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ABS-CBN NEWS

[Climate change changing behavior of PH storms: Marcos](#)

By Pia Gutierrez

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr on Tuesday urged local chief executives to be alert during calamities as climate change has altered the course of typhoons and storms. This, as officials admit that they may have underestimated the effect of Severe Tropical Storm Paeng in their area.

ABC NEWS

[Nigeria, Pakistan, Philippines and Australia. What can we learn from the world's devastating floods?](#)

By: Annika Burgess

Australia hasn't been alone in copping a disastrous drenching in recent months. The Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam, Nigeria, Venezuela and Pakistan are among the many countries that have faced extreme downpours and deadly flooding.

BUSINESS MIRROR

[Future-proofing and greening of build](#)

By: Rizal Raoul Reyes

Being a disaster-prone country, the Philippines badly needs sustainable and pro-environmental building practices to ensure that millions of Filipinos at least minimize the impact of severe typhoons and other natural disasters caused by climate change and, to a certain extent, mismanagement of the Philippines's environment.

BUSINESS WORLD

[Typhoon Yolanda lesson: Community empowerment, not new laws, needed in disaster management](#)

By: Marifi S. Jara

One of the biggest lessons from Typhoon Haiyan, which struck central Philippines on Nov. 8, 2013, is that disaster management must involve communities from planning to rehabilitation, said a professor who has done studies on what is locally known as Super Typhoon Yolanda.

CNN PHILIPPINES

[Marcos eyes placing NDRRMC under Office of the President](#)

Metro Manila (CNN Philippines, November 8) — President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. on Tuesday said he is considering placing the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) under the Office of the President in a bid to streamline calamity response efforts.

MANILA STANDARD

[\[Opinion\] Disasters and pollution](#)

By: Tony Lopez

The Philippines is not ready for disasters. Nor for the impending global warming changes. So the effect is one disaster after disaster in the coming years. One of the deadliest typhoons is Paeng which visited the Philippines for four days, from Oct. 30, 2022 to Nov. 2, 2022. Its speed was only 160 kms per hour but it was more than 900 kms wide, from Mindanao to northern Luzon.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

[After the onslaught of Paeng, Oxfam calls for better climate financing](#)

By: Germelina Lacorte

DAVAO CITY—Following the devastation brought about by Paeng, the international group Oxfam is calling on the global community to rally quality climate finance support for countries like the Philippines that are extremely vulnerable and yet ill-prepared to deal with disasters brought about by climate change.

[FAO warning: Climate change poisons food](#)

By: Cristina Eloisa Baclig

Manila, Philippines—Did you know that aside from impacting the world's food security, the rapidly accelerating climate crisis also affects food safety?

[Reversing Duterte's follies](#)

By: Segundo Eclar Romero

In the wake of Severe Tropical Storm "Paeng," President Marcos Jr. flew over the areas in Maguindanao devastated by landslides with Maguindanao del Sur Gov. Bai Mariam Sangki-Mangudadatu.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

[Data-informed governance of extractive industries crucial: Diokno](#)

MANILA – Finance Secretary Benjamin Diokno has cited the importance of improving the inclusive and data-informed management of the extractive industries in driving long-term economic expansion as he cited its PHP363-billion contribution to government revenues from 2012 to 2019.

PHYS.ORG

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

By Piers Forster, The Conversation

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 canceled out if the same amount is removed elsewhere.

RAPPLER

[\[Opinion\] 'Pa-siyam': Super Typhoon Yolanda 9 years later, and lessons \(yet to be\) learned](#)

By: Minh Tran, Albert Salamanca, Ladylyn Lim Mangada, Reinna Bermudez

Pa-siyam describes the tradition of praying nine consecutive days for the dead. Its observance brings opportunity to mourn and grieve, as well as reflect and commemorate. In the case of Super Typhoon Yolanda, nine years, not simply nine days, after its onslaught, the anniversary necessitates a moment of reflection and remembrance. What lessons have we learned almost a decade after this climate disaster?

[Western Visayas eyes adapting fisheries, agri systems to climate change](#)

By: Jun Aguirre

Antique, Philippines – Severe Tropical Storm Paeng (Nalgae) damaged 52.36% of total fisheries holdings in Western Visayas, regional officials told President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Tuesday, November 8, citing losses of P929 million from the region's P1.7-billion fishery infrastructure.

THE MANILA TIMES

[Agroforestry is instinctive to Filipinos](#)

By: Daphne Oseña-Paez

In our little farm south of Metro Manila we grow vegetables and fruits enough for our consumption. The excess is shared with friends. It is not a commercial setup. We just wanted a place with a small cottage where our daughters could run around freely. Along the way, I discovered my love for Philippine native trees, learned to germinate seeds and grow trees, and found the relevance of my activities ecologically.

[PH should build bilateral ties at COP27](#)

THE 27th annual Conference of State Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, or COP27, opened this week in the Red Sea resort city of Sharm el-

Sheikh, Egypt, and to say that global expectations for the summit are low would be an understatement. Nevertheless, it is still an important event for the Philippines and presents an opportunity for this country to strengthen its climate resiliency and response.

[Promoting sustainability through borderless collaboration, ESG reporting, insight sharing](#)

By: Chris Ferareza

On top of a myriad of factors that can disrupt business operations, including a changing business environment and economic uncertainties that stir global financial markets, businesses are now increasingly concerned about how they can help address environmental issues, and for good reason. The effects of climate change are more apparent, with a study released by the United Nations' World Meteorological Organization showing that in 2021, greenhouse gases, the primary cause of climate change because they trap heat within the atmosphere, spiked to hit new record levels. They warn that these levels will continue to rise through 2022.

[SEC joins Asean Capital Markets Forum in Cambodia](#)

By: Kelvin Lester Lee

I had the distinct privilege and honor to be the head of the Philippine delegation that participated in the recently concluded 37th Asean Capital Markets Forum (ACMF) Chairs' Meeting and the ACMF International Conference last October 27 to 28, 2022, which was jointly organized by the ACMF, the Securities and Exchange Regulator of Cambodia (SERC), and the Asian Development Bank in Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

[Groups raise alarm over new gas project in Verde Island Passage](#)

By: Gaea Katreena Cabico

Manila, Philippines — Clean energy advocates and locals expressed opposition to a proposed liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminal in Batangas province, saying the project will put the Verde Island Passage and coastal communities that rely on the marine corridor at risk.

[Planting wrong mangrove species a risky waste of time, group says](#)

By: Gaea Katreena Cabico

Manila, Philippines — A conservation organization on Tuesday called for more sustainable planting of mangroves in the country as more organizations pursue planting initiatives meant to make coastal communities more resilient to the impacts of climate change.

[UN unveils global 'early warning' system for disasters at \\$3 billion](#)

By: Agence France-Presse

Sharm El Sheikh — The United Nations on Monday unveiled a five-year plan to build a global early warning system for deadly and costly extreme weather events amplified by climate change.

Information and Knowledge Management Division

ABS-CBN NEWS

Climate change changing behavior of PH storms: Marcos

By Pia Gutierrez

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr on Tuesday urged local chief executives to be alert during calamities as climate change has altered the course of typhoons and storms. This, as officials admit that they may have underestimated the effect of Severe Tropical Storm Paeng in their area.

“It’s also something that we are beginning to see, yung mga like the governors, city mayors, mga local government kayong lahat that work in the local. Kapagka magkabago, alam na natin kung saan babaha eh , ano ang area na mai-isolate. Ngayon hindi na e. Hindi na sumusunod dun sa dati. Yung last years ko as governor, talagang kitang kita ko na eh nag-iiba talaga yung takbo ng tubig so we really have to be prepared kasi I don’t know how to prepare. Bago ito e, everything is new,” Marcos Jr said.

As of November 7, the agricultural damage brought by Paeng to Western Visayas is now pegged at P1,775,837,325, with 44,000 farmers and 10,000 fisherfolk affected, according to the Department of Agriculture.

The fisheries sector suffered the most damage at P929 million, followed by rice crops at P705.8 million. Damage to agricultural infrastructure is at P50 million.

Meanwhile, over 400,000 families or 1.5 million individuals in Western Visayas have been affected by Paeng, of which 410 individuals or about 84 families are still seeking shelter in evacuation centers.

A total of 119 infrastructures or 68 roads, 41 bridges, and 10 flood control structures were also damaged in the region. 5 roads and bridges remain impassable days after the devastation of Paeng, of which 3 are located in Antique, while 2 are in Iloilo.

“I think the biggest problem I see is the infra that we have to fix kasi malalaki yung sira, the two bridges. For public works, siguro unahin natin as a priority to find a way first for people to be able to transport goods and people,” the President ordered during the meeting.

“Basta mabuksan. Somehow unahin natin baka light lang muna, mga motorsiklo lang muna pero eventually we want really to get even the trucks na nakakadaan, so yun ang, if you say that the two spans, maremedyuhan nyo yan by December then that’s good.”

ABC NEWS

[Nigeria, Pakistan, Philippines and Australia. What can we learn from the world's devastating floods?](#)

By: Annika Burgess

Australia hasn't been alone in copping a disastrous drenching in recent months. The Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam, Nigeria, Venezuela and Pakistan are among the many countries that have faced extreme downpours and deadly flooding.

Images of cities completely submerged and locals desperately paddling through floodwaters have become ubiquitous, yet no less alarming.

While climate change plays a role in extreme weather events, experts say it is still difficult to determine exactly what the future holds when it comes to rainfall and flooding.

But what is clear is the need to improve resilience.

So as world leaders meet in Egypt for the UN COP27 climate conference, what can we learn from the recent soakings, and what can be done to help countries prepare for a potentially more flood-prone future?

The world under water

When United Nations secretary-general António Guterres visited Pakistan after historic floods in September left one-third of the country underwater, he warned that "nature is striking back".

