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ABS-CBN NEWS

[**COP27 summit opens as world races against climate clock**](#)

By Marlowe Hood, Agence France-Presse

SHARM EL SHEIKH, Egypt - The UN's COP27 climate summit kicked off Sunday in Egypt after a year of extreme weather disasters that have fuelled calls for wealthy industrialized nations to compensate poorer countries.

BUSINESS MIRROR

Why insuring Philippine agriculture holds key

When PBBM declared a state of calamity last week due to the devastation wrought by Typhoon Paeng, it was in reaction to one of the most destructive typhoons our people had to face this year. More than 110 people had been declared dead with hundreds more missing and injured. Tens of thousands have also been displaced. Damage to infrastructure has breached more than a billion pesos with damages to agriculture and fisheries now at more than P3 billion, affecting more than 50,000 farmers.

BUSINESS WORLD

PHL seeks \$600-M loan from WB

By: L.M.J.C. Jocson

The Philippine government is seeking a \$600-million loan from the World Bank (WB) to support reforms that would help achieve a “resilient, inclusive and sustainable financial sector.”

CNN PHILIPPINES

Marcos to push for food and energy security, climate change in APEC 2022

By CNN Philippines Staff

Metro Manila (CNN Philippines, November 7) — President Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr. will call for stronger cooperation to ensure food and energy security, including the region’s efforts to address climate change, when he attends his first Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit next week in Thailand, the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) said on Monday.

DW AKADEMIE

Who is paying for climate change loss and damage?

By: Louise Osborne

Global warming is leading to ever more extreme natural events and more damage. Countries in the Global South are demanding compensation for climate change they say wealthier nations, like Germany, caused.

MANILA BULLETIN

PH ranks high in sustainability index

By: Bernie Cahiles-Magkilat

The Philippines ranked 6TH regionally and 12th globally in the Sustainability Trade Index (STI) 2022, joining more developed economies as it scored high in the report that measures economies' behavior and effects of international trade on sustainability and economic prosperity.

PH representatives for 27th COP urged to support Agroecology

By: Charie Mae F. Abarca

In an open letter to the Philippine delegates to the 27th Session of the Conference of the Parties (COP27) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, various civil society organizations in the country recommended the inclusion of Agroecology on the agenda to address the ongoing climate crisis.

Rough seas ahead for the Philippine digital economy

By: Monchito Ibrahim

The Philippines continues to ride the crest of the ASEAN digital economy juggernaut. According to the e-Economy SEA report 2022 recently released by Google, Temasek, and Bain and Company, our country's digital economy growth remains to be one of the fastest among the six ASEAN member states (ASEAN 6) tracked by the study, coming in next to Vietnam which came out the fastest. But the seventh edition of the annual study also says global headwinds are blowing ahead that potentially impact the upward trajectory and even derail the full economic recovery of the Southeast Asian countries including the Philippines. Will the Philippines again show extraordinary resiliency to withstand the rough seas ahead?

MANILA METRO

Climate change: carbon offsetting isn't working - here's how to fix it

The environmental impact of carbon dioxide emissions will be the same irrespective of where the emissions take place. Carbon emitted in one part of the world can be cancelled out if the same amount is removed elsewhere.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Gov't urged to tap civil society groups in PH climate action

By: Imelda Abaño

Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt—The 12-day global summit on climate change began on Sunday in this Red Sea resort city, with civil society groups urging the Philippine government to include them in the process and champion the issue of financial compensation from floods, rising seas and other climate-related impacts.

Legarda acknowledged as Asean biodiversity hero

By: Daniza Fernandez

Manila, Philippines — Senate President Pro Tempore Loren Legarda has been acknowledged as an Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) biodiversity hero, her office said on Monday.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

House OKs integration of nat'l building code in curriculums

By: Filane Mikee Cervantes

Manila – The House of Representatives on Monday overwhelmingly approved on final reading a bill mandating the integration of the National Building Code of the Philippines as a major subject in the curriculum of engineering and architecture degree programs, as well its inclusion in the professional licensure examinations.

PBBM to raise seafarers' role; climate change mitigation at APEC

By: Azer Parrocha

Manila – President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. will shed light on the role of the country's maritime crews and seafarers in ensuring stable supply chains when he participates in the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Economic Leaders' Meeting (AELM) in Thailand next week, Malacañang announced Monday.

RAPPLER

Hundreds of Yolanda survivors bike in campaign for climate change mitigation

By: Jazmin Bonifacio

Tacloban, Philippines – Bicycle enthusiasts in Eastern Visayas cities and towns hit hard by Super Typhoon Yolanda (Haiyan) in 2013 joined the Pedal for Planet and People activity on Sunday, November 6, to push for systems encouraging the non-fuel, two-wheel mode of transport.

REUTERS

UK to announce U.S. gas deal after climate change summit -Telegraph

Nov 7 (Reuters) - British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak is poised to announce a major gas deal with the U.S. after the COP27 climate change summit, The Telegraph reported on Monday.

THE MANILA TIMES

Japanese companies bag two subway contracts

Embassy of Japan Chargé d'affaires ad interim Matsuda Kenichi and Special Advisor to the Prime Minister Mori Masafumi joined President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. and Transportation Secretary Jaime Bautista at the contract signing ceremony for Contract Package 102 (CP102) and Contract Package 103 (CP103) of the Metro Manila Subway Project (MMSP) Phase 1 on November 3. CP102, which involves the construction of two underground stations — Quezon Avenue and East Avenue — and tunneling works, was awarded to Nishimatsu Construction Co., Ltd. and D.M. Consunji, Inc. (Nishimatsu-DMCI Joint Venture).

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

Half of ancestral lands threatened by destructive projects — report

By: Gaea Katreena Cabico

Manila, Philippines — Environmentally destructive projects such as large-scale mining and logging have threatened half of indigenous territories in the Philippines, a legal and policy research institution said.

SEA medical professionals call for health-centered climate action

By: Gaea Katreena Cabico

Manila, Philippines — Southeast Asian medical professionals called on governments at the COP27 summit to transition to a clean energy future and put health at the center of climate policies.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

ABS-CBN NEWS

Turn your trash to cash

By: SM Prime

Why is it so important that everyone works together in managing our waste? An ever increasing population has impacted heavily on the amount of waste accumulated through the years. Proper waste management not only helps reduce the hazardous impacts of waste on people's health and the environment, but also helps mitigate the perceived disastrous impacts of climate change to the ecosystem. It is for this reason that everyone from the government, private sector, and communities need to work hand-in-hand to efficiently manage and dispose waste.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

Legal shield for environment defenders, climate activists sought

By: Ma. Teresa Montemayor

Manila – The Commission on Human Rights (CHR) on Monday urged the government to provide legal protection for environmental defenders and climate activists who promote climate awareness and education.

THE MANILA TIMES

Marcos pushes environment protection

By: Kristina Maralit

IN his bid to "reintroduce" the Philippines to the world stage, President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. wants environmental protection included in his administration's economic transformation thrust.

Information and Knowledge Management Division

ABS-CBN NEWS

COP27 summit opens as world races against climate clock

By Marlowe Hood, Agence France-Presse

SHARM EL SHEIKH, Egypt - The UN's COP27 climate summit kicked off Sunday in Egypt after a year of extreme weather disasters that have fuelled calls for wealthy industrialized nations to compensate poorer countries.

Just in the past few months, climate-induced catastrophes have killed thousands, displaced millions and cost billions of dollars in damage across the world.

Massive floods devastated swaths of Pakistan and Nigeria, droughts worsened in Africa and the western United States, cyclones whipped the Caribbean, and unprecedented heatwaves seared three continents.

The conference in the Red Sea resort of Sharm el-Sheikh comes in a fraught year marked by Russia's war on Ukraine, an energy crunch, soaring inflation and the lingering effects from the Covid pandemic.

"Whilst I do understand that leaders around the world have faced competing priorities this year, we must be clear: as challenging as our current moment is, inaction is myopic and can only defer climate catastrophe," said Alok Sharma, British president of the previous COP26 as he handed over the chairmanship to Egypt.

"How many more wake-up calls does the world -- and world leaders -- actually need," he said at the opening ceremony.

The world must slash greenhouse emissions 45 percent by 2030 to cap global warming at 1.5 degrees Celsius above late-19th-century levels.

Warming beyond that threshold, scientists warn, could push Earth toward an uninhabitable hothouse state.

But current trends would see carbon pollution increase 10 percent by the end of the decade and Earth's surface heat up 2.8C, according to findings unveiled last week.

Promises made under the 2015 Paris Agreement would, if kept, only shave off a few tenths of a degree.

MONEY FOCUS

The COP27 summit will focus like never before on money -- a major sticking point that has soured relations between countries that got rich burning fossil fuels and the poorer ones suffering from the worst consequences of climate change.

Developing nations have "high expectations" for the creation of a dedicated funding facility to cover "loss and damage", UN Climate Change Executive Secretary Simon Stiell said on Friday.

"The most vulnerable countries are tired, they are frustrated," Stiell said. "The time to have an open and honest discussion on loss and damage is now."

The United States and the European Union -- fearful of creating an open-ended reparations framework -- have dragged their feet and challenged the need for a separate funding stream.

UN chief Antonio Guterres has called for a "historic pact" to bridge the North-South divide.

"Our planet is on course for reaching tipping points that will make climate chaos irreversible and forever bake in catastrophic temperature rise," Guterres said recently.

"We need to move from tipping points to turning points for hope."

US-CHINA TENSIONS

After the first day of talks, more than 120 world leaders will join the summit on Monday and Tuesday.

The most conspicuous no-show will be China's Xi Jinping, whose leadership was renewed last month at a Communist Party Congress.

US President Joe Biden has said he will come, but only after legislative elections on Tuesday that could see either or both houses of Congress fall into the hands of Republicans hostile to international action on climate change.

Cooperation between the United States and China -- the world's two largest economies and carbon polluters -- has been crucial to rare breakthroughs in the nearly 30-year saga of UN climate talks, including the 2015 Paris Agreement.

But Sino-US relations have sunk to a 40-year low after a visit to Taiwan by House leader Nancy Pelosi and a US ban on the sale of high-level chip technology to China, leaving the outcome of COP27 in doubt.

A meeting between Xi and Biden at the G20 summit in Bali days before the UN climate meeting ends, if it happens, could be decisive.

One bright spot at COP27 will be the arrival of Brazilian president-elect Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, whose campaign vowed to protect the Amazon and reverse the extractive policies of outgoing President Jair Bolsonaro.

BUSINESS MIRROR

Why insuring Philippine agriculture holds key

When PBBM declared a state of calamity last week due to the devastation wrought by Typhoon Paeng, it was in reaction to one of the most destructive typhoons our people had to face this year. More than 110 people had been declared dead with hundreds more missing and injured. Tens of thousands have also been displaced. Damage to infrastructure has breached more than a billion pesos with damages to agriculture and fisheries now at more than P3 billion, affecting more than 50,000 farmers.

The fact that the Philippines is one of the world's most climate change affected countries, with an average of more than 20 tropical cyclones annually, is one of the major challenges that we face as a people on our road to food security and sustainable rural livelihoods. With the destruction brought by these seasonal visitations a regular occurrence, what chance do we really have at increasing our food inventories?

At this point in the life of an affected farmer, our national aspirations of food security are furthest from his mind. As he surveys the devastation around him, what is top of mind is saving what little possession he has. His roof may be partially or totally destroyed, along with the flimsy walls of his home. His assets, in the form of livestock, tools and beasts of burden may have perished or lost by now. What remains of his planted crops may be too meager to save if the crops can be saved at all. This is considering that his family has not had to relocate to an evacuation center. This is an all too familiar scene that is replayed many times annually.

At the scale and regularity of these calamities, what is appropriated by the National Government Agencies (NGAs) will simply not be enough due to the national debt and the deficit. And even if funds are sufficient, the reality is that distribution is always marred by inefficiencies due to warring political sides on the ground. Farmers are usually at the crossfires. And the reality is, even with crop insurance, payouts go through a long and painful time of settlement.

After a typhoon, it is common knowledge that the local community goes through at least a month of just cleaning up and getting back to where they were. It takes time for crop insurance adjusters to go to a site and validate losses. Upon getting to an affected site, it is impossible to evaluate the state of planting, the seeds or inputs used and other attendant losses. Almost always, the farmer just collects a small portion of what was insured. Not to take anything away from the Philippine Crop Insurance Corporation, which is the only entity in the country giving any level or modicum of crop insurance, the PCIC must not measure its accomplishments just on the number of pay-outs given to the most number of farmers. It must be measured on "timely" and "accurate" compensation for losses suffered by our farmers.

Unfortunately, the tools at the disposal of the PCIC to do its job are just not there at this point in time. We are still issuing crop insurance policies on the basis of long-standing

indemnity contracts. No payouts for non-verifiable losses. It is time for the PCIC to move away from traditional indemnity policies and into “Parametric Insurance” for farmers. Under a Parametric Insurance Policy, farmer-policyholders are insured against the occurrence of a specific event (like a typhoon or an earthquake), and paying a set amount based on the magnitude of that event. Here the payout is not based on actual losses.

An example is paying out to a farmer P100,000 if a typhoon of signal number three parameters or an earthquake of certain parameters happens. In this case, when “parameters” regarding magnitude, level of tremor, wind speed, precipitation, water levels are breached: a payout happens. No arguments, no adjusters, no lengthy debates. The result is an earlier and faster settlement for losses for the farmer, which he can then use to restore his home and equipment, and gets him planting again. And that is what we want: more farmers getting back to planting again, instead of falling in line for “ayuda” or seeing the neighborhood 5/6 loan shark.

Of course the parameters are all specified in the contract and to the extent that the parameters are breached, a corresponding amount of payout is issued. A third party, usually a government agency or a weather system monitoring entity, can be tasked with providing the information regarding each calamity so that a determination of whether or not parameters have been breached can be settled. PAGASA and the SARAI system of the DOST-PCAARRD are examples of third party agents that can give on-line decision-support tools for crop risk and crop insurance services. The SARAI system is capable of providing weather monitoring, advisories and even plant health assessments on the basis of satellite coverage services.

There are even foreign groups today that are just waiting to see whether or not the Philippines can roll out a national parametric insurance system, before financing entities and social impact groups pump in funds for crop production and agricultural modernization straight to farmers and farmers groups. Satellite services are now much more affordable and insurance companies all over the world are using these technologies and innovations to offer better products to stakeholders.

We cannot be said to be unaware of Parametric Insurance because in 2017, under the leadership of the Bureau of the Treasury, the national government started a trial program with the World Bank. This program, which included the GSIS, was meant to provide rapid liquidity to 25 provincial LGUs in the event of typhoons and earthquakes. From 2017 to 2019, the combined coverage for damages was in excess of P30 billion on premiums paid for by the BTr at P3 billion and insured with the GSIS. The World Bank re-insured the policies and retroceeded them in turn, to international re-insurers. According to the World Bank Report commissioned thereafter, the loss ratio was less than 50 percent proving that even should this rise, the system would be sustainable in the coming years. What was most impressive was the payouts, which were completed in 6 weeks. We are now ready to move to phase 2 of this program. Lessons learned have been documented and scaling up to insure critical government infrastructures, including school buildings, can now follow.

With Parametric Insurance, the national budget can be protected from unprogrammed allocations brought about by calamities that visit us regularly. This is possible because “risks” are distributed not only among local players, but can even be re-insured with international re-insurance companies, as we did during our trial run with the World Bank. Moreover, payouts can be done quickly, efficiently and painlessly, avoiding political hazards during funds distribution

We must realize that the resources are just lying around us. The Agriculture and Credit Policy Council regularly dispenses close to P2 billion in loans per year, the PCIC about P4 billion in insurance coverage, and the Agriculture Guarantee Fund Pool, a program started in 2008 that saw GOCCs set aside funds for food production, now stands at P8 billion and is now managed by PHILGUARANTEE. If these funds are just structured properly with a Parametric Insurance component, we will now invite global finance and re-insurance into funding Philippine agriculture, not just in the hundreds of millions, but in the billions of pesos.

Impoverished African states are already on Parametric Insurance and there is no reason why the Philippines cannot scale this up. This may just open the door to greater direct farmer funding in the coming years and answer the challenge to greater farm productivity.

BUSINESS WORLD

PHL seeks \$600-M loan from WB

By: L.M.J.C. Jocson

The Philippine government is seeking a \$600-million loan from the World Bank (WB) to support reforms that would help achieve a “resilient, inclusive and sustainable financial sector.”

The World Bank board is expected to approve the Philippines’ second financial development policy financing at its Dec. 20 meeting.

Documents from the World Bank website showed the loan aims to boost the Philippine government’s efforts to strengthen the resilience of the financial sector, expand financial inclusion for individuals and firms, and to support climate, disaster risk and sustainable finance.

“This operation builds on the reform agenda initiated under the first financial sector development policy loan and focuses on the continuity of reform implementation that spans the recent political transition,” the multilateral lender said.

In 2021, the World Bank approved a \$400-million loan to help the Philippine financial sector’s recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Among the programs supported by the second loan are the expansion of the Philippine Deposit Insurance Corp.’s deposit insurance coverage; strengthening the prudential supervision of banks and conglomerates, as well as the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas’ (BSP) capacity to address banking risks at an early stage.

The loan also supports the expansion of digital financial services through digital banks, developing a financial consumer protection program, and boosting the credit reporting ecosystem.

Reforms will also include the establishment of the Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility, adoption of BSP requirements on climate risk management, among others.

“Supporting an inclusive economic recovery and addressing climate change risks through promoting a green economy became a priority for the Philippines. The proposed operation will enable the financial sector to play an effective role to achieve this goal,” the World Bank said.

The Department of Finance will be the program’s main implementing agency.

Development policy loans typically support policy and institutional changes needed to create an environment conducive to sustained and equitable growth as defined by borrower-countries' own development agenda, according to the World Bank.

As of March, the World Bank was the Philippines' third-largest source of official development assistance, with loans and grants representing 23.38% of the total.

The World Bank is currently supporting 15 ongoing programs and projects worth \$4.96 billion, in areas like transport, rural development, disaster risk reduction and management, social protection, Customs modernization, and COVID-19 response.

CNN PHILIPPINES

[**Marcos to push for food and energy security, climate change in APEC 2022**](#)

By CNN Philippines Staff

Metro Manila (CNN Philippines, November 7) — President Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr. will call for stronger cooperation to ensure food and energy security, including the region's efforts to address climate change, when he attends his first Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit next week in Thailand, the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) said on Monday.

Leaders of APEC's 21 member economies are scheduled to hold their summit on Nov. 18-19 in Bangkok — the first such face-to-face gathering since 2018. Malacañang said Marcos will also attend the APEC CEO Summit of top business leaders in the region on Nov. 16-18.

The President is expected to call attention during the leaders' summit "for the need to ensure food security, energy security, also the robust response of APEC economies to the challenge of climate change adaptation and mitigation," said DFA Assistant Secretary Eric Tamayo.

Marcos would also highlight Filipino seafarers' crucial duty of keeping a smooth flow of supply chains across the globe, especially now that the world is dealing with economic challenges brought about by the pandemic and other disruptions.

"So focus on the drivers of economy, particularly ensuring the flow and operations of various supply chains around the globe, the critical role of essential workers, particularly our maritime crew is one of the key initiatives of the Philippines in this APEC, providing and facilitating for the safe passage of essential workers who have been affected by the pandemic," Tamayo said.

Last month, Foreign Affairs Undersecretary Eduardo de Vega warned that 50,000 Filipino seafarers currently deployed in the European Union (EU) would be at risk of losing their jobs if the Philippines' fails to comply with European Maritime Safety Agency's standards.

Tamayo said the President will also have bilateral meetings with six counterparts, details of which are yet to be disclosed as they are being finalized.

Teresita Daza, the DFA's spokesperson, said Foreign Affairs Secretary Enrique Manalo and Trade Secretary Alfredo Pascual are among those who will join Marcos.

Daza noted that APEC accounts for about 85% of the Philippines' trade abroad while 82% of tourism flows into the country are from members of the forum.

APEC economies also host around 60% of Filipinos abroad, who are responsible for 68% of remittances back to the Philippines, she added.

The Philippines, a founding member of the forum, hosted APEC meetings in 1996 and 2015.

APEC was founded in 1989 with the primary goal of supporting sustainable economic growth and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific region.

DW AKADEMIE

[Who is paying for climate change loss and damage?](#)

By: Louise Osborne

Global warming is leading to ever more extreme natural events and more damage. Countries in the Global South are demanding compensation for climate change they say wealthier nations, like Germany, caused.

Eric Njuguna is angry. The 20-year-old environmental activist is witnessing the devastating changes a warming planet is bringing to Kenya. People are losing their livelihoods, their homes and many, even their lives, to the worst drought the region has seen in the last 40 years.

"The impacts make us thirsty. It makes us hungry for food. I feel like the anger doesn't come from the knowledge of it, but from the impact of it. And knowing that we did the least to cause this, but that our countries, our communities are bearing the brunt of it," Njuguna told DW from Kenya's capital Nairobi.

Kenya is among those countries in the Global South hardest hit by extreme weather linked to a warming planet. But it is by no means the only one. Drought is bringing millions of people in the Horn of Africa to the brink of starvation, while ever more destructive storms are hitting the Philippines. And this summer, some 1,500 people lost their lives when extreme monsoons flooded large swathes of Pakistan.

"There is what we can adapt to, but with the increasing severity of the climate crisis, there is what we cannot adapt to," said Njuguna. "This needs to be paid for."

Calls are growing louder for wealthier nations to provide compensation in the form of a dedicated fund to cover the costs of severe damage and losses.

The controversial issue is set to play a major part in discussions taking place over the next two weeks at the COP27 climate conference in Sharm El-Sheikh. On Sunday, delegates agreed to address financing loss and damages adding it to the summit's agenda for the first time.

What is loss and damage?

The concept of loss and damage was first introduced by Alliance of Small Island States at international climate negotiations in Geneva in 1991 with the proposal of an insurance scheme against rising sea levels with costs to be covered by industrialized countries. But it was not seriously considered again until 2013 at the COP 19 climate conference in Warsaw, Poland.

The Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage was created with the aim of enhancing knowledge of the issue and finding ways to approach it. There has been little movement since then.

At last year's UN climate conference in the Scottish city of Glasgow, negotiators rejected a proposal made by members of the G77 group of over a hundred developing countries and China for a formal loss and damage financial facility. Instead, the Glasgow Dialogue was established to enable further discussion over funding in an "open, inclusive and non-prescriptive manner".

But Zoha Shawoo, an associate scientist researching loss and damage at the Stockholm Environment Institute, says some countries have criticised the dialogue as "an excuse to delay further action."

Rich countries are dragging their feet on financing

While historically, developed countries bear the most responsibility for emissions leading to global temperature rise — between 1751 and 2017, the United States, the EU and the UK were responsible for 47% of cumulative carbon dioxide emissions compared to just 6% from in the entire African and South American continents — they have been slow to make financial contributions to ease the impact on the most affected countries.

In 2010, Global North nations agreed to pledge \$100 billion (€101 billion) annually by 2020 to help developing countries adapt to the impacts of climate change, for example, by providing farmers with drought-resistant crops or paying for better flood defences.

But according to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), which tracks funding, in 2020 wealthy countries pledged just over \$83 billion. That was a 4% increase on the previous year, but still falls short of the agreed amount.

Marlene Achoki, global policy co-lead on climate justice at NGO CARE International says rich countries that created the problem should "provide the finance that is needed" because inadequate funding has a destabilizing effect on countries that are already struggling.

"Instead of addressing issues of poverty and education, they have to take steps to address the issues of climate change," Achoki said. "They have to look for resources, finances to try to build resilience of communities."

Losses are not only financial

Fifty-five of the 58 nations included in the Vulnerable 20, a group of developing nations, which includes Kenya, Philippines and Colombia, suffered climate-related economic losses of over half a trillion dollars in the first two decades of this century, according to a report put together by the Loss and Damage Collaboration, a global group of researchers, activists, lawyers and decision makers.

But there have also been non-economic losses, including the disappearance of areas of cultural and traditional significance.

"If you have an area where you perform religious or cultural rituals on a beach or something and that gets flooded and removed, that has a loss associated with it," Shawoo said. "A lot of the communities that are most vulnerable to climate changes are also Indigenous, local or tribal communities and they are facing the majority of those losses."

What's the sticking point?

Though developed nations broadly acknowledge the need to address loss and damage, some argue for financing through existing climate funds, insurance schemes and humanitarian aid. The European Union, for example, said in a briefing that it was "open to discussing L&D (loss and damage) as a topic but hesitant about creating a dedicated L&D fund."

"I think there's a fear that if they open up that space of acknowledging the need for additional finance, for loss and damage, it will open them up to liability and compensation claims, which would have a massive cost associated with them," said Shawoo.

If a bridge collapsed because of a flood, or houses were destroyed as a result of a typhoon in a developing country, for example, there is the fear among developed nations that "they would then be held liable to pay for it," she added.

Some countries have decided to go their own way. Earlier this year, Denmark pledged over \$13 million in loss and damage compensation to developing countries including Sahel region in northwestern Africa and at the COP 26 climate conference last year Scotland also committed at least \$1 million.

Action by individual nations is a good way to meet the urgency of the losses faced by developing nations, said Shawoo. "It's an easy way for countries to show they are doing something without committing to something that would hold them accountable, like a finance facility."

But with temperatures set to rise and wealthy nations failing to significantly reduce carbon dioxide emissions, the impacts of climate change will continue to affect the poorest communities.

"The window for action is closing. The impacts we are facing with 1.2 degrees of warming are pretty severe and still no serious action is in sight," said Njuguna.

MANILA BULLETIN

PH ranks high in sustainability index

By: Bernie Cahiles-Magkilat

The Philippines ranked 6TH regionally and 12th globally in the Sustainability Trade Index (STI) 2022, joining more developed economies as it scored high in the report that measures economies' behavior and effects of international trade on sustainability and economic prosperity.

In the first Hinrich-IMD Sustainable Trade Index (STI), produced by the Institute for Management Development (IMD) and the Hinrich Foundation released Tuesday, Nov. 9, New Zealand ranked first, the UK second, and Hong Kong third.

STI ranks 30 economies by their capacity for global trade in a manner that supports long-term sustainable development by analyzing the factors that affect the sustainability of trade at a time of high political tensions and inflation. These include economic growth, social capital development and environmental protection.

