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25 October 2022 [08:00 am]

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ASSOCIATED PRESS (AP)

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By Wanjohi Kabukuru

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By Samuel P. Medenilla

AGRICULTURE modernization, digitalization, and the impact of climate change on employment are among the main issues on the agenda of the 27th Association of Southeast Asian Nation (ASEAN) Labor Ministers Meeting (ALMM) to be hosted by the country this week, according to the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE).

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By: Aidan Lewis and Farah Saafan

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MANILA BULLETIN

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MANILA STANDARD

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[Climate justice as a human right](#)

By: Tony La Vina

A few weeks from now, governments will meet in Sharm Al Sharif in Egypt for the 27th Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. It will be a pivotal meeting that will hopefully make progress on addressing the climate emergency.

MINDA NEWS

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By: Antonio Colina V

Environmental groups urged rich countries that are contributing largely to greenhouse gas emissions to provide additional climate funds as reparation to developing countries severely affected by the climate crisis.

MONGABAY

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RAPPLER

[\[Opinion\] Taiwan injects momentum into global transition to net-zero emissions](#)

By: Chang Tzi Chin

The world has embarked on the transition to net-zero emissions. The innovative approaches to international cooperation highlighted in the Paris Agreement — which calls for wide cooperation by all countries to meet global reduction targets — are gradually taking shape. Taiwan is willing and able to cooperate with international partners to jointly achieve net-zero transition, mobilize global climate action, and ensure a sustainable environment for future generations.

REUTERS

[EU countries agree to hike climate change target next year](#)

By: Kate Abnett and Bart H. Meijer

European Union countries agreed on Monday to raise their target to curb greenhouse gas emissions under the Paris climate agreement next year, as the bloc attempts to rally ambition among major emitters ahead of this year's U.N. climate talks.

THE MANILA TIMES

[Berde buildings](#)

By: Aaron Ronquillo

Sustainability and environment-friendly are some of the watchwords nowadays as people are becoming increasingly aware of the need to protect the environment and

along with it, one's health as they are intertwined. Several organizations or institutions have emerged to promote these two attributes. One of them is the Philippine Green Building Council (PHILGBC), which established the Berde (Building for Ecologically Responsive Design Excellence) program.

[PH to host Asean labor ministers' meet](#)

By William B. Depasupil

THE top labor officials of the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) will meet in Manila this week to discuss ways to strengthen regional cooperation on matters affecting labor and employment.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

[SLTEC redeems P3.2 billion ACEN preferred shares](#)

By: Richmond Mercurio

Manila Philippines — South Luzon Thermal Energy Corp. (SLTEC) has redeemed P3.2-billion worth of preferred shares owned by ACEN Corp. as part of the energy transition mechanism, which will enable the early retirement of the company's coal power plant in Batangas.

[UN Day: Philippines marks role in community of nations](#)

By: Pia Lee-Brago

Manila, Philippines — The Philippines continues to make its mark in the United Nations, with at least 657 Filipinos serving in various capacities for the UN overseas, UN Philippines Resident Coordinator Gustavo Gonzalez said.

Information and Knowledge Management Division

ASSOCIATED PRESS (AP)

[African nations to finalize aims ahead of UN climate summit](#)

By Wanjohi Kabukuru

MOMBASA, Kenya (AP) — The final meeting of African nations' climate negotiators ahead of the global U.N. summit kicks off in the Namibian capital Windhoek on Monday, with participants expected to focus on how to ramp up renewable energy on the continent.

Organizers of the annual Climate Change and Development in Africa conference said the meeting serves as the final chance for the continent's negotiators, government officials, climate scientists, grassroots civil societies and farming associations to fine tune the continent's interests and agree on a common position to promote at the climate summit in Egypt in November, known as COP27.

How the continent will transition towards clean energy without leaving the poorest communities behind and ensuring renewables help boost nations' economies will be a major discussion point for African delegations, said Africa Climate Policy Centre's James Murombedzi.

He added that participants are also likely to look at how to finance more renewable power on the continent as well as seek additional funds to help vulnerable communities adapt to weather extremes and ensure food security.

Africa attracted just 2% of the world's clean energy investment in the last 20 years, according to the International Renewable Energy Agency.

It's expected that African nations will urge developed countries to ensure more climate financing at COP27. Countries want high-polluting nations to pay compensation to countries who have done little to contribute to climate change but are more vulnerable to its effects. This is known as "loss and damage" in climate negotiations.

"As we have argued for decades, adaptation and increasingly loss and damage are the main climate action priorities for the continent," said Mithika Mwenda, one of the meeting's co-conveners and part of the Pan African Climate Justice Alliance.

Africa is responsible for about 3% to 4% of global emissions despite being home to nearly 17% of the world's population but experts say it is particularly vulnerable to climate change as it's less able to adapt.

BUSINESS MIRROR

[Agri modernization, climate risks top Asean labor agenda](#)

By Samuel P. Medenilla

AGRICULTURE modernization, digitalization, and the impact of climate change on employment are among the main issues on the agenda of the 27th Association of Southeast Asian Nation (ASEAN) Labor Ministers Meeting (ALMM) to be hosted by the country this week, according to the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE).

Labor and Employment Secretary Bienvenido E. Laguesma will chair the ALMM, to be held at the Shangri-La Hotel in Bonifacio Global City from October 25 to 29.

It will be the first face-to-face ALMM since the onset of the pandemic in 2020.

Also a first in the event, Laguesma said agricultural modernization and food security are included among the top priorities in the meeting.

“This is a good development for the Philippines as it is fully aligned with the strategic priorities of President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.’s socioeconomic agenda,” Laguesma said in a press statement on Sunday.

Emerging trends

Other issues to be tackled: the review of the progress of various regional programs on skills development, digitalization, climate change and green jobs, industrial relations and the changing world of work, migration and social protection.

On skills training, Laguesma said they will talk about upgrading competency and professional qualifications standards and the delivery of technical and vocational education and training (TVET); making ICT (information and communication technology) and digitalization accessible to all.

“The meetings will also highlight the need for more effective regional responses to unemployment especially in rural communities, rising food prices, and inflation, which are now among the biggest threats to workers’ welfare and well-being in the region,” Laguesma said.

Labor officials from the 10 Asean member-states—Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam and the Philippines—are participating in the event.

Laguesma said they will also hold meetings with ASEAN Plus Three dialogue partners China, Japan and South Korea.

Labor participation

Nagkaisa Labor Coalition chairman and Federation of Free Workers (FFW) president Sonny Matula said the ALMM participants are also expected to meet with labor representatives.

“The actual meeting will be for labor ministers only, but they are expected to also meet with labor representatives during the side event [of the ALMM],” Matula told BusinessMirror in a SMS.

He said they endorsed Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU) Chairperson Elmer Labog to be their representative in the event.

Labog said he will raise the issues of trade union rights violations, low wages, and unemployment in case their meeting with labor ministers pushes through. As of press time last Sunday, DOLE has yet to confirm if the ALMM participants will be meeting with employer or labor representatives.

INTERAKSYON

[Egypt COP27 climate summit activists concerned voices will be curtailed](#)

By: Aidan Lewis and Farah Saafan

Cairo— The decision to hold next month's COP27 climate summit in a highly secured tourist resort in Egypt, along with restrictions on access, is curbing civil society's participation in the event, some prominent activists say.

The Nov. 6-18 summit in Sharm el-Sheikh is the first annual U.N. climate conference to be held after the easing of COVID-19 restrictions. Campaigners see it as a crucial venue for raising the alarm over climate change and pressuring governments to act.

But they say voicing their concerns through rallies and protests as they have done in past host countries or cities will be more challenging in Egypt, where public demonstrations are effectively banned and activists have struggled to operate legally amid a far-reaching crackdown on political dissent.

Limits on accreditation and attendance badges for activists, especially from poorer nations, have also been a point of contention at previous U.N. climate summits.

Egypt, which has just one non-governmental organization permanently accredited to attend the annual summits, says inclusion of civil society is a priority, and it has helped add more NGOs including 35 Egyptian groups through a single-year admission valid only for COP27.

That was a positive step but the process was not publicly announced and did not give some groups a fair chance to apply, said Hossam Bahgat, head of the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights (EIPR) and one of Egypt's best known campaigners.

"As a result, the list of accredited organizations does not include a single human rights organization and none of the independent human rights groups in Egypt, including those that are working on the nexus of human rights, environmental justice and climate justice," he said.

A spokesperson for Egypt's COP presidency said in a written response to questions that there had been a "fully transparent" selection process approved by the U.N. after consultation with regional organizations and national negotiating teams.

Egyptian groups were recommended based on their environment and climate change expertise, the spokesperson said.

A U.N. climate change spokesman said there had been around 10,000 registrations from almost 2,000 admitted observer organizations for COP27, which was similar to COP26 in Glasgow.

Concrete barrier

Another concern among activists is the difficulty ordinary citizens may face accessing Sharm el-Sheikh. The city, situated at the southern tip of Egypt's Sinai peninsula, is bordered by the sea on one side and a concrete and wire barrier in the desert on the other.

It is only reachable by air, or by roads studded with checkpoints that run north towards the Suez Canal, the border with Israel, and North Sinai, where Egyptian security forces have been waging a counter-insurgency campaign.

"It's going to be virtually impossible for anyone who is not accredited for the conference itself to be able to access the city during the conference period," said Bahgat, adding that activists were expecting a "significantly quieter and much more regulated" COP this year.

Some of those hoping to travel from outside Egypt have been put off by hotel prices that ran into hundreds of dollars per night earlier in the year.

After lobbying from civil society, the government negotiated a \$120 price cap for two-star hotels and announced cheaper accommodation in recent weeks.

That included rooms for 400 young people at about \$30-40 a night, and was designed to help African groups overcome long-standing obstacles to accessing COP summits, said Omnia el-Omrani, COP27's youth envoy.

Omar Elmawi, an East African climate campaigner and member of the COP27 Coalition who has sought a visa to travel to the summit, said the offer of cheaper accommodation had been too slow to arrive.

"We're still in this big problem around access for our people from Africa," he said, citing flight and hotel costs and uncertainty over visas as barriers to attendance. A highly regulated summit could limit the airing of "the really hard questions that need to be asked", he said.

Egyptian officials have said hotel prices are driven by market forces and peaceful protests will be welcomed during the summit, with designated spaces created for them.

The COP27 presidency was doing what it could to ensure such spaces were "visible and in the vicinity of the conference, provided with all services including drinking water and shades", the presidency spokesperson said. Those wishing to hold a rally should coordinate "with the relevant authorities as soon as possible", they added.

But this month a group of independent experts appointed by the United Nations Human Rights Council warned that past crackdowns on NGOs and activists had created a "climate of fear", and called on Egypt to ensure safe and meaningful participation for civil society at COP27.

A petition led by 12 Egypt-focussed rights groups has called on Egypt to address restrictions on civil society, saying “effective climate action is not possible without open civic space”.

Because of the lack of local residents in the remote tourist resort, a traditional “global day of action” during the summit would be marked elsewhere around the world but not in Sharm el-Sheikh, said Tasneem Essop, head of the Climate Action Network, which includes more than 1,500 civil society groups.

“Certainly we’re very alive to the fact that Sharm el-Sheikh is an enclosed space, very controlled, very curated,” she said.