The floods — which killed more than 1,700 people — were blamed on what Mr Guterres described as "a monsoon on steroids", along with melting glaciers in the country's north.

Since then, Nigeria has also been hit by the biggest floods the West African country has experienced since 2012, killing more than 600 people.

Last week, more than 100 people were killed in landslides and flooding in the Philippines after a severe tropical storm.

While in Australia, NSW registered its wettest October on record and Victoria's slow-moving flood emergency continues to impact communities in the state's north.

Andrew King, a climate scientist at the University of Melbourne, said the La Niña weather phenomenon has its fingerprints on many of the world's flood events.

However, the climate crisis also affects rainfall.

"Climate change does have an affect on lots of different types of extreme weather, and in terms of rainfall, it really intensifies short duration heavy rain events," he said.

"The torrential downpours can be a bit heavier because the world has warmed, and the atmosphere can hold a bit more moisture when it's warmer."

The global average temperature has already warmed 1.1C above the pre-industrial average.

The latest UN climate change report estimated the world could pass the 1.5C warming threshold in the next five years.

At his opening address at COP27 on Monday, Mr Guterres again urged countries to accelerate the transition from fossil fuels.

"Humanity has a choice: cooperate or perish," Mr Guterres told the summit.

"It is either a climate solidarity pact or a collective suicide pact."

Resilience solutions in 'a bit of a bind'

While there are trends towards worsening flooding in some parts of the world, it is still hard to predict what the future holds, Dr King said.

But regardless of the question marks, he said resilience needed to be a main focus.

"In Australia, we tend to avoid the scale of fatalities that we see in poorer parts of the world," he said.

"In places like Nigeria, there tends to be a lot more fatalities, unfortunately.

"It really shows in poorer parts of the world there does need to be more resilience to extreme weather."

Dr Sophie Webber, from the Sydney University School of Geosciences, has been involved in climate resilience projects and planning in Indonesia and across the Pacific Islands.

She said it was difficult to prepare for a flood season in the short-term, which is why Indonesia's capital Jakarta has been investing in long-term, large flood-mitigation projects.

There have been attempts to clean up rivers to allow more floodwater to flow through and out to sea and construction on large sea walls was underway, Dr Webber said.

There have also been initiatives to move people further away from rivers at risk of flooding.

But the "the big infrastructure – or hard infrastructure – approach" comes with negative social and environmental impacts, Dr Webber said.

"Big infrastructure can be quite environmentally damaging in terms of it moving the impacts slightly further away," she said.

"It can have ecological impacts on things like fisheries and mangrove ecosystems."

Across the Pacific Islands, where sea walls have had negative knock-on effects on communities and livelihoods, nations like Fiji have been looking at nature-based solutions.

An emphasis has been placed on "soft protection measures" like better intact mangroves, Dr Webber said.

However, as much as these approaches may "sound good and feel good" they may not necessarily be able to withstand climate change.

"There's a lot of environmental engineering work about how it is generally good at building resilience, but they might not necessarily be able to withstand the kind of super serious impacts of climate change," Dr Webber said.

All in all, "there's a bit of a bind", she said.

"There isn't a lot of really amazing solutions to increased flooding from climate change."

'Debt for climate swaps' the answer?

One of the main – and most controversial – topics on the table at COP27 is climate change "loss and damage" funding.

Countries least responsible for planet-heating emissions – but hardest hit by an onslaught of weather extremes – have been ramping up the pressure on wealthy polluting nations to provide financial help for damages.

Part of the discussion is the "debt for climate swaps" approach.

A debt for climate swap is an agreement that allows countries to reduce their debt obligation in exchange for a commitment by the debtor to invest in specific climate projects.

Dr Webber said debt relief is a short-term response that can help countries prepare and respond to flood events.

Huge amounts of debt have left many countries "unable to invest in social and physical infrastructure that might protect against flooding", she said.

"It also then leaves them in a situation where they can't afford to pay for the clean-up either."

The approach isn't entirely new. It was successfully adopted in Seychelles in 2015 with a \$US21.6 million (\$33 million) "debt for nature" conversion that went towards marine conservation.

But it has recently been gaining more attention, especially in light of the flooding in Pakistan which cost the country around \$US30 billion in damages and economic loss, according to World Bank estimates.

Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif told the COP27 summit on Monday that the country's escalating public debt was hampering its recovery.

"Millions of people are going into winter without shelter or livelihood," Mr Sharif said.

"Women and children are still looking to us to protect their basics needs."

Speaking alongside Mr Sharif, the UN secretary-general urged international financial institutions like the World Bank and leaders at the upcoming G20 summit in Indonesia, to reform policies that govern debt relief to help middle-income countries like Pakistan to focus on rebuilding rather than repayment.

In the lead-up to UN summit, Dr Webber said a lot of work was being done in the Pacific to build a sense of urgency around debt for climate swaps.

While many Pacific nations don't have high unsustainable debt ratios, it only takes one major disaster "to get really out of whack".

"If there's a big cyclone, like a Cyclone Winston-style cyclone, that would have huge ramifications on debt," Dr Webber said.

"Countries take out loans after a disaster and to try to rebuild, and those disasters can have a huge shock on GDP."

Dr Melanie Pill from the ANU's Institute for Climate, Energy and Disaster Solutions said relieving a country of debt can help address loss and damage, but it was not a silver bullet.

Challenges around feasibility, capacity, transparency and equity remained.

"It's not as easy as just cancelling the debt," Dr Pill told the ABC.

"Small island developing states don't just have debt to one country. They have loans from the World Bank and other countries.

"So you would have to have a plan of who's actually going to cancel that debt, who's willing to do that, and which country comes first."

She said there needed to be a lot of planning to ensure the approach benefited communities that suffered the losses and did not get swallowed up by corruption or internal bureaucracies.

"I think it could be something that could be considered, but I think it's a case-by-case basis ... The money would need to be used very strategically," Dr Pill said.

"There needs to be certain rules around it and I think that is a long process to put into place."

BUSINESS MIRROR

Future-proofing and greening of build

By: Rizal Raoul Reyes

Being a disaster-prone country, the Philippines badly needs sustainable and pro-environmental building practices to ensure that millions of Filipinos at least minimize the impact of severe typhoons and other natural disasters caused by climate change and, to a certain extent, mismanagement of the Philippines's environment.

Renato Redentor Constantino, Executive Director of the Institute for Climate and Sustainable Cities (ICSC), stressed in an e-mail interview with the BusinessMirror that cities must be future-proofed to meet the challenges of climate change, global warming, among others. He added that the pandemic was an eye opener for the country as its infrastructure needs a lot of improvement to ensure the people will have continued mobility.

The greening of the buildings

Colliers Philippines industry analyst Tricia Ann Pacete pointed out in her paper "Forging Smarter and Greener Building," the local property sector is also doing its part to promote environmental sustainability. "Smarter and greener buildings are fast becoming the norm in the Philippines, with more and more property developers taking action to address climate change and to embrace the available advanced technologies," she said.

Moreover, Pacete observed that the local building and construction industry has been continuously innovating in response to the rapid changes in the environment. She added sustainability initiatives such as smart technologies, and increased safety standards for occupiers' welfare, leading the transformation of new buildings' design and features.

As a result, Pacete noted smarter and greener buildings are rapidly emerging as the standard in the Philippines, with more and more property developers taking action to address climate change and to embrace the available advanced technologies.

It is a fact that the building and construction industry has a significant impact on the economy, society, and the environment. It plays a crucial role in the economy, driving jobs and growth. Pacete cited an article published in Industry Tap noting that the building and construction industry accounts for about 13 percent of the global gross domestic product (GDP), and which is expected to increase to 15 percent.

Pacete said the building and construction industry has a big impact in every business—shelter, infrastructure, manufacturing facilities, and many others. Further, she said the quality of the buildings it produces imparts a legacy on the lives of countless of people.

“As the industry continues to expand, bringing more growth, its environmental impact cannot be left unnoticed as it accounts for 39 percent of carbon emissions. This figure is alarming and calls for an improvement in the quality of construction and the materials used. The unprecedented appearance of the global pandemic has contributed to the acceleration of innovation across the building and construction industry.

These innovations have given rise to key trends shaping the construction industry,” Pacete explained.

She said these trends center on sustainability initiatives, well-being, and the integration of smart technologies into the building management system.

As far as the Philippine construction industry is concerned, Pacete observed that the country is also gradually keeping up with the trends. “Many buildings now are becoming more digitized and have more sustainable features not just to reduce cost but also to lessen their carbon footprint,” she said.

She said many players in the Philippine construction industry are also studying the potential benefits of integrating artificial intelligence and machine learning to their building management systems (BMS). “Artificial intelligence, for instance, can be used in crucial building operational systems, such as energy management, enhanced HVAC system for optimal comfort, and predictive maintenance.”

Being a sector with the largest contribution to greenhouse gas emissions, Pacete said the real-estate industry is aware that it has an immense responsibility in creating a greener and more sustainable built environment.

Transitioning to the new normal

As the world transitions to a new normal, Pacete said the building and construction industry is also transforming to cater to the needs and ensure the well-being of their building users. Right now, she said real-estate developers are now investing more on innovations as the world transitions to the post-pandemic environment. She said this will not only ensure productivity but will also provide a sense of safety. One such innovation is contactless or touchless systems, such as sensors, access cards, and facial recognition software.

These features will help lessen the risk of transmission not only of the Covid-19 virus but also other pathogens.

“Sustainability in the built environment is not just an option, rather it is now a must-have. We believe that the future of office buildings leans towards creating spaces that are safer and healthier with minimal impact on the environment,” Pacete said.

BUSINESS WORLD

[Typhoon Yolanda lesson: Community empowerment, not new laws, needed in disaster management](#)

By: Marifi S. Jara

One of the biggest lessons from Typhoon Haiyan, which struck central Philippines on Nov. 8, 2013, is that disaster management must involve communities from planning to rehabilitation, said a professor who has done studies on what is locally known as Super Typhoon Yolanda.

