



NEWS ROUNDUP

29 OCTOBER 2024 [08:00 am]

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- Current climate pledges by nations 'miles short' of 2030 goal, UN body says
- Climate change almost wipes out decline in global area burned by wildfires
- DFA's Manalo calls for urgent global action to protect women in conflict zones
- Greenhouse gases surged to new highs in 2023, warns UN weather agency
- UN official urges more ambitious, credible climate action plans

CCC IN THE NEWS:

- CCC takes steps to bolster climate resilience across regions
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ABS CBN

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AL JAZEERA

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ECO BUSINESS

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GMA NEWS

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By: Michaela Del Callar

Foreign Affairs Secretary Enrique Manalo on Monday sought urgent global action to protect women in conflict zones and to fast-track existing initiatives to further strengthen their roles in all phases of peace and security as he warned that gains in advancing women's rights are now "at risk of being undone."

UN NEWS

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The appeal comes as global leaders prepare to gather for the UN's Climate Change Conference in Baku next month, amid repeated dire warnings about the human cost of ignoring the existential crisis from UN Secretary-General António Guterres and others.

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UN climate change secretariat (UNFCCC)'s 2024 Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) Synthesis Report showed that current plans would result in emissions 51.5 gigatonnes of carbon dioxide (CO₂) equivalent by 2030 – just 2.6 per cent below 2019 levels.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

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The Philippines stressed the importance of international collaboration and national leadership in advancing climate action, aligning its efforts with the 1.5°C global goal during the Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) Partnership Steering Committee Meeting held here.

GMA NEWS

Why CCC should not be placed under the DENR

By: John Leo Algo

A few days ago, Mr. Ludwig Federigan published an op-ed in a newspaper posing the question if the Climate Change Commission (CCC) should be placed under the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

Information and Knowledge Management Division

ABS CBN

'Leon' intensifies into severe tropical storm; several areas under Signal No. 1

Twelve provinces in Luzon are under Wind Signal No. 1 after "Leon" intensified into a severe tropical storm, the state weather bureau said on Monday.

As of 10:00 a.m., the center of Leon was estimated based on all available data at 735 km east of Casiguran, Aurora or 780 km east of Echague, Isabela.

It is packing maximum sustained winds of 95 kph near the center and gustiness of up to 115 kph, and is moving westward at 20 kph.

#WalangPasok: Class suspensions on Monday, Oct. 28

The following areas are under Tropical Cyclone Wind Signal No. 1:

- Batanes
- Cagayan including Babuyan Islands
- Isabela
- Ilocos Norte
- Abra
- Apayao
- Kalinga
- the eastern portion of Mountain Province (Natonin, Paracelis)
- the eastern portion of Ifugao (Aguinaldo, Alfonso Lista)
- the eastern portion of Quirino (Maddela)
- the northern portion of Aurora (Dilasag, Casiguran, Dinalungan)

-- and the northern portion of Catanduanes (Pandan, Bagamanoc, Panganiban, Viga, Gigmoto)

PAGASA said a gale warning will be hoisted over the northern and eastern seaboard of Northern Luzon on Monday afternoon.

The trough or extension and rainbands of Leon may bring moderate up to torrential rains over parts of Northern Luzon, Central Luzon, CALABARZON, MIMAROPA, Western Visayas and Negros Region through Thursday afternoon.

Flooding and landslides are expected.

According to PAGASA, Leon is expected to "rapidly intensify throughout its passage over the Philippine sea." It may reach typhoon category within 24 hours, and may reach super typhoon category during its period of closest approach to Batanes.

Leon is forecast to move west northwestward on Monday until Tuesday morning, then turn northwestward until it makes landfall along the eastern coast of Taiwan on Thursday evening or early morning on Friday.

After crossing the landmass of Taiwan, Leon will then turn to the northeast towards the East China Sea and exit the Philippine Area of Responsibility on Friday morning or afternoon.

AL JAZEERA

[Current climate pledges by nations 'miles short' of 2030 goal, UN body says](#)

National pledges to cut greenhouse gas emissions fall significantly short of those needed to limit catastrophic global warming, says the United Nations before climate change negotiations next month.

The “nationally determined contributions” (NDCs) are enough to cut global emissions by 2.6 percent from 2019 to 2030, up from 2 percent last year, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) said in its annual assessment on Monday.

But they hardly equate the 43 percent cut that scientists say is required to stay within reach of a Paris Agreement target to limit global temperature rises to 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 Fahrenheit), the body warned, referring to the 2015 global agreement to cut greenhouse gas emissions.

As part of their Paris obligations, nations must deliver new and stronger NDCs before a deadline in February next year, and the report’s findings should mark a “turning point”, said Simon Stiell, UNFCCC executive secretary.

“Current national climate plans fall miles short of what’s needed to stop global heating from crippling every economy and wrecking billions of lives and livelihoods across every country,” he said.

“The last generation of NDCs set the signal for unstoppable change,” said Stiell. “New NDCs next year must outline a clear path to make it happen.”

The forum for conjuring up more ambitious pledges will be the COP29 climate talks beginning in two weeks in the Azerbaijani capital of Baku. Nearly 200 countries will devise a new global emissions trading system as well as a \$100bn annual financial package to help developing countries meet their climate goals.

“What we are seeing is that in some cases, [the NDC process] might be used as a negotiating mechanism – more money for more ambition,” said Pablo Vieira, global director of the NDC Partnership, a non-government group helping about 60 countries draw up their pledges.

“They also want to make sure that the new NDCs are investable, that they have the necessary elements that will attract not just public finance, but also private,” he said.

Greenhouse gases rising exponentially

In a separate report, the UN's weather monitoring body on Monday said greenhouse gases have been accumulating in the atmosphere "faster than any time experienced during human existence" over the last two decades.

Carbon dioxide concentrations have risen by 11.4 percent in just 20 years, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) said in its annual greenhouse gas bulletin.

Last year's increase in CO₂ concentrations, the second largest annual rise of the last decade, could have been driven by a surge in forest fires, with the carbon released from Canada's worst-ever wildfire season exceeding the annual emissions of most major countries.

CO₂ concentrations are now 51 percent higher than pre-industrial levels, while methane – another potent greenhouse gas – is 165 percent higher than in 1750, WMO said.

The UN Environment Programme (UNEP) on Thursday warned of a chasm between what countries have promised and what they must achieve.

The 2015 Paris agreement, signed by nearly 200 nations, committed to keeping global warming "well below" 2C compared with pre-industrial levels and if possible, the safer limit of 1.5C.

"This should set alarm bells ringing among decision-makers," said WMO Secretary-General Celeste Saulo. "These are more than just statistics. Every part per million and every fraction of a degree temperature increase has a real impact on our lives and our planet."

ECO BUSINESS

[Climate change almost wipes out decline in global area burned by wildfires](#)

By: Ayesha Tandon

The paper, published in Nature Climate Change, is the first attribution study to assess the impacts of climate change and land-use change on “global burned area”.

It finds that changes in population distribution and land use over the 20th century – including forest fragmentation and the conversion of land for urban development and agriculture – have suppressed wildfires, driving down global burned area by 19 per cent.

However, this decline has been hindered by human-caused warming, which has expanded the area burned by 16 per cent through increasingly hot and dry conditions across much of the world.

As a result, the global burned area has declined just 5 per cent over the past 100 years.

Despite the worldwide decline overall, the study finds that climate change has driven increases in burned area of 29 per cent in south-eastern South America, 22 per cent in northern Australia, 18 per cent in west Siberia and 15 per cent in western North America.

This study is the “key missing piece to the puzzle of tracking anthropogenic emissions”, according to Dr Matthew Jones – an independent researcher who was not involved in the study.

