



NEWS ROUNDUP

09 NOVEMBER 2023 [08:00 am]

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By: Joyce Balancio

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BUSINESS MIRROR

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GMA NEWS

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By: Gisselle Ombay

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MANILA STANDARD

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SUNSTAR

[Marcos: Yolanda testament of Filipinos' resilience, unity](#)

By: Third Anne Perlate Malonzo

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THE PHILIPPINE STAR

['Hopeless, but hopeful': Yolanda survivors continue fight for climate justice a decade later](#)

By: Gaea Katreena Cabico

Joanna Sustento sometimes feels hopelessness and despair. The 32-year-old Taclobanon lost most of her family when Super Typhoon Yolanda, also known as Haiyan, devastated the Eastern Visayas city on Nov. 8, 2013.

[Marcos: Philippines must build 'stronger' communities to prevent repeat of Yolanda destruction](#)

By: Gaea Katreena Cabico

The Philippines needs to build “stronger and more resilient communities” that can withstand the impacts of the climate crisis, President Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr. said Wednesday as the country marks the 10th anniversary of Super Typhoon Yolanda.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

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By: Ma. Teresa Montemayor

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SREAB: Ang bisista ngayon ni Special Rapporteur Ian Fry ipakita ang positibong engagement ng ating pamahalaan sa United Nations on the issue of human rights and climate change.

Information and Knowledge Management Division

ABS CBN

'Keep a special place in our hearts' for Yolanda victims, Marcos urges public

By: Joyce Balancio

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Wednesday led the commemoration of the 10th anniversary of super typhoon Yolanda, which killed more than 6,000 people in Leyte province and other parts of the Visayas.

"Ten years have gone by and yet the memory of this tragedy remains indelible in our hearts and our thoughts," Marcos said in his speech at the Tacloban City Convention Center.

"To this day, we still do not know the true scope of our loss. Because we grieve and we mourn those of our dead. But we must always keep a special place in our hearts for those who we lost who are unaccounted [for], unrecorded... Up to now, we say 6,000 casualties, we do not know that for sure," he added.

Yolanda, one of the strongest storms ever recorded, unleashed winds of up to 315 kilometers an hour and whipped up tsunami-like waves that devastated the central Philippines on Nov. 8, 2013.

Tacloban, the capital of Leyte province, bore the brunt of the storm's fury and was almost totally destroyed by five-meter-high storm surges that crashed over mostly poor coastal communities.

About 6,300 people were killed and a decade later more than a thousand are still missing.

"To the survivors, who continue to move forward, we salute your spirit and character," said Marcos, who also thanked those who helped in Tacloban's recovery.

He added that it was crucial for the government to prioritize measures to address climate change to prevent a repeat of the devastation from Yolanda.

Disaster-resilient evacuation centers are being put up, while early warning systems and incident command systems are being procured by the government.

Marcos urged the Yolanda response cluster to work closely with the national government agencies to address lingering issues and provide the residents with necessary assistance so they can rebuild their lives.

He ordered the Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development to accelerate the distribution of land titles and housing units to residents of Tacloban City.

Before the event ended, Marcos led the ceremonial distribution of certificates of award to some housing beneficiaries.

Tacloban Mayor Alfred Romualdez said Wednesday some Tacloban residents were still living near coastal communities marked as "danger zones."

Romualdez said around 18,000 houses were built to relocate Yolanda-hit residents, but up to 5,000 units needed to be repaired.

"[A]lmost half of the houses that were built in 2013-2016 — most of them, actually — were incomplete and substandard," he told ANC.

Marcos also attended the opening ceremony of the 2023 Handa Pilipinas Visayas Leg organized by the Department of Science and Technology in Tacloban City.

The annual event aims to raise public awareness and adoption of available technical innovations related to disaster risk reduction and management.

Marcos encouraged the use of these innovations so that the country would be better equipped against the impacts of calamities.

BUSINESS MIRROR

Filipino typhoon survivors join 'David and Goliath' climate fight

Joanna Sustento lost her home and most of her family when Typhoon Haiyan smashed into the Filipino city of Tacloban on Nov. 8, 2013, an experience that drove her to join the fight to make fossil fuel firms pay up for worsening climate disasters.

One of the most destructive storms in modern history, Haiyan killed more than 6,000 people and displaced millions, with the total bill for losses and damage estimated at 571 billion pesos (\$10.18 billion) by the Philippine government.

