



## NEWS ROUNDUP

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## **PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER**

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By: Raul J. Palabrica

By this time, with the holiday season just a few weeks away, many companies have started or are in the middle of planning sessions for the next year.

## **PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY**

### **[The need for stronger action to address plastic pollution](#)**

By: Brian James Lu

Amid the elections in the United States and policy debates, a pressing issue that may not receive as much attention as the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) is the growing global concern over plastic pollution.

### **[UN Climate Change Conference set to start in Azerbaijan](#)**

The 29th Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP29) will kick off in the Azerbaijani capital Baku on Monday, aiming to address escalating climate challenges.

## **CCC IN THE NEWS:**

### **RAPPLER**

#### **[EXPLAINER: What is the People's Survival Fund?](#)**

By: Iya Gozum

Local governments are on the frontlines of disasters and the impacts of the climate crisis. As vulnerable countries expect calamities to hit harder and with more frequency, funding for adaptation becomes a matter of survival.

## **Information and Knowledge Management Division**

## ECO BUSINESS

### [How will another Trump presidency affect Southeast Asia's energy transition?](#)

By: Liang Lei

Sustainability circles worldwide groaned as the United States picked Donald Trump as its next president last week, following a previous term marked by climate pullbacks and an election campaign suggesting he would do likewise this time round.

In Southeast Asia, Trump portends, if not an upset, then greater uncertainty for the clean energy sector. Beyond fears of shrinking green funding, policymakers need to divine the implications of a potentially reinvigorated US-China trade war in climate technology, and any adjustment to the American strategic interest in this part of the world.

There could be silver linings where American interests align, though Southeast Asia could also be tempted to pivot closer to China, observers say. Some are counting on existing momentum in private clean energy markets to carry the region through the next five years.

One less partner

Major clean energy schemes in Southeast Asia could lose billions of pledged funds if Trump lives up to his promise of saving climate money and focusing on domestic industries.

The US is today the biggest state partner in Just Energy Transition Partnership (JETP) programmes with Indonesia and Vietnam, to help the recipients ditch pollutive coal power and switch to clean energy. Trump could disengage the US from these schemes, as part of “a repeat of rollbacks and repeals” expected in his new term, said Sharon Seah, senior fellow and coordinator of the climate change in Southeast Asia programme at Singapore’s ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute.

A full US withdrawal from the JETPs would mean US\$2 billion less of the US\$20 billion pledged to Indonesia by wealthy nations and financiers, and US\$1 billion less of the US\$15.5 billion allocated for Vietnam – at a time when the funds are already slow to materialise. More American dollars feed into these packages via multilateral lenders.

Trump could also derail Southeast Asia’s green energy push by weakening international institutions and refusing to pay up US dues, Seah said, pointing to his halting of funding and withdrawal from the World Health Organization as Covid-19 worsened in 2020, moves only reversed later by his successor Joe Biden.

More broadly, anxieties lie too in the US' broader contributions to global climate finance. Trump in his first term in 2017 had sought one-third cuts in US aid overseas, though the Senate ultimately blocked the move. There are fears the US will now disengage from a new, larger round of global funding under negotiation.

But at least, an immediate shock from funding cutoff is unlikely. The US government is not today a major funder of Southeast Asia's energy transition, noted Joshua Crabb, Asia-Pacific equities head at UK asset manager Robeco.

On clean energy specifically, bilateral American funds for the region totalled just over US\$41 million between 2018 and 2022, per Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development data. That is 2 per cent of all such financing from wealthy nations, and 3 per cent of the US\$1.4 billion by super-funder Germany in the same period.

### Trade wars rebooted

Asia is no stranger to Trump's trade salvos. Having watched China face the wrath of US semiconductor restrictions since 2018, Southeast Asia then accommodated an influx of Chinese solar panel manufacturers escaping sky-high US import tariffs from the mainland.

Some restrictions have been eased, though key ones including on solar panels remain, and even extended under Biden to target firms offshoring to Southeast Asia. This time round, Trump has campaigned on an up to 20 per cent levy on global imports (up to 100 per cent for China).

American-first policies could restrict US investments in Southeast Asia's energy sector, the Asia Society Policy Institute wrote ahead of Trump's win. Such a trade strategy appears to be taking shape, with the man running Trump's earlier trade war with China asked to return to his portfolio, as reported by UK newspaper Financial Times.

There could be a "revival" of the trade war, except now "there are more emerging and critical sectors that would make for easy targets, for example clean technology", Seah said.

She added that Trump "can and almost certainly will withdraw from the ongoing Indo-Pacific Economic Framework negotiations", a Biden initiative. The framework aimed to beef up environmental standards, cover critical mineral supply chains, and introduce new commitments on clean energy. Initial members include seven Southeast Asian nations.

But Seah sees possible upsides too, such as US clean-tech firms being interested in Southeast Asian markets and supply chains should Trump dampen domestic demand.

Another area that could survive Trump is nuclear energy cooperation – where some Southeast Asian nations have ongoing work with the US state, on top of business engagements with American small reactor companies.

“Civilian nuclear energy cooperation and eventually nuclear power project deployment will take time in Asean, and this is more of an export prospect for the US,” said Dr Victor Nian, founding co-chairman of Singapore thinktank Centre for Strategic Energy and Resources. The Asean bloc consists of 10 Southeast Asian countries.

Slowdowns in US partnerships with Southeast Asia are “unlikely dealbreakers” for nuclear energy cooperation and export, though exact impacts remain unclear now, Nian added. Four Southeast Asian nations – Indonesia, Philippines, Singapore, Vietnam – have signed “Section 123” agreements with the US, a precursor deal to the transfer of nuclear energy logistics.

US disengagement could yet tempt Southeast Asia closer to China, with its growing renewable energy supply chain in the region – and globally.

“If indeed the US is pulling away from clean energy investment in Asean, it might lead to a situation where the region has to lean towards China for future investments,” Nian said, as Southeast Asia concurrently prioritises economic development, urbanisation and industrialisation. But he said Asean should not rely heavily on any particular country, and use diversification to ensure equitable access to clean energy.

### Market momentum

In the days after Trump’s win, many have sought to calm nerves by downplaying one man’s influence on climate action. US local governments and nonprofits have pledged to continue supporting decarbonisation initiatives, while foreign leaders are said to have made plans on global negotiations without American leadership.

Some in the private sector, likewise, believe there is enough momentum in the sustainability sector to carry Asia through Trump’s new term.

“Many of the banks we speak to, and more critically the asset owners, are very focused on transition,” said Crabb.

“We often say that Asia, having the population, economic growth and pollution problems, means it is the key focus area for the world,” he said, adding that regulations are changing to enable investments to address the issues.

Investor confidence and the positive impact of the green transition in Asia will remain key investment themes, Crabb said.

In a briefing note, the global sustainable equity fund team at French asset manager Mirova noted a “strong rebound of sustainable themes” in 2017, right after Trump won his first election.

“Climate change still affects our economy. And although policies may be less supportive, technological advancements still continue and we still need to protect our society and economy from [its] devastating effects,” it said, adding that the “fundamental outlook” for sectors such as renewable energy, nuclear and water treatment “has not changed for most”, amid significant underperformance today.

#### Moral decay

But developing countries still look to the United States to lead climate action – not just because of its money and capabilities, but responsibility as the world’s biggest producer of planet-heating greenhouse gases.

If the US does not pull its weight, emerging economies may also be reluctant to, and they have at times voiced this frustration publicly. Last year, as officials from Indonesia – the world’s top coal exporter – sought to get more funding for decarbonisation projects, one of its senior ministers pulled up a chart showing per-capita emissions by country at a conference in Singapore.

Luhut Pandjaitan, now chair of Indonesia’s national economic council, pointed to Indonesia’s 2.3 tonnes of carbon emissions per person. “We also have a right to go up, to reach [the world average] of 4.5 tonnes, before we go down. But the US for instance, [as a] developed country, they have to reduce from 14.7 to 4.5 tonnes,” he told his audience of policymakers and financiers.

Globally, the immediate fear is that Trump would once again pull the United States out of global climate treaties, jeopardising efforts like the COP29 talks that started Monday in Azerbaijan, where countries are to decide on a whole host of issues from climate funding to slashing fossil fuel use.

Seah, from the ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute, said Southeast Asian climate efforts may face more roadblocks if the US continues to subsidise the oil and gas sectors. She added that inertia could increase too should the US refuse to cooperate with China on reducing methane, another potent greenhouse gas from extracting and using fossil fuels.

But Seah noted that Trump cannot directly stop Southeast Asia's decarbonisation plans, and many countries have already started implementing key steps such as ramping up renewables.

"Remember, Trump 2.0 too shall pass," she added.



## [\[Opinion\] Will COP29 reach consensus on more funds for climate finance?](#)

By: Biswajit Dhar

Developing countries need trillions of dollars of help from developed nations to help them meet their climate goals and to compensate them for loss and damage from climate change.

So far, funding has fallen well short of what's needed.

Financing mechanisms under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) have been among the most contentious facets of the treaty, largely due to the under provisioning by the developed countries.

While they had agreed to provide US\$100 billion by 2020, the actual level of funding consistently remained below this until 2022. In 2022, for the first time, developed countries provided and mobilised climate finance totalling US\$116 billion, up from about US\$90 billion a year earlier.

Climate finance from public institutions accounted for close to 80 percent of funding in 2022, increasing from US\$38 billion in 2013 to US\$91.6 billion in 2022. Though the increase from public institutions increased by 25 per cent between 2021 and 2022, private climate finance increased by almost 50 per cent.

Most developing countries have long demanded much higher levels of funding from developed countries.

India and the Arab Group have, for instance, demanded that developed countries must provide around US\$1 trillion annually to meet the financing needs of developing countries.

Several institutions have confirmed that the levels of climate finance provided to developing countries compare poorly with their actual requirements, and that their annual actual requirements could run into several trillions of US dollars.

According to the Green Climate Fund, developing countries would need US\$2-4 trillion annually and that mobilising private capital is critical to meeting this target.

The first Needs Determination Report of the Standing Committee on Finance in 2021 estimated that nearly US\$6 trillion was needed to implement developing countries' climate action plans by 2030.

Other estimates put this cost at US\$7.8-13.6 trillion for the same time period. In 2019, the Independent High-Level Expert Group on Climate Finance estimated that the emerging markets and developing countries, excluding China, must spend close to US\$2.4 trillion a year until 2030 to meet climate goals.

The Expert Group argued that about one-half of the total funds needed by these countries would be from sources providing concessional credit (including bilateral, multilateral, and other “innovative concessional” finance), and that more than half of this private finance would be directly and indirectly catalysed by multilateral development banks other development finance institutions, among others.

Two new financing windows — the New Collective Quantified Goal , and the “Loss and Damage Fund” (L&D Fund) — are also expected to face a fund crunch when COP29 is convened in Baku in Azerbaijan.

Yet there is hope that the meeting would take important decisions regarding the two new windows of climate finance.

The New Collective Quantified Goal financing window could enable developing countries to meet their Nationally Determined Contributions (i.e., plans that countries create to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and limit global warming) by 2030.

The adoption of the New Collective Quantified Goal financing window at COP29 would ensure continued provisioning of targeted climate finance, a process initiated in 2009 through the decision to set up the Green Climate Fund. Developed countries had committed to contribute US\$100 billion by 2020 to it.

The new financing window is considered vital for channelising greater funds that developing countries urgently need for climate action.

It would support the implementation of low-carbon, climate resilient solutions in energy, transport, agriculture, and other vital systems.

Increasing financial support should enable developing countries to step up their climate ambitions in the next round of national climate plans, which are due in 2025.

The second major climate finance window, which would be in focus at Baku, is the L&D Fund.

The fund is the outcome of the COP27 decision to “establish new funding arrangements for assisting developing countries that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change”.

The L&D Fund came into existence during COP28 after the Governing Instrument of the Fund was approved. The case for such a fund was initially made in 1991 by the Alliance of Small Island States to counter the adverse consequences of climate change.

The L&D Fund would test the global commitment to meet the long-standing demand of the most vulnerable countries to be compensated for the “loss and damage” suffered by them due to climate change.

Since the L&D Fund was established during COP28, 23 countries have pledged to contribute US\$700 billion towards addressing loss and damage.

Four countries, France, Italy, Germany, and the UAE together account for 60 per cent of the pledges made so far, but the US, whose share in historical emissions (since 1850) is the largest (20 per cent of the global total), has contributed US\$17.5 billion.

These contributions are too meagre given that the projected economic cost of loss and damage by 2030 is estimated to be between US\$400 and US\$580 billion a year. Further, by 2050 the economic cost of loss and damage in developing countries is estimated to increase to US\$1-1.8 trillion.

An equally important concern is whether climate finance would worsen the debt burden of developing countries which is already at a precarious level.

In 2023, public debt in developing countries reached US\$29 trillion, almost 30 per cent of the global total. Further, the share of private creditors in the total external public debt of developing countries was 61 per cent in 2022.

Borrowing from private creditors on commercial terms is more expensive, but with concessional financing from multilateral and bilateral sources drying up, developing countries could end up worsening debt burdens while responding to their commitments to reduce global warming.

## FINANCIAL TIMES

### [China's cleantech boom fuels its confidence on the climate stage](#)

By: Edward White

Chinese diplomats will arrive in Azerbaijan with a message for the UN COP29 climate conference. In the “real world”, they will argue, China is racing ahead of schedule in its efforts to decarbonise its economy. It is also helping the developing world do the same via its booming renewable energy and electric vehicle industries, as well as its Belt and Road infrastructure initiative.

Chinese officials, meanwhile — in line with recent discussions with diplomats and other foreign visitors — are expected to push back at moves from Washington and Brussels that link negotiations over climate change to Beijing's industrial policy and trade practices. They will also be increasingly assertive in highlighting China's efforts to finance the green transition in the developing world, despite western calls for Beijing to be more ambitious.

And, with COP29 opening after Donald Trump's US presidential election win, expectations that the country will withdraw from the Paris agreement on climate change have been raised.

Li Shuo, an analyst of Chinese climate and energy policy, says global climate diplomacy is at risk of becoming “more politicised, more divisive” and drifting to “a rather irrelevant status” because of the US government's insistence on linking climate and trade issues.

“China's impressive success when it comes to embracing the low-carbon economy . . . is not a political story but a ‘real economy’ story,” argues Li, director of the China Climate Hub at the Asia Society Policy Institute think-tank. “Which part of the world wins that ‘real economy’ competition?”

Beijing's growing confidence in climate diplomacy marks a significant change after years of pressure from western leaders, who have argued that the world's biggest polluter — accounting for about a third of global emissions — needs to act more quickly to help the world tackle global warming.

Several statistics point towards China's decarbonisation efforts outstripping Beijing's expectations, and progressing towards the dual goals of peak emissions before 2030 and carbon neutrality before 2060 that President Xi Jinping announced four years ago. Beijing achieved its target of having 1,200 gigawatts of installed solar and wind capacity — enough to power hundreds of millions of homes annually — in July, six years early.

The government's original goal of electric vehicles to account for half of car sales by 2035 is on course to be achieved next year.

At the same time, China's foreign direct investment outflows are tracking at record levels. They are underpinned by cleantech investments in the developing world and supported by one of Xi's hallmark foreign policies, the Belt and Road, which Beijing is now refocusing on green investments.

China's emissions could even fall this year: CO<sub>2</sub> output in the third quarter hovered around last year's levels and declined in the previous three months, according to an analysis by UK-based climate news site Carbon Brief.

This reflects, in part, both the surge in low-carbon electricity generation in China, which is home to about two-thirds of the world's solar and wind power projects under construction, and transport sector electrification. It also raises the possibility that China's total emissions peaked in 2023 — seven years ahead of Xi's 2030 target.

But Lauri Myllyvirta and Chengcheng Qiu, the Carbon Brief report's authors and analysts at the Finland-based Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air, say there is "uncertainty" over the chances of a year-on-year emissions decline, following new economic stimulus plans announced by Beijing in September. The authors point out that policymakers are cautious about claiming emissions have already peaked.

International experts also question whether Beijing is doing enough to wean the country off coal, given signs of a resurgence in the pace of coal-fired power station builds and the slow rate of retirement of older coal-fired plants.

A report from Global Energy Monitor, an environmental research group, says China's coal industry sits at a "pivotal juncture", with a recent surge in production prompting a "significant threat to the country's dual carbon goals".

Xuyang Dong, a China energy policy analyst at Climate Energy Finance, an Australian think-tank, argues that China's renewable electricity generation, backed by huge investment in the power grid and energy storage, means coal will increasingly only be used as an emergency back-up before, "inevitably", being phased out.

However, with relations between many western capitals and Beijing at a historical low point, China's green revolution could have other effects. Distrust of China among western countries is widespread, so some might slow their own climate transition to

resist using low-cost green technologies from China. Washington and Brussels are highly critical of Beijing's alleged unfair state support for its cleantech industries.

Domestically, however, Xi's dual carbon pledges, known as shuang tan, have fundamentally shifted the focus of officials across the country, experts say.

Jingbo Cui, co-director of the Environmental Research Center at Duke Kunshan University, near Shanghai, says the shuang tan policy has sparked intense competition between provincial and city governments in China.

Officials have raced to set more ambitious carbon emissions and intensity-reduction targets, while vying for investment from new cleantech industries. There has also been stricter regulatory oversight of heavy industry, aimed at reducing industrial pollution.

Cui adds that there is a sense among officials, experts and industry that, as the direction has been set by Xi, they are safe to debate openly how to achieve the policy goals. This contrasts with other issues in China, including aspects of the economy, where criticism of policies can be considered politically sensitive.

"Before this shuang tan policy, the pressure was on [economic] development — that is it," Cui says. "After the policy, there is this dual pressure. On the one hand, you still have development. On the other, you have to target to really cut down emissions and intensity."

## **GMA NEWS**

### **[Ex-Mindoro lawmaker named Champion of Change by UNDP's BIOFIN](#)**

By: Mariel Celine Serquiña

A former Mindoro lawmaker was recognized by the United Nations Development Programme's Biodiversity Finance (UNDP BIOFIN) for her advocacy in working on measures for biodiversity protection and conservation.

Former Occidental Mindoro congresswoman Josephine Ramirez-Sato was named "Champion of Change" by BIOFIN, a UNDP-managed initiative working with governments and the private sector to narrow the financing gap for biodiversity conservation by promoting investments in biodiversity to protect nature, create jobs, reduce pandemics, and combat climate change. It recognizes individuals who play a catalytic role in policy processes and act as true agents of change.

Sato authored the bill that became the National Integrated Protected Areas System (E-NIPAS) Act, which increased the number of legislated protected areas from 13 to 107. As a result, new protected areas became eligible to access public funding estimated between \$1 million and \$10 million per year.

She also authored bills that promoted biodiversity protection and conservation across the country, such as banning mining on Mindoro Island and expanding the coverage of marine protected areas, including the Apo Reef Natural Park located in Sablayan, Occidental Mindoro.

"Our forests, rivers, and streams, the trees and the animals that thrive in the forest, as well as the rich marine wildlife in our coastal and marine environment need to be protected. To do this, we need to put our money where our mouth is and find ways to finance biodiversity," Sato said.

The former lawmaker was featured in the UNDP BIOFIN Workbook 2024: Finance for Nature, released in October.

She was joined by three others: vice president of the National Indigenous Board of Costa Rica Doris Rios; former Minister of Environment in the State of Jalisco in Mexico Sergio Graf Montero; and Mutumboi Mundia, a pivotal figure in Zambia's biodiversity finance landscape and capital market development.

To be selected as Champions of Change, a candidate should be involved in the BIOFIN process from an early stage. BIOFIN in the Philippines began in 2014, which Sato has been a part of.

“As a BIOFIN Champion, Congresswoman Sato continues to support tamaraw conservation within congressional fora, as well as site-level work in the province of Occidental Mindoro through the Together for Tamaraws crowdfunding campaign,” the brief citation for the lawmaker stated.

At least P24 billion, or \$530 million, is needed to complete the implementation of the Philippine Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2015-2028.

However, the current level of spending on biodiversity only amounts to P5 billion (\$100 million) per year, which leaves an 80% financing gap.

BIOFIN identifies, accesses, combines, and sequences various sources of biodiversity funding to meet national needs and targets.



## Marcos on tropical cyclones: It's climate change, new reality we should face

By: Anna Felicia Bajo

President Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr. on Monday said there is no template to follow when dealing with tropical cyclones.

In an ambush interview, Marcos gave a statement on the weather disturbances that are about to enter the Philippine Area of Responsibility this week.

“We don’t have a textbook to follow. We don’t have a template to follow. It is climate change, and it is the new reality that we are having to face,” Marcos said.

“I don’t remember -- I’ve been around for a long time – I don’t remember seeing these many – sunod-sunod —of this strength,” he added.

Marcos made an assurance that the government was monitoring the situation.

“Maaari ‘yung isang malakas tapos may susunod na isa, may hangin nang kaunti. Pero hindi ‘yung sunod- sunod na malakas. At saka sunod-sunod, hindi man lang tayo pinagbigyan ng isang linggo,” Marcos said.

“So, this is what we are monitoring now. We’re trying to see what the damages are, that we have to go in already,” he added.

Marcos called on the public to listen to the local government and the authorities “who tell you what to do.”

“As long as – as soon as the national government can come in, we will come in,” Marcos said.

“Your local government is there – is ready to be the first responders as they always are, and the national government will come in as soon as we can. In fact, we’re already there and they are just waiting for the storm to allow them to get to work,” he added.

So far, Signal No. 3 was hoisted over eight areas in Luzon as Typhoon Nika (international name: Toraji) weakened into a severe tropical storm, weather bureau PAGASA said.

According to the 8 p.m. PAGASA tropical cyclone bulletin, Severe Tropical Storm Nika has maximum sustained winds of 110 km/h near the center and gustiness of up to 185 kph.

## NEWS5

### [Trump worries, leader absences cloud COP29 climate summit in Baku](#)

The annual (United Nations) UN climate summit began on Monday with some prominent leaders planning to skip the event ahead of tough talks on finance and trade, after a year of weather disasters that have emboldened developing countries' demands for cash.

Delegates gathering in Azerbaijan's capital, Baku, hope to resolve the COP29 summit's top agenda item—a deal for up to \$1 trillion in annual climate finance for developing countries, replacing a target of \$100 billion.

“Let's dispense with the idea that climate finance is charity,” UN climate chief Simon Stiell said at the Baku Stadium venue. “An ambitious new climate finance goal is entirely in the self-interest of every nation, including the largest and wealthiest.”

But the financing goal is competing for attention with economic concerns, wars in Ukraine and Gaza, and the election of Donald Trump, a climate-change denier, for a second term as president of the United States, the world's biggest economy.

Political leaders expected to stay away include United States (US) President Joe Biden, China President Xi Jinping, and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen.

The Caspian Sea nation, which is home to the world's first oil wells, faces pressure to make progress on last year's COP28 pledge to transition away from fossil fuels.

Azerbaijan's oil and gas revenues accounted for 35% of its economy in 2023, down from 50% two years earlier. The government says these revenues will decline to 22% by 2028.

One of the first tasks as the summit talks began, was to adapt the agenda to accommodate China's last-minute proposal to discuss trade.

The Chinese proposal—made on behalf of the “BASIC” group of countries including Brazil, India, and South Africa—asked for the summit to address “restrictive trade measures” such as European Union carbon border tariffs going into effect in 2026.

Those concerns have been compounded by Trump's campaign promise to impose 20% tariffs on all foreign goods, and 60% on Chinese goods.

China's request showed it flexing its muscles after Trump's election, Li Shuo, director of China Climate Hub at the Asia Society Policy Institute, said.

Trump has called climate change a hoax and said he will again withdraw the US from the Paris Agreement, the global treaty to reduce planet-warming emissions, which he did during his first stint in the White House.

Michai Robertson, finance negotiator for the Alliance of Small Island States, told Reuters the impact his time could be greater given more countries were "leaning right" politically.

"The ball is back in the court of the developed countries and their populations: you all need to get your act together, or we will suffer because of your negligence," he said.

Despite the Trump concerns, the US, under the outgoing Biden administration, delivered an early statement of positive climate intent with a world-first deal to guarantee some of the Asian Development Bank's loans.

## EXTREME WEATHER

This year is on track to be the hottest on record. Rich and poor countries alike have been challenged by extreme weather events, including flooding disasters in Africa, coastal Spain, and the US state of North Carolina, drought gripping South America, Mexico, and the United States West.

Most countries are not prepared.

"Unless the world collectively steps up its efforts, the impacts of climate change will become increasingly severe and frequent and will be felt by an increasing number of people in all countries, including in the US," said Kaveh Guilanpour, vice president for international strategies at the nonprofit Center for Climate and Energy Solutions.

Many people gathered in Baku worry US disengagement could lead other countries to backpedal on existing climate pledges or scale back future ambitions.

"People will be saying, well, the US is the second biggest emitter. It's the biggest economy in the world. If they don't set themselves an ambitious target, why would we?" Marc Vanheukelen, the EU's climate ambassador from 2019 to 2023, told Reuters.

Azerbaijan has lobbied governments to accelerate their move to clean energy while touting gas as a transition fuel.

President Ilham Aliyev has called Azerbaijan's fossil-fuel bounty "a gift of God," and Baku has proposed creating a Climate Finance Action Fund to collect voluntarily up to \$1 billion from extractive companies across 10 countries including Azerbaijan.

Azerbaijan's gas exports to Europe this year are expected to exceed 12 billion cubic meters, after 11.8 billion cubic meters last year, as Europe seeks to reduce its reliance on Russian gas.

Azerbaijan has drawn international criticism for jailing political prisoners including journalists and ethnic Armenians whom Baku describes as separatist leaders.

Aliyev has rejected the criticism and said it could undermine peace negotiations with Armenia.

## PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

### Preparation for adverse climate change

By: Raul J. Palabrica

By this time, with the holiday season just a few weeks away, many companies have started or are in the middle of planning sessions for the next year.

Traditionally, those activities center on a review of the business plans for this year and whether or not they were properly implemented or their objectives satisfactorily met.

Looking forward to 2025, the discussions are expected to review closely the company's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, or SWOT, as corporate planners fondly describe them.

The idea is, by examining those items and interrelating them in the context of actual business operations, management would be able to come up with programs that would enable the company to recover from a not-so-favorable financial situation, or improve a so-so bottom line, as the case may be.

In addition to the usual subjects for discussion, e.g., preferences of the target market and quality of products and services, the issue of adverse effects of recurrent weather disturbances brought about by climate change may have to form part of the talking points.

Note that in the past weeks, several parts of the country were hit by rain and wind of super strength that resulted in massive floods and damaged structures that had not been experienced before.

Some meteorologists predict that these natural phenomena are expected to recur often and with more devastating effects in the coming days due to climate change, and that no country, no matter how developed it may be, would be immune from nature's wrath.

Given these circumstances, for business planning purposes, adverse climate conditions would no longer be a case of "what if they happen" and instead "when they happen." It's no longer a matter of chance, but reality.

Significant and prolonged business disruptions brought about by climate change now represent a challenge that businesses must acknowledge as inevitable and be prepared to contend with to ensure their survival.

They cannot allow themselves to be caught flat-footed and totally unprepared in a manner similar to what happened during the COVID-19 pandemic that hit the world in 2020.

Because that extreme health emergency was unprecedented, majority of domestic businesses that year did not have any backup or alternative plans on how to maintain their operations in a situation when pedestrian and vehicular movement was restricted and face-to-face transactions were discouraged.

With no lessons in the past to look to for guidance, businesses that were seriously affected by the medical protocols imposed then were forced to improvise and engage in insufficient reactive measures.

To aggravate matters, the administration at that time grievously fell short of its responsibility to provide the leadership needed to enable the country to meet the challenges of the once-in-a-century medical scourge.

The result? Thousands of businesses failed and millions of Filipinos lost their jobs and other means of livelihood.

With the experiences from the pandemic in mind, business planning sessions would have to set up contingency plans in case extreme weather conditions prevent employees from reporting for work or to engage in activities that ensure the company is able to meet the requirements of its clientele and which, most importantly, includes the collection of revenues needed to sustain the operations of the business.

This may involve scenario playing or assuming that an event, say, a massive flood that prevents access to the workplace, had happened and employees are given assignments on what to do to keep the operation going or minimize the unfavorable effects of that disruption.

Forward planning to address adverse climate conditions is not going to be cheap because it would require setting aside funds for the adoption and implementation of measures that would, hopefully, mitigate them.

For obvious reasons, it is better to be proactive rather than reactive in situations where Mother Nature exclusively calls the shots.

## PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

### [The need for stronger action to address plastic pollution](#)

By: Brian James Lu

Amid the elections in the United States and policy debates, a pressing issue that may not receive as much attention as the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) is the growing global concern over plastic pollution.

Plastics have revolutionized modern life, offering convenience, durability, and affordability. However, this very adaptability has led to severe environmental and health consequences. The crisis level of plastic pollution today has prompted the creation of the Global Plastic Treaty, an international effort to control and ultimately eliminate plastic waste.

Countries worldwide are grappling with an escalating plastic crisis, and there is an urgent need to address its environmental, health, and economic impacts. Unlike many political issues, plastic pollution is universal; it crosses borders and affects communities everywhere. Plastic waste endangers marine life, contaminates food and water sources, and contributes to greenhouse gas emissions. Governments, non-government organizations (NGOs), and environmental advocates are uniting in calls for stricter regulations on plastic production and disposal.

The Global Plastic Treaty, with its fifth session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee scheduled for Nov. 25 to Dec. 1, 2024, in Busan, South Korea, represents a hopeful step toward international cooperation. This growing consensus reflects a shift in global priorities, recognizing that tackling plastic pollution is essential for safeguarding ecosystems, human health, and climate stability.

The statistics on plastic use are staggering. The UN Environment Program reports that the world purchases one million plastic drinking bottles every minute and uses 500 billion single-use plastic bags annually. This level of consumption is a global challenge, as plastics contain harmful chemicals that seep into food, water, and the environment. These chemicals linked to hormone disruption, cancer, reproductive issues, and developmental disorders, putting those who ingest or come into contact with contaminated food or water at risk of serious long-term health issues. Researchers have even found microplastics—tiny fragments resulting from the degradation of larger plastic items—in human tissues, blood, and placentas. These microscopic pollutants can travel through the human body, potentially causing inflammation, organ damage, and chronic illnesses.

The Philippines ranks as the world's third-largest contributor to plastic waste, following China and Indonesia, according to a 2015 study. The country generated an estimated 2.7 million metric tons of plastic waste that year, with Our World in Data reporting that the Philippines accounted for 36.38 percent of global plastic waste emitted to oceans in 2019. This is significantly higher than India, the second-largest ocean plastic polluter, which contributed about 12.92 percent that year. Marine ecosystems bear the brunt of this pollution, as evidenced by the 2017 observation by actor Leonardo DiCaprio. He highlighted the Philippines' plastic pollution problem, posting a photo of a beach near Manila covered in disposable plastic waste. DiCaprio's statement that the Philippines is the third biggest source of ocean plastic pollution could have served as a stark reminder of the severity of the issue.

The "tingi," or retail economy, which sells goods in small, affordable quantities, is a major contributor to plastic waste in the Philippines. This system, which caters to a population with limited purchasing power, enables consumers to buy items like shampoo, cooking oil, condiments, and even single servings of food in tiny, individually packaged sachets. While this practice makes essential products more accessible, it also leads to a massive proliferation of single-use plastics that are difficult to recycle and often end up polluting rivers, coastlines, and urban areas. With millions of these sachets and packets used daily, the cumulative waste places a significant burden on the environment. Local governments and environmental advocates are increasingly concerned about the impacts of this packaging-heavy economy and are working to encourage more sustainable alternatives. However, the "tingi" system remains deeply ingrained in the country's retail and consumer culture, making change challenging.

Approximately 300 local government units (LGUs) in the country have enacted ordinances to regulate plastic use, reflecting growing awareness of plastic pollution's impact. However, effective implementation of these regulations remains challenging, particularly in wet markets where plastic use is pervasive. In these markets, vendors often use two layers of plastic bags to package items like fish and meat to prevent leaks, which significantly increases plastic waste.

Despite existing ordinances, a lack of strict enforcement allows these habits to continue largely unchecked, undermining efforts to reduce plastic pollution. Stricter enforcement measures, coupled with increased awareness among vendors and consumers, are essential to curtailing unnecessary plastic use. By prioritizing sustainable alternatives and closely monitoring adherence to these regulations, LGUs can make meaningful progress in reducing plastic waste and fostering environmental responsibility across communities.



A 2022 study by the National Research Council of the Philippines (NRCP) highlights the serious threats posed by microplastics and plastics to food security, the environment, and public health. The research team sampled 240 mussels across eight study sites, including the wet market in Marikina, the fish port in Navotas, the fish landing center in Bacoor, the riverside in Oings underscore the pervasive presence of plastic pollution in the country's aquatic ecosystems and highlight the urgent need for measures to mitigate its impact on food sources and public health.

The Philippines is among the 170 countries that have signed the Global Plastic Treaty, marking a significant step toward addressing plastic pollution on an international scale. By supporting global efforts to reduce plastic production, improve waste management, and promote sustainable alternatives, the Philippines has aligned itself with international standards. However, to truly realize its commitment to this treaty, the Philippine government must take bold, decisive action to combat the severe plastic pollution affecting its land and waters.

bando, and aquaculture farms in Antique, Baybay, Macaleon, and Bicol. Alarmingly, 100 percent of the mussel samples tested positive for microplastics. These find

The government should allocate resources to boost waste collection and recycling infrastructure across the archipelago, particularly in underserved regions where plastic waste often ends up in rivers, seas, and coastal areas.

By strengthening partnerships with local government units (LGUs), the national government can enforce existing plastic ordinances more effectively, especially in high-use areas like wet markets. Finally, investing in large-scale education campaigns to raise awareness about the environmental impacts of plastic waste would empower citizens to reduce plastic use and support sustainable alternatives. Only through these robust measures can our country fully honor its commitment to the Global Plastic Treaty and make meaningful progress in tackling its plastic pollution crisis.

## UN Climate Change Conference set to start in Azerbaijan

The 29th Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP29) will kick off in the Azerbaijani capital Baku on Monday, aiming to address escalating climate challenges.

Leaders worldwide will gather in Baku for the event until November 22.

“With global temperatures hitting record highs, and extreme weather events affecting people around the globe, COP29 will bring together leaders from governments, business and civil society to advance concrete solutions to the defining issue of our time,” according to the UN.

“A key focus of COP29 will be on finance, as trillions of dollars are required for countries to drastically reduce greenhouse gas emissions and protect lives and livelihoods from the worsening impacts of climate change.”

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) is a multilateral treaty established in 1992, following the first assessment report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

Its main aim is to stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations to prevent dangerous human-induced interference with the climate system.

Since entering into force in 1994, the UNFCCC has served as the foundation for global climate negotiations, leading to significant agreements like the Kyoto Protocol in 1997 and the Paris Agreement in 2015.

Today, 198 Parties participate in annual meetings to assess progress and forge responses to the climate crisis.

## CCC IN THE NEWS:

### RAPPLER

#### [EXPLAINER: What is the People's Survival Fund?](#)

By: Iya Gozum

Local governments are on the frontlines of disasters and the impacts of the climate crisis. As vulnerable countries expect calamities to hit harder and with more frequency, funding for adaptation becomes a matter of survival.

Aside from the disaster funds, there is money available for local governments and community organizations to help them make long-term plans and adapt to climate change impacts: the People's Survival Fund or the PSF.

The PSF was created under Republic Act No. 10174 (which amended the Climate Change Act) in 2012. The government allocates an annual fund of P1 billion to the PSF under the General Appropriations Act. The Department of Finance (DOF) heads the board that oversees the fund.

The budget could be increased if the Office of the President and the Department of Budget and Management see the need – and depending on the accomplishments of the program.

These are projects that concern water resource management, land management, agriculture, health, disease monitoring, early warning systems, among others.

Aside from climate adaptation projects, the PSF gives project development grants for municipalities (second class or lower) who want to conduct assessments that will help them eventually prepare a proposal. These grants provide up to P2,000,000.

The PSF board has approved 13 projects and six grants, benefitting 19 municipalities, as August 31, according to the Climate Change Commission (CCC). Over P300,000,000 from the fund has been disbursed.

Approved projects, delays

It took years before the next batch of projects was approved in 2023. The first batch, worth P310.34 million, was approved back in 2016.

In 2023, the PSF board approved P539 million worth of projects. President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. officially awarded funds to six municipalities a day before the global climate talks started in Dubai.

Here's the list of projects:

Municipality/Province	Project	Budget
San Francisco, Camotes Island, Cebu	Building Resilience through Community Based Ecological Farming	P33,891,670
Del Carmen, Surigao del Norte	Siargao Climate Field School for Farmers and Fisherfolks	P80,705,896.80
Lanuza, Surigao del Sur	Disaster Risk Reduction and Mechanism Response as Coping Mechanism to Resiliency	P39,048,000.00
Gerona, Tarlac	Promoting a Climate- Informed Gerona	P38,100,000.00
Kitcharao, Agusan del Sur	Establishment and Sustainable Management of River Ecosystem in Kitcharao	P112,983,416.01

Sarangani	Saub Watershed Ecosystem Rehabilitation and Flood Risk Reduction for Increased Resilience	P33,484,789.33
Mountain Province	Mountain Province Field School for Farmers	P271,150,900.00
Maramag, Bukidnon	Enhancing the Climate Adaptive Capacity of Communities through Establishing a Disaster Risk Reduction Management Approach in the River Ecosystem of Maramag, Bukidnon	P126,396,491.45
Borongan City, Eastern Samar	Reinforcement of Lom River Flood Protection and Redevelopment for Resilient Communities and Livelihoods	P117,964,960.92

Cabagan, Isabela	Construction of 10 units of solar powered pump in different barangays	P21,284,725.7
Catanauan, Quezon	Mangrove rehabilitation project	P2,638,000.00
Cortes, Surigao del Sur	Building Resilience with Ridge to Reef Adaptation to Climate Change	P126,690,000.00
Ilocos Norte	Ilocos Norte Climate-Resilient Intervention towards Sustainable Agriculture and Natural Resources Management	P305,286,756.00

Approved climate adaptation projects under the PSF as of August 31, 2024. List obtained from the Climate Change Commission.

Municipality	Project development grant	Budget
Bobon, Northern Samar	Establishment of the Bobon-LGU Green Mitigation and Adaptation Infrastructures Technologies with Livelihood Complementation	P2,000,000
Mondragon, Northern Samar	Mondragon-LGU Ecosystem Based Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation as a Showcase for Environmental Restoration and Conservation	P2,000,000

Pambujan, Northern Samar	Establishment of the Pambujan-LGU Climate Smart Agriculture cum Environmental Restoration and Conservation of Selected Barangays Coastal Zones-Rivers-Estuaries	P2,000,000
Rosario, Northern Samar	Establishment of Rosario-LGU Green Mitigation and Adaptation Infrastructures Technologies with Livelihood Compensation	P2,000,000
San Jose, Northern Samar	Application of Nature Based Solutions to Conserve and Restore the Ecosystems of LGU-San Jose Selected Barangay Shorelines, Rivers, and Estuaries	P2,000,000
Sadanga, Mountain Province	Building Resiliency and Ensuring Food Security through Water Harvesting Structures	P2,000,000



Approved project development grants under the PSF as of August 31, 2024. List obtained from the Climate Change Commission.

In a recent report, the Commission on Audit (COA) found that the board only called for proposals from 2015 to 2017, instead of calling for proposals two times a year.

COA said that aside from the irregular proposal calls, rejection rate could be attributed to strict documentary requirements and proponents' lack of technical capacity to put forward proposals.

According to the CCC, projects proposals are assessed by the municipalities' level of poverty incidence, the multiple hazards that increase risk in the town, and the presence of key biodiversity areas in project sites.

**=END=**