Jones, who works on the annual Global Carbon Budget (GCB), tells Carbon Brief that this study is a “major step forward in modelling the extent of additional, human-related fires”. He notes that until now, projects like the GCB have “been forced to assume that all fire emissions are natural, therefore underestimating the effect of people on the global carbon cycle”.

Burned area paradox

Australia’s “black summer” bushfires of 2020-21 are one of the continent’s most intense and damaging fire seasons on record. The fires burned around almost 25m hectares of land, killed more than 30 people and released more CO₂ than the combined annual emissions of over 100 countries.

Researchers from the World Weather Attribution (WWA) service published a “rapid attribution” study on Australia’s wildfires. They find the likelihood of Australia experiencing weather conditions like those in the lead-up to its 2020-21 fires has increased by at least 30 per cent since 1900 as a result of climate change.

Similarly, WWA found that climate change more than doubled the likelihood of extreme fire weather conditions that led to unprecedented fires in eastern Canada in 2023. And the hot, dry and windy conditions that drove the devastating Pantanal wildfires in 2024 were 40 per cent more intense due to climate change.

Attribution studies make it clear that climate change is making individual wildfires more intense and frequent. However, data shows that, overall, the area burned globally by fires is decreasing.

Dr Matthew Jones is an independent researcher who works with the Natural Environment Research Council and Global Carbon Project. He is the lead author of a study published last week, which finds that forest fire carbon emissions increased by 60 per cent globally over 2001-23.

He tells Carbon Brief there climate change is does not provide the whole picture when it comes to global burned area, noting that human activity can impact wildfires in many ways:

“Wildfires are a natural phenomenon, but they are made increasingly likely by human-induced climate change and they are also influenced by people, who manage much of Earth’s land area and also alter rates of fire ignition.

“Fire scientists have long grappled with the troublesome task of separating out the additional fires that people are causing, over and above the fires that would have happened naturally.”

Attributing burned area

Sepepe Lampe is a doctoral student at Vrije University Brussels Department of Water and Climate and co-lead author on the study. He tells Carbon Brief that “this is the first study that actually attributes and quantifies how much climate change has affected burned area all over the world”.

The authors use seven “fire-vegetation models” from the Inter-Sectoral Impact Model Intercomparison Project to carry out the attribution study, which compares wildfires in

today's climate with wildfires in a counterfactual world without human-caused climate change.

To assess the impact of climate change on global burned area, the authors run models of the present-day climate (2003-19), both with and without the impacts of climate change. They then compare the results to isolate the impacts of climate change on global burned area.

To study the impact of “direct human forcing” – defined as land-use change, land management and population density – they compare simulations of the world in the early-industrial period (1901-17) and a present-day world (2003-19) without the impact of climate change. In these simulations, the authors do not include any long-term changes in climate, so the only differences are in land use and population change.

The maps below show the percentage change in burned area due to climate change (top), direct human forcing (middle) and both (bottom). Red indicates an increase in the percentage burned area and blue indicates a decrease. White indicates that there has been little change in the percentage of burned area. The map divides the world into hexagonal regions, as used by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

Climate and land-use change

The study finds that climate change has driven an increase in burned area in most IPCC regions, with only eight of the 42 regions showing a decrease in burned area due to the changing climate.

Lampe explains that the climate-driven decrease in burned area in regions such as Southeast Asia could be due to factors such as changing rainfall patterns.

Many regions have seen more than a 10 per cent increase in burned area due to climate change alone, including all IPCC regions in Australia and several regions in South America, Siberia and North America, the study adds.

The authors find that on average, climate change has driven a 16 per cent increase in burned area globally and increased the probability of experiencing months with above-average global burned area by 22 per cent.

The area of land that would be burned in the two most-active fire months of the year in a world without climate change is now expected for four months every year, the authors add.

The authors also find that the impact of climate change on burned area is accelerating over time, increasing most rapidly after the 1970s. Central Australia has seen the greatest increase.