Typhoons were part of growing up in Tacloban for Ms. Sustento, but nothing from past experience could prepare the city's roughly 200,000 residents for Haiyan, known locally as Yolanda.

"We didn't know Typhoon Yolanda was going to be a different kind of monster," Ms. Sustento, 32, told the Thomson Reuters Foundation as she recalled how the floodwaters engulfed her family's bungalow within minutes.

She lost her parents, eldest brother, sister-in-law and nephew in the disaster.

Today, Ms. Sustento works at Greenpeace Philippines to document other people's losses from extreme weather events including Yolanda, part of the environmental group's efforts to build a pioneering community-led legal case against fossil fuel companies.

At the same time, the group is calling for Congress to approve new legislation called the Climate Accountability Bill, which would impose fines on big emitters of planet-heating carbon and use the proceeds to pay climate-linked damage claims.

Such efforts reflect a growing global push to secure recompense for communities on the frontlines of global warming – whether through the courts or a new U.N. "loss and damage" fund being set up for that purpose.

'SOMEONE MUST PAY'

In Yolanda's aftermath, Arthur Golong, 48, was among tens of thousands of people relocated from an informal settlement in central Tacloban to villages north of the city.

He has managed to build a new life, opening a hairdressing business, but a lack of jobs has forced many others to leave.

In 2019, Mr. Golong and other survivors of the storm filed a petition before the country's national human rights commission, accusing 47 fossil fuel companies of infringing on people's rights as a result of their actions triggering climate change.

"Someone must pay for it," he said, as he waited for customers at his village home.

"Fossil fuel companies may have contributions to society, but they also have major contributions to environmental harms," he added.

In a landmark decision, the commission said fossil fuel companies were responsible for climate-induced rights harms, though it did not have the jurisdiction to order compensation and the case has not been taken up by the courts.

Yeb Sano, a former top climate negotiator for the Philippine government who now leads Greenpeace Southeast Asia, said the commission's inquiry had inspired community-led climate litigation in the Philippines, and beyond.

"It has provided us sound legal basis to go to regular courts as the new battleground," he said.

TANGIBLE LOSSES

When Yolanda struck, it took weeks for aid to arrive in Salcedo, a small farming town in Eastern Samar province, which was devastated by the storm and also wants to join the Greenpeace-led legal push.

As a fifth-class municipality – a label for the poorest towns in the Philippines – Salcedo's more than 20,000 residents who depended on fishing and farming struggled to recover from Yolanda, said Salcedo councilor Joselito Esquierdo.

"Our community grappled with tangible losses from our farmlands to the sea," Mr. Esquierdo said.

Hundreds of residents still live in temporary, makeshift houses, and the town's fishermen and farmers did not receive appropriate aid to rebuild their lives, said Oliver Layugan, a resident who became an environmental advocate after the storm.

The 2013 typhoon exposed major shortcomings in the Philippines' disaster preparations, according to a 2019 report by the U.N. Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, and the country has sought to boost its readiness for future climate crises.

The government's Climate Change Commission did not respond to a request for comment.

ADAPTATION VS COMPENSATION

But despite criticism over how the government and aid agencies responded, Mr. Sano said disasters like Yolanda had shown that, in certain cases, no amount of adaptation or preparedness can ward off the worst effects of a heating climate.

"Adaptation is no longer possible for some communities and countries," he said, adding that the debate must now shift to compensation by those responsible for causing climate change – whether oil and gas firms or rich industrialized nations.

Governments are grappling with how to set up a new fund to tackle loss and damage driven by global warming, but wealthy countries have firmly rejected demands for compensation for the consequences of their high share of the emissions that are turbo-charging floods, droughts and storms around the world.

"The excuse always is, 'I'm not going to give you money if you're not going to be able to manage it properly'. But then it begs the question: Why are we in this situation in the first place?" said Mr. Sano.

An eventual decision to test the fossil-fuel lawsuit in the courts could energize small communities hard-hit by disasters like Yolanda, said the former climate negotiator who forced "loss and damage" onto the U.N.'s diplomatic radar a decade ago.

"Whether we win or lose in court, it would generate a lot of energy for the movement," he said.

"Many communities and sectors would get truly inspired by the courage of people who wage this David and Goliath fight."