MALAYA BUSINESS INSIGHT

B&P holds coastal, underwater cleanup

Outsource staffing solutions company Booth and Partners (B&P) has taken its advocacy to the next level by marking World Cleanup Day 2022 with a simultaneous underwater and coastal cleanup in Argao and Badian, Cebu last September 17.

Together with their 1% for the Planet partner and non-profit organization, Coastal Conservation Education Foundation Inc. (CCEF), and the local government units of Argao and Badian, they were able to gather around 250 participants from the LGU, the coastal community, independent volunteers, as well as the Booth and Partners employees to take part in the beach cleanup event dubbed as “Ocean Ally: World Cleanup Day with Booth and Partners.”

The cleanup was B&P’s maiden on-site corporate social responsibility (CSR) event with the Cebu-based organization that specializes in coastal resource management (CRM) in maintaining sustainable coasts through involved communities. The tandem widened their reach by removing not just the visible marine pollutants in the area but also the significant amount of ghost nets.

Apart from trapping fishes in the seas, ghost nets are especially harmful to corals, such as those located in Zaragosa, Badian. Accounting for 46 to 70 percent of plastic pollution at sea, these discarded fishing gears have caused great concern due to their microplastics contribution.

Member companies of 1% for the Planet are to give one percent of their revenue to certified members, non-profit organizations for use in environmental causes.

MANILA BULLETIN

[PH reaffirms commitment to UN principles](#)

By: Joseph Pedrajas

The Philippines has reaffirmed its commitment to the principles of the United Nations, particularly its goals to overcome conflict, crisis and possible catastrophes, as the organization celebrates its 77th founding anniversary on Monday, Oct. 24.

Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) Secretary Enrique Manalo stressed the need to maintain a more peaceful, united, and prosperous world amid climate change and food insecurity, which have been exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic and increasing geopolitical conflicts.

“As President Ferdinand R. Marcos stated recently at the United Nations General Assembly, ‘We need the United Nations to continue to work. And we, the Philippines, are determined to be part of that solution,’” the country’s top diplomat said in a statement.

Throughout the years, Manalo took pride of the country’s active membership and staunch advocacy for the values and ideals of the United Nations.

“We have always stood up for sovereign equality of states, peaceful resolution of disputes, equal rights of women and men, inclusive social development, the rule of law, and justice for all,” he said.

Today, he added, the Philippines even “plays a constructive role in the United Nations as a bridge-builder and champion of vulnerable groups, such as children and migrants, and developing countries’ interests.”

Amid the challenges that continue to confront the world, Manalo believed, there are still many opportunities to forge stronger international cooperation to realize the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

“Against this backdrop, the Philippines reaffirms its commitment to uphold the principles upon which the United Nations was founded, forging cordial ties with the members of the community of nations, and strengthening partnerships to realize our national and collective aspiration of peace, security, and development for all peoples,” he said.

“On this occasion of our commemoration of UN Day, we uphold the important place of the United Nations in these efforts and commit to advancing its role in ensuring a better, safer, and more sustainable future,” he added.

MANILA STANDARD

[Alexa, what's the weather like today?](#)

By: Alma Maria Jennifer Gutierrez

Every year, our country encounters several typhoons, and in recent years, we have observed and experienced extreme tropical storms and floods. Aside from this, we have seen in the news the loss of human lives and properties brought about by these weather disturbances. I wonder why we don't learn from this, and develop solutions to prevent such losses.

How does climate change affect our country? The Philippines is highly at risk of the impacts of climate change, such as sea level rise, intensification and frequency of extreme weather events, rising temperatures and extreme rainfall. Knowing these things, are we still in denial of climate change, or do we need to take action to prevent its effects on the environment? What should be our attitude towards it?

We have reached a tipping point where what we do now will affect our planet and reverse the tremendous consequences of global warming. What measures can we take to protect Mother Earth so the next generation can enjoy it? As inhabitants of our planet, we cannot allow the forces of climate change in our lives and catastrophe to persist. We have suffered enough; if we don't do something about it and take radical action, the next generations will be harmed.

Rather than be overwhelmed, let's do something and start today. All of us can make a big difference. As an educator and an advocate of sustainability, I cannot simply sit and not do anything. And if you are a parent, I am sure you feel the same way. A change in our behaviors can make a difference in helping protect our environment. Some simple ways are—minimizing the use of plastics and bringing our own water bottles when going out. If possible, upcycle so as not to add to the landfills. Segregate our trash into biodegradable and recyclable. I believe that WE NEED TO TAKE ACTION—that action will make us become ecologically adept and shape our environmental future.

In the onslaught of typhoon Karding (international name Noru), five rescuers from Bulacan died while saving others. We honor their heroism and offer our sincerest sympathies to their family. We should not allow more human lives to be at risk in the future. So, what can we do as citizens? As Filipinos, we should also do everything in our power to put pressure on the government to prevent the construction of the Kaliwa Dam Project, which will damage the biodiversity of the Sierra Madre Mountain and leave enduring destruction to our environment. I also appeal to our government to be serious about going after illegal loggers and encourage every citizen to participate in a tree-planting program.

We must act, and we must care. And we can do something. Acting gives us the power to find the solution because there is no planet B.

[OPINON] Climate justice as a human right

By: Tony La Vina

A few weeks from now, governments will meet in Sharm Al Sharif in Egypt for the 27th Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. It will be a pivotal meeting that will hopefully make progress on addressing the climate emergency.

Specifically, I hope climate justice will guide the actions of everyone.

Several months ago, the Commission on Human Rights published its report on the link between climate change and human rights.

The report concluded that climate change is a human rights issue and Carbon Majors can be held liable for their human rights violations.

While belatedly released, the Report is a big win for the environmental and climate justice movement, especially as we strengthen our resolve to combat the climate crisis, here in the Philippines and everywhere else in the world.

A battle cry by many climate activists and environmental workers for years now, it is a victory to witness human rights institutions acknowledge this important—and fundamental—truth.

Acknowledging that climate change is a human rights issue has many consequences, including the fact that the way to fight the climate crisis will involve a deep resolve to simultaneously protect and promote human rights.

The CHR noted the many impacts of climate change on the rights of people, including, but not limited to, their rights to life, health (both physical and mental), food security, water and sanitation, livelihood, adequate housing, and the right to a safe, clean, healthy, and sustainable environment.

Laudably, the Report mentioned rights to preservation of culture, noting that “climate change particularly impacts cultures closely connected with the natural environment,” and using rituals and cultures of indigenous peoples as examples.

The Report also discussed the impact of climate change to the right of future generations and inter-generational equity, noting that the lack of urgency in the fight against the climate crisis unfairly shifts the burden unto future generations.

Perhaps one of the most important, if not the main highlight, of the CHR Report was the discussion on the liability of Carbon Majors—fossil fuel and agriculture companies among others—in the context of climate change.

It used a study that linked the emissions of Carbon Majors to observed rise in atmospheric carbon dioxide and an increase in global average temperature, among others.

To discuss further their liabilities, the CHR noted that these Carbon Majors had early awareness, notice, or knowledge of the adverse effects of their products.

Further, that these Carbon Majors engaged in willful obfuscation and obstruction (including the coal industry's "history of misleading the public about climate science" and the Carbon Majors' efforts to sow "doubt and misinformation about climate change"), which, according to the CHR, "prejudiced the right of the public to make informed decisions about their products, concealing that their products posed significant harms to the environment and the climate system."

The CHR concluded that paragraph strongly by saying that "[a]ll these have served to obfuscate scientific findings and delay meaningful environment and climate action."

The CHR ended its groundbreaking Report with a number of recommendations. Despite the successes of the Paris Agreement, which had, for one of its main goals the limiting of temperature increase to 2 degrees Celsius, preferably 1.5 degrees, compared to pre-industrial levels, the CHR echoed the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)'s report that even if all the current Nationally

Determined Contributions (NDCs) are implemented, "the world will still face a 2.7 degree increase in temperature by the end of the century.

"Therefore, there is a need for "maximum ambition from all countries on all fronts."

Its recommendations to governments focused on climate justice, discouraging the dependence on fossil fuels, and ensuring that all persons have the necessary capacity to adapt to climate change, among others.

Notably, it also recommended governments, specifically developed nations, to fulfill their climate finance commitments and device new mechanisms for loss and damage from climate-related events, stressing the need for "a separate finance mechanism for loss and damage xxx to assist developing countries" in addition to climate financing for mitigation and adaptation, a call that environmental workers, particularly from climate-vulnerable countries, have been making.

The fact that this is part of the recommendations, therefore, is a big victory for climate justice.

Another notable recommendation to governments was to support and provide adequate legal protection to environmental defenders and climate activists, and States are encouraged to, for instance, (a) stop labeling climate advocates, environmental groups, and defenders as enemies of the State, and other related actions, based on their advocacy for climate action, and (b) prohibit vilification, surveillance, red-tagging,

threats of retaliation, and other activities that limit the freedom of climate activist and environmental groups.

The CHR Report is the first of its kind, and its contribution to the climate change discussion, particularly that on loss and damage, is invaluable.

It provided novel recommendations, put a lot of focus on climate justice and just transition, and laid down one by one and in no uncertain terms—rights, obligations, and liabilities. It can now serve as precedent and can be cited by courts all over the world as we begin to witness a surge in climate litigation.

MINDA NEWS

[As COP27 nears, environmentalists call on rich countries ‘to pay climate debt’](#)

By: Antonio Colina V

Environmental groups urged rich countries that are contributing largely to greenhouse gas emissions to provide additional climate funds as reparation to developing countries severely affected by the climate crisis.

Ruel Kenneth Felices, digital campaigner of the Interfacing Development Interventions for Sustainability, Inc. (IDIS), told MindaNews on Monday that environmental advocates are demanding that rich countries “pay their climate debt and deliver additional non-debt-creating climate finance as reparations for their historical role in causing the climate crisis.”

“As COP27 is just around the corner, we must take this opportunity to raise our calls, push our demands and compel governments, global institutions and corporations to take urgent and necessary actions for the people’s survival. We will also call and raise awareness on the emerging and other environmental issues in the city,” he said.

COP27 or the United Nations Climate Change Conference will gather world leaders to “take action towards achieving the world’s collective climate goals as agreed under the Paris Agreement” from November 6 to 18 in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt.

He said green groups are organizing a bicycle ride titled “Climate Finance Now! Reparation for Climate Debt!” at 5 a.m. on November 6 to express their solidarity and to highlight the gravity of the climate crisis as well as the urgency for bold, ambitious, just and equitable climate solutions.

A similar event will be simultaneously held in Cagayan de Oro City, Quezon City, Cebu and Batangas, according to him.

He added that countries like Bangladesh, Nepal, India, Pakistan, Thailand, South Korea and Sri Lanka will also initiate similar events.

Felices said they also hope to raise awareness on the worsening impact of climate change and to pressure governments and corporations to take urgent actions to address the global crisis.

He added that they want to highlight the environmental issues in Davao such as the prioritization of the waste-to-energy project by the local government, call for more sources of clean energy, and address solid waste management issues, including plastic pollution.

He added that around 150 bikers are expected to join the cycling event, which will start at the Freedom Park along Roxas Avenue in the city.

Rara Ada, area coordinator for Philippine Movement for Climate Justice (PMCJ), told Kapehan sa Dabaw on Monday that organizers wish to highlight the impact of the climate crisis during the bicycle ride not only in Davao City but also in other parts of the country.

She said they are hoping for a coordinated action from the highly industrialized countries to address the climate crisis.