Conversely, the authors find that changes in direct human forcing factors since the early industrial period have driven a 19.1 per cent decrease in burned area.

This is due to landscape fragmentation, a reduction in fuel for fires – often seen when landscapes are converted from natural areas into urban areas or cropland – and deliberate fire management and suppression techniques, according to the study.

The decrease in burned area is mainly seen in savannah, grasslands and croplands – particularly in equatorial Asia and tropical North Africa – Lampe tells Carbon Brief. He adds:

“The global signal of burned area is actually 70 per cent determined by what’s going on in the African savannahs. And there we see more and more savannahs being turned into cropland, which causes a decline in burned area.”

Overall, the study finds a 5 per cent reduction in global burned area since the early 20th century.

‘Major step forward’

The study shows that without the “mitigating influences” of land-use change, global burned area would probably be even higher today.

This work is a “major step forward in modelling the extent of additional, human-related fires”, Jones tells Carbon Brief. He adds:

“Up until now, projects like the Global Carbon Budget have struggled to estimate how people influence the climate through wildfire emissions. We have been forced to assume that all fire emissions are natural, therefore underestimating the effect of people on the global carbon cycle.”

He explains that this study is the “key missing piece to the puzzle of tracking anthropogenic emissions”.

Prof David Bowman is an Australian Research Council laureate fellow and the director of the transdisciplinary Fire Centre at the University of Tasmania. He tells Carbon Brief

that the approach used in this study seems “valid”, but adds that wildfire modelling is “extraordinarily difficult”.

He points out a few important assumptions and caveats in the “useful” study – for example, that the authors do not consider the intensity of fires.

Bowman also warns that the decline in global burned area “has been used for political purposes deflecting attention from the escalating wildfire crisis”.

Dr Maria Barbosa – a researcher at the Universidade Federal de São Carlos, who was not involved in the study – tells Carbon Brief that the study “provides valuable insights into how fire regimes are likely to shift”.

Barbosa warns that “we are currently failing to prepare for the upcoming fire seasons”, and says that governments need to invest in early warning systems, improve land-use planning to reduce fire risks and strengthen policies for forest management and restoration.

Lampe tells Carbon Brief that the findings of this study could help to inform regional policymakers and could “have significance for loss and damage”.

GMA NEWS

[DFA's Manalo calls for urgent global action to protect women in conflict zones](#)

By: Michaela Del Callar

Foreign Affairs Secretary Enrique Manalo on Monday sought urgent global action to protect women in conflict zones and to fast-track existing initiatives to further strengthen their roles in all phases of peace and security as he warned that gains in advancing women's rights are now "at risk of being undone."

Manalo, at the opening of the International Conference on Women, Peace and Security in Manila, echoed United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres' concerns that progress in women's rights hangs in the balance around the world due to global conflict as he lamented their minimal role in peace process.

"Women and girls live in harrowing conditions in conflict zones. They are disproportionately affected by gender-based violence, restricted from accessing critical services, and often denied participation in decision-making processes," Manalo said.

In 2023, Manalo said 50% more cases of conflict-related sexual violence were reported, while the number of women and girls affected by grave violations in armed conflicts increased by 35%.

"These figures remind us this global agenda is profoundly relevant, but it is under stress. These figures call for reinforcing this agenda and making it a reality on the ground, in times of peace and conflict and in the transition towards peace."

Manalo said the Philippines decided to step up and host the conference to contribute to international stocktaking in shaping a new consensus on the implementation of the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) agenda ahead of the 25th anniversary in 2025 of a UN Security Council resolution demanding equal rights for women to engage in peace negotiations.

He said more needs to be done to fully implement UNSC resolution 1325 which was adopted in October 31, 2000.

Data collected by UN Women in 2023 shows that, on average, women comprised only 9.6% of negotiators, 13.7% of mediators, and 26.6% of signatories to peace agreements globally, with Manalo calling these figures "far too low."

“We must uphold women as agents of change and leaders in shaping conditions for lasting peace. Their under-representation in peace processes does not do justice to this,” he said.

“We must do more. It is possible. And necessary, in light of evidence that when women are involved in peace processes, agreements are more likely to be reached, implemented, and sustained.”

Beyond conflict, Manalo also said that women around the globe face threats from climate change, economic vulnerability, and rising militarization.

“That there is a significant relationship between climate security and gender equality is more apparent. Environmental changes often impact women in conflict-regions more severely,” he noted.

The Philippines, he said, is deeply aware of these realities, having seen how disasters can heighten vulnerabilities for women, especially most recently with the typhoons that hit the Philippines.

In many conflict zones, Manalo said women bear a larger share of the burden when it comes to food insecurity, displacement, and resource shortages.

“Yet, their resilience and leadership are critical in overcoming these challenges. We must shift approaches, seeing women – not as victims to assist -- but as agents of resilience, sources of rooted and robust solutions, and stewards of lasting peace,” he said.

More than 700 participants including Ministers, Vice Ministers and other senior officials from over 80 countries and 130 organizations have gathered in Manila for the three-day conference to share best practices, renew commitments, and identify actionable steps in advancing the Women, Peace, and Security agenda worldwide.

They will issue a communique, called the Pasay Declaration, that will outline proposals for sustainable, gender-responsive peace frameworks, and practical strategies that promote the role of women in peace and security.

UN NEWS

[Greenhouse gases surged to new highs in 2023, warns UN weather agency](#)

The appeal comes as global leaders prepare to gather for the UN's Climate Change Conference in Baku next month, amid repeated dire warnings about the human cost of ignoring the existential crisis from UN Secretary-General António Guterres and others.

Echoing the UN chief's longstanding appeals, WMO Deputy Secretary-General Ko Barrett told journalists that carbon dioxide (CO₂) – one of the three main greenhouse gases, along with methane and nitrous oxide - is now accumulating in the atmosphere “faster than at any time experienced during human existence”. Because of the extremely long lifetime of CO₂ in the atmosphere, “we are committed to rising temperatures for many, many years to come,” she added.

WMO's 2024 Greenhouse Gas Bulletin offers a stark, scientific reminder that rising CO₂ levels need to be slowed. In 2004, the concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere was 377.1 parts per million (ppm), while in 2023, this reached 420 ppm, according to WMO's Global Atmosphere Watch Network. “This is an increase of 42.9 parts per million, or 11.4 per cent in just 20 years,” Ms. Barrett explained.

“These are more than statistics,” the WMO deputy chief insisted. “Every part per million matters, every fraction of a degree of temperature increase matters; it matters in terms of the speed of glacier and ice retreat, the acceleration of sea level rise, ocean heat and acidification. It matters in terms of the number of people who will be exposed to extreme heat every year, the extinction of species, the impact on our ecosystems and economies.”

Key greenhouse gas-producing events include forest fires and the El Niño weather phenomenon which fuelled drier conditions and a “surge” in gas concentrations in the latter part of 2023, according to WMO. Its analysis shows that just under half of CO₂ emissions remain in the atmosphere, just over one quarter are absorbed by the ocean and just under 30 per cent are retained on land.

Wildfires' key role

Senior scientific officer at WMO, Oksana Tarasova, described last year's wildfires in Canada as “absolutely dramatic” in terms of the amount of greenhouse gases produced. Today's CO₂ levels have not been seen “in the history of humanity”, she said. “The last time we see 400 parts per million of CO₂ was three to five million years ago, and during

that time, the temperature was three to four degrees warmer” and sea levels 10 to 20 metres higher.

The WMO report pointed out that from 1990 to 2023, radiative forcing – the warming effect on our climate from greenhouse gases increased by 51.5 per cent. CO2 accounted for more than 80 per cent of this increase, according to data from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Annual Greenhouse Gas Index.

Toxic relationship

“As long as emissions continue, greenhouse gases will continue accumulating in the atmosphere leading to global temperature rise,” the UN agency said. “Given the extremely long life of CO2 in the atmosphere, the temperature level already observed will persist for several decades even if emissions are rapidly reduced to net zero.”

Asked about whether the UN climate conference might be expected to yield tangible commitments from countries, the WMO Deputy Secretary-General noted that politicians worldwide do reference the latest scientific climate findings and forecasts in their public declarations. “So I do think they are listening, the question is to what degree will we see that manifest at COP29 in action,” she said.

Ms. Barrett noted that measures taken at a national level to transition to a “lower fossil fuel economy” were massively important to safeguard future generations.

“Even though there is a lag and temperatures will rise, we are not to be dissuaded from action,” she said, “because there will be a transformation and a downward trend in temperature in future. It all just depends on how quickly we take action and how fast we can reduce those temperatures.”

UN official urges more ambitious, credible climate action plans

UN climate change secretariat (UNFCCC)'s 2024 Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) Synthesis Report showed that current plans would result in emissions 51.5 gigatonnes of carbon dioxide (CO₂) equivalent by 2030 – just 2.6 per cent below 2019 levels.

With nations preparing for the UN climate change conference (COP29) in Baku next month, Simon Stiell, the Executive Secretary of UNFCCC urged governments to convert pledges into “real world, real economy results”.

At COP28, which was hosted by the United Arab Emirates, delegations had committed to tripling renewables, advancing the global goal on adaptation and transitioning away from all fossil fuels.

“COP29 must be an enabling COP, delivering concrete and ambitious outcomes on climate finance that take account of developing country needs, recognizing that such support is core business to protect every nation and the global economy from rampaging climate impacts,” Mr. Stiell emphasised.

‘Stark but not surprising’ findings

He warned that the report’s findings are “stark but not surprising”.

The report also showed that the current trajectory falls far short of scientific requirements.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) – a UN scientific body assessing climate change and providing governments with scientific information to develop climate policies – notes that emissions need to be cut by 43 per cent compared to 2019 levels.

Mr. Stiell emphasised that the current levels of pollution would “guarantee a human and economic trainwreck for every country, without exception.”

Looking ahead to next year’s updated commitments, he called for an “ABC test” for new plans:

“They must have ambitious new emissions targets that are economy wide...they must be broken down into sectors and gases...and they must be credible, backed up by substantive regulations, laws and funding.”

The 2024 NDC report “must be a turning point, ending the era of inadequacy and sparking a new age of acceleration, with much bolder new national climate plans from every country due next year,” he urged.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

MANILA STANDARD

[CCC takes steps to bolster climate resilience across regions](#)

The Climate Change Commission (CCC), the lead policy-making body on climate change, is focusing on the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) to strengthen climate resilience across the country.

The CCC shared key updates on the implementation of the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) during a recent Study Group Session organized by the United Nations International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Cotabato City.

The Philippines' NAP, a key document for long-term climate adaptation planning, was developed under the leadership of President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.

The session focused on localizing the NAP in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM). It noted the region's unique challenges and opportunities in integrating climate adaptation strategies into local policies and development plans.

Recognizing BARMM's distinct socio-political landscape and heightened exposure to climate hazards, the CCC emphasized the importance of embedding the NAP into BARMM's regional development framework.

The efforts include conducting risk assessments tailored to the region's distinct geographical, socio-economic and political characteristics.

"We are committed to support BARMM in translating national adaptation strategies into localized programs and projects that cater to the specific needs of our communities," said CCC vice chairperson and executive director Robert E.A. Borje.

To further align national climate policies with local action, the CCC assists BARMM's local government units (LGUs) in the development of their Local Climate Change Action Plans (LCCAPs), which serve as critical tools to identify and implement climate adaptation and resilience measures.

Currently, 62.4 percent of BARMM's LGUs have submitted their LCCAPs. The CCC aims for 100 percent submission by 2025 and focuses on enhancing the capacities of the remaining 37.6 percent LGUs through technical support and capacity-building initiatives.

To ensure efficient allocation of financial resources for climate adaptation and mitigation, the CCC introduced Climate Change Expenditure Tagging (CCET) system to drive transparency in tracking climate investments and promote accountability in climate action.

In BARMM, 42 out of 125 BARMM LGUs have submitted their Annual Investment Plans (AIPs) and Quality Assurance Reports (QARs) for FY 2023. The CCC urged the remaining LGUs to engage in the CCET process to better align their financial plans with national climate priorities. CCC News

“We will translate the NAP into tangible actions with measurable results. By prioritizing the submission of LCCAPs and engaging in the CCET process, BARMM can significantly contribute to the nation’s collective capacity to confront and overcome climate challenges, ultimately building a more resilient future for all Filipinos,” Borje said.

PH reaffirms pledge to fight climate woes

The Philippines stressed the importance of international collaboration and national leadership in advancing climate action, aligning its efforts with the 1.5°C global goal during the Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) Partnership Steering Committee Meeting held here.

The two-day event gathered representatives of developing countries, developed countries and their funding organizations, multilateral development banks, and academia, who form part of the NDC Partnership steering committee, to discuss the current and upcoming work program aimed to support higher ambition in NDCs by 2025.

The Philippine delegation, led by Commissioner Rachel Anne S. Herrera of the Climate Change Commission (CCC) and Undersecretary Carlos Abad Santos of the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), expressed gratitude for the NDC partnership's efforts to address the growing needs of developing countries.

Herrera during their meeting acknowledged the NDC Partnership's assistance, which includes resources from the Partnership Action Fund (PAF) and the deployment of in-country facilitators to help develop the Philippines' NDC Partnership Plan.

She cited the need for sustained international collaboration and country-level leadership for successful climate action efforts.

"The (NDC) Partnership is at a crossroads but is well-placed to seize the momentum. For the Philippines, we prioritize climate action from the highest and across all levels of government, aligning with our national development agenda," said Herrera.

She cited the unique role of the NDC Partnership in guiding countries through climate financing mechanisms.

"The platform has become the 'approach of choice' for many, including the Philippines, as we engage with bilateral partners and multilateral development banks to enhance our climate resilience," she said.

She pointed out the importance of focusing on countries committed to implement and enhance their NDCs, those with the potential for transformative adaptation co-benefits, and those promoting inclusion and gender empowerment. Equally important are countries that may lack quantitative indicators but show promise through peer-to-peer learning due to positive outcomes and progress in realizing ambitious goals.

In his remarks, Abad Santos reiterated the Philippines' commitment to submitting an enhanced NDC by 2025. "The Philippines intends to submit an enhanced NDC 3.0, focusing on scaling up climate action and ambition on mitigation and implementation," he stated.

The updated plan will establish a robust measurement, reporting and verification (MRV) system, emphasizing adaptation and resilience. He said the country's NDC will revisit parameters and measures across various sectors, including agriculture, energy, industry, and forestry, while setting respective targets based on integrated modeling and economy-wide analysis.

GMA NEWS

Why CCC should not be placed under the DENR

By: John Leo Algo

A few days ago, Mr. Ludwig Federigan published an op-ed in a newspaper posing the question if the Climate Change Commission (CCC) should be placed under the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

For us in the civil society sector who have been engaging with the Philippine government to advocate for more inclusive climate action in the past few years, the answer to that question is a resounding no.

Under the law

Under the Climate Change Act, the CCC is intended as an independent and autonomous body that “shall be the sole policy-making body of the government which shall be tasked to coordinate, monitor and evaluate the programs and action plans of the government”.

It is supposed to be chaired by the Philippine president to ensure this independence. Yet the previous administration started the practice of having a chairperson-designate to said commission. It was continued by the current president, who designated DENR Sec. Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga as the chairperson-designate.

This is not to question the competence of Loyzaga, whose track record in climate and disaster work is undeniably credible, especially from her days in the Manila Observatory and the National Resilience Council. This is about the lack of proper coordination among government agencies that causes confusion among both government and non-government stakeholders as to who is supposed to do what.

Addressing the climate crisis demands a “whole-of-government” approach that requires clear and effective coordination. The Climate Change Act and its amending law RA 10174 clearly designate the CCC to lead in coordination within the government, so it should be freed from any competition with other departments in providing policy direction and evaluating the government’s climate work.

The DENR currently handles many aspects of climate work, including on strengthening adaptation measures on the sectors of water resources, ecosystems and biodiversity. It also manages emissions reduction in the waste and industry sectors, while leading in monitoring the capacity of forests to remove climate pollution from the atmosphere.

Yet the climate crisis is ultimately a cross-cutting issue that impacts not just the sectors covered by the DENR’s mandate. It also impacts food security, which is largely under the Department of Agriculture. It concerns our energy security, which is one of the goals

for the Department of Energy. Securing ecological integrity is the responsibility of local government units, per RA 7160, which places that part of climate work under DILG.

In the Philippine context, much like with issues regarding disaster risk reduction management (DRRM), it is simply unwise to put climate concerns solely under the mandate of any single department whose mandate may be limited. Thus, it is vital to implement the “whole-of-government” and “whole-of-society” approaches in addressing climate and disaster risks.

The plan

During a national consultation on just transition held on 1 October 2024 in Quezon City, the government presented the Inter-Agency Steering Committee on Climate Change, which displays which agency would lead in addressing a specific climate issue. The committee itself is shown to be chaired by the CCC, with the DENR as the co-chair.

However, this raises the question of how it is supposed to be different from the Climate Change Advisory Board, which was established under the Climate Change Act and fulfills similar functions.

There are also more questions that need answers.

Has the Board ever been formally convened as it is intended? Is the aforementioned inter-agency committee supposed to fulfill this role now? Or is it redundant, given the Board? Most importantly, how can CCC be enabled to do its mandate as the lead policymaking body against the climate crisis in the Philippines?

This crisis is arguably the biggest threat to the Philippines’ pursuit of sustainable development, now and in the future. If our government will properly respond to this, then it must ensure that the current legal and policy framework in the country is suitable for the work that needs to be done. Those questions require answers that the nation needs to know, as we are all stakeholders in this matter.

For us in the civil society sector, what we expect to see at the bare minimum is that the laws are being followed, rights are being respected, there is a well-defined governance and coordination structure with clear designations of who does what, and all sectors are genuinely represented and allowed to participate in climate decision-making processes.

For all the flak that the CCC has received in recent years, many of which have basis, the agency has played a leading role in setting key climate policies and plans that also lay out the coordination set-up within the government.

This has been most notable in the National Adaptation Plan and the Nationally Determined Contribution Implementation Plan, arguably the two most important national climate strategies, that are both published this year.

Yet issues remain that need to be resolved. It is clear under the law: the CCC is to be the body that leads in coordinating, monitoring, and evaluating the work of government agencies on addressing this crisis. The other government agencies, including the DENR, should be the ones more on handling the implementation of adaptation and mitigation policies and measures, consistent with their mandates.

The questions about the Committee and the Board need to be resolved, led by the CCC chair, to address any further coordination issues that one of the most climate-vulnerable countries just cannot afford.

In any case, all of these agencies should be working in both the “whole-of-government” and “whole-of-society” principles so we can truly achieve resilience to climate and disaster risks, avert losses of lives and assets, and enable the just transition to a low-emissions, sustainable future.

Instead of putting one government agency over the other, we must focus on enabling all of them to perform their respective mandates that complement one another.

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