GMA NEWS

[On Yolanda's 10th anniversary, VP Sara reiterates call for climate change mitigation](#)

By: Gisselle Ombay

In commemorating the 10th anniversary of Super Typhoon Yolanda, Vice President Sara Duterte on Wednesday underscored the importance of mitigating climate change and preparing for disasters to help prevent another catastrophic event.

In a video message, Duterte urged the nation to remember and honor the thousands of people who died during one of the strongest storms ever recorded.

“Today, as we remember the lives lost, let us unite in solidarity and recommit ourselves to creating a safer, more resilient future defined by sustainable development. Together, we can build communities that are better prepared to face the challenges posed by natural disasters and climate change,” she said.

Super Typhoon Yolanda (international name: Haiyan) hit the country on November 8, 2013, and left more than 7,000 people dead or missing.

Duterte said it is crucial that Filipinos learn from the lessons of the past as she highlighted the need to invest in resilient infrastructure, early warning systems, and education on disaster preparedness.

“This commemoration serves as a poignant reminder of the importance of disaster risk reduction, climate change mitigation, and disaster preparedness,” said the Vice President.

“It is crucial that we learn from the lessons of the past and take proactive steps to prevent such catastrophic events from happening again,” added Duterte.

The Vice President also urged the public to acknowledge the efforts of first responders, volunteers, and humanitarian organizations who helped during those trying times.

She said that their dedication and selflessness were “instrumental in helping affected communities rebuild their lives and regain hope for a brighter future.”

“Typhoon Yolanda left an indelible mark on our hearts, but it also revealed the extraordinary resilience and strength of those who were affected. In the midst of unimaginable destruction, we witnessed the unwavering spirit of Filipinos, who rose above adversity and rebuilt their lives with determination and courage,” Duterte added.

President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. will attend a mass and commemoration at Tacloban's seaside convention center, where many people had been sheltering when Yolanda smashed into the country.

Marcos will also attend a disaster preparedness conference in the city.

In the evening, Tacloban residents plan to place lit candles along the city's streets in a somber remembrance of the friends and family lost in the disaster.

About 6,300 people were killed and a decade later more than a thousand are still missing.

It also affected more than 16 million people or 3 million families across the country.

MANILA STANDARD

[DFA cites visit of UN envoy on climate change](#)

By: Rey E. Requejo

Foreign Affairs Secretary Enrique Manalo has welcomed UN Special Rapporteur for climate change Ian Fry as the latter embarked on a 10-day trip to the Philippines.

The country's top diplomat tackled the country's climate actions under President Marcos during his meeting with UN Special Rapporteur.

Manalo cited the importance of the rapporteur's role in promoting informed global discussions and driving consensus on issues such as climate finance, including loss-and-damage financing mechanism, which he said the Philippines has been pushing with other developing countries for some time now.

"Assured UN Special Rapporteur Ian Fry of PH's full support for his mandate and a successful country visit. True to the Philippines' climate action advocacies, we will work with Dr. Fry in pressing for urgent and meaningful COP28 (Conference of Parties) outcomes," Manalo said.

Fry discussed with Manalo his mandate that was established by the Human Rights Council in 2021 following climate change and human rights talks in the Council, which had been shepherded by the Philippines, Vietnam and Bangladesh since 2009.

The Department of Foreign Affairs said the Philippines is the third country to be visited by Fry after his appointment in 2022 after Bangladesh and Honduras.

Manalo also emphasized the country's efforts in championing climate justice, disaster risk resilience and climate adaptation, including through its participation in the advisory opinion proceedings by the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS) and the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and hosting of the Asia Pacific Ministerial Conference in 2024, DFA said.

Besides the DFA chief, Fry also met with Environment Secretary Ma. Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga and Justice Secretary Jesus Crispin Remulla, with whom he discussed key features of the national policy framework.

Both Philippine officials expressed hope that Fry's program would enable him to appreciate the Philippine government's achievements and best practices in promoting and protecting human rights in the context of climate change.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

['Hopeless, but hopeful': Yolanda survivors continue fight for climate justice a decade later](#)

By: Gaea Katreena Cabico

Joanna Sustento sometimes feels hopelessness and despair. The 32-year-old Taclobanon lost most of her family when Super Typhoon Yolanda, also known as Haiyan, devastated the Eastern Visayas city on Nov. 8, 2013.