Ada said more than 50 percent of the greenhouse gas emissions came from countries belonging to the Global North or the highly industrialized nations “but developing countries like the Philippines are the ones bearing the brunt of the climate crisis through strong typhoons.”

Felices identified the Global North as composed of the wealthy and technologically advanced countries like the United States, nations of the European Union and Japan, among others.

“Apparently, they have the greatest contribution to the historical and present greenhouse gas emissions in the atmosphere. The concept of this call is for these countries from the Global North to deliver climate finance to the Global South,” he added.

Global South refers to those technically and socially less-developed countries, basically located in Africa and Asia.

MONGABAY

[Arctic sea ice loss to increase strong El Niño events linked to extreme weather: Study](#)

By: Alec Luhn

The 2015-16 El Niño fueled deadly record cyclones in the South Pacific and Mexico, as well as severe droughts that resulted in thousands of early deaths from fires and haze in southeast Asia and tens of millions going hungry amid crop failures in southern Africa.

Strong El Niños like that one could happen more frequently in the future as Arctic sea ice starts to disappear in the summer, according to a recent study published in Nature Communications. The research is the first to find a direct link between sea ice loss and the occurrence of El Niño, a warming of surface water in the eastern Pacific off of Peru that encourages higher global temperatures and extreme weather around the planet.

Research has already indicated that the warming Arctic is affecting weather in the mid-latitudes, such as when polar vortex “stretching” likely contributed to a deadly cold wave in Texas last year. But the new study suggests that changes in the Arctic will also influence the tropics.

“We will see an ice-free Arctic in the near future,” said lead study author Jiping Liu of the University at Albany in New York state. “The loss of Arctic sea ice can influence the frequency of strong El Niños, so Arctic sea ice loss influences global weather and the climate.”

The Arctic is warming at a rate up to four times faster than the planet as a whole and has lost a third of its sea ice volume in just two decades. It’s expected that by 2050, year-round Arctic sea ice will melt entirely during some summers. One study even predicted this could happen by 2035.

El Niño usually happens naturally every three to five years, with the irregular occurrences named for the Christ child by Peruvian fishermen who noticed the ocean warming trend around Christmas. Liu said he was surprised to find that the high-emissions global warming scenario computer models used in the study predicted that total summer sea ice loss could promote the most drastic kind of El Niño, where Pacific sea surface temperatures increase by 1.5° Celsius (2.7° Fahrenheit) or more. The models found that the frequency of these strong El Niños could increase by 35% before the end of the century.

That suggests that melting sea ice could trigger more heatwaves, droughts and other extreme weather events associated with strong El Niños around the globe. Liu is now working on research to confirm this influence. Warming water temperatures during strong El Niños can also cause widespread coral bleaching and reef death.

Jennifer Francis, acting deputy director of the Woodwell Climate Research Center who was not involved in the study, told Mongabay that the new research gives some of the most compelling evidence yet of long-distance climate links, or teleconnections, between the Arctic and other regions. Francis co-authored a landmark 2012 study showing that Arctic warming is triggering changes in the jet stream, a band of fast winds circling the polar region that typically bottle up cold air around the north pole. Her work sparked an ongoing debate as to whether Arctic warming affects weather further south, and to what degree.

The effects of human-caused Arctic warming are “reaching all the way down to the tropics. It’s not just influence on the mid-latitudes, it’s not just influence on the jet stream,” she said. “Everything’s connected, and it’s really pretty disturbing to see these strong El Niños projected to increase by quite a lot... Devastating weather events seem to be associated with that.”

According to Liu’s modeling results, sea ice loss could drive strong El Niños via changes in the movement of both winds and water. Firstly, without the Arctic Ocean summer ice cover, those northern waters could transfer more of their heat energy to the atmosphere, intensifying a low-pressure system off the coast of Alaska called the Aleutian Low. The strengthened winds around the Aleutian Low would then blow against the Trade Winds that typically push warm water west near the equator, allowing it to “slosh” back into the eastern Pacific, where El Niños form.

Secondly, the Arctic Ocean will become less cold without summer ice to reflect sunlight back to space, slowing the poleward movement of warm water out of the eastern Pacific. “The Arctic can say to the tropics, ‘you can keep the heat,’ so we have tremendous heat buildup in the tropics,” Liu explained.

Although the Nature Communications study ran two different sets of models to confirm its results, these models come from the same family. The next step in the research will be to try to replicate the connection between sea ice loss and El Niño using different climate models and different future emissions scenarios, according to professor James Screen, a sea ice and modeling expert at the University of Exeter who was not involved in the study.

Screen noted that Liu’s modeling was done using the RCP 8.5 high carbon emissions scenario, which assumes global warming of 4 to 5 degrees Celsius by 2100, even higher than the 3.2°C predicted if the world’s nations meet their current carbon emission reduction pledges under the Paris Climate Agreement. Each fraction of a degree of warming that the world can avoid likely decreases the chances that Arctic sea ice will disappear completely every summer and that stronger El Niños will become more frequent.

“1.6, 1.7, 1.8, even 2 degrees C [of warming] is going to be a damn sight better than 4 degrees,” Screen said. “There would still be some effect of sea ice loss on El Niños, but it might not be as pronounced as the results [modeled] here.”

An ice-free Arctic could have many other impacts, recent research has shown. A paper published in *Science* last month found that the western Arctic Ocean is acidifying three to four times faster than other ocean basins due to escalating ice loss, according to data from 47 research voyages between 1994 and 2020. Open water exposed to the air by receding ice absorbs more carbon dioxide, which increases acidity. This effect could corrode the shells of mollusks and other invertebrates, although more research on these impacts is needed.

This summer, a climate modeling study published in *Weather and Climate Extremes* showed that the melting of sea ice in the Greenland Sea, which normally “shields” Norway’s Svalbard archipelago from moist air originating further south, has increased the likelihood of extreme precipitation in the islands. Deluges like one that caused a landslide onto a road in Longyearbyen in 2016 are going to get more common as sea ice continues to decline, the study predicted.

“The climate crisis is here today. It’s affecting people today, it’s affecting ecosystems today, and it’s piling on,” Francis said. “We’ve really got to get on the stick and do whatever we can to slow it down.”

RAPPLER

[\[Opinion\] Taiwan injects momentum into global transition to net-zero emissions](#)

By: Chang Tzi Chin

The world has embarked on the transition to net-zero emissions. The innovative approaches to international cooperation highlighted in the Paris Agreement — which calls for wide cooperation by all countries to meet global reduction targets — are gradually taking shape. Taiwan is willing and able to cooperate with international partners to jointly achieve net-zero transition, mobilize global climate action, and ensure a sustainable environment for future generations.

As the world's 21st largest economy, Taiwan has an important influence on economic prosperity and stability in the Indo-Pacific region. In particular, Taiwan's semiconductor industry occupies a pivotal position in international supply chains. The industry actively cuts the use of energy resources in its production processes by developing new technologies and new models. Through ever-evolving semiconductor innovations, it has developed numerous smart applications of electronic devices and promoted global energy conservation. Taiwan is carrying out substantial climate actions and vigorously advancing energy transition. As of May 2022, cumulative installed renewable energy capacity had reached 12.3 GW, a significant 60% increase from 2016. From 2005 to 2020, Taiwan's GDP grew by 79%. Over the same period, greenhouse gas emission intensity fell by 45%, demonstrating that economic growth has been decoupled from greenhouse gas emissions.

On Earth Day of April 22, 2021, President Tsai Ing-wen announced Taiwan's goal of net-zero emissions by 2050. In March 2022, the Executive Yuan published Taiwan's Pathway to Net-Zero Emissions in 2050. The roadmap outlines four major transition strategies in energy, industry, lifestyles, and society. Resting on the twin governance foundations of technology research and development (R&D) and climate legislation, the strategies are supplemented by 12 key substrategies. These are wind and solar power; hydrogen; innovative energy; power systems and energy storage; energy conservation and efficiency; carbon capture, utilization, and storage; carbon-free and electric vehicles; resource recycling and zero waste; natural carbon sinks; green lifestyles; green finance; and just transition. By integrating intragovernmental resources, Taiwan will develop a step-by-step action plan to reach its targets.

In building the foundations of technology R&D needed to achieve net-zero transition, Taiwan will focus on five areas: sustainable energy, low carbon, circularity, carbon negativity, and social science. The Greenhouse Gas Reduction and Management Act is being amended and will be renamed the Climate Change Response Act. The amendments will make net-zero emissions by 2050 a long-term national reduction target, improve the effectiveness of climate governance, add a chapter on climate change adaptation, strengthen information disclosure and public participation, and introduce a carbon pricing mechanism. The act will provide economic incentives for emissions reduction, guide low-carbon and green growth, and contribute to completing

the foundations of national climate legislation and governance. Taiwan's long-term vision for 2050 is to make the transition to net-zero emissions the new driving force of national development. By creating competitive, circular, sustainable, resilient, and secure transition strategies and governance foundations, Taiwan will stimulate economic growth, encourage private investment, create green jobs, promote energy independence, and improve social well-being.

Due to political factors, Taiwan is excluded from international organizations and cannot participate substantively in discussions on global climate issues. It is difficult for Taiwan to stay abreast of current developments and properly implement related tasks. This will create gaps in global climate governance. Taiwan has limited independent sources of energy and an economic system that is oriented to foreign trade. If it cannot seamlessly link with the international cooperation mechanisms under the Paris Agreement, this will not only affect the process of Taiwanese industries going green but will also undermine the stability of international supply chains. Presented with the threat of carbon border adjustment measures, Taiwan's overall competitiveness could be seriously hit if it is unable to fairly participate in international emission reduction mechanisms. This will also weaken the effectiveness of international cooperation and undermine the global economy.

Making the transition to net-zero emissions is an inescapable collective responsibility of this generation. It will only be possible to achieve the target if the international community works together. In the spirit of pragmatism and professionalism, Taiwan is willing to make concrete contributions to tackling global climate change. The COVID-19 pandemic has shown that whatever the situation, Taiwan has enormous potential to contribute to the world in extremely helpful ways. Taiwan should be given equal opportunity to join international cooperation mechanisms in response to climate change. We hope the international community will support Taiwan's immediate, fair, and meaningful inclusion.

REUTERS

[EU countries agree to hike climate change target next year](#)

By: Kate Abnett and Bart H. Meijer

European Union countries agreed on Monday to raise their target to curb greenhouse gas emissions under the Paris climate agreement next year, as the bloc attempts to rally ambition among major emitters ahead of this year's U.N. climate talks.

EU countries' climate ministers on Monday approved their joint negotiating position for the United Nations summit in November, which was supposed to serve as a deadline for nearly 200 countries to hike their climate pledges.

Most countries have not submitted new targets. The 27-country EU, the world's third-biggest polluter, pledged on Monday to upgrade its target "as soon as possible", but said this could not be done until the bloc finishes negotiating a dozen new emissions-cutting laws.

EU countries agreed to wrap up those negotiations by the end of this year - a tight deadline for the dozen laws, which include a ban on new fossil fuel car sales by 2035 and an overhaul of the EU carbon market.

EU officials told Reuters the bloc was racing to clinch deals on three policies in time for the COP27 summit on Nov. 7.

The EU's current target is to cut its net emissions by 55% by 2030, from 1990 levels. EU officials hope it will be possible to nudge that goal higher, because the package of climate policies was designed in July 2021 to deliver the 55% emissions target - and parts of it have since been made more ambitious.

For example, in May, Brussels hiked proposed EU targets to expand renewable energy and increase energy savings, to attempt to end countries' reliance on Russian fuels following Moscow's invasion of Ukraine.

Ministers also agreed on Monday that the EU would support putting "loss and damage" - the contentious topic of compensation for the damage floods, rising seas and other climate change-fuelled impacts are inflicting on the world's poorest - on the agenda for the COP27 gathering in Egypt.

That could represent a breakthrough, since even getting the issue onto the summit agenda has proved contentious. The EU and United States are facing pressure from developing nations to soften their long-standing resistance to such compensation.

EU countries remained vague, however, on what loss and damage talks at the summit should ultimately deliver.

Developing countries say COP27 must establish a fund to support countries struck by climate impacts like the floods in Pakistan this year that killed nearly 1,700 people.

THE MANILA TIMES

Berde buildings

By: Aaron Ronquillo

Sustainability and environment-friendly are some of the watchwords nowadays as people are becoming increasingly aware of the need to protect the environment and along with it, one's health as they are intertwined. Several organizations or institutions have emerged to promote these two attributes. One of them is the Philippine Green Building Council (PHILGBC), which established the Berde (Building for Ecologically Responsive Design Excellence) program.

What is Berde?

Established in 2009 with the support of the Department of Energy, the Berde program was created as "an appropriate response to the Philippine building industry's need to proactively address the negative impacts of climate change. The program was established to develop the Philippines' own national voluntary green building rating system to facilitate green building projects in the country, inspire confidence in the industry and build trust in the industry," according to the PHILGBC website.

It is "a tool to assess, measure, monitor and certify the performance of green building projects above and beyond existing national and local building, and environmental laws, regulations and mandatory standards," it continued.

"Berde is developed through a consensus-based decision-making process that involves the various materially affected stakeholders in the building industry. Stakeholders are consulted throughout the development process," said Chester de la Cruz, a senior staff at the PHILGBC National Secretariat.

Berde vs LEED

LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) is a widely recognized rating system in the world established by the US Green Building Council. In terms of purpose and function, both LEED and Berde are the same in the sense they are tools to assess, measure, monitor and certify the performance of green building projects.

However, they differ in the sense that every country's experiences and conditions are different as factors like climate and environmental priorities, technology level, laws, and standards and regulations are taken into account.

"It was through a series of discussions with the different industry stakeholder groups that Berde came to be. In 2007, stakeholders of the Philippine building and construction industry decided to develop the Philippines' own green building rating system," said de la Cruz.

"What's a plus with Berde is that aside from looking into resource efficiency and conservation, we also look into management, green procurement, health and well-being, waste management and other socioeconomic inputs contributing to green buildings including green jobs, heritage conservation, among others," he added.

How to be Berde certified?

The PHILGBC is tasked with certifying construction projects for Berde certification. It builds trust and confidence in the system by managing and addressing conflicts of interests between the project, the project team and the assessment team assigned for the project.

These projects may undergo a certification process under each of the assessment stage depending on the project type and the project's life cycle. This may range from a new construction project (about to be built) to improving an existing project (already built).

Certified buildings are rated with stars depending on the outcome of the assessment. The lowest is 1 Star (good practice) and the highest is 5 Star (world class).

Berde is for whom?

Berde is for all building professionals as it recommends the best practices. Berde provides various Green Building Rating Schemes for use in designing, constructing and operating projects in a resource-efficient, economically viable and socially responsible manner.

Since its inception, Berde has been practiced and several buildings in the Philippines were built according to its standards. The following are some buildings in Metro Manila that have Berde certification — Mastercard Manila Office at Ayala Tower One Exchange Plaza, Ayala Avenue, Ayala Triangle, Makati. (Berde 1 Star), Mandani Bay Suites Tower 1 and Tower 2 of HTLand Inc. in Mandaue City, Cebu (Berde 5 Stars), and the Six/Neo at the Bonifacio Global City, Taguig, which has also completed certification for both new construction and operations, achieving a 4-Star rating under Berde GBRS New Construction version 1, and a 5-Star rating for Green Building Certification for its operations.

The above-mentioned buildings have the common features that earned them Berde certification — highly efficient façade consisting of a sunshade envelope and full glass wall of double glazed low-emissivity glass; green roof skypark, green walls, condensate water harvesting, VRV inverter air-conditioning, water-saving fixtures, water-less urinals, low-flush toilets, charging stations for e-vehicles, LED lights in common areas, solid waste management facilities and renewable energy sources.

The Laguna Lake Development Authority Building in Quezon City is the first government building to undergo a Berde certification (Berde 3 Star). Among the features it has are accessible vegetated open spaces, green screen on the west side, 50 percent of the

parking area is under shade, constructed wetlands for effluent water treatment, reed bed and polishing pond with bubble diffusers, rainwater collection tank, naturally ventilated space, preferred parking provision for fuel efficient vehicle, external views and natural daylight, and materials recovery facility.

The Berde standard is unique as it is designed with the Philippine setting in mind but still aims for the highest standard in design and construction.

[PH to host Asean labor ministers' meet](#)

By William B. Depasupil

THE top labor officials of the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) will meet in Manila this week to discuss ways to strengthen regional cooperation on matters affecting labor and employment.

Labor Secretary Bienvenido Laguesma said on Sunday the 27th Asean Labor Ministers' Meeting (ALMM) and Related Meetings will be held from October 25 to 29 at the Shangri La Hotel in Bonifacio Global City.

Expected to join Laguesma are labor ministers and senior labor officials from Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

Laguesma, who heads the ALMM, also said agricultural modernization and food security will be among the top priorities in the ALMM agenda.

"This is a good development for the Philippines as it is fully aligned with the strategic priorities of President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.'s socioeconomic agenda," he said.

Laguesma said the labor ministers will also hold meetings with Asean Plus Three dialogue partners China, Japan and South Korea.

This year's meetings mark a return to the face-to-face format, and will focus on the theme of moving beyond the pandemic and further promoting digitalized, inclusive and sustainable recovery and growth for workers.

Also on the table is the review of the progress of various regional programs on skills development, digitalization, climate change and green jobs, industrial relations and the changing world of work, migration, and social protection.

Laguesma said the meetings will highlight the need for more effective regional responses to unemployment especially in rural communities, rising food prices and inflation, which are now among the biggest threats to workers' welfare and well-being in the region.

The labor ministers are expected to come up with plans for regional action on improving skills for employment; upgrading competency and professional qualifications standards and the delivery of technical and vocational education and training (TVET); making ICT and digitalization accessible to all; and modernizing agriculture to improve farm productivity, enhance food security and create new jobs.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

[SLTEC redeems P3.2 billion ACEN preferred shares](#)

By: Richmond Mercurio

Manila Philippines — South Luzon Thermal Energy Corp. (SLTEC) has redeemed P3.2-billion worth of preferred shares owned by ACEN Corp. as part of the energy transition mechanism, which will enable the early retirement of the company's coal power plant in Batangas.

SLTEC is a wholly owned subsidiary of ACEN, which owns and operates a 246-megawatt (MW) circulating fluidized bed thermal power plant in Calaca, Batangas.

SLTEC's redemption of its 32 million preferred shares from ACEN will enable the return of P3.2 billion in capital to ACEN, which the Ayala Group's listed energy platform can use to fund new renewable energy investments.

ACEN said redemption of the remaining 3.83 million preferred shares in SLTEC is expected to close by end of the year.

"The energy transition mechanism (ETM) will ultimately result in the early retirement of the 246-MW SLTEC coal plant by 2040, 15 years ahead of the end of its technical life, which will help ACEN to fulfill its commitment to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emission by 2050 or earlier," the company said.

ACEN's board in October last year authorized its management to work toward the early retirement of the SLTEC coal plant by 2040 through the use of an ETM.

The 244-MW coal plant in Batangas is the only coal plant in ACEN's portfolio.

The ETM is an innovative concept developed by the Asian Development Bank, which aims to leverage low cost and long-term funding geared towards early coal retirement and reinvestment of proceeds to enable renewable energy.

The equity divestment feature of the ETM includes the redemption of SLTEC preferred shares held by ACEN using proceeds of subscriptions from institutional investors.

ACEN said proceeds received by the company would be deployed for its renewable energy investments.

ACEN, which currently has about 3,400-MW of attributable renewable energy capacity, is working to become the largest listed renewables platform in Southeast Asia, with a target of building 5,000-MW of renewables by 2025.

UN Day: Philippines marks role in community of nations

By: Pia Lee-Brago

Manila, Philippines — The Philippines continues to make its mark in the United Nations, with at least 657 Filipinos serving in various capacities for the UN overseas, UN Philippines Resident Coordinator Gustavo Gonzalez said.

He highlighted the partnership between the Philippines and the UN and the contribution of Filipinos to the UN during the celebration of UN Day.

“For these women and men, there is no more compelling imperative to keep striving,” Gonzalez said.

Oct. 24 is United Nations Day. It marks the anniversary of the entry into force in 1945 of the UN Charter. With the ratification of this founding document by the majority of its signatories, including the five permanent members of the Security Council, the UN officially came into being.

Seventy-seven years later, Gonzalez said UN Day is as relevant as it was when it was first observed.

Filipino diplomat Carlos P. Romulo was among the founders of the UN and served as the president of the General Assembly.

“While the founding of the UN was a celebration of the end of the Second World War, global turmoil remains in various forms. Today, we are living in very complex times, where crises overlap, interconnect and exacerbate preexisting vulnerabilities,” Gonzalez said. “We have reached unusual levels of unpredictability, challenging multiculturalism and the various levels of political leadership.”

The Philippines is the only country in Asia that ratified eight of the nine core international human rights treaties. In October 2018, the Philippines was elected to its second consecutive term on the UN Human Rights Council, the fifth time the Philippines has been elected a member since the UNHRC’s establishment.

The Philippines actively took part in the negotiations for the Sendai Framework for Natural Disaster Risk Reduction in 2015 and succeeded in having migrants included in the Framework to recognize their contributions in building disaster resilient communities.

The country was one of the very first to report back on its implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals in July 2016. In July 2018, and then in July this year, the Philippines presented its Voluntary National Review at the High-Level Political Forum.

The Philippines has also been an advocate of the protection of the rights and promotion of the welfare of migrants, through the implementation of the Global Compact for Safe,

Orderly and Regular Migration since its adoption by the UN General Assembly in December 2018.

“We welcome the engagement of the government to support the UN reform to ensure that we are better able to adapt to the challenging times and effectively respond to national priorities,” he added.

Gonzalez noted that the ongoing preparation of the new Cooperation Framework between the Philippines, which is taking place at the same time that the new Philippine Development Plan is being developed, represents a unique opportunity to align the work of the UN with the Philippines’ development imperatives in the spirit of true partnership.

Foreign Affairs Secretary Enrique Manalo said, “Throughout the years, the Philippines has been an active member and staunch advocate for the values and ideals of the United Nations.”

“We have always stood up for sovereign equality of states, peaceful resolution of disputes, equal rights of women and men, inclusive social development, the rule of law and justice for all,” Manalo said.

“The Philippines reaffirms its commitment to uphold the principles upon which the United Nations was founded, forging cordial ties with the members of the community of nations and strengthening partnerships to realize our national and collective aspiration of peace, security, and development for all peoples,” he said.

The secretary said that the Philippines plays a constructive role in the UN as a bridge-builder and champion of vulnerable groups, such as children and migrants, and developing countries’ interests.