the bedrock of future success. The Asia-Pacific's diverse economic landscapes and policy contexts can shape adaptation strategies, resilience building, and emission reduction techniques.

In adaptation, as in mitigation, this knowledge exchange is pivotal, particularly in catalyzing funding and policy support for the most vulnerable nations.

Climate change is leading to more intense and frequent extreme weather events, and there are severe vulnerabilities in the region, including sea level rise in the Pacific, and flooding and typhoons in tropical Asia.

A person living in Asia and the Pacific is six times more likely to be affected by disaster events than someone living outside the region, resulting in thousands of lives lost and millions of dollars of economic damages.

The number of lives lost in disasters is dwarfed by the deaths attributable to air pollution, much of it caused by burning coal.

Of the seven million premature deaths globally resulting from air pollution, more than four million were in Asia and the Pacific. Reducing reliance on coal helps mitigate climate change and also has an immediate health benefit for people living in the region.

While some countries make progress, others grapple with unique challenges.

Indonesia, for instance, stands at a pivotal juncture. The announcement at the Group of Twenty in 2020 of \$20 billion of finance to support a Just Energy Transition Partnership in Indonesia has, along with the global resources race fueled by the United States' Inflation Reduction Act, creating meaningful opportunities for the transition in Indonesia.

However, more policy reforms are needed to increase renewable energy uptake. Indonesia has significant capacity for solar power, but regulatory constraints make it very difficult to compete.

Given the urgent need to address climate change, the imperative is not only setting goals or targets, but delivering on them.

In Australia, targets supported by meaningful policy and economic incentives have been key to progress: electricity generation by renewable sources has grown by 167 percent over 10 years, driven by meaningful policy and incentives to make those targets a reality.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

[\[Opinion\] Germany's Philippine agenda](#)

By: Andrew J. Masigan

I had the pleasure to meet the new German Ambassador to the Philippines, Andreas Pfaffernoschke, at a diplomatic event last month.

A native of Berlin, Ambassador Pfaffernoschke was previously appointed to such important posts as Moscow, New York and Paris. The fact that a diplomat of his caliber was assigned to the Philippines exemplifies the importance of the country to Germany's Indo-Pacific strategy.

Beneath his dignified persona, Ambassador Pfaffernoschke is an amiable gentleman, a loving spouse of 33 years and father of four. He is a grandfather of one and an avid runner, swimmer and tennis player. He has a doctorate in economics and joined the foreign service in 1990.

Last August, President Bongbong Marcos accepted his credentials, opening the way for him to perform his official duties. Since then, Ambassador Pfaffernoschke has gone on a full offensive, meeting German nationals and Filipino personalities, both in the public and private sectors. He admits being impressed by the openness and hospitality of the Filipino.

The Philippines and Germany are of like minds. Both value peace and the rules-based framework for international discourse. Both value democracy, free market capitalism and the individual's pursuit of wealth and happiness. With the exception of the aberration that is the Duterte administration, both countries honor human rights too.

Ambassador Pfaffernoschke and I sat down for a long chat last week. At the forefront of his agenda is the peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific region. No surprise there. Germany is committed to defend the rules-based order among nations. It is doing its fair share to temper China's hegemonic ambitions and safeguard the freedoms of navigation and overflight we presently enjoy in the West Philippine Sea. Germany stands firm in support of the 2016 Arbitral Ruling of the Permanent Court of Arbitration, which ruled in the Philippines' favor.

Another priority is to encourage the Philippine government improve its human rights record. President Duterte did the country a great disservice with his poorly considered drug war. Not only was it an embarrassing failure by most indices, the unlawful murders inflicted severe damage to the country's reputation as safe destination for investments,

tourism and international cooperation. It relegated the Philippines as a rogue state that is both lawless and unsafe.

The Marcos government has professed to re-calibrate the drug war to comply with human rights statutes. The world is watching closely. On impunity, it is believed that abuses among law enforcers are still widespread. Too, the slow and oftentimes biased justice system is a cause for concern. The same is true for red-tagging, which came into vogue during the later part of the Duterte regime. All these must be corrected if the Philippines is to qualify for EU aids and grants and renew its preferential trade status (GSP Plus) with the EU after 2027. The recent extension of our GSP Plus during the visit of EU chief Ursula von der Leyen was only an accommodation.

Climate change is also a topic of interest. Even if the Philippines emits an annual average of only 1.98 metric tons of greenhouse gases per person (half the global average), the Philippine government had audaciously committed to reduce emissions by 75 percent by the year 2050.

However, like many countries (including Germany), the Philippines is behind in meeting its nationally determined contributions on greenhouse gas emissions. At this stage, green technologies should have found its way across the agriculture, transport, waste management and manufacturing sectors. It is not there yet. Germany is committed to assist the Philippines in both technology transfers and investments.

In commerce, Germany has always been an important ally to the Philippines. Germany is the EU's largest economy and the Philippines' 12th largest trading partner. Bilateral trade amounted to some \$4.7 billion last year, for which the Philippines enjoyed a hefty surplus. As far as foreign direct investments are concerned, German companies pumped in some \$217 million over the last five years despite the blowback of the Fraport controversy of 2007. German companies employ thousands of Filipinos whilst facilitating technology transfers to the country.

Admittedly, the Philippines' share of German investments pale in comparison to the amounts that have been invested in Vietnam and Indonesia. This is especially true now that Germany is actively "de-risking" its economic interest from China.

The Philippines needs to become more competitive, especially in the realm of ease in doing business, asserts Ambassador Pfaffernoschke. Among the pain points are the many redundant steps required to obtain business permits, all of which can take months to accomplish. Rampant corruption, especially from predatory local government officials. Bureaucratic difficulties in importation and exportation, among others.

While the Anti-Red Tape Authority has made some progress in reducing redundancies, the culture of red tape and harassment remain rife among government bureaucrats. This should be replaced by a culture of enablement. The culture of red tape is reflected in our poor intake of foreign direct investment. As of the first seven months of the year, FDIs declined by 14.7 percent despite the many foreign roadshows of the President. It just shows that an aggressive sales blitz to “sell the Philippines” means nothing if the house is not in order.

In the realm of cultural exchanges, Ambassador Pfaffernoschke aspires to level up access to German language courses. Learning German will grant access to Filipinos intending to work or study in Germany. Germany is in need of thousands of workers to augment its ageing population.

Germany is a highly evolved country with mature democratic institutions, a world-leading economy and social equality across sectors. It views the Philippines as a young friend that is still coming to its own. Through the initiatives of Ambassador Pfaffernoschke, Germany is committed to help the Philippines become a stronger republic.

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