



NEWS ROUNDUP

20 NOVEMBER 2023 [08:30 am]

- 'More work needed to improve PHL resilience to disaster'–UN
- Innovating for green and sustainable growth
- PHL seeking \$600-M WB loan
- Over \$672-M investment pledges secured in Marcos' APEC participation
- 'Filipino kids hit hard by climate change'
- Active participation in COP28 urged as Asia-Pacific Climate Week wraps up
- Philippines, US team up to protect environment, human health

CCC IN THE NEWS:

- Implementation of Philippine climate laws still lacking, says UN special rapporteur
- 16th Climate Change Consciousness Week , layong ipaunawa ang problema ng climate change sa publiko
- Climate Change Commission Net Zero Challenge
- PH, poor countries stand to lose if World Bank hosts climate loss and damage fund – expert
- 60 percent of Pinoys live in low-lying, high-risk areas

BUSINESS MIRROR

['More work needed to improve PHL resilience to disaster'–UN](#)

By: Jonathan Mayuga

United Nations Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction Mami Mizutori has hailed the Philippines's disaster risk reduction effort even as she reiterated that more work needs to be done to improve the country's resilience.

BUSINESS WORLD

[Innovating for green and sustainable growth](#)

By: Cheryl Edeline C. Ong and Anne E. Momongan-Lim

With the Philippines undergoing rapid urbanization, industrialization, and environmental degradation, the government is taking the initiative to steer the country towards green growth and sustainable development. To be globally competitive, the government and businesses alike must prioritize innovative approaches, fostering technological advancement, and implement incentive mechanisms that promote environmental protection while driving long-term economic growth.

[PHL seeking \\$600-M WB loan](#)

By: Luisa Maria Jacinta C. Jocson

The Philippines is seeking a \$600-million loan from the World Bank (WB) to support climate resilience efforts and promote green investment.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

[Over \\$672-M investment pledges secured in Marcos' APEC participation](#)

President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. has secured USD672,300,000 in investment pledges from various sectors during his successful participation in the 30th Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Economic Leaders' Meeting and related activities in San Francisco, California last week.

THE MANILA TIMES

['Filipino kids hit hard by climate change'](#)

Vice President and Education Secretary Sara Duterte said climate change has hit Filipino children hard, thus the need to address the crisis.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

[Active participation in COP28 urged as Asia-Pacific Climate Week wraps up](#)

By: Gaea Katreena Cabico

This year's Asia-Pacific Climate Week concluded Friday after five days of discussion on the region's climate priorities, with the United Nations urging participants to play an active role in the upcoming COP28 negotiations.

[Philippines, US team up to protect environment, human health](#)

By: Gaea Katreena Cabico

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources and the United States Environmental Protection Agency signed a memorandum of understanding to enhance cooperation on environmental and human health protection.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

GMA

[Implementation of Philippine climate laws still lacking, says UN special rapporteur](#)

By: Jheset Enano

Despite numerous policies in the Philippines relating to climate change, the government is still coming up short in implementing these laws, according to the United Nations special rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights in the context of climate change.

IBC 13

[16th Climate Change Consciousness Week , layong ipaunawa ang problema ng climate change sa publiko](#)

Nakararanas na ng malalakas na bagyo ang lugar sa Pilipinas na hindi naman kadalasang binabagyo noon. Mismong mga opisyal pa nga ng Climate Change Commission ang nakapagsasabi na ibang-iba na ang sitwasyon ngayon.

NSTV

[Climate Change Commission Net Zero Challenge](#)

In August 2023, the CC launched its own Carbon Neutrality Program titled the CCC Net Zero Challenge (NZC) in Caliraya-Lumot Watershed. The NZC aims to significantly offset the agency's carbon emissions and serves as CC's pioneer program in translating critical policy instruments, such as the National Strategy Framework for Climate Change (NFSCC), National Climate Change Action Plan (NCCAP), and the Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) into action.

RAPPLER

[PH, poor countries stand to lose if World Bank hosts climate loss and damage fund – expert](#)

By: Iya Gozum

United Nations (UN) Special Rapporteur Ian Fry has expressed “grave reservations” on the recommendation to make the World Bank the host of the climate loss and damage fund that was decades in the making.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

[60 percent of Pinoys live in low-lying, high-risk areas](#)

By: Bella Cariaso

About 60 percent of Filipinos reside in low-lying places and are highly at risk amid the threat of climate change, according to an official of the Climate Change Commission.