The STI Report explores how nations can maintain "climate accountability" and Environment Social and Governance (ESG) objectives while preserving the economy at a time of high geopolitical tensions ahead of COP 27.

Based on the report, the Philippines was ahead of other ASEAN countries in the APAC and Global ranking except Singapore which ranked third for APAC.

Globally, the Philippines scored high in the Environmental pillar at 5th, Societal pillar at 17th, and Economic pillar at 19th. It has mixed scores in 70 indicators across the three pillars.

Notably, the Philippines ranked high in tariffs and non-tariff barriers metrics finishing first place on new tariff barriers 2021.

The country also ranked second place for high technology exports as percentage of manufactured exports. It also ranked fourth in growth in labor force in 2020 and exchange rate stability in 2018.

In the monetary policy intervention, the Philippines also finished 6th overall and ranked 7th in total reserves as percentage of GDP and 8th in terms of monetary policy intervention in 2021. The country also ranked 10th in terms of mobile subscriptions per 100 people.

The Philippine ranking was affected by low scores in terms of trade costs having finished low in corruption perception index in 2021 and rule of law index in 2020 at 22nd while it ranked 18th in logistics in 2018.

It placed lower in export concentration at 22nd and exports of goods and services at 19th.

The country finished lower in overall technological infrastructure at 21st having ranking for sub metrics on fixed internet speed, internet users, fixed broadband subscription, and mobile subscriptions. On technology innovation indicator, the Philippines ranked 13th overall.

As COP 27 approaches, The Sustainable Trade Index is a reminder for nations that sustainability of trade – economically, socially and environmentally speaking – is essential for economies to prosper at a time of higher ‘climate accountability’ expected of nations.

“Globalization and sustainability are at odds with each other. Companies and countries have used global trade and sourcing to maximize financial returns, but we are now acutely aware that this compromises sustainability to the extent, for instance, that energy is consumed and natural resources are depleted. Therefore, governments and corporate leaders alike must balance these two effects, asking ‘how do we support our economies while preserving ESG objectives?’” Professor Arturo Bris, Director of the IMD World Competitiveness Center, IMD Switzerland, said in a statement.

The STI looks at 70 indicators across three pillars. The Economic pillar quantifies how well economies are fostering economic growth through international trade, e.g., the quality of trade infrastructure, the ease of conducting international trade, export diversification in bilateral trade partnerships and export goods concentration. The Societal pillar captures social factors contributing to economies’ long-term capacity to conduct trade, e.g., education levels and labor standards, which feed human capital development. The Environmental pillar measures the extent to which a country uses natural resources and manages the externalities arising from its economic growth and participation in the global trading system, e.g., the air and water pollution levels.

The results reveal how economies balance the trade-offs between growth and equitable prosperity. The Index can serve as a tool for regulators and businesses to shape policies to better integrate sustainable trade along with the prosperity of economies.

The Index finds that the top-ranking economies encourage technological innovation and have low trade barriers. Their citizens have a high life expectancy, attend school for longer, and enjoy more growth opportunities. They conserve energy and respect climate goals globally.

PH representatives for 27th COP urged to support Agroecology

By: Charie Mae F. Abarca

In an open letter to the Philippine delegates to the 27th Session of the Conference of the Parties (COP27) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, various civil society organizations in the country recommended the inclusion of Agroecology on the agenda to address the ongoing climate crisis.

Agroecology, defined as the “application of ecological principles to agricultural systems and practices,” must be recognized as a global warming solution, according to Philippine-based organizations.

There were 55 organizations who endorsed the open letter including peasant groups Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas, Alyansa ng Magbubukid sa Gitnang Luzon, and Amihan National Federation of Peasant Women.

The petition was also endorsed by Alliance of Filipino Women Gabriela, Kalikasan People’s Network for the Environment, MASIPAG, and Youth Advocates for Climate Action Philippines.

“We call on the Philippine Delegation to the COP27 to advocate for Agroecology as an adaptive strategy to strengthen stability and resilience of food production systems, in the face of extreme events due to climate change, and as we are nearing the point of irreversible impact of this global threat,” said the organizations in the aforementioned open letter.

Noting the drastic impacts of climate change on food productivity, the groups highlighted the “significant need” to come up with coherent and actionable policies to achieve a “climate-resilient” food system in the Philippines.

Meanwhile, COP27 of the UNFCCC will be hosted by the Government of the Arab Republic of Egypt from Nov. 6 until Nov. 18, 2022. The conference seeks to “effectively tackle” the global challenge of climate change.

Rough seas ahead for the Philippine digital economy

By: Monchito Ibrahim

The Philippines continues to ride the crest of the ASEAN digital economy juggernaut. According to the e-Economy SEA report 2022 recently released by Google, Temasek, and Bain and Company, our country's digital economy growth remains to be one of the fastest among the six ASEAN member states (ASEAN 6) tracked by the study, coming in next to Vietnam which came out the fastest. But the seventh edition of the annual study also says global headwinds are blowing ahead that potentially impact the upward trajectory and even derail the full economic recovery of the Southeast Asian countries including the Philippines. Will the Philippines again show extraordinary resiliency to withstand the rough seas ahead?

Last year, the same report dubbed the next 10 years for ASEAN as the Roaring 20s: The SEA digital decade. The region is supposed to solidify its position as the world's fastest-growing digital economy. Existing enablers like digital payments and tech-enabled logistics have been put in place to make it happen. We have seen significant improvements in terms of infrastructures and capacities meant to bridge the regional digital divide. ASEAN was really poised for a steep growth trajectory. Then geopolitical tensions started to appear in different corners of the globe that are now causing interest rates and inflationary pressures to rise affecting consumer demand in the region.

These headwinds are causing disruptions in our supply chains with rising freight costs. Zero-Covid mandates and lockdowns in China, a major trading partner of the region, have resulted in production backlogs making the sourcing of affordable goods very challenging. High inflation has resulted in the depreciation of regional currencies including our peso causing price hikes in goods and services including travel. The currency depreciations have also ballooned the foreign debts of countries. The report says that with the economic slowdown and a softer labor market, we are beginning to see weakened discretionary spending by consumers. And climate change is adding up to our situation in the Philippines. This year alone, we have seen some of the worst storms hit our shores with record-high destructions and death tolls keeping everyone focused on normalizing their lives rather than making purchases online.

Despite the prevailing rough seas, however, the report says the digital economy of the ASEAN 6 remains on track to hit US\$200 billion in gross merchandise value (GMV) by the end of this year. Surprisingly, it is about to achieve this figure three years earlier than expected in the 2016 first edition of the report. Digital adoption has expanded significantly during the first two years of the pandemic. One hundred million additional internet users have come online in the region in the last three years. The Philippines alone added more than two million internet users between 2020 and 2021 resulting in an internet penetration rate of 68 percent of the total population. The pace of digital adoption may be slower than the steep acceleration at the peak of the pandemic but it continues to rise even today.

Affluent consumers and young digital natives in the urban areas continue to drive the growth of the digital economy of the ASEAN 6 and, in the case of e-Commerce, adoption is almost at its full potential. Generally, the buying habits of these digital consumers have all gone back to pre-pandemic levels. We are seeing, however, a different picture as far as the adoption and usage of digital financial services are concerned which have flourished during the pandemic driven by the shift to everything online. But the current headwinds are expected to put into stress-test the business models of the new digital banks and the platforms.

There is no question that the digital economy has opened a lot of opportunities for the citizens of the ASEAN 6. Across the region, it has created high-skilled jobs for 160,000 workers and 30 million indirect jobs. On the part of the platforms, they have enabled over 20 million merchants and six million food entrepreneurs to grow their businesses online. The report also highlights the need for continuous dialogue between regulators and the platforms to address emerging social concerns around the welfare of worker-partners brought about by the new business models of the new players.

The Philippine digital decade, as shown in the report, continues its upward trend at 20 percent year-on-year to reach US\$20 billion this year primarily driven by e-Commerce transactions. It is projected to hit US\$35 billion by 2025 and potentially US\$150 billion by end of 2030. To achieve these figures, the Philippines needs to turn its focus on capacitating people outside of the metros so they can start to enjoy the benefits of online commerce and make its digital infrastructure world-class but affordable. It has been always a catchup game when it comes to efforts to bridge the digital divide. But there is no other alternative in sight but to work on the digital inclusion of on-a-budget consumers and those in the provinces to sustain the growth of the Philippine digital economy.

MANILA METRO NEWS

[Climate change: carbon offsetting isn't working - here's how to fix it](#)

The environmental impact of carbon dioxide emissions will be the same irrespective of where the emissions take place. Carbon emitted in one part of the world can be cancelled out if the same amount is removed elsewhere.

Carbon offsetting is one way of achieving this. Companies can meet their emissions reduction targets by purchasing carbon credits awarded to projects that either emit fewer emissions at source, such as cleaner energy production, or remove them from the atmosphere, such as forestry schemes. Each credit corresponds to one metric tonne of reduced or removed carbon emissions.

The first day of the UN climate summit, COP27, in Egypt saw intense discussions over the trade of carbon offsets. The US sees offsets as a promising way of directing investment towards clean energy projects in developing countries.

But many scientists and environmentalists are sceptical of companies offsetting their emissions instead of actually reducing them. This has prompted some firms, including EasyJet, to focus their efforts on reducing their emissions directly.

I am a member of the Climate Change Committee, the UK's independent climate change advisory body. We have produced a report that assesses whether carbon offsetting has supported the UK's transition towards net zero. The report confirms that the scepticism around carbon offsetting is not unfounded. But we also found ways to improve offsetting.

Can we rely on carbon offsets?

Carbon credits are cheap. One tonne of carbon dioxide costs just Pound 3 to offset on average. Companies are also not required to disclose how offsets are being used to meet their net zero targets. They therefore have little incentive to reduce their emissions as they can claim to be net zero while relying entirely on offsetting.

But offsetting often fails to reduce carbon emissions meaningfully. Global carbon credit standards exist to ensure that credits are traceable and meet a minimum verifiable level. However, an emissions reduction may occur whether or not it is paid for with credits. An area of rainforest, for example, will remove carbon from the atmosphere whether or not it has been sold as part of a carbon offsetting scheme.

Projects may also not remove emissions permanently. A fire that destroys a forest, for example, will damage the integrity of the credits sold by forestry projects. Six forest projects involved in the carbon offsetting market in California have released up to 6.8 million tonnes of carbon dioxide since 2015 because of fires.

Seeds of hope

But if used correctly, carbon offsetting can be an important component of the policy mix as we transition to net zero. A rise in the price of credits would allow offsetting to make a greater contribution to global climate priorities, such as restoring nature.

International accounting mechanisms were agreed at COP26 encouraging countries that sell offsets not to count these emissions savings towards their own climate targets. Within their borders, countries would have to deliver both their domestic targets and any offsetting projects sold to overseas buyers.

This could help raise overall climate ambition in some countries. But national climate targets for countries selling offsets need to be ambitious and the sale of offsets must be monitored to ensure the delivery of offsetting projects.

Woodland covers roughly 13% of the UK's land surface, making it one of the most nature-depleted nations on the planet. Despite this, less than 1% of the carbon offsets purchased by the 350 largest listed companies on the London Stock Exchange go towards restoring UK nature.

However, offsetting could provide the finance required to restore UK nature. Quality standards are being developed for woodland and peatland creation projects in the UK, detailing the scale of restoration needed to deliver climate and biodiversity targets.

They require projects to last for a minimum of 70 years and demand the creation of buffers in the form of additional tree planting and peat restoration to insure against project failure. Our report suggests that these standards could lead to Pound 1 billion of funding each year for UK nature restoration projects.

We also found that the purchase of carbon credits could raise Pound 400 million of funding each year for emerging climate technologies in the UK. One such technology is direct air capture, which involves pulling carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and storing it underground. Purchasing credits in long-term carbon removal projects such as this represent an attractive option for industries that cannot easily curb their emissions, such as the aviation industry.

Offsets can work

Since 2018, the global market for offsets has grown five-fold and is set to continue growing. But further steps must be taken to ensure that carbon offsets are used correctly.

Guidance over how a company is using carbon offsetting must be improved. A company should only be able to claim that they are net zero when they have minimised their own emissions and are using offsetting to compensate for the rest.

The UK government is developing its own regulations for businesses through a net zero transition plan. The plan will require organisations to disclose the steps they are taking to transition towards net zero. This involves setting out how offsetting contributes to these targets, enabling an independent assessment of how far organisations are reducing their emissions.

Efforts to improve UK and international standards for carbon offsetting projects should be accelerated. Standards are being developed in the UK for carbon credits associated with restoring kelp beds off our coasts, improving carbon storage in our soils, and planting hedgerows. They will support climate and biodiversity goals while providing a financial incentive for farmers.

For overseas projects, a set of standards could be internationally agreed, possibly based on the Integrity Council for the Voluntary Carbon Market's Core Carbon Principles. With a trusted set of standards, businesses can be confident that they are investing in high-quality offsetting projects.

Carbon offsetting should support attempts to reduce an organisation's emissions, not provide an alternative. By improving guidance on the use of offsetting, businesses can be encouraged to reduce their emissions directly. But through financing climate change mitigation and nature restoration, carbon offsetting can play an important role in the transition to net zero.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Gov't urged to tap civil society groups in PH climate action

By: Imelda Abaño

Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt—The 12-day global summit on climate change began on Sunday in this Red Sea resort city, with civil society groups urging the Philippine government to include them in the process and champion the issue of financial compensation from floods, rising seas and other climate-related impacts.

A week before the United Nations-backed climate conference, the Philippines was hit by Tropical Storm Paeng (international name: Nalgae), leaving over a hundred people dead, causing landslides and widespread flooding.

Hit by an average of 20 typhoons a year, the Philippines is now the world's most disaster-prone country, according to the World Risk Report 2022.

Civil society groups said the Philippines and other vulnerable countries bearing the brunt of extreme weather events must call on governments to push loss and damage finance on top of the agenda at this year's 27th Conference of Parties (COP27) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. (See related story in World, Page B3).

But at the opening of COP27, countries have finally agreed to discuss loss and damage funding on the COP27 agenda since the adoption of the UN climate convention in 1994.

"I expect the Philippine delegation to the climate talks to be at the forefront of the loss and damage discussions, which is the most important issue for our country in this meeting," Tony La Viña, associate director for climate policy and international relations of the Manila Observatory, told the Inquirer.

'Different from past talks'

According to La Viña, a former lead negotiator of the country, he has high hopes with the leadership of the Philippine delegation under Environment Secretary Toni Yulo Loyzaga since she is also a climate change expert and has particular interest in resilience and addressing climate impacts.

La Viña is attending COP27 as a climate justice advocate, together with his colleagues from the Manila Observatory led by its executive director, Fr. Jett Villarin, SJ.

"I hope the Philippine delegation would also seek assistance from us from the civil society who are veterans of the negotiations process," he said.

In last year's climate talks in Glasgow, civil society groups complained of exclusion and the lack of transparency in the strategy and decision-making of the Philippine delegation.

"The presence of many civil society representatives makes this COP different from the past climate talks," Rodne Galicha, lead convener of the civil society network Aksyon Klima Pilipinas, said at this year's COP.

Christian Aid's advocacy partner Jessica Dator-Bercilla agreed, saying the Philippine delegation must engage those who have been actively involved in climate negotiations so that the country can have an institutional documentation of the key Philippine positions around issues that matter to the Philippines such as loss and damage.

Transparency

Gerry Arances, executive director of Center for Energy, Ecology and Development, said: "While the level of transparency from the government on the official delegation's agenda and composition has been far from satisfactory, one can hope that the pronounced priorities of DENR (Department of Environment and Natural Resources) Secretary Loyzaga and her background in climate science and civil society would make its mark in the engagements of the delegation."

He also noted that the policy directions of the new administration, such as the President's marching orders to ramp up the gas buildup after over a decade of coal expansion, require civic movements and communities to keep watch over the government representatives and remind them of our need for ambitious climate action.

Loyzaga, in a statement, said: "The Philippine delegation in the following days will continue to assert and safeguard the country's interest in climate change negotiations, ensuring that we receive the appropriate support and assistance as a country vulnerable to climate change."

The delegation consists of representatives and negotiators from the DENR, Department of Finance, Department of Foreign Affairs, Department of Agriculture, and Department of Energy, with advisers from climate scientists and development experts.

In the Philippines, several youth climate advocates are also actively lobbying government delegates to integrate their key recommendations into the country's position on critical climate issues.

"We never forget to demand accountability and transparency from the government and businesses for their statements and actions in the context of climate justice," said John Leo Algo, deputy executive director of Living Laudato Si Philippines.

Sea level rise

Meanwhile, the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) said the country needs to ramp up its disaster preparedness and resilience measures, since it now faces rising sea levels and increased risk of tsunamis.

According to recent data from the agency, over 80 percent of the country's 81 provinces are exposed to tsunamis. This includes 832 coastal municipalities and 25 coastal cities housing 62 percent of the country's population.

Of the many climate-related threats coastal communities face, tsunamis are the rarest as they could only happen during earthquakes.

But the DOST urged both national and local governments to "not be complacent" as rising sea levels also raise the risk of exposure.

"Tsunami hazards can result in disaster losses, [but] we can reduce disaster risks. Information, tools, systems and plans are available for communities to be safer," said Joan Salcedo, DOST supervising science research specialist.

Legarda acknowledged as Asean biodiversity hero

By: Daniza Fernandez

Manila, Philippines — Senate President Pro Tempore Loren Legarda has been acknowledged as an Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) biodiversity hero, her office said on Monday.

Legarda was recognized last November 2 in Bogor, Indonesia for her contributions to biodiversity efforts in the Philippines.

"It is an honor to be recognized by the Asean as one of this year's Asean Biodiversity Heroes. It is heartening that what I advocated to do by being a planetary inhabitant has impacted not only my fellow Filipinos but also the peoples of Asean and hopefully the world," the senator said in her acceptance speech.

Legarda committed to "further improve the policy environment that will see full implementation, transition the country towards a blue economy, sustainability and climate resilience for future generations."

As a legislator, Legarda has authored a number of environmental laws such as the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act, Philippine Clean Air Act, Renewable Energy Act, and Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act, among other measures.

She likewise sponsored the Philippines' concurrence in ratifying the Paris Agreement, an international climate change treaty, in 2017.

Other awardees were from Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, and Thailand.

The Asean Biodiversity Heroes Awards, initiated in 2017, is among the commemorative activities for the 55th Asean anniversary and the 17th Asean Center for Biodiversity anniversary.

The award was designed to acknowledge people from Asean member states who provide significant contributions to biodiversity conservation in their nations and region, raise biodiversity awareness, and support Asean's vision of "One Community."

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

House OKs integration of nat'l building code in curriculums

By: Filane Mikee Cervantes

Manila – The House of Representatives on Monday overwhelmingly approved on final reading a bill mandating the integration of the National Building Code of the Philippines as a major subject in the curriculum of engineering and architecture degree programs, as well its inclusion in the professional licensure examinations.

During the plenary session, a total of 276 lawmakers voted in favor of House Bill 5087, which seeks to mandate the integration of the National Building Code under Republic Act 6541 in the curriculum of the Bachelor of Science (BS) degree programs in civil engineering, mechanical engineering, electrical engineering, sanitary engineering, electronics engineering, and architecture, and its inclusion as a topic in the licensure examinations for these professions.

The bill aims to ensure that those who practice the engineering and architecture professions receive the necessary formal instruction and training on ensuring the safety and integrity of structures, both building and nonbuilding.

Deputy Speaker and Pampanga Representative Aurelio Gonzales said it is important to properly convey and inculcate in the minds of the students the noble intent of the National Building Code, as well as the valuable technical information on structural design and construction considering that the future of the country depends on them when they become professionals.

"It is sad to note however, that the noble intentions of the Building Code and the valuable technical information embodied in the law and its Implementing Rules and Regulations, which I understand is in the stage of amendments to make them conform to changing conditions, especially on climate change, are not properly conveyed and inculcated in the minds of the students in the academe in whose hands the future of our country on matters concerning the design and construction of the buildings be it a one-story, medium rise or high rise depend," he said.

The bill mandates the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) to develop and include in the architecture and engineering curriculums the study of the National Building Code of the Philippines as a major subject in these courses.

It also mandates the Professional Regulation Commission to include the National Building Code of the Philippines as a topic in the licensure examinations for the Civil Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Sanitary Engineering, Electronics Engineering, and Architecture professions.

Legal shield for environment defenders, climate activists sought

By: Ma. Teresa Montemayor

Manila – The Commission on Human Rights (CHR) on Monday urged the government to provide legal protection for environmental defenders and climate activists who promote climate awareness and education.

In a statement, the CHR noted that the Philippines plays an important role in leading and demanding climate action in the global arena as it is the fourth most climate change-vulnerable country in the world.

This, as international communities come together for the 27th Climate Change Conference of Parties (COP27) on Nov. 6 to 18 in Egypt with the theme "Rise Up: Moving Beyond Climate Talk to Climate Action".

November is dedicated to the promotion of environmental education across all sectors of society by virtue of Republic Act No. 9512 or the National Environmental Awareness and Education Act.

"We must meet the 1.5° target of the Paris Agreement to prevent the irreversible harms of climate change," the CHR said.

It emphasized that people's lives and human rights are prioritized when the climate crisis is addressed with expedient urgency.

Earlier, Environment Secretary Maria Antonia Yulo Loyzaga, the head of the country's delegation to COP27, said the damage caused by Severe Tropical Storm Paeng is a "reminder of the devastating impacts of climate change."

Apart from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, representatives from the Departments of Finance, Agriculture, Energy, and the Climate Change Commission, climate scientists and climate and development experts composed the Philippine delegation to COP27.

"We call for concrete actions from all governments to review and enhance their nationally determined contributions," the CHR said.

"We forward our recommendations to the Philippine government to ensure equality and non-discrimination in climate adaptation and mitigation measures through our National Inquiry on Climate Change report," it added.

The CHR appealed to local leaders and lawmakers for the creation of legally binding instruments to strengthen the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.

PBBM to raise seafarers' role; climate change mitigation at APEC

By: Azer Parrocha

Manila – President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. will shed light on the role of the country's maritime crews and seafarers in ensuring stable supply chains when he participates in the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Economic Leaders' Meeting (AELM) in Thailand next week, Malacañang announced Monday.

In a Palace press briefing, Undersecretary Cheloy Garafil, officer-in-charge of the Office of the Press Secretary (OPS), confirmed that Marcos will be joining other heads of state at the 8th APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting in Bangkok from Nov. 16 to 19.

This will be the first APEC meeting for the President and his administration. It will also be the first in-person meeting of the 21-member regional economic bloc since the coronavirus pandemic hit at the start of the year 2020.

Aside from maritime crews and seafarers, Garafil said other topics that will be raised by Marcos are the importance of empowering micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) and their inclusion in global value chains, the need to ensure food and energy security, and climate change mitigation and adaptation measures.

Garafil said Marcos will also participate in the APEC CEO Summit which is a meeting of top business leaders in the region.

"He will meet with top executives of Thai companies to discuss business opportunities, investments, and expansion plans," she said.

She said Marcos will also have the opportunity to meet with leaders of economies to discuss the country's bilateral relations and seek paths toward mutual economic benefits.

DFA Multilateral Affairs and International Economic Relations (UMAIER) Assistant Secretary Eric Gerardo Tamayo said Marcos will be having bilateral meetings with six counterparts, but arrangements are still being finalized.

Garafil said the President will also meet with the Filipino community in Thailand.

The APEC was established in 1989 with the primary goal of supporting sustainable economic growth and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific Region.

The 21 member economies of APEC are the Philippines, Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Russia, Singapore, Chinese Taipei, Thailand, the United States, and Vietnam.

The Philippines has hosted APEC meetings twice, in 1996 and 2015.

Positive outcomes

Meanwhile, Tamayo expressed confidence that the President's participation at the APEC would result in "positive outcomes."

Tamayo, who is also the Director-General of the Philippine APEC National Secretariat, said Marcos will push for APEC to revitalize its role as a driver of global economic growth.

Before the pandemic, he said the Asia-Pacific Region had been the significant driver of global economic growth. However, this was disrupted by the global health crisis.

"...The challenge before us is to facilitate the rapid recovery of economies arising out of the pandemic and also to undertake the necessary measures to also counter the disruptive forces that affect the current economic situation around the globe," he said.

"It is important for us to be able to highlight the fact that economies need to future-proof the region in responding to these disruptions coming from the pandemic and other disruptions around the globe," he added.

RAPPLER

Hundreds of Yolanda survivors bike in campaign for climate change mitigation

By: Jazmin Bonifacio

Tacloban, Philippines – Bicycle enthusiasts in Eastern Visayas cities and towns hit hard by Super Typhoon Yolanda (Haiyan) in 2013 joined the Pedal for Planet and People activity on Sunday, November 6, to push for systems encouraging the non-fuel, two-wheel mode of transport.

As part of build-up activities for the Tuesday, November 8, commemoration of Yolanda, which killed more than 6,300 and destroyed more than half a million houses, 300 cyclists also used the event to call on rich countries contributing largely to carbon emission to pay reparation to small countries suffering from the impact of the climate crisis.

Environmentalists likewise urged a halt to the land use conversion of the peatlands of the Leyte Saba Basin to forestall the growing vulnerability of the area to the effects of climate change.

Yolanda, which affected more than 3.4 million families in the country, cost the Philippine economy P95.48 billion. By 2016, the Philippine government had listed a P150.03-billion total funding requirement for the Yolanda Reconstruction and Rehabilitation program.

While the global call is for rich nations to step up reparations for their huge carbon emissions, which are among the reasons cited for global warming, environmentalists in Eastern Visayas also pushed the government to lay down systems for non-motorized transport.

During Super Typhoon Yolanda, the bicycle was used as an emergency response transport and a way to reestablish communication among survivors, said Judah Aliposa, a member of the board of trustees of the Firefly Brigade Inc. and private sector representative in the Disaster Resilience Regional Development Council 8.

Aliposa said biking is no longer just a fitness activity. More people have taken up biking as an alternative transport mode to motor vehicles, especially with recent runaway fuel costs, and the government should respond to their needs, he stressed.

"The bicycle is here for good, we cyclists are here for the long run," Aliposa said. "Magsara man ang lahat, magmahal man ang gasolina, ito pa rin ang bisikleta at hindi na ngangailangan ng gasolina." (Even when everything shuts down, or the price of gasoline increases, the bicycle will be here because it doesn't need fuel to operate.)

Leyte Board Member Ronnan Christian Reposar, who also works with the Environmental Legal Assistance Center (ELAC) and biker associations in the province, noted that every kilometer of a bike ride helps reduce road congestion and air pollution.

Local actions

Reposar said Leyte province, the municipality of Palo, and Tacloban City have passed resolutions on setting up bike lanes and road sharing.

"They are very supportive of this call, but it's not that easy and they need support from national government agencies, like the Department of Public Works and Highways and the Department of the Interior and Local Government," he added.

While environmentalists had long warned of global warming, it was only after Yolanda that the national government stepped up discussions on climate change.

"The phenomenon is real – we are experiencing environmental shifts. Like a repeat order, every time there is a storm or typhoon, we will expect flooding, landslide," the provincial board member said.

"We can't just stop with rescue and relief," Reposar stressed, noting that the Leyte Saba Basin Peatland (LSBP) – which includes the towns of Palo, Santa Fe, Alang Alang, and San Miguel in Leyte – has a large carbon sink in a region vulnerable to the effects of climate change.

A carbon sink is anything that absorbs more carbon from the atmosphere than it releases – for example, plants, the ocean, and soil.

In April 2022, the Forest Foundation of the Philippines warned that land use conversion in the LSBP, an area of more than 2,100 hectares, has reduced its ability to store carbon.

"Peatlands are highly effective carbon stocks. They cover only 3% of the land but contain more carbon than the entire forest biomass of the world," the foundation noted.

The LSBP, in the northeastern portion of Leyte Island – which covers the municipalities of Alangalang, Santa Fe, and San Miguel – is the second largest peatland mass in the country, next to the Agusan Marsh of Mindanao.

"We want to protect this, and what we are doing now contributes to raising awareness on the importance of tackling this issue," Reposar said.

REUTERS

UK to announce U.S. gas deal after climate change summit -Telegraph

Nov 7 (Reuters) - British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak is poised to announce a major gas deal with the U.S. after the COP27 climate change summit, The Telegraph reported on Monday.

The United States will promise about 10 billion cubic metres of liquefied natural gas (LNG) to Britain, the newspaper said, adding that the deal which is in final stage is expected in about a week or two.

Earlier this year, the United States agreed to supply 15 billion cubic metres of liquefied natural gas to the European Union to help it wean off Russian energy supplies.

Britain's National Grid had previously said that Britain's ability to secure supply would depend upon its gas prices being high enough to attract exports from Europe and liquefied natural gas from countries such as Qatar and the United States.

Sunak on Monday at the COP27 climate change summit said the war should accelerate efforts to wean the world off fossil fuels.

British government officials are in talks with major American LNG suppliers about a deal to bolster energy imports, Sky News had previously reported.

Former British Prime Minister Liz Truss last month wrote an op-ed in the Times newspaper calling on Europe to keep energy exports flowing during the winter.

Wholesale gas prices have soared in recent months as economies reopen from COVID-19 lockdowns and high demand for liquefied natural gas in Asia pushed down supplies to Europe.

Around 12 British energy suppliers have already collapsed this year, affecting more than 2 million customers.

THE MANILA TIMES

Japanese companies bag two subway contracts

Embassy of Japan Chargé d'affaires ad interim Matsuda Kenichi and Special Advisor to the Prime Minister Mori Masafumi joined President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. and Transportation Secretary Jaime Bautista at the contract signing ceremony for Contract Package 102 (CP102) and Contract Package 103 (CP103) of the Metro Manila Subway Project (MMSP) Phase 1 on November 3. CP102, which involves the construction of two underground stations — Quezon Avenue and East Avenue — and tunneling works, was awarded to Nishimatsu Construction Co., Ltd. and D.M. Consunji, Inc. (Nishimatsu-DMCI Joint Venture).

Meanwhile, Sumitomo Mitsui Construction Co., Ltd. was awarded CP103, which calls for the construction of the Anonas and Camp Aguinaldo underground stations and tunneling works. In his speech, Chargé d'affaires Matsuda highlighted that the event "marks another milestone in Japan's cooperation with the Philippines for infrastructure development under President Marcos' "Build, Better, More" program.

Upon completion, this subway will ease the heavy traffic congestion in Metro Manila, thus contributing to the mitigation of climate change. It will also be a driving force for revitalizing the Philippine economy to accelerate investments from all over the world". "As we take pride in spurring the Metro Manila Subway Project forward, Filipinos can assuredly rely on Japan to continuously extend our utmost support until this project is successfully completed," Chargé d'affaires Matsuda added.

To date, the Japanese government, through the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), has provided assistance amounting to P42 billion in the 1st tranche and P100 billion pesos in the 2nd tranche. This 17-station subway will halve travel time between Quezon City and the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA) to only 35 minutes and revitalize the Philippine economy by easing traffic congestion in Metro Manila.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

Half of ancestral lands threatened by destructive projects — report

By: Gaea Katreena Cabico

Manila, Philippines — Environmentally destructive projects such as large-scale mining and logging have threatened half of indigenous territories in the Philippines, a legal and policy research institution said.

According to the 2022 State of the Indigenous Peoples Address Report by the Legal Rights and Natural Resources Center, 1.25 million hectares of indigenous lands or 21% of registered ancestral domains were embroiled in projects seen to pose ecological risks such as massive disturbance and pollution of land, waterways, air and biodiversity.

Ancestral lands cover around 13 to 14 million hectares of the country's land area. Of those, 5.3 million hectares are forest, making up 75% of the remaining forest cover in the Philippines.

Years of research have shown that indigenous communities are the best protectors of the forests they call home.

The LRC found that 83 out of 410 environmentally critical projects listed by the Environmental Management Bureau were situated within or close to lands under registered Certificate of Ancestral Domain Titles (CADTs).

CADTs refer to titles formally recognizing the rights of possession and ownership of indigenous peoples over their ancestral domains in accordance with the Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act of 1997.

According to the report, 49% of mining projects in the country and 87% of forest areas covered by large-scale logging were in conflict with registered ancestral domains.

"Protecting ancestral domains and their natural defenses to extreme climate impacts is urgently needed if we are to rise above the climate emergency we are already experiencing now," said lawyer Mai Taqueban, executive director of LRC.

The report was released ahead of the COP27 climate talks in Egypt, where governments and campaigners tackle measures to keep global warming under control and protect communities from the worst impacts of climate change.

At risk

"Underpinning these tensions with and pressures on IPs and their ancestral domains is the weak implementation of the free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) process," the report read.

The LRC also reported that at least 45 indigenous peoples were killed from 2019 to 2021. Top drivers of IP killings were land grabbing and conflict with ancestral domains, mining and quarrying and dam projects.

“The exploitation and commoditization of nature is sadly an enduring framework to managing our natural resources. This is contrary to indigenous peoples’ conception of development,” Taqueban said.

“Not only has this marginalized them, it has also worsened their human rights situation, for many of them naturally oppose these projects. What they have been clamoring for is support for their own development plans, anchored in their right to self-determination,” she added.

The Philippines was identified as the deadliest country in Asia for land and environment defenders for the ninth consecutive year by international organization Global Witness.

Taqueban said indigenous peoples were calling for a harmonization of IPRA with natural resources and other laws affecting them and urging the government to fasttrack the issuance of CADTs.

SEA medical professionals call for health-centered climate action

By: Gaea Katreena Cabico

Manila, Philippines — Southeast Asian medical professionals called on governments at the COP27 summit to transition to a clean energy future and put health at the center of climate policies.

Health Care Without Harm Southeast Asia stressed Monday that health is a human right, and climate change is a public health issue.

Climate change is making millions of people sick or more vulnerable to diseases, and low-income and vulnerable communities are disproportionately affected.

"We are living in a moment in which the twin crises of fossil fuel-driven climate change and the outbreak of diseases have merged. Their link exacerbates ecological deterioration and health issues, building on one another, becoming increasingly damaging to the very fabric of our society," said H. Suherman, MKM of the RISE Southeast Asia Alliance for Health and Climate in Indonesia.

"That is why, in countries like Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Laos, Singapore, Cambodia and Vietnam, the impacts of climate change are not only real but intensifying," he added.

In the Philippines, cyclones and flash floods ravage villages, resulting in fatalities and causing damage to homes and agriculture.

HCWH Southeast Asia called on governments attending climate change negotiations in Egypt to commit to the following recommendations:

- Develop low-carbon and sustainable health systems through a just energy transition toward a healthy fossil fuel-free world
- Strengthen their emission reduction targets, with developed countries taking the lead in phasing out all fossil fuels
- Provide technical and financial support to developing countries to facilitate a transition to clean energy
- Build climate-resilient health systems that ensure the provision of health services, particularly on sexual and reproductive health, in times of shocks and disasters
- Develop a Health National Adaptation Plan
- Secure the operationalization of the Santiago Network on loss and damage, a network of organizations and experts that can provide technical assistance to climate-vulnerable countries
- Increase climate financing grants, not loans, for countries in the Global South
- Achieve a balance of financial support for mitigation and adaptation. Financing for adaptation should at least be 50% and interventions with health co-benefits should be prioritized

"The call for a future free from extractive, polluting and harmful fossil fuels is driving the healthcare climate action agenda in Southeast Asia. Our role as healthcare workers therefore is to bolster this plan of action by advocating for health to be integrated in all climate policies and vice versa," said Esperanza Cabral, former chief of the Philippines' Department of Health.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

ABS CBN

Turn your trash to cash

By: SM Prime

Why is it so important that everyone works together in managing our waste? An ever increasing population has impacted heavily on the amount of waste accumulated through the years. Proper waste management not only helps reduce the hazardous impacts of waste on people's health and the environment, but also helps mitigate the perceived disastrous impacts of climate change to the ecosystem. It is for this reason that everyone from the government, private sector, and communities need to work hand-in-hand to efficiently manage and dispose waste.

Waste management does not have to be complicated.

This is why a well-known property developer and owner of a chain of malls, hotels, and residences has made it their mission to reduce, reuse, and recycle as part of their strategy to help protect nature and its coastline areas.

SM Prime Holdings has sustained regular coastal cleanups through its Mall Operations team at SM By the BAY. After two years, through its corporate social arm SM Cares, SM Prime has welcomed back volunteers in keeping our oceans healthy through its International Coastal Cleanup (ICC) held last September 17 at the SM By the Bay Central Park, SM Mall of Asia Complex in Pasay City.

The event was joined by 2,438 volunteers composed of students, professionals, and others from different private and public organizations and partnered by DENR-NCR, the Climate Change Commission, and the Philippine Coast Guard. An estimated 12,158 kilos of trash were collected, equivalent to 32,826.6 kgs of CO₂ and 20,303.86 kgs of CO₂ reduced by coal replacement. This number translates to:

3,993,114 mobile phones charged or 1,244 incandescent lights switched to LEDs.

"The International Coastal Clean Up is part of the overall SM Green Movement. As a proven responsible property developer and community partner, SM Prime's various Sustainability programs across its malls, residences, hotels and leisure properties promote resource conservation & environmental protection for an improved quality of life in the communities it serves," shares Perkin So, SM Supermalls SAVP for Operations.

Efforts toward creating a healthier environment should not stop here. You too can take part at home. Here are a few ways to ensure that your home is helping the environment:

Reduce landfill impact

Segregate waste at home by having a trash bin for biodegradable and non-biodegradable wastes, and separating recyclable materials. It will also make it easier for waste transporters to process the breaking down of non-recyclable materials and decomposable food waste.

Convert trash to cash

For the past 15 years, SM Supermalls has been executing the Trash to Cash program across all its branches.

Bring your recyclables such as plastics, papers, metals, appliances, and cookware to SM's Trash to Cash booths between 10 am and 2 pm, every first Friday and Saturday of the month, to exchange your items for cash.

One organization that has taken part in SM's Trash to Cash program is the Junior Chamber International (JCI), in alignment with their Trash for Tabs project. JCI shares how they use the money they earn in exchange for waste collected to buy learning tablets for children in need.

SM Supermalls also has the Plastic Waste Collection and E-Waste Collection programs to enable recycling, upcycling, and co-processing of solid waste to help reduce landfill and water pollution.

Through these SM Cares programs and other responsible practices, SM Prime has long been producing efforts to help reduce its environmental footprint and create a sustainable habitat for everyone. Aside from their solid waste management programs, they have been using recycled water in their malls' water closets, air conditioning operations, watering landscapes, and cleaning their perimeter areas. They have also installed solar panels to slowly switch their power to renewable energy, use natural and LED light systems, and promote bike-friendly facilities in support of sustainable mobility.

SM Prime believes that everyone must work together to help create a sustainable and clean environment for the future of the next generation.

To know more about the projects of SM Prime and how they are helping the community, visit their website and the SM Cares website.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

Legal shield for environment defenders, climate activists sought

By: Ma. Teresa Montemayor

Manila – The Commission on Human Rights (CHR) on Monday urged the government to provide legal protection for environmental defenders and climate activists who promote climate awareness and education.

In a statement, the CHR noted that the Philippines plays an important role in leading and demanding climate action in the global arena as it is the fourth most climate change-vulnerable country in the world.

This, as international communities come together for the 27th Climate Change Conference of Parties (COP27) on Nov. 6 to 18 in Egypt with the theme "Rise Up: Moving Beyond Climate Talk to Climate Action".

November is dedicated to the promotion of environmental education across all sectors of society by virtue of Republic Act No. 9512 or the National Environmental Awareness and Education Act.

"We must meet the 1.5° target of the Paris Agreement to prevent the irreversible harms of climate change," the CHR said.

It emphasized that people's lives and human rights are prioritized when the climate crisis is addressed with expedient urgency.

Earlier, Environment Secretary Maria Antonia Yulo Loyzaga, the head of the country's delegation to COP27, said the damage caused by Severe Tropical Storm Paeng is a "reminder of the devastating impacts of climate change."

Apart from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, representatives from the Departments of Finance, Agriculture, Energy, and the Climate Change Commission, climate scientists and climate and development experts composed the Philippine delegation to COP27.

"We call for concrete actions from all governments to review and enhance their nationally determined contributions," the CHR said.

"We forward our recommendations to the Philippine government to ensure equality and non-discrimination in climate adaptation and mitigation measures through our National Inquiry on Climate Change report," it added.

The CHR appealed to local leaders and lawmakers for the creation of legally binding instruments to strengthen the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.

THE MANILA TIMES

Marcos pushes environment protection

By: Kristina Maralit

IN his bid to "reintroduce" the Philippines to the world stage, President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. wants environmental protection included in his administration's economic transformation thrust.

On the campaign trail up to his recent participation in the United Nations (UN) General Assembly, the president has called for immediate action to achieve climate equity and justice, echoing his predecessor Rodrigo Duterte's concern that the country was in "serious trouble" due to climate change and global warming.

"Those who are least responsible suffer the most. The Philippines, for example, is a net carbon sink; we absorb more carbon dioxide than we emit," the president told the UN. "And yet, we are the fourth most vulnerable country to the effects of climate change."

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

The onslaught of Super Typhoon "Karding" last month September was a reminder that the government needed to act fast to fight climate change and mitigate its impacts.

The Philippines is hit by at least 20 typhoons a year and scientists have warned that storms are becoming more intense as the planet continues to heat up because of greenhouse gases.

Marcos has pressed the panic button and his office has proposed P453.1 billion in funding for climate change expenditures in the 2023 budget.

The amount was justified by Finance Secretary Benjamin Diokno, who pointed out that the Philippines had incurred losses of \$10 billion over the past decade due to climate-related hazards.

"Climate change is the greatest threat facing humanity today. With its devastating social and economic impacts, it requires urgent action from all levels of society," Diokno said.

By allocating more money for climate change mitigation, the government is bent on showing the world that the Philippines is "determined to be a world leader in this fight against the crisis", the Finance chief added.

The Green Force, an initiative co-led by the Finance department and the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, aims to synergize public and private investments in greening the business landscape and mainstreaming climate change.

Earlier this year, Philippine Sustainable Finance Roadmap also laid down steps to mobilize financing for climate action initiatives and climate-resilient public infrastructure, among others.

At a recent meeting with the Board of Governors of the Asian Development Bank, meanwhile, Marcos enjoined neighboring nations to help ensure climate-resilient economies and reiterated a call for united efforts against climate change.

Countries should develop economies that are "green ... sustainable, truly climate-resilient and responsive to people's immediate needs" and take "into account the ecosystem from which we harness our resource," he said.

Also at the forefront of the fight is the Climate Change Commission (CCC), which has ramped up efforts to ensure that Marcos' message resonates with every Filipino and the rest of the world.

Robert Borje, CCC vice chairman and executive director told a global climate change dialogue last month that all nations must seize the "opportunity to advance inclusive climate finance", driven by a process that ensures "balanced geographical participation, particularly of developing states in the Asia-Pacific region".

The CCC called for collaboration with partners and stakeholders "to implement more climate actions with results" and also challenged developed nations to "go beyond dollars and cents" in securing climate security and equity.

For the 27th Session of the Conference of the Parties (COP27) in Egypt in November, the CCC said it would renew its call for a more effective and efficient global strategy with a particular focus on measures for developing and vulnerable nations.

"To give our people the environment we deserve, we – the global community — need to do more for the least responsible for climate change, those with the least resources, and those who are most vulnerable and at risk," Borje said.

"Conversely, for those most responsible for climate change, with the most resources, you — the developed and industrialized countries — need to do more. This is climate justice," he added.

Marcos has said that he was looking forward to attending COP27, which will be held at the Egyptian resort of Sharm el-Sheikh from November 6 to 18.

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