Maria Ela L. Atienza, a political science professor at the University of the Philippines, pointed out that the country already had the Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act in 2010, but the law — intended to shift focus not just on disaster response but preparedness and mitigating threats — was not fully rolled out.

“We have the law,” she said on Tuesday over the Alerto Bangsamoro program of DXMS Radyo Bida in partnership with International Alert Philippines.

This, she said, spells out the responsibilities of the national and local governments as well as other agencies.

But even years post-Yolanda, Ms. Atienza said the country has yet to fully realize the most effective mechanisms of disaster management, noting that several other destructive typhoons have since struck, including the most recent one that left more than 50 people dead in the Bangsamoro region alone.

“We need to improve on disaster education... such as explaining to the people the reality of climate change,” she said in a mix of English and Filipino.

Haiyan is considered one of the strongest typhoons in recorded global weather history.

It killed at least 6,300 people while 1,062 remained missing, and another 28,688 were injured, based on the final report of the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council.

More than 90% of these casualties were from the Eastern Visayas Region.

Ms. Atienza said her research work undertaken in 2015-2018 showed that Yolanda-hit areas imbibed the importance of disaster preparedness, and other communities can learn the same lessons without first experiencing a calamity themselves.

The protracted Yolanda rehabilitation also underscores that communities must be involved in disaster management right from the planning stage.

People must be given “ownership” of rehabilitation programs, she said, so that appropriate livelihood assistance and relocation plans can be rolled out.

Ms. Atienza also noted that disasters are not solely brought on by natural phenomena but by human exploits, including conflicts and economic activities.

She said an effective disaster risk reduction and management program — which includes an inclusive plan from mitigation to response and recovery, well-informed communities and leaders, and a national government program aligned with the climate crisis — requires funding, manpower, and building capacity, especially at the local level.

In the coastal town of Guiuan, where Yolanda made its first of six landfalls, the local government launched this year an awards program to promote and support climate action efforts of individuals and groups.

“We survived as a community. We were aided by many and we progressed continually in the aftermath. This year, let us look into the past, not only to grieve or to be proud of how far we have gone since that fateful day, but let us look at the past to inspire our future,” Guiuan Mayor Annaliza Gonzales-Kwan said in a speech during the Yolanda commemoration event.

The Golden Cowrie Climate Action Awards covers projects on research, community empowerment and education, ecosystem and wildlife conservation, and sustainable development.

Lourdes V. Tibig, climate science advisor of the Institute for Climate and Sustainable Cities (ICSC), said the small town’s efforts “should inspire other local governments in the Philippines.”

She added, “the leadership shown by Guiuan to adapt to the worsening impacts of climate change are truly worth honoring at the global level.”

The Guiuan Development Foundation, Inc., which leads the research and development of the town’s marine protected areas, is featured at the ongoing COP27 Virtual Ocean Pavilion.

CNN PHILIPPINES

[Marcos eyes placing NDRRMC under Office of the President](#)

Metro Manila (CNN Philippines, November 8) — President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. on Tuesday said he is considering placing the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) under the Office of the President in a bid to streamline calamity response efforts.

Marcos bared the plan in an interview with reporters during an event commemorating Super Typhoon Yolanda in Tacloban City.

"I think that we are headed in that direction because of the weather that we are suffering now from the effects of climate change," Marcos said, noting that the suggestion to shift the NDRRMC supervision "has been going around for many years now."

"I think it would be equally, if not a more robust system, if we put it under the Office of the President," he added. "So that's what we are planning to do in the near future."

Formed in 2010 through Republic Act 10121, the NDRRMC is headed by the Defense Secretary.

Officials also include the chiefs of other national agencies, representatives from local government units, as well as the private sector.

Marcos said the government's disaster response has been good so far, but noted that there is always room for improvement.

"So we are continuing to refine the procedures, to refine the processes, the organization, so that we will do even better than we have so far," the chief executive said.

The pronouncement comes following the onslaught of several cyclones in the country in the past months. The latest — Severe Tropical Storm Paeng — left at least 158 people dead, according to the NDRRMC's latest report.

MANILA STANDARD

[Opinion] Disasters and pollution

By: Tony Lopez

The Philippines is not ready for disasters. Nor for the impending global warming changes. So the effect is one disaster after disaster in the coming years. One of the deadliest typhoons is Paeng which visited the Philippines for four days, from Oct. 30, 2022 to Nov. 2, 2022. Its speed was only 160 kms per hour but it was more than 900 kms wide, from Mindanao to northern Luzon.

It killed 158, injured 142, affected 4.661 million people in 817 cities and towns, 74 provinces, and 17 regions. In other words, the entire country.

Paeng damaged 53,000 houses, 92.25 million hectares of crops, and P3 billion worth of agriculture.

Power was lost in 523 cities and towns; water service was gone in 27 cities and towns.

The typhoon shut down 9 airports (including the MIA) and 121 seaports.

President Marcos Jr was on top of the situation – virtually. He presided over a disaster emergency meeting with his Cabinet and key officials – in absentia. Was he in Japan? Nobody knew.

Paeng is only an augury of worst things to come.

The Philippines will endure a never ending series of disasters.

But to me the biggest disasters are our politicians.

The Philippine alphabet has 31 letters after whom local typhoons could be named. As for our bad politicians? Well, the words in the dictionary may not be enough for the nomenclature of disaster politicians.

It seems ironic that the Philippine should suffer so much from disasters and bad weather which experts routinely blame on global warming effect. The Philippines is not all a polluter.

Global warming is the earth temperature rising – ideally– by not more than 1.5 degrees Celsius since the 17th century.

The 1.5 is the ideal but it looks like we will hit more than 2 degrees Celsius (a total disaster) – thanks to unabated pollution and emissions of carbon dioxide.

By today, the world has produced 34.7 billion tons of carbon dioxide emissions. Of that, 10.66 billion has been produced by China, the world's No. 1 polluter (it feels the least guilty for the honor). China's share of total pollution is 30.63 percent .

No. 2 is the United States with 4.7 billion tons or 13.54 percent; No. 3 is India with 2.44 billion tons or 7 percent. Fourth is Russia, 1.58 billion or 4.5 percent. After them is Africa 1.3 billion or 3.7 percent; Japan with 1.03 billion tons of 2.9 percent.

Vietnam and Thailand each contributes 0.7 percent.

The Philippine contribution? Just 0.39 percent.

To reach the emerging industrialized country status of Vietnam and Thailand, the Philippines must burn 1.8 times as much as Vietnam and Thailand.

To reach the level of wealth of Japan's wealth, Filipinos must create 7.5 times the Japanese's current emissions.

We should pollute the environment some more. Otherwise, Filipinos will remain poor forever.

At this writing in Egypt, world leaders and environmentalists are gathered for what is called the COP27 – the 27th Conference of Parties or nations who are signatories to the UN framework convention on climate change.

The UNFCCC entered into force on March 21, 1994. Today, it has near-universal membership.

The 198 countries ratified the Convention are called Parties to the Convention. Preventing "dangerous" human interference with the climate system is the ultimate aim of the UNFCCC.

The ultimate objective of the Convention is to stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations "at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic (human induced) interference with the climate system."

It states that "such a level should be achieved within a time-frame sufficient to allow ecosystems to adapt naturally to climate change, to ensure that food production is not threatened, and to enable economic development to proceed in a sustainable manner."

At the land of the pyramids, the United Nations chief Antonio Guterres opened Monday's session warning that the world was "on a highway to climate hell with our foot on the accelerator."

The world faces three major threats – the Russia-Ukraine war, global warming, and a global economic crisis.

The Ukraine has brought about a severe energy shortage and an unusual spike in energy prices.

Coal, for instance, has risen per ton from \$50 to as high as \$470.

Coal provides 60 percent of Philippine energy supplies. It also remains the cheapest source of energy, although it is possibly the dirtiest.

“We are in the fight of our lives, and we are losing,” Guterres said in his opening remarks.

Newly minted British prime minister Rishi Sunak, told participants in Egypt Russia’s invasion of Ukraine should prompt countries to invest more heavily in renewable energy.

“Putin’s abhorrent war in Ukraine, and rising energy prices across the world, are not a reason to go slow on climate change. They are a reason to act faster,” said the former-banker-turned-politician.

The world is not doing enough to mitigate global warming.

The World Meteorological Organization has noted a warming of the planet at its hottest in eight years, including every year since 2015 when countries signed the landmark Paris agreement aimed to cut global emissions dramatically.

Reported the New York Times: “The biggest fault line of this year’s talks is the question of what rich, industrialized countries that account for the largest share of greenhouse gas emissions owe to those bearing the brunt of climate hazards. On that there was a small breakthrough on Sunday – progress on the contentious issue of who will pay for the irreversible damage that climate change is wreaking on the world’s most vulnerable.”

On Monday, environmental groups called for a “fossil fuel nonproliferation treaty” that would ultimately put an end to all new oil, gas and coal projects.

NYT noted that the talks come at the end of a year that saw extraordinary heat waves across the northern hemisphere, catastrophic flooding in Pakistan and Nigeria, and a punishing drought in China.

Per the United Nations, 110 heads of state and government are addressing the COP27 conference, a larger number than at many previous climate conferences. Of those, just seven are women.

Originally, President Marcos Jr. had wanted to attend the conference. The invitation was extended in June by Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi and by the UN secretary general.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

[After the onslaught of Paeng, Oxfam calls for better climate financing](#)

By: Germelina Lacorte

Davao City—Following the devastation brought about by Paeng, the international group Oxfam is calling on the global community to rally quality climate finance support for countries like the Philippines that are extremely vulnerable and yet ill-prepared to deal with disasters brought about by climate change.

The call from Oxfam Philippines came following the onslaught of Severe Tropical Storm “Paeng” (international name: Nalgae), which affected 1.9 million individuals and forced 975,000 to take shelter in evacuation centers. At least 98 people have been reported dead while 63 are still missing.

It also came along with the release of the Oxfam report, “Climate Finance in Asia: Assessing the state of climate finance in one of the world’s most climate vulnerable regions.”

“The Philippines, like many other Asian countries, ranks really high in terms of climate vulnerability and really low when it comes to climate readiness, according to our ‘Climate Finance in Asia’ report,” said Oxfam Pilipinas Country Director Lot Felizco in a statement. “Even though we are working on measures to improve our preparedness, every time we are hit by extreme weather events such as ‘Paeng,’ we have to deal with further loss, making it even harder to be ready for the climate crisis,” he added.

Felizco said the Philippines and other climate-vulnerable countries in Asia continued to grapple with the problem of having to face the effects of a climate emergency that “more developed countries have caused and benefited from,” he said. “This is why we are calling for better and sufficient climate finance that would allow countries like the Philippines to adequately face the effects of climate change,” he said.

According to the report, the Philippines ranked 10th among the 18 Asian countries (excluding Singapore, Korea and Japan) in terms of vulnerability and preparedness to climate change.

The ranking based on the Notre-Dame Global Adaptation Initiative Index also shows the Philippines ranking 113th globally out of 182 countries for 2020. “This means it is highly vulnerable but is not as prepared as countries like Singapore or Japan, which rank 6th and 19th respectively.

There is much to be done so countries like the Philippines can catch up with others that are fortunately not as highly vulnerable and at the same time better prepared,” said Felizco. “Climate finance and support from players who contribute the most to climate

change are important in correcting injustice and saving the lives of millions of people, especially those in the poorest communities and in marginalized groups,” he said.

According to the Climate Finance in Asia report, Asian countries have seen an annual 28 per cent rise in climate finance to \$20.5 billion in 2020 but this increase hides problems that are being mirrored across the world.

The first to analyze climate finance flows worth \$113 billion between 2013-2020 in 18 countries across Asia, the report said that despite being home to nearly 4 billion people and half the world’s population, Asian countries only received around 25 percent of reported global financial flows each year.

Asian countries need \$1.3 trillion a year from now to 2030 to meet their estimated climate needs and that the amount they received each year was hardly enough.

Only a third of Asia’s climate finance went to help countries adapt and cope with climate-induced harm and only two-thirds of it went on mitigation initiatives.

The majority of flows into Asia came as loans, often forcing already indebted countries to cut public services in order to repay. Only 17 percent of bilateral climate finance and six per cent of multilateral climate finance to Asia came in the form of grants.

The report also said donors almost completely ignored locally-led initiatives – only about 0.5 per cent of all climate finance went directly to local Asian communities, civil society organizations and authorities – giving them less say in how this money was governed.

“Asia is being devastated by climate-driven disaster after disaster, taking lives and costing billions. Pakistan underwater. China and India, baked by 50-degree heat waves, Bangladeshis leaving farmland made unusable by saltwater, the Philippines hit by worsening typhoons,” said Sunil Acharya, Oxfam’s Asia Regional Policy and Campaigns Coordinator.

The report also cited the December 2021 onslaught of Super Typhoon Rai (Odette), killing more than 400 people and resulted in \$336 million in losses to agricultural goods, \$75 million worth of fishing boats and gear, and \$565 million in damage to homes, roads and utility lines.

“This is becoming an irreversible humanitarian crisis across Asia where half the population already live below the poverty-line. People are nearing the limits of what they can do to cope,” Acharya said. “They need more help, not debt, and more say in how it happens.”

The Philippines is 5th among Asian countries surveyed in the Oxfam report that received the highest amount of climate finance. However, the report said that the \$7.8 billion (P380 billion) received from 2013 to 2020 was mostly from debt instruments. Of the annual average of \$972 million (P48.6 billion) worth of climate finance received by

the Philippines, more than half or \$528 million (P26.4 billion) were from concessional debt instruments while \$364 million (P18.2 billion) were from non-concessional debt instruments.

“We are forced to look rather cynically at the climate financing of the multinational institutions because the majority of their money is winding up as Asian foreign debt. It’s difficult for Asian countries to maintain health and education budgets when they’re taking on more debt to pay for climate damage that they did little to cause,” Acharya said.

The report recommended that developed countries should increase their adaptation funding to each Asian country by 2025 to align with the Glasgow Climate Pact of doubling adaptation finance overall, and focus on providing grants rather than loans. No funds lent at market rates should be counted as climate finance, the Oxfam report said.

“Asia’s climate finance providers and governments need to reassess climate finance in a way that is genuinely pro-poor, locally-led, and targeted to help women and girls who are shouldering the bulk of climate risk and harm,” Acharya said. “Climate finance must be transparent, (can be) easily track(ed down) and spent in ways in which people who are most affected are able to genuinely participate in decision making processes,” he added.

[FAO warning: Climate change poisons food](#)

By: Cristina Eloisa Baclig

Manila, Philippines—Did you know that aside from impacting the world's food security, the rapidly accelerating climate crisis also affects food safety?

As world leaders gather this week and deliver speeches and meet for the 27th Conference of the Parties (COP 27) climate summit, one of the most significant impacts of climate change highlighted by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations was on food safety.

According to FAO, while 31 percent of human-caused greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions originate from the world's agri-food systems, they are also extremely vulnerable to climate change.

Rising temperatures, erratic rainfall, and extreme weather events—typhoons, floods, and droughts—due to climate change can threaten the production of safe food in various ways.

These include:

Increase in food-borne diseases

In the report titled “Climate Change: Unpacking the burden on food safety,” FAO stated that “changes in temperature precipitation and other environmental factors are expected to affect the geographic distribution and persistence of food-borne pathogens and parasites.”

Extreme weather events, for instance, were linked to higher incidence of various food pathogens such as *Salmonella* spp. and *Campylobacter* spp.—both of which causes food poisoning—in several parts of the world.

Globally, at least 600 million, or one in ten people, become sick due to contaminated food, according to the World Health Organization (WHO). At least 420,000 people die every year due to food poisoning.

“Diarrhoeal diseases are the most common illnesses resulting from the consumption of contaminated food, causing 550 million people to fall ill and 230,000 deaths yearly,” it said.

In the Philippines, the DOH noted that the morbidity rate due to food poisoning has decreased from 1,520 or 100,000 population in 1990 to 347.3 or 100,000 people in 2010.

Last month, 33 students in Occidental Mindoro were taken to the hospital due to apparent food poisoning after consuming fried spring rolls.

Increase in waterborne diseases

Climate change also increases the frequency and severity of extreme weather events, like hurricanes and typhoons, which result in severe flooding leading to an increased likelihood of outbreaks of waterborne diseases such as cholera.

Data from the Department of Health (DOH) showed that cholera cases from January 1 to November 2 this year increased to 4,102 from 1,159 infections recorded during the same period last year.

A total of 37 people died from cholera in the first seven months of this year.

Last year, when Typhoon Odette ravaged the country, the health department recorded a “clustering” of waterborne diseases in several regions, including acute gastroenteritis and diarrhea.

Prolonged droughts “can put stress on the availability and usage of water in a given area, affecting businesses like food processing plants where food safety may be compromised to compensate for the lack of sufficient water.”

Alarming, FAO noted that “various food- and waterborne pathogens are becoming resistant to antimicrobials, and recent evidence points to a potential association of rising temperatures with increased rates of antimicrobial resistance.”

Uptake of toxic heavy metals in staple crops

Rising soil temperatures caused by the climate crisis are expected to facilitate the uptake of heavy metals by plants, according to FAO.

An example is arsenic in rice, a staple crop known to accumulate heavy metals in the plant as well as the grain.

“Heavy precipitation events, especially in mining areas, can release various heavy metals into the surrounding areas, compromising food and water quality. A combination of acid rain and fertilizer-induced soil acidification are affecting the bioavailability and mobilization of heavy metals,” FAO explained.

“Accelerated permafrost thawing may release large, historically trapped inventories of heavy metals like mercury into our fresh-water systems,” it added.

According to the UN, permafrost is the ground underneath the Earth’s surface that has been continuously frozen for at least two consecutive years—and in most cases, for hundreds or thousands of years.

Widespread fungal infections in plants

In a separate report, FAO claimed that climate change increases pest risks in agricultural ecosystems.

One of these pests includes the banana fusarium wilt, a soil-borne fungus found to be invasive in Australia, Mozambique, Colombia, Asia, and Near East.

High temperatures—over 34 °C—and extreme weather events such as cyclones and tropical storms increases the risk of banana fusarium wilt, according to the UN organization.

In September, the Fiber Industry Development Authority-Negros Oriental reported that fusarium wilt had affected the banana and abaca production in two barangays. This has led to the issuance of Executive Order No. 28 by Gov. Pryde Henry Teves, which prohibits the “movement of soil and plants” from the villages of Lunga and Apolong.

Two years ago, the Department of Agriculture earmarked P263 million in fresh funds to the banana industry to combat the persistent fusarium wilt. During the first seven months of 2020, the Philippines’ export earnings from bananas decreased by 11 percent to \$1.03 billion from \$1.16 billion in 2019, mainly due to the spread of the fusarium wilt.

Migration of plant pests, pesticide overuse

Climate change, according to FAO, “is altering the geographic distribution and life cycles of pests, which in turn are expected to change pesticide application trends.”

Changes in temperatures drive plant pests into new areas, which further causes greater pesticide use to maintain agricultural productivity.

To make things worse, elevated temperatures cause the volatilization of pesticides, which reduces their efficacy. Some of the chemicals from pesticides, which escape into the atmosphere, also end up in remote areas like the Arctic—“where thawing permafrost is releasing them back into the environment and, ultimately, into our food chain.”

Increased harmful algae

Lastly, climate change affects the quality of water globally by exacerbating conditions that lead to algal blooms.

Freshwater green algae, which can be found in Laguna Lake and commonly bloom more during the summer season, do not produce toxins that can directly make humans and animals sick. However, it can deplete the oxygen levels in the lake once these algae decompose.

This causes a foul odor, described by locals as “similar to the stench of pig pens and decaying fish.”

According to the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR), red tide is a phenomenon wherein the water is discolored due to high algal biomass.

Red tide, also called harmful algal blooms or HABs, “occur when colonies of algae grow out of control while producing toxic or harmful effects on people, fish, shellfish, marine mammals, and birds,” said the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

“The human illnesses caused by HABs, though rare, can be debilitating or even fatal.”

Experts warn the public against eating shellfish from coastal waters that are positive for red tide. Eating contaminated shellfish, the DOH said, could lead to life-threatening red tide poisoning—or paralytic shellfish poisoning.

“From the term itself, paralytic shellfish poison: a person who eats shellfish from the red tide waters will have paralysis in their body. It will start with numbness of the face and a headache. These are the signs that a person consumed poisonous shellfish,” BFAR chief information officer Nazzer Briguera said.

Last month, at least 25 people from Milagros town in Masbate province were rushed to the hospital due to red tide poisoning.

However, fishes, squids, shrimps, and crabs are safe to eat as long as they are fresh and cleaned before being cooked.

What we can do to ensure food safety

While climate change requires collective action—such as commitment from nations to slash carbon pollution—FAO believes everyone plays a role in keeping food safe.

To prioritize food safety throughout the whole supply chain, “from farm to table,” FAO recommended actions to be done by various sectors, which include:

Governments:

- Foster multi=sectoral collaboration.
- Public support programs must focus on healthy and safe food.
- Design strong policies—to strengthen the national food safety system and ensure it complies with food safety standards—and practice good governance.

Food businesses:

- Follow up on food safety commitments. “Everyone involved in food production, processing, distribution, and retail must ensure compliance with standards to identify, evaluate and control food safety hazards.”
- Promote food safety culture through regular informational sessions, trainings, or workshops on food safety.
- Comply with international food standards.

Educational institutions and workplaces:

- Support food safety education.
- Promote safe food handling.
- Involve families in food safety activities that allow them to learn and inform others about reducing the risk of foodborne diseases by changing simple day-to-day actions.

Consumers:

Keep informed and promote food safety by making safe and healthy dietary choices. Practice safe food handling at home by following WHO’s Five Keys to Safe Food: keep clean, separate raw and cooked, cook thoroughly, keep food at safe temperatures, and use safe water and raw materials.

Reversing Duterte's follies

By: Segundo Eclar Romero

In the wake of Severe Tropical Storm "Paeng," President Marcos Jr. flew over the areas in Maguindanao devastated by landslides with Maguindanao del Sur Gov. Bai Mariam Sangki-Mangudadatu.

He reports on the sortie: "I was pointing out to the governor that in all those places where there are trees, the ground did not move. All the damage that you saw on the mountains, it's because they were bald." Mr. Marcos told her he could refer the Maguindanaons and the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao to plenty of nongovernmental organizations. The governor must have been bemused by the President's display of cluelessness.

Despite the profound speeches the President had given in the United Nations General Assembly and other forums about climate change, Mr. Marcos' real understanding of the wicked environmental problems besetting the nation is questionable. Jon Bonifacio of the environmental group Kalikasan found it "strange that it seems like it's only now he's come to appreciate the benefits provided by well-conserved watersheds."

Nations are supposed to find the resolve and resilience to squarely face their specific natural and human-made challenges. Israel and Singapore, which are minority nations in ethnically dominant neighborhoods, have learned to steel and steer themselves with strategic purpose and national will to prevail.

The Philippines has its share of challenges that could trigger a rugged and robust national response. The 20 typhoons that batter the nation every year could be the equivalent of the harsh winters that many nations have learned to anticipate, plan for, and adapt to.

But after over half a millennium since a single unified administration has been established in the archipelago in 1565 by a succession of Spanish, American, and now Filipino control, we display a certain level of masochism by staying in the destructive pathways of typhoons, suffering widespread damage and despair with no visible and significant collective or individual mitigation and adaptation.

It is certain that over the six-year term of office of Mr. Marcos, there will be 120 typhoons, one-fourth or 30 would be destructive. This is as it has been over the terms of recent past presidents. One out of four typhoons occurs globally within the Philippine Area of Responsibility.

Why then do we have continuing public and private institutional clumsiness in disaster risk reduction and management? One of the most inspiring initiatives in Philippine disaster risk reduction and management was the initiation of Project NOAH (Nationwide Operational Assessment of Hazards) in 2012 by the country's leading scientists. It was

promoted as the Philippines' flagship disaster risk reduction and management program during the Aquino administration.

The project was defunded in 2017 when the Duterte administration took over on the pretext that the innovations of Project NOAH could already be mainstreamed under the Department of Science and Technology. It was not only the scuttling of ABS-CBN and the erratic response to the COVID-19 pandemic that further debilitated Filipinos reeling from disasters. Project NOAH should be on the list of the Duterte administration's epic follies.

Project NOAH was an all too brief renaissance surge in technological and behavioral innovation applied to getting the nation and local communities ready and resilient against hazards. It was getting international and local acclaim. Among other achievements, Project NOAH's specific and targeted advisories enabled the municipality of Daram in Samar to preemptively evacuate in the face of Typhoon "Ruby" on Dec. 6, 2014. There were no recorded casualties even though 1,664 houses were washed away by the storm surge of Ruby.

Altogether, Project NOAH from 2012 to 2016, cost the Filipino taxpayer a measly P6.4 billion. Even in real terms, this pales in comparison with the P5 billion confidential funds of Mr. Marcos and Vice President Sara Duterte of at least P30 billion over six years.

Mr. Marcos' post-Paeng clueless remarks could be easily forgotten if he will reconsider the revival of Project NOAH as a complementary, enriching, display of Filipino capacity to sustain national resilience-building. That will be a good start for the President as a leader able to break the prevailing wait-and-see attitude of the governing, economic, and social elite, and inspire and mobilize them to provide the leading edge to the nation.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

[Data-informed governance of extractive industries crucial: Diokno](#)

MANILA – Finance Secretary Benjamin Diokno has cited the importance of improving the inclusive and data-informed management of the extractive industries in driving long-term economic expansion as he cited its PHP363-billion contribution to government revenues from 2012 to 2019.

“With the Marcos administration banking on the potential of the extractive sector to drive long-term economic expansion, the inclusive and data-informed governance of the extractive industries becomes more critical than ever,” said Finance Secretary Diokno at the FORGE PH: Philippine Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (PH-EITI) National Conference on Tuesday.

FORGE PH is the annual assembly of the extractive sector that updates stakeholders on progress in achieving greater transparency and accountability in the extractive industries.

This year, the national conference focused on how the PH-EITI can respond to concerns on climate change and energy transition, which is in line with the initiative to incorporate sustainability concerns in the global reporting standard.

“We call on our participants to actively and constructively engage one another and develop concrete actions to improve the management of this very important sector,” Diokno said, as he advocated the PH-EITI as a platform for data transparency and multi-stakeholder participation in extractives governance.

The government will take necessary steps to strengthen and broaden the space for inclusive multi-sectoral engagement.

As such, local government capacity to govern extractive activities, specifically small-scale mining sectors, will be improved through the subnational implementation of EITI.

Moreover, the EITI platform will be used to ensure equitable government revenue share from resource utilization, which is demonstrated in PH-EITI’s contribution to the crafting of a new fiscal regime for mining.

EITI data will be utilized to inform the public and stakeholders of initiatives towards climate change mitigation and adaptation, and the transition to low-carbon energy.

With this, Diokno urged stakeholders to continue using PH-EITI data in their research work and policy advocacy.

“As we close in on our first decade of being an EITI-implementing country, we commit to making implementation more inclusive, more meaningful, and responsive to the needs of our stakeholders,” he said.

The EITI International, led by its chair, former New Zealand Prime Minister Helen Clark, has been supporting the Philippines in maintaining a high level of transparency and stakeholder engagement in its extractive industries.

The PH-EITI is a government-led, multi-stakeholder initiative implementing EITI, the global standard that promotes the open, accountable management, and good governance of oil, gas, and mineral resources. It was created on Nov. 26, 2013 through EO No. 147, series of 2013.

PHYS.ORG

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

By Piers Forster, The Conversation

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 canceled 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 ton 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 skeptical 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 skepticism 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 ton of carbon dioxide costs just £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 tons 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 £1 billion of funding each year for UK nature restoration projects.

We also found that the purchase of carbon credits could raise £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 minimized 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 organizations 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 organizations 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 organizations 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.

RAPPLER

[\[Opinion\] 'Pa-siyam': Super Typhoon Yolanda 9 years later, and lessons \(yet to be\) learned](#)

By: Minh Tran, Albert Salamanca, Ladylyn Lim Mangada, Reinna Bermudez

Pa-siyam describes the tradition of praying nine consecutive days for the dead. Its observance brings opportunity to mourn and grieve, as well as reflect and commemorate. In the case of Super Typhoon Yolanda, nine years, not simply nine days, after its onslaught, the anniversary necessitates a moment of reflection and remembrance. What lessons have we learned almost a decade after this climate disaster?

In 2013, the 19th United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP19) began with heartfelt prayers to communities in the Philippines that had just been hit by Yolanda, one of the strongest typhoons on record. World leaders and climate activists urged governments to urgently address the escalating climate crisis.

This year, the anniversary of Yolanda takes place as world leaders are convening for the 27th Conference of Parties (COP27) in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt, once again opening the international stage to discuss pressing climate issues that leave communities at risk of suffering losses and damages due to extreme weather events.

Displaced, resettled, and perpetually precarious

Just a couple weeks before this year's commemoration, Tacloban City declared a cholera outbreak with at least 192 cases recorded in the city. Most of the cases were found in Barangay 106, where the source has been traced to a polluted creek and the water processing plant. Barangay 106 is home to resettlement housing projects for those displaced by Yolanda, along with other villages where permanent housing units were constructed in the city.

When the storm struck in 2013, Tacloban was one of the hardest hit areas in the typhoon path. Ninety percent of the city was destroyed, with massive loss of lives and displacement recorded. In the wake of the disaster, the city government initiated large-scale resettlement, moving families from high-risk coastal areas to 40 km north of the city center. Disaster-affected residents, including former informal settlers, were given new permanent housing. Yet, for many, lives and livelihoods remain bleak.

Access to clean water, for instance, remains a challenge. Earlier this year, during a human rights monitoring visit to four permanent shelter areas in Tacloban, the Commission on Human Rights (CHR) recorded water meters not installed per household, and limited supply of continuous water in the housing units.

The relocation from coastal settlements up north has also moved many people further away from their original sources of income and work. Housing units are also often too

small, leading better off families to self-construct extension spaces, thereby exposing neighboring units to structural risks. The COVID-19 pandemic also further exacerbated the precarious living conditions of displaced families. These are just few of the new and continued challenges faced by communities displaced by Yolanda; persistent issues of poverty and safety and security remain present.

Rights of the relocated and roles of duty-bearers

A survey of 311 displaced households conducted by the CHR and the Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI) in 2020 found that needs and human rights of displaced people remain unmet and unfulfilled, particularly safety, security, and freedom of movement; adequate standard of living; employment and livelihoods; housing, land, and property; and participation in public affairs. Thirty percent of the respondents found their livelihoods to have worsened, and half found water quality and access to be poor. Further, less than 40% of the households hold ownership documentation for their housing units, with many still insecure about their tenure rights and status.

Evidently, disaster-induced displacement and relocation compromise basic human rights of affected people. Durable solutions are needed to ensure internally displaced persons (IDPs) can fully enjoy their rights while no longer having protection or assistance needs due to displacement. This includes, among others, effective provisioning of basic services for affected families, ensuring land titles and tenure security, and inclusion of displaced people in decision-making.

The human rights issues surrounding displacement in Tacloban City are reflections of serious loopholes in the current legal frameworks. The Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act (RA 10121) must be revised to address human rights issues, particularly in relation to approaching and responding to disaster displacement and institutionalizing an accountability arrangement for duty bearers.

A human rights-based legislation or policy at the national and local levels on internal displacement could also provide the framework for an inclusive, participatory, and more accountable response to evacuation, recovery, and resettlement.

A finance facility for the most vulnerable

Nine years after its landfall in a nation frequented by an average of 20 disasters each year, Yolanda's impacts are still felt and lived every day. Its prolonged implications on human rights and livelihoods are examples of losses and damages that communities are experiencing due to climate variability and extreme events.

Financial resources must extend beyond disaster relief and cater to the needs of those most vulnerable, and address not only economic but also cultural, psychological, livelihood, and other non-economic loss and damage, such as those associated with displacement and resettlement.

Indeed, Yolanda was part of the push that led to the creation of the Warsaw International Mechanism on Loss and Damage at COP19. By COP26, the quest for a dedicated fund, however, has not materialized. If we are to learn from the tragic event and the sustained devastation that followed, and uphold the principles of climate justice, a finance facility that puts vulnerable communities at its heart must be realized.

Reflecting on the Yolanda experience, Dean Antonio La Viña of the Manila Observatory believes that “rebuilding places and restoring lives after a major climate event does not happen automatically, without strategic interventions and sustainable finance. This is where a loss and damage finance facility is relevant and useful. While humanitarian aid after a disaster is needed, it is simply not delivered at the scale and urgency that would result in restitution and restore places and people back or even to a better place where they were not before the climate disaster hit them.”

Looking ahead

Ahead of COP27, recent reports show a record-high level of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, yet current nationally determined contributions (NDCs) are insufficient and not ambitious enough; a system-wide transformation is urgently needed. Crises continue to happen, with Typhoon Odette in December 2021, Typhoon Karding in September 2022, and, during the last week of October, massive flooding across many areas in the Philippines.

The response in the aftermath of Yolanda and the development efforts that followed to rebuild lives and livelihoods provide rich lessons. Yet, clearly, we have not learned.

Much of development and critical infrastructures are still being built in places that are exposed to coastal hazards. Access to productive livelihoods continue to be a challenge for the resettled communities. And as shown above, the fundamental human rights of those who suffered from the wrath of the super typhoon remains unfulfilled.

Catastrophic losses and damages due to the deepening climate crisis will continue unless we act with haste and ambition.

As negotiations are underway in Sharm el-Sheik, the experiences and lessons learned from Yolanda will inform the deliberations of the parties. It is vital that States set ambitious NDCs and commit to their realization. The creation of financing mechanisms extending beyond climate adaptation and disaster risk reduction to address loss and damage must be set and committed.

Measures need to put front and center the needs, capacities, and human rights of vulnerable communities. Funding must be directly accessible without additional burdens and communities must play key roles as decision-makers every step of the way.

Whether one practices pa-siyam or not, Yolanda’s ninth anniversary is not the end of learning and reflections. It should guide us to end the disproportional vulnerabilities

experienced by local communities. Through committed action and robust and rooted policy frameworks, States and stakeholders have the power to ensure there will be no more Yolandas to happen anywhere in the world.

Western Visayas eyes adapting fisheries, agri systems to climate change

By: Jun Aguirre

Antique, Philippines – Severe Tropical Storm Paeng (Nalgae) damaged 52.36% of total fisheries holdings in Western Visayas, regional officials told President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Tuesday, November 8, citing losses of P929 million from the region's P1.7-billion fishery infrastructure.

The Department of Agriculture's Western Visayas Regional Technical Director Jose Albert Barrogo told the President during a briefing on Paeng recovery efforts that the storm affected 10,577 fisherfolk, mainly in Antique, Capiz, and Iloilo.

Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) Western Visayas Director Remia Aparri said Capiz incurred losses of P500 million as fishponds overflowed due to heavy rain brought by Paeng. The storm also washed out the farms of more than 2,500 seaweed farmers.

As officials discussed the need to restock fisheries and seaweed farms, the President asked: What can we do to ensure damage like this doesn't happen again?

Aparri said the government needs to reengineer the sector.

"We have to calendar the schedule of planting so that we can evade typhoons," the BFAR director said.

"It has something to do with the calendar of farming, just like rice," Aparri added, citing moves to move rice into a dry cropping season since Typhoon Odette (Rai), which hit the region hard in December 2021, and Tropical Storm Agaton (Megi), which destroyed P83.5 million worth of rice crops covering 5,787.31 hectares in Capiz and Iloilo in April 2022.

"We have to adjust," Aparri said. "It's high time that we use climate change adaptation and mitigation," the official added, highlighting the need for more mangrove plantations to shelter fish and act as a storm surge buffer.

Marcos brought a P177.46-million check for partial aid to Antique's fisheries and agriculture sector.

Governor Rhodora Cadio said around 35,000 of farmers in the province were affected.

According to regional agriculture officials, P706 million worth of rice crops or 39.8% of the total supply was destroyed, while damage to agricultural infrastructure was placed at P50 million.

Local officials reminded the national government that small farmers in Antique continue to await the promised P5,000 aid to defray rising costs of inputs like fertilizer and fuel.

They called for “immediate intervention” to speed up disbursement of the Rice Farmers Financial Assistance, citing difficulties in getting the Department of Budget and Management and the Land Bank of the Philippines to issue payment orders.

Aid for affected families

The regional office of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) said around 400,000 families in 2,570 Western Visayas barangays were affected by Paeng.

Just before the briefing, many Antique folks lined up to receive the DSWD cash aid for individuals in distressed situations.

Floods and landslides temporarily displaced more than 50,000 families in the region though most have already gone back to their communities, even with more than 25,000 houses destroyed, the DSWD office added.

The agency said it also released 92,425 family food packs, each good for three to five days.

Marcos also approved the Department of Health’s appeal to purchase more mobile water treatment plants for Western Visayas.

Hearing that the region only has two of these plants, the President noted that even without storms, many areas have problems sourcing safe drinking water. He said it would be difficult to take back plants loaned to local government units as the need seems to be long-term.

The Metropolitan Manila Development Authority has loaned 15 of these mobile water plants for Capiz and Antique, and 15 to Maguindanao, but still has 80 units available, said Interior Secretary Benhur Abalos.

THE MANILA TIMES

[Agroforestry is instinctive to Filipinos](#)

By: Daphne Oseña-Paez

In our little farm south of Metro Manila we grow vegetables and fruits enough for our consumption. The excess is shared with friends. It is not a commercial setup. We just wanted a place with a small cottage where our daughters could run around freely. Along the way, I discovered my love for Philippine native trees, learned to germinate seeds and grow trees, and found the relevance of my activities ecologically.

According to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), agroforestry is a land-use system where trees are managed together with crops and/or animal production systems and can increase social, economic and environmental benefits for all land users at all scales. Simply put, it is an integrated farming system that is not focused on just one crop. Agroforestry is now considered in global policy-making as one of the viable solutions to attaining the UN Sustainable Development Goals involving food security, climate change adaptation and mitigation, poverty alleviation and livelihood resilience. The idea of agroforestry is not new though. This goes back many centuries and millennia in ancient civilizations like India, the Americas and Africa.

In the Philippines, agroforestry is common and traditionally practiced in traditional small-scale and backyard farms. According to an FAO report on agroforestry in 2022, the Philippine government was among the first to support agroforestry as a means to address poverty and food security in the 1970s. Now that agroforestry is considered a system to address climate change, the Philippines needs an expanded national agroforestry policy beyond food and the economy, to include culture, conservation, climate change mitigation and adaptation policies.

The first thing we did on the farm was to plant a variety of Philippine native trees and fruit-bearing trees out of concern for natural habitats and the environment. Now we can occasionally spot bats and flying lizards (draco). Back then I was not thinking so much about food production as much as I do now.

When we started growing food, we were, unknowingly, actually practicing agroforestry by planting a mix of crops between trees. I would describe it as integrated, regenerative and organic. I used to think it was too messy, not "instagrammable" enough. It turns out our farmers' traditional method is in vogue with the current climate talks in COP27. Here are some of the concepts we are practicing in our organic farm.

Intercropping. We introduced a high-value crop, cacao (*Theobroma cacao* L.), when our native trees and fruit trees were established five years ago. We planted cacao between existing trees — coconut, banana and fruit trees. Young cacao benefit from the multi-level shades provided by the trees. The shade cover or canopy gets trimmed in the rainy season as the ground needs more sun to prevent pests from thriving in humidity.

Fallen leaves from trees provide mulch to keep the soil moist during the dry season. There are various root crops planted on the ground, like cassava, sweet potato, purple yam (ube) and ginger. Other vegetables are planted on rotation.

Chickens. Though we gave up raising poultry, we keep about 20 chickens as pets. (Our daughters gave them names. And nobody in the family wants to cook them.) They provide us with fresh eggs. They are let out of their house pens to forage through the farm at different times of the day. This reduces our costs of buying feed. The chicken manure helps keep our soil healthy.

Typhoon Paeng's damage to infrastructure and agriculture is estimated at P5.6 billion by the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council. Our property was not left untouched. Our big bamboo shrub, which started from one shoot given to me by Maan Hontiveros, was uprooted by strong winds. The vegetables were gone. Native trees and cacao crops were saved.

I feel like I've done something right by planting native trees first, then adding cacao in between. It's a long-term investment that not only gives us potential economic benefits, but also helps prevent soil erosion and offers the young cacao shield from harsh tropical temperatures and extreme storms. It would be interesting to see if the concepts of agroforestry and regenerative farming, which are already being practiced in developing countries by small-scale farmers, can be scaled up to the commercial level and in temperate countries to address the looming global food security crisis.

The Philippines ranks fourth globally as the country most affected by climate risks with extreme weather conditions continuing to threaten food security. Trees within agroforestry practices can help play a role in climate change mitigation by carbon sequestration and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. In cacao agroforestry, the inter-planting of different trees not only shades the young cacao from the sun, but it also provides protection from extreme typhoons and erosion, like in our farm.

I love that my rotational vegetables and young cacaos are able to coexist beautifully with our rare Philippine native trees. I have also been able to make traditional sikwate or tablea chocolate drink by myself, from seed to cup.

[PH should build bilateral ties at COP27 | The Manila Times](#)

THE 27th annual Conference of State Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, or COP27, opened this week in the Red Sea resort city of Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, and to say that global expectations for the summit are low would be an understatement. Nevertheless, it is still an important event for the Philippines and presents an opportunity for this country to strengthen its climate resiliency and response.

The prospects for cooperative global action on climate change have steadily waned since the historic adoption of the Paris Agreement in 2015, with actions toward reducing climate impacts and funding vulnerable countries' adaptation and mitigation efforts falling far short of promises. Even though the rhetoric and the goals remain the same, with the UN, government leaders and climate activists still proclaiming that the world can and must limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius before the end of the century, the assertions sound less convincing than ever before, and those making them sound less convinced that they are realistic.

The reality, sadly, is that the "ideal" 1.5 C target, a level at which most of the worst effects of climate change could be prevented, is no longer achievable, and the less ideal alternative target of limiting global warming to 2 C is likely beyond reach as well. Although the rate of increase has slowed, global emissions of greenhouse gases are still rising; they are on track to be about 10.6 percent higher in 2022 than in 2021.

A key agreement within the Paris accord was that the world's wealthier nations would provide funding for more vulnerable countries' climate change adaptation and mitigation efforts. The Philippines' impressively bold pledge to reduce its own emissions by 75 percent by 2050 is based on the presumption that this funding will be forthcoming; only about 3 percent of the emissions reduction will be achieved by the government's own investment, with the remaining 72 percent being "conditional" on receiving outside help. The Philippines' pledge is just one example of many.

The goal of the Paris accord was that \$100 billion in funding would be provided annually for countries like the Philippines, but the closest the world has gotten to it was in 2019 when \$79 billion was gathered. Since then, the disruption of the Covid-19 pandemic and its resulting, persistent global economic chaos, Russia's invasion of, and protracted war in Ukraine, and perversely, the increasingly severe and widespread impacts of climate-induced natural disasters have diverted attention and resources from the funding of climate action. Even more distressingly, it appears that even \$100 billion per year is not nearly enough; the UN Environment Program's (UNEP) Adaptation Gap report, released just ahead of COP27, said that the adaptation needs of vulnerable countries will actually cost about \$340 billion per year by 2030.

The irony is that while the world's nations are in unanimous agreement that something must be done about climate change, they are collectively incapable of doing something about it because their shares in any collective effort must take a back seat to their

immediate, individual concerns of economic stability, food security and energy security. They are still willing to do what they can to fight climate change, but those concerns place limits on what that is, and moreover, those limits change from year to year.

This is where the opportunity arises for the Philippines. No government or major institution is willing to admit that a global summit like COP27 is a waste of time, but the only way to ensure that it will not be is for those individual governments or institutions to be able to go home and tell their citizens or stakeholders that they accomplished something. Collective agreements are difficult, but bilateral agreements are comparatively easy and would provide those achievements that can be highlighted.

The Philippines should use the COP27 event to seek out these potential one-on-one partnerships, building a solution to our own climate adaptation and mitigation challenges one piece at a time, rather than wait for a grand, world-scale plan that will never come. We have been waiting for six years for the global effort to begin, and with the impacts of climate change growing visibly worse each passing year, it would be foolish to keep on waiting.

[Promoting sustainability through borderless collaboration, ESG reporting, insight sharing](#)

By: Chris Ferareza

On top of a myriad of factors that can disrupt business operations, including a changing business environment and economic uncertainties that stir global financial markets, businesses are now increasingly concerned about how they can help address environmental issues, and for good reason. The effects of climate change are more apparent, with a study released by the United Nations' World Meteorological Organization showing that in 2021, greenhouse gases, the primary cause of climate change because they trap heat within the atmosphere, spiked to hit new record levels. They warn that these levels will continue to rise through 2022.

These environmental issues are cause for alarm, and has triggered increased participation from government, nongovernment organizations and businesses to join hands in preventing further environmental damage through sustainability initiatives.

In our previous article, we talked about how to successfully create champions that promote sustainability practices employed in the workplace. There, we mentioned how vital it is that all personnel realize that they all play a part in reversing climate change effects. This comes in the form of engagement in small measures that when practiced continuously, help contribute to attain bigger environmental goals like reducing carbon emissions.

Engaging in sustainability initiatives has become a need instead of an alternative or add-on initiative. In the Philippines, results of Grant Thornton's International Business Review show that 42 percent of Philippine mid-market firms surveyed are ready and likely to invest in sustainability reporting and initiatives.

But while many firms have expressed willingness and are keen to jump in when it comes to promoting sustainability, the tricky part is: how and where to start?

Engage in sustainability reporting

As more companies put sustainability at the heart of their corporate governance policies, they reap several benefits, the most valuable of which is the improvement of their brand's reputation and goodwill. For those operating in countries where rules about sustainability, or environmental, social and governance (ESG) programs are set, the immediate benefit is being able to comply with such rules. But, as they comply and fully embrace sustainability or ESG, the more rewarding and fulfilling benefits, and gains come their way. They also become more active and diligent in measuring and accurately reporting the impact of their business undertakings to people, the environment and the economy.

Like other leaders in various professions, assurance and advisory professionals now have bigger roles to play when it comes to making advances in ESG initiatives within

their firms. This responsibility entails leading by example and inspiring clients, other businesses and stakeholders who are ready to do more in terms of sustainability or ESG to adopt similar programs and comply with standards.

One specific area in which sustainability advisors and assurance providers alike can help is in sustainability reporting. This comes in the form of preparing proper disclosures outlining the activities and choices companies make to engage in and promote sustainability. As regulatory oversight becomes stricter, the sustainability advisor's role extends to providing insights on whether a company's sustainability report includes quantitative and qualitative data that are not only reflective of ESG pursuits, but are also accurate, relevant and timely. A McKinsey article described sustainability reporting as one which includes company disclosures that detail "frameworks and standards to follow, which stakeholders to address and which information to make public."

Make headways through borderless collaboration

Assurance leaders now perform an integral function to assist in making transparent sustainability reports. And they can achieve more when they collaborate with stakeholders, and other audit and advisory professionals.

This imperative is not solely the responsibility of audit and assurance professionals. Businesses that are part of a larger business network or group likewise gain more by sharing best practices with other entities comprising the network or group. Free flow sharing of innovative ideas and strategies fosters continuous learning, opens new avenues for filling in knowledge gaps and helps leaders improve decision-making.

Share analyses, audit approaches

Jumping in on this discussion, Grant Thornton leaders emphasized in an article that audit and assurance leaders must show renewed commitment to share internally global audit data analytics approaches currently being developed and "to start dedicating resources focused on how to deploy data analytics better in their firm." This initiative matters most in the mandatory audit of sustainability reports.

Their role also includes suggesting new sustainability programs that client companies can invest in, particularly those that involve audit data analytics other than those already existing and recommended by their internal strategy group.

The onslaught of bigger environmental issues calls for more drastic actions. Effective collaboration coupled with the commitment to share best practices and spark continuous learning to be able to better comply with sustainability or ESG standards are key. We are far from fully addressing the looming climate crisis, but the sooner we make conscious efforts to combat it, we are a step closer to reaching this goal.

[SEC joins Asean Capital Markets Forum in Cambodia](#)

By: Kelvin Lester Lee

I had the distinct privilege and honor to be the head of the Philippine delegation that participated in the recently concluded 37th Asean Capital Markets Forum (ACMF) Chairs' Meeting and the ACMF International Conference last October 27 to 28, 2022, which was jointly organized by the ACMF, the Securities and Exchange Regulator of Cambodia (SERC), and the Asian Development Bank in Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

The ACMF is a high-level grouping of capital market regulators from all 10 Asean jurisdictions: Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam. Its primary responsibility is to develop a deep, liquid and integrated regional capital market.

Sustainable finance is a priority of the ACMF, as reflected in its commitment in 2022 to promote sustainable development, inclusivity and resiliency amid the impact of the global economic downturn and the Covid-19 pandemic. In line with this, the Asean Sustainability-Linked Bond Standards (SLBS) and the Asean Sustainable and Responsible Fund Standards (SRFS) were launched during the conference, which will support Asean in narrowing the gap toward the 2030 Agenda in combating climate change. The endorsement of these two initiatives likewise signals the ACMF's commitment to the ACMF Action Plan 2021-2025 Strategic Objectives.

A total of \$29.82 billion has been issued under the Asean Green, Social and Sustainability Bond Standards as of Oct. 21, 2022, and since they were first introduced in 2017 and 2018, showcasing the region's remarkable progress in promoting sustainable finance. With the launch of the Asean SLBS and the SRFS, the range of sustainable investments in the region is expected to widen, further accelerating sustainable development across the region.

Another important initiative of the ACMF is to promote sustainability disclosure across the region and to enhance the voice of Asean in international standard-setting. As part of the efforts to prioritize the promotion of corporate sustainability reporting, the ACMF chairs engaged the International Sustainability Standards Board (ISSB) and discussed developments and engagement plans during the meeting.

Focusing on the areas of interoperability, proportionality in implementation and phasing in of industry-specific metrics, the ACMF discussed the Asean perspective on the draft ISSB standards. This lays the foundation for future collaboration and will help ACMF evaluate the feasibility of adopting ISSB standards based on each jurisdiction's own legal and regulatory arrangements with respect to international standards and in a way that promotes consistent and comparable sustainability disclosures across Asean.

The active engagement of the different jurisdictions is critical in creating a global baseline standard of sustainability disclosures to meet investors' information needs. Standard-setting in terms of how this global baseline fully responds to the needs of

market participants, contributes to optimizing reporting efficiency for companies in those jurisdictions and how those jurisdictions can build upon the global baseline according to their needs was also discussed.

Other major activities in the ACMF chairs' meeting included the endorsement of the Asean Collective Investment Schemes (CIS) Digital Repository to promote and publicize cross-border offerings of funds and the legal wrappers for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Bond Toolkit.

The ACMF chairs also acknowledged the progress on the Asean Taxonomy for Sustainable Finance by the Asean Taxonomy Board, its importance and recent developments in the board's ongoing work, as well as on recent developments in global standards of sustainability reporting. This involved stakeholder consultations, both in the public and private sector, including international standard setters and the ACMF looks forward to the development of the next version of the Asean Taxonomy.

As an active participant of the ACMF, the Securities and Exchange Commission takes pride in aligning itself with global best practices in the field of sustainable finance. Considering that the Philippines as a developing nation directly benefits from sustainability efforts, these initiatives are not only good for the environment but also for our domestic economy, business sector and the general public.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

[Groups raise alarm over new gas project in Verde Island Passage](#)

By: Gaea Katreena Cabico

Manila, Philippines — Clean energy advocates and locals expressed opposition to a proposed liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminal in Batangas province, saying the project will put the Verde Island Passage and coastal communities that rely on the marine corridor at risk.

In a letter to Shell, residents and groups asked the multinational oil and gas company to shelve its proposed P3.5-billion LNG import terminal in Batangas City. Once operational, the terminal is seen to disrupt fishing and other activities.

“There are tens of thousands of us who rely on small-scale fishing and many more on ecotourism, which bring in several millions of pesos of revenue for Batangas alone. These sectors will be adversely impacted by the construction of an LNG terminal,” the letter read.

The construction of the gas facility and the consequent frequent entry of barges as well as inadvertent oil spills or disposal of shipboard liquid and other waste will also pose negative impacts on the biodiversity rich Verde Island Passage, the groups added.

They also stressed the need to protect and nurture the health of coastal ecosystems to build the resilience of communities, and the need to shift away from fossil fuels as the impacts of climate change are being increasingly felt.

“Every typhoon that barrels through the Philippines is tainted by the carbon emissions of Shell and other polluters who have changed our climate for the worse,” said Yeb Sano, executive director of Greenpeace Southeast Asia and head of the Greenpeace delegation at COP27.

Shell is one of the carbon majors linked to 71% of industrial greenhouse gas emissions since 1988.

Fossil battleground

Currently, there are five operating fossil gas plants in Batangas. It is also the site of eight proposed plants and seven LNG terminals.

According to the think-tank Center for Energy, Ecology, and Development, Shell secured an Environmental Compliance Certificate from the environment department for the same project in 2013. But the company shelved the development of the project due to unfavorable market conditions at the time.

“It makes no sense for Shell to still insist on gas. I cannot imagine a more unfavorable market condition than the sky-high energy prices we are experiencing right now across the world,” said Gerry Arances, executive director of CEED and co-convenor of Protect VIP.

President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. called on Congress to enact a law that will foster the midstream natural gas industry.

[Planting wrong mangrove species a risky waste of time, group says](#)

By: Gaea Katreena Cabico

Manila, Philippines — A conservation organization on Tuesday called for more sustainable planting of mangroves in the country as more organizations pursue planting initiatives meant to make coastal communities more resilient to the impacts of climate change.

The cyclones that regularly batter the Philippines highlight the vital roles that mangroves play: They act as a buffer against storm surges and floods, havens of biodiversity, and sponges for planet-warming greenhouse gases.

However, some initiatives end at planting and seedlings do not mature, Mangroves Matter PH said.

"Mangrove planting activities highlight the need to restore and conserve our remaining mangrove forests, but it is ultimately more important to do this more sustainably in a sense that proper protocols were done and the number of mangrove seedlings that were able to survive are high," the organization said.

Why do mangrove restorations fail?

A common mistake in mangrove planting is not choosing the right species for the appropriate site.

Most of the planting activities in the Philippines use *Rhizophora* mangroves, locally known as bakhaw.

According to Mangrove Matters PH founder Matthew Tabilog, bakhaw seedlings are usually planted in the seaward zone, closer to the water. *Rhizophora* mangroves dominate the midward zone, which is located behind the seaward zone.

Meanwhile, *Sonneratia alba* (pagatpat) and *Avicennia* spp. (api-api) are naturally thriving in the inward — or landward — zones.

Tabilog added there have been instances when bakhaw mangroves were planted in seagrass beds, which risked destruction of seagrass meadows. Seagrass meadows have their own role in protecting and promoting biodiversity.

How to get it right

Mangrove Matters PH stressed that organizations should consult experts before conducting mangrove planting "because it will just be a waste of time, effort, and resources if these projects will fail entirely."

It also called on the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to monitor mangrove planting initiatives and provide science-based mangrove planting protocols.

The organization also called on the DENR to further protect mangroves by rejecting proposed reclamation projects and applications for Environmental Compliance Certificates for them.

The Philippines had 500,000 hectares of mangroves in the past century but that has declined to roughly 250,000 to 300,000 hectares.

In a paper published by journal Science in 2015, marine scientist and renowned mangrove expert Jurgenne Primavera said that around half of the 279,000 hectares of mangroves in the country that disappeared between 1951 and 1988 were converted into fishponds.

"The call to restore mangroves should be political and backed up by science," Tabilog said.

[UN unveils global 'early warning' system for disasters at \\$3 billion](#)

By: Agence France-Presse

Sharm El Sheikh — The United Nations on Monday unveiled a five-year plan to build a global early warning system for deadly and costly extreme weather events amplified by climate change.

The price tag—a relatively modest \$3.1 billion, or less than 50 cents per person—is a small price to pay for proven methods that can save thousands, if not millions, of lives, UN chief Antonio Guterres said at the COP27 climate summit in Egypt.

"I have called for every person on Earth to be protected by early warning systems within five years, with the priority to support the most vulnerable first," he said as world leaders gathered in the Red Sea resort of Sharm el-Sheikh for the 13-day talks.

Even as climate-enhanced extreme weather is multiplying, half the world's countries lack advanced early warning systems that can save lives.

Countries with inadequate infrastructure see, on average, eight times greater mortality from disasters than countries with strong measures in place, according to the UN.

Proper early warning systems for floods, droughts, heatwaves, cyclones or other disasters allow for planning that minimizes adverse impacts.

And it works: the number of people affected by disasters has nearly doubled over the last two decades, but the number of people killed or missing has fallen by half.

When Cyclone Bhola hit what is present-day Bangladesh in 1970, it claimed hundreds of thousands of lives, prompting the country founded the following year to invest in weather forecasting technology, shelters and a network of volunteers along the coast.

A similarly strong Cyclone Amphan made landfall in 2020 in the same area, but left a death toll of just 26.

"Early warnings save lives and provide vast economic benefits," World Meteorological Organization chief Petteri Taalas said in a statement.

"Just 24 hours notice of an impending hazardous event can cut the ensuing damage by 30%."

The Global Commission on Adaptation found that spending just \$800 million on such systems in developing countries would avoid losses of \$3 billion to \$16 billion per year.

Starting with science-based observation networks and forecasting technology, a complete early warning infrastructure also requires national and community-based response capabilities, along with ways to rapidly communicate information to a population.

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