For a decade, Sustento has been speaking about her harrowing experience in many climate events, including major conferences, and calling on big businesses and governments to compensate communities hard-hit by climate disasters and take urgent and ambitious action to combat the climate crisis.

Yolanda, one of the strongest storms ever recorded, killed more than 6,000 people and forced millions into displacement. It humanized an issue largely clouded by complex science and served as a warning of the catastrophic impacts of climate change.

"It's really frustrating because I and our community, we've been sharing our stories for so long. We've been shouting, demanding climate justice for so long. And at the same time, we're experiencing more extreme weather events, and still, nothing changes," Sustento told Philstar.com.

Even before Yolanda, climate-vulnerable communities have been demanding climate justice—that wealthy countries, responsible for most of the carbon emissions that drive the crisis, owe them financial and technological assistance. Countries that are least responsible for the crisis, such as the Philippines, bear the brunt of the impacts of climate change.

But rich economies fail to deliver on the \$100 billion promised each year.

Fierce debates on which countries should shoulder the "loss and damage" of climate disasters and which should benefit from it as well as abandoning fossil fuels continue even as climate scientists warn that devastating climate impacts are hitting faster than expected.

"Corporations still continue with business as usual, despite our calls for accountability, despite our calls for just transition. Even governments remain complacent. They do not uphold their duties to us, the people," Sustento said.

Long fight

Ronan Napoto, a climate advocate from Quinapondan in Eastern Samar, also feels frustrated by the inaction of governments and corporations. Napoto said his community still struggles to cope with the aftermath of Yolanda a decade later.

“How many more years should we wait before achieving climate justice?” the 25-year-old Napoto asked.

“I always think that I don’t have the luxury of time. I don’t have enough resources to keep on campaigning for this call... I will not stay young as I am now,” he added.

A study published in *The Lancet* in 2021 found that more than half of 10,000 young people in ten countries, including the Philippines, reported feelings of sadness, anxiety, powerlessness and helplessness about the climate crisis.

Being a climate advocate can also be dangerous in the Philippines, which has consistently ranked as the worst place in Asia for land and environment defenders.

Despite the continuous threats to their lives and advocacy, lack of resources, and the feeling of being unheard, Napoto said that climate activists like him do not have any choice but to be hopeful. The stories and the eagerness of communities to fight keep him going.

“I would like to be still hopeful that at the end of the day, there’s still light at the end of the tunnel. I don’t know how long the tunnel is, though,” he said.

What climate justice should look like

Sustento and Napoto dream of a future where communities no longer live in fear and run away from storms, where authorities no longer have to count bodies after a disaster, where people feel safe and prepared.

For this future to happen, they stressed the need for governments to come up with people-centered solutions, transition to cleaner renewables in an equitable manner, and make polluters responsible for climate change pay.

“The funds that will be collected should be directed to initiatives that will support mitigation, and capacitate vulnerable communities to ensure that they just don’t just build back their lives, but they are also empowered [to adapt] to emerging issues,” Napoto said.

A landmark report of the Commission of Human Rights released in 2022 said that the willful obfuscation of climate science and obstruction of efforts toward global transition to clean renewable energy by fossil fuel companies are immoral. The commission also

stressed that fossil fuel firms and governments have moral obligations to address the climate crisis.

President Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr. has frequently mentioned the need to fight climate change and for rich nations to fulfill their climate obligations. But groups criticize him for failing to translate his words into tangible action.

Perseverance amid hopelessness

When Sustento started campaigning for climate justice and action, she was doing it for her parents, brother, sister-in-law and three-year-old nephew that she lost in the storm. She said she “wanted to honor their death” by starting a new life out of her loss.

Her purpose has evolved over the years after immersing in different communities and hearing their struggles.

“I was already doing it for the communities that I meet,” she said.

Ten years after Yolanda, Sustento found a new reason to continue her fight for climate justice: her son.

“I am no longer responsible just for myself. I’m responsible for someone else’s life,” the first-time mother said.

“When my son reaches an age where he can understand what’s happening in the world, I want to tell him the story of what I did to secure his future, to ensure that he’ll be able to reach his dreams when he grows up, that he’ll be able to have the best childhood, and enjoy the things I did when I was young,” she added.

Despite the overwhelming challenges, Sustento said she will not stop sharing her story. She hopes that those in the frontlines of the climate crisis will also find strength to keep telling their stories.

“Yes, we will get exhausted. But we can also rest. Let’s continue, Sustento said. “Telling our stories gives face to the climate crisis because this is the only way for the whole world to understand us.”

SUNSTAR

Marcos: Yolanda testament of Filipinos' resilience, unity

By: Third Anne Perlate Malonzo

The response of the Filipinos following the onslaught of Super Typhoon Yolanda (Haiyan) is a testament of resiliency and unity.

This was the statement of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Wednesday, November 8, 2023, as he led the 10th anniversary commemoration of Super Typhoon Yolanda at the Tacloban City Convention Center.

He commended the resiliency and the “Bayanihan” spirit of the Filipinos, which was highlighted as the affected communities sought help.

He also expressed deep gratitude to non-government organizations and the international community who helped the Philippines, particularly Tacloban, to recover.

“The aid that came from all directions, the volunteerism, the heroism that overflowed in the affected areas, specifically in the rehabilitation of Tacloban,” Marcos said in his speech.

“Indeed, what we saw back then was the spirit of bayanihan in its truest form — moving without prompting, without hindrance, and without ceasing. And much to our surprise, we saw that Filipino bayanihan spirit coming from our friends from all other lands,” he added.

Marcos said that while 10 years have already passed, the memory of the Yolanda tragedy remained indelible in the hearts and thoughts of the Filipinos.

Over 6,000 people died due to the onslaught of Yolanda, while over a thousand more are still missing up to date.

Marcos said there may be more fatalities who remained unrecorded.

“We are certain that there were more but for whatever reason their deaths have not been recorded,” he said.

“So, even if that is the case, let them not be unremembered. So when we grieve and when we mourn for our dead, keep a special place in your heart for those who have not been known to have gone but we know in our hearts, we know the loss that we feel. Let us always pray for them,” he added.

Marcos also recognized that bringing back normalcy in the Yolanda-hit areas is still a work in progress.

He said efforts for the turnover of housing units and land titles to survivor beneficiaries is already being accelerated while the local government units are continuously addressing lingering issues of the affected communities.

“I recognize your disaster risk reduction and the management efforts through the creation of contingency, public service, and the disaster response plans both at the barangay and city levels are now in place. Your endeavors to establish emergency evacuation SOPs and emergency response teams are noteworthy and serve as examples for other local governments around the country,” he said.

“Equally important is your collective action to protect and rehabilitate your communities through reforestation, river embankment and stabilization, and other environmental conservation programs,” he added.

Marcos said the onslaught of Yolanda also proves that climate change should serve as a vital component in making national policies as it will keep exacerbating the impact of natural disasters.

“Be assured that the government is always striving to ensure that such tragedies of this magnitude will be avoided and will be adapted to. We continue to build disaster-resilient evacuation centers and emergency operations centers,” he said.

“We are also putting in place more centralized and efficient early warning systems, incident command systems, and disaster response strategies. The development and deployment of new technologies, such as GeoRiskPH and PlanSmart, along with the continuous conduct of information and education campaigns [and] simulation drills are also aimed to save lives,” he added.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

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CCC Vice Chairman and Executive Director Robert Borje said climate change and human rights are two different issues but are connected as emphasized in the Climate Change Act, the People Survival Fund, and the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Plan.

“When we talk about climate change, the human rights we’re protecting are very fundamental and that’s the fundamental right to live and live free from fear,” he said in a Bagong Pilipinas Ngayon briefing.

The actions, policies, and projects created by the commission are focused on protecting Filipino lives and their livelihood, he added.

UN Special Rapporteur visit

United Nations (UN) Special Rapporteur Ian Fry is in the country to see the impacts of climate change on human rights and the protection of environmental defenders.

The Philippines, a country that contributes only 0.5 percent of greenhouse gas emissions, is at most risk for the impacts of climate change.

Borje said Fry would also look into the issue of loss and damage or the impact of climate change on the country’s development, displacement in the context of climate change, intergenerational justice, litigation and legislation, and programs on gender.

He said Fry has observed that the government is providing programs and avenues where the next generation could participate in policy-making and actions related to climate change.

“Climate change is a global, historic and systemic issue and problem, so we must all work on this, and not just now, at the present global ecosystem or structure, but also in the next generation,” he added.

Fry's, whose 10-day visit will end on Nov. 10, is expected to submit a report of his trip to the UN Human Rights Council in June 2024.

Ways forward

The CCC is working with legislators to ensure the accounting of national resources so that they may be given appropriate value.

It is also working on the strengthening of the local government units' adaptive capacity to climate change challenges and impacts.

According to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement, implementation of the government's efforts must include climate finance, technology development and transfer and capacity building from developed countries and carbon majors going to the Philippines.

To date, the Philippines has a National Climate Change Action Plan, Local Climate Change Action Plan and National Framework Strategy for Climate Change.

Under the administration of President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr., Borje said there would be a National Adaptation Plan and a Nationally Determined Contribution Implementation Plan which aims to reduce the country's greenhouse gas emissions by 75 percent

"We have completed the greenhouse gas inventory for the years 2015 and 2020 which is pending for a long time," he said.

"We're finalizing the guidelines for the certification of green jobs for the private sector to have incentives to transition towards a low carbon economy."

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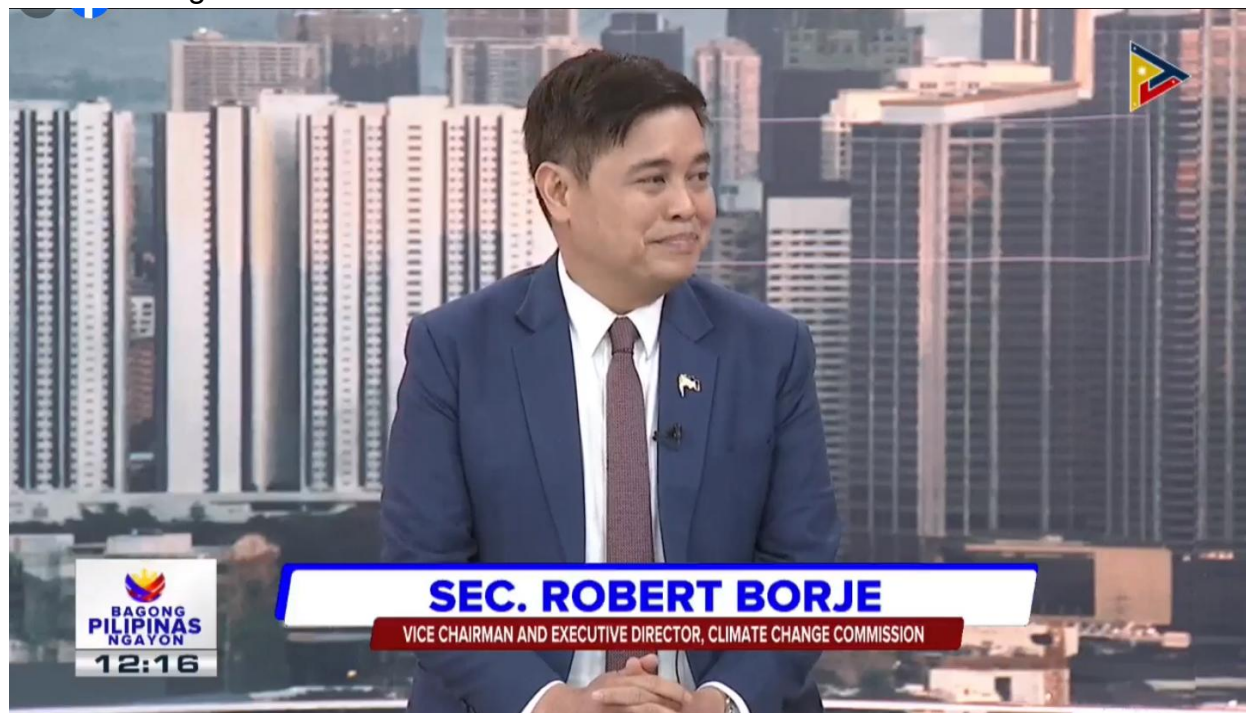
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PANOORIN: Pagtalakay sa mahalagang serbisyo ng pamahalaan at iba pang mga isyung pambayan, tutukan sa Bagong Pilipinas Ngayon

SREAB: Ang bisista ngayon ni Special Rapporteur Ian Fry ipakita ang positibong engagement ng ating pamahalaan sa United Nations on the issue of human rights and climate change.



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