Information and Knowledge Management Division

BUSINESS MIRROR

'More work needed to improve PHL resilience to disaster'–UN

By: Jonathan Mayuga

United Nations Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction Mami Mizutori has hailed the Philippines's disaster risk reduction effort even as she reiterated that more work needs to be done to improve the country's resilience.

A decade since Super Typhoon Yolanda struck and left a path of death and destruction in the Philippines, the top UN DRR exec reiterated the need to further enhance preparedness, recognizing that huge challenges still lie ahead.

Mizutori, who also heads the UN Office for DRR, acknowledged that the Philippines stands as a global model of resilience, noting all its efforts to build disaster-response capabilities.

"There has been so much progress, remarkable progress with the integrated [DRR] and climate change adaptation at all levels, national and local. The Philippines is a role model not only in this region but the whole world. Your commitment to prevention, your commitment to DRR has truly empowered your resilience," said Mizutori, who recently visited the country to lead the launch of the Asia Pacific Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction which the Philippines will host next year.

Mizutori also acknowledged the country's inclusion of local financing for DRR-related policies and the recognition of local governments through the Local Government Code of the Philippines, a practice not commonly observed in other nations.

"Financing for disaster risk reduction, which is crucial to effectively implement strategies and transform words into actions, is a priority issue. Currently, leaders in local governments are more and more recognized for their importance in building resilience but [the Philippines] did it 30 years ago. And today, local government units in provinces, cities, and municipalities in barangays, have their own local DRR strategy, management plans, and are implementing it," Mizutori noted.

The UN DRR executive also encouraged increased localization to bring disaster risk reduction efforts down to the grass root level, and include harnessing local knowledge and engaging with communities to empower local action. She likewise commended the collaboration of local and private sector leaders in implementing the Adopt-a-City program, which she found innovative and suggested other countries follow suit.

The UN official also highlighted the country's unique approach to risk-informed policy and projects, extending to various sectors such as agriculture, industry, and education, "Public-private partnership is also your strength," she added.

Ready for disaster

DENR Secretary Maria Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga recently expressed readiness to support the development and execution of programs aimed at enhancing community resilience and preparedness in responding to disasters and other emergencies.

This as Yulo-Loyzaga emphasized the paramount importance of barangays—the smallest administrative units in the country, in disaster risk reduction and resiliency.

"We hope from the DENR that we can offer support to all our communities and barangays in terms of their evidence-informed programs at the local level. This forum is a manifestation of our commitment to working inclusively in a multi-stakeholder fashion towards disaster resilience," said Loyzaga.

Over the past several months, the DENR has been conducting capacity-building and training activities across the country to reaffirm the crucial role of the barangay as the first line of defense against disasters in their communities.

The most recent is the Barangay Leaders Resilience Forum last October 12 which brought together over 300 barangay leaders from across the country, local chief executives, development organizations from the private sector, civil society, and academic institutions to explore context-specific, innovative, and responsive approaches to risk reduction, risk management, and resilience-building.

Barangay leaders from Limay, Orion, and Mariveles in Bataan; Tanay, Antipolo, San Mateo, Rodriguez, and Baras in Rizal; Del Carmen and Burgos in Surigao del Norte; and Ormoc City in Leyte, affirmed their commitment to build knowledge, skills, and capacities to manage and reduce disaster risks and lead resilient communities.

Barangay officials from the cities of Pasay, Parañaque, Quezon, and Manila in Metro Manila expressed a similar commitment.

The barangay leaders expressed their support for DENR's Project TRANSFORM, or Transdisciplinary Approach for Resilience and Environmental Sustainability through Multistakeholder Engagement. This integrated program aims to combat poverty,

enhance community resilience, and foster public-private partnerships by involving all segments of society.

Republic Act 1760, also known as the Local Government Code of 1991, recognizes local government units (LGUs) as the central actors in disaster risk reduction (DRR). Barangays are mandated to establish and operationalize Barangay Risk Reduction Management Committees, develop barangay disaster risk reduction and management plans, and allocate funds and resources for disaster response and recovery.

“The task of building resilience and preserving life is not just the government’s alone. We all have a role to play to ensure the quality of life for generations to come,” said Yulo-Loyzaga.

The DENR is leading efforts and initiatives in the run-up to the APMCDRR to be cochaired by Yulo-Loyzaga and Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro Jr. Set for October 2024, a central focus of the biennial conference will be on Localization and Urban and Rural Resilience.

BUSINESS WORLD

Innovating for green and sustainable growth

By: Cheryl Edeline C. Ong and Anne E. Momongan-Lim

With the Philippines undergoing rapid urbanization, industrialization, and environmental degradation, the government is taking the initiative to steer the country towards green growth and sustainable development. To be globally competitive, the government and businesses alike must prioritize innovative approaches, fostering technological advancement, and implement incentive mechanisms that promote environmental protection while driving long-term economic growth.

As such, the government has been actively ramping up efforts to encourage new and current investors to support this green and innovative drive through government-led incentive programs such as the Strategic Investment Priority Plan (SIPP) and the incentives under the Renewable Energy Act.

For business owners and investors, the SIPP is a crucial policy that serves as a roadmap and guide to identifying priority sectors and industries that play a pivotal role in achieving the country's development goals, including the creation of employment opportunities and export growth.

This is the fourth article in our series following the 2nd SGV Tax Symposium, which focused on how a sustainable and effective tax ecosystem can advance the sustainability agenda for both the public and private sectors. In one of the discussions by the Board of Investments, the speaker presented the SIPP goals for nation building briefly covered below.

THE LABOR-INTENSIVE ECONOMY

According to the Department of Finance (DoF), the unemployment rate in the first eight months of 2023 improved to 4.6% compared to the 5.3% rate from a year earlier. This is a positive development in a labor-intensive country. It is recognized that the workforce plays a vital role in growth and development. With a population of over 118 million in 2023, the Philippines presents a unique opportunity for labor-intensive industries to flourish. Noteworthy though is that being labor-intensive may also be the reverse of technological advancement; thus, it is a challenge to strike a balance between technological innovation and human involvement.

GLOBALLY COMPETITIVE INFRASTRUCTURE

Through the SIPP, the current administration acknowledges the need to hasten the transformation into a modern and efficient economy with highly developed infrastructure, such as efficient transportation systems, roads, bridges, and airports.

The National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) in March announced that the administration approved high-impact infrastructure flagship projects worth P9 trillion, in line with the “Build Better More” infrastructure program.

Investors may want to delve into projects that will provide adequate infrastructure to promote and support the movement of goods and services across the country, thus reducing transportation costs and improving overall efficiency. Globally competitive infrastructure is also going to manifest in improved healthcare facilities, the availability of affordable housing, and enhanced education.

TECHNOLOGY

One of the focus areas of the SIPP is technology advancement and innovation. By embracing technology advancement, the Philippines seeks to develop a competitive edge, attract digital investment, foster entrepreneurship, and build a strong digital economy. The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) is likewise pushing for the acceleration and growth of innovation.

As technology will depend on favorable factors, the focus areas for improvement ought to include lowering the cost of power and stabilizing the supply of energy, regardless of location in the Philippines.

CLIMATE CHANGE

With its goal of fostering green growth, the Philippines aims to position itself as a regional hub for carbon-reducing activities. The growth of the renewable energy sector and the transition to cleaner and more sustainable energy sources can be further promoted by making investors and stakeholders alike more aware of the fiscal and non-fiscal incentives on offer for those who invest in energy efficiency projects.

During the 2nd Tax Symposium, the DTI speaker discussed the energy efficiency projects (EEP) under the 2022 SIPP. In relation, BoI Memorandum Circular 2023-006 was issued as an amendment to the Specific Guidelines on Registration of Energy Efficiency Projects covered by Republic Act No. 11285.

Under the circular, for the self-financed, the EEP shall only be entitled to the Income Tax Holiday (ITH) incentive and duty exemption on imports of capital equipment, raw

materials, spare parts and accessories. The ITH incentive is limited to the prescribed ITH entitlement period under the CREATE Act or until the recovery of 50% of its capital investment, excluding cost of land and working capital of the registered EEP, whichever comes first.

STRATEGIC INVESTMENT PRIORITY PLAN INCENTIVES

It can be inferred from the SIPP that these objectives for nation building are aligned with the global shift towards a sustainable and green economy through innovation and technological advancement. Businesses can be partners of government and align their investments and projects with the administration's goal for the Philippines to be a regional hub for globally competitive, innovation- and sustainability-driven industries. Amplifying one's knowledge of priority sectors vis-à-vis incentives can lead to opportunity and to expansive industries — these include electric vehicles, smart/high-tech light manufacturing, high-tech agriculture, renewable energy, and data centers.

To highlight these attractive incentives, PEZA presented during the symposium that the incentives granted to industries identified by the SIPP include the enjoyment of a four to seven-year ITH. The incentives will depend on the location, the industry, and whether the company is a domestic or export-oriented enterprise as provided under the CREATE law.

After the period of enjoyment, export enterprises can avail of a special corporate income tax of 5% or enhanced deductions. On the other hand, domestic enterprises are entitled to the latter after the ITH period. These deductions are in addition to the allowable ordinary and necessary deductions under the Tax Code, as amended. In addition, companies eligible are entitled to duty and VAT exemption for imports of capital equipment, raw materials, spare parts, and accessories directly and exclusively used in the registered activity. Local purchases directly and exclusively used in the registered activity are also entitled to VAT zero rating.

OTHER GREEN INCENTIVES AVAILABLE

Aside from the SIPP, the Philippines has placed a spotlight on the incentives under the Renewable Energy Act. As an overview, industries eligible under this act are entitled to an ITH of seven years from the start of commercial operations. The maximum period that can be availed of is 21 years, inclusive of the initial seven years. Further, after the ITH period, a 10% corporate tax on net taxable income may be availed of, provided that the savings must be passed on to end-users in the form of lower power rates.

When evaluating the incentives offered in the Philippines, businesses contemplating investment may need to carefully assess the available options to determine which are

the most advantageous for their specific needs. Each company will have to consider the various applicable incentives and determine which can provide them with greater benefits.

The Philippines, being rich in natural resources including renewable sources, and having a pool of talented workers, is making strides towards sustainable development by leveraging innovative solutions and incentivizing green practices. By harnessing these incentives and supporting ongoing innovation, the Philippines is poised to become a regional leader in green growth and a model for other countries seeking sustainable development.

[PHL seeking \\$600-M WB loan](#)

By: Luisa Maria Jacinta C. Jocson

The Philippines is seeking a \$600-million loan from the World Bank (WB) to support climate resilience efforts and promote green investment.

According to a document uploaded to the World Bank website, the loan aims to “support the Government of the Philippines’ reforms to accelerate the economic recovery and boost medium-term growth; and protect the environment and improve climate resilience.”

This would be the lender’s second sustainable recovery development policy loan to the Philippines.

In June, the World Bank approved the first sustainable recovery development policy loan worth \$750 million.

“Climate change poses major risks to growth and development in the Philippines and will affect the country’s ability to meet its development goals,” the bank said.

“The country is exposed to frequent natural disasters and the impacts of climate change, which could cause severe economic and fiscal shocks and threaten the country’s socio-economic development,” it added.

The World Bank estimates that greenhouse gas emissions are expected to quadruple by 2050.

The proposed financing will support reforms that target increased investment in public services, renewable energy, infrastructure and green jobs, which will “accelerate economic recovery and boost long-term growth.”

It will also finance initiatives to reduce and recover more plastic waste, promote green transport through electric vehicles, encourage the use of green goods and services in procurement, and enhance the resilience of the Philippine Crop Insurance Corp. in order to better protect farmers from climate risk.

The World Bank board will take up the loan proposal on May 31, 2024.

Separately, the World Bank said it approved a \$500-million loan to the Philippines for climate disaster management for schools, health institutions, and communities.

In a statement issued on Nov. 17, the bank said the Philippines' disaster risk management and climate development policy loan with a catastrophe deferred drawdown option can be "quickly drawn upon when major natural disasters or health crises hit, minimizing the impact on the economy and long-term development."

"The real benefit of this support is its ability to rapidly deliver crucial services — such as healthcare, shelter, and food — to those most impacted by disasters or climate events," Ndiamé Diop, the World Bank's Country Director for the Philippines, said.

The bank said fund releases may be triggered with a state of calamity declaration due to a natural disaster or public health emergency.

"The full amount of this financial support will be available for three years, giving the Philippine government immediate access to funds when they need it, enabling it to better manage the cost of shocks and protect the Philippine population," it said.

"The financial support has a revolving feature, and the three-year drawdown period may be renewed up to four times, for a total maximum period of 15 years," it added.

In 2022, the World Bank was the Philippines' third-largest source of official development assistance (ODA). It accounted for 21.18% of the ODA portfolio, equivalent to \$6.86 billion, through 29 projects and programs.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

Over \$672-M investment pledges secured in Marcos' APEC participation

President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. has secured USD672,300,000 in investment pledges from various sectors during his successful participation in the 30th Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Economic Leaders' Meeting and related activities in San Francisco, California last week.

The investment pledges secured are USD400-million for the telecommunications sector; USD250-million for semiconductor and electronics; USD20-million in pharmaceutical and healthcare; USD2-million for artificial intelligence (AI) for weather forecasting; and USD0.3-million in renewable energy.

Marcos also secured significant commitments in technological advancements across key priority sectors in the Philippines, which include the deployment of the first two Internet MicroGEO satellites dedicated to the Philippines.

He also received technology-related commitments particularly in the development of Asia's largest AI-driven weather forecasting program for the Philippines, bolstering the country's resilience against climate change through the agreement between the Department of Science and Technology and the US-based company, Atmo.

Also among the commitments concluded during Marcos' APEC participation is the Philippines' inaugural specialty oncology hospital that will enhance service efficiency and accessibility for Filipino patients seeking cancer care, which was a subject of an agreement between Ayala Corporation Health and the Varian Medical Systems.

The first US FDA-approved manufacturing facility in the Philippines, which will bolster the country's global pharmaceutical industry presence, through an agreement between Lloyd Laboratories and Difgen, was also secured.

The agreement covering the 1st Phase for a project on sustainable energy, which will provide affordable and reliable power access through the agreement between Meralco and Ultra Safe Nuclear Corporation, was also signed.

An additional investment of USD1 billion for the semiconductor industry is up for discussion with US companies.

The Philippines and the US have also agreed to work toward strengthening the Philippines' semiconductor supply chain.

THE MANILA TIMES

'Filipino kids hit hard by climate change'

Vice President and Education Secretary Sara Duterte said climate change has hit Filipino children hard, thus the need to address the crisis.

She said typhoons cause flooding, landslides and storm surges in high-risk areas, affecting children. The vice president said the country ranked first in the World Risk Index for 2022. From 2016 to 2021, about 9.7 million Filipino children were displaced because of climate-change related events.

Duterte said children must be given "meaningful participation" in the fight against climate change. The upcoming COP28 presents a critical opportunity for the Philippine government to design and implement child-responsive climate action that prioritizes the needs and perspectives of children."

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

[Active participation in COP28 urged as Asia-Pacific Climate Week wraps up](#)

By: Gaea Katreena Cabico

This year's Asia-Pacific Climate Week concluded Friday after five days of discussion on the region's climate priorities, with the United Nations urging participants to play an active role in the upcoming COP28 negotiations.

Around 3,000 participants which included policymakers, experts, and members of civil society organizations gathered in the southern Malaysian City of Johor Bahru to deliberate on solutions to the climate crisis as well as align the region's priorities ahead of the COP28 climate talks in Dubai later this month.

Donald Cooper, the director of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change's transparency division, called on delegates to actively participate in the "global stocktake" assessing the world's progress toward the target of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

A technical report released in September said that the world was off track on its pledge to curb global warming.

"We want to hit that curve that puts us below 1.5. The global stocktake is where you are going to establish what is needed and how we are going to do it," Cooper said during the closing ceremony.

"Everyone will take their share [of the commitments] to make sure we hit that curve. So be active in the global stocktake, at the Dubai conference. And make sure that those 80,000 people who are going to turn up there all end up heading in your direction," he added.

Discussions at the climate week covered decarbonizing energy systems and industries, creating more sustainable cities, settlements, infrastructure and transportation, conserving biodiversity and ecosystems, protecting human health, and greening economies.

"As we stand at the crossroads of environmental crisis and opportunity, I trust APCW 2023 here in Johor Bahru has served as an impactful platform for all of us to strengthen regional cooperation, accelerate climate action, and embrace transformative potential of

green technologies and sustainable practices,” Johor investment, trade, and consumer affairs committee chair Lee Ting Han said.

Calls for inclusivity

UNFCCC’s Cooper lauded the participation of various groups in the week-long event.

“From the indigenous peoples, youth, gender, it has been remarkable to see them all included, and included at a high level,” he said.

However, indigenous peoples attending APCW were not provided spaces in the opening and closing plenary of the climate week, as well as in ministerial meetings, according to Grace Balawag, deputy coordinator of indigenous peoples’ organizations Tebtebba.

In a statement delivered at APCW Thursday, the International Indigenous Peoples Forum on Climate stressed that they should be treated as “key partners” in climate change dialogues, not merely beneficiaries.

Jit Sohal, the regional climate manager of Health Care Without Harm Southeast Asia, said that there were few health-focused events at APCW.

“But that only means we need to work harder: how do we make sure that health is central to all of these discussions because health is important to everyone,” she said.

APCW 2023 brought this year's series of regional climate weeks to a close, following the Africa Climate Week in Kenya, the Middle East and North Africa Climate Week in Saudi Arabia; and the Latin America and the Caribbean Climate Week in Panama.

Philippines, US team up to protect environment, human health

By: Gaea Katreena Cabico

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources and the United States Environmental Protection Agency signed a memorandum of understanding to enhance cooperation on environmental and human health protection.

The memorandum of understanding aims to foster collaboration and information exchange on topics such as air quality, water quality, science-informed policymaking, climate change mitigation and adaptation, solid waste management, cumulative impact research and assessment, environmental incident response, environmental justice, and enforcement and compliance assurance.

The collaboration with the EPA also seeks to develop the capacity of the DENR's Environmental Management Bureau, environment chief Maria Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga said.

"As the adverse impacts of climate change and environmental degradation continue to impact the most vulnerable of the society, this collaboration will allow us to develop local adaptation and risk reduction strategies and integrate community and ecosystem resilience into green growth pathways," Loyzaga said.

"The United States and the Philippines enjoy a strong and robust partnership, and with today's action we are extending that partnership to address environmental challenges that affect the health and well-being of our people and our planet," EPA Administrator Michael Regan said.

The MOU was signed by Regan in Washington D.C. ahead of the signing ceremony in Metro Manila. The partnership will be in effect for five years, with the ability for extension upon mutual consent.

In a joint statement in May, President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. and United States President Joe Biden committed to boost cooperation on environment and climate change issues.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

GMA

[Implementation of Philippine climate laws still lacking, says UN special rapporteur](#)

By: Jhesset Enano

Despite numerous policies in the Philippines relating to climate change, the government is still coming up short in implementing these laws, according to the United Nations special rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights in the context of climate change.

In a press briefing at the end of his 10-day visit to the Philippines, UN special rapporteur Ian Fry called on the government to rapidly develop a strategic implementation plan for its climate change policies. He also recommended the development of climate actions that are sensitive to different sectors, including indigenous peoples and persons with disabilities.

“The government does appear to have reasonable and good policies on climate change and disaster risk reduction, but there is clearly a gap in the implementation on the ground,” he said on Wednesday, citing reports he received from different communities during his mission.

In his interim report presented to the Philippine government, Fry also underscored the government’s pursuit of a development agenda that “contradicts the highly fragile nature of the country.”

Fry began his visit to the Philippines on Nov. 6, upon the invitation of the Philippine government. He met with different government officials, including the secretaries of the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the Department of Justice (DOJ), and officials from the Climate Change Commission (CCC).

He visited Baseco Compound in Manila to observe reclamation projects in Manila Bay; Tacloban City and several other cities in Leyte province to see the recovery efforts in the aftermath of Super Typhoon Yolanda in 2013, and Iloilo province to learn about the Jalaur Mega Dam project that has reportedly displaced indigenous communities.

He also met with several civil society organizations and representatives of different sectors during his mission.

Special rapporteurs are independent experts tasked to monitor and report on specific human rights, either from a thematic or country-specific perspective. They are appointed by the UN Human Rights Council.

Fry, an international environmental law and policy expert from Tuvalu, is the first special rapporteur on climate change. He was appointed in March 2022.

Revisions to climate change law

Fry said it is “without doubt” that the Philippines is one of the most vulnerable countries to the impacts of climate change.

“This is creating enormous costs to the country and to communities through loss of lives, primarily through typhoons, storm surges and also droughts,” he said.

Among his recommendations to the Philippine government was the revision of the Climate Change Act, or Republic Act No. 9729, which was passed into law in 2009.

He also backed the adoption of the Climate Accountability bill, proposed by Rep. Edgar Chatto at last year's Conference of Parties (COP27) in Egypt.

Also known as the CLIMA Bill, the measure seeks to hold big polluters accountable by penalizing them for their emissions.

While the CLIMA Bill hasn't been filed in either houses, and Rep. Chatto is so far the only author of the bill, other members of the House of Representatives Committee on Climate Change are mulling being co-authors. At the 10th anniversary commemoration of Super Typhoon Yolanda in Tacloban, Rep. Anna Veloso-Tuazon said they are still reviewing the bill and are open to consultations with several stakeholders.

In revising the current climate change law, Fry said the government should strongly heed the report of the Commission on Human Rights (CHR), which called for actions against “carbon majors,” or coal, oil, gas and cement companies that are responsible for most of the global greenhouse gas emissions.

The CHR report was a result of a national inquiry spurred by a petition filed by climate survivors and environmentalists. They petitioned the commission to establish how the

human rights of Filipinos are affected by the increasing frequency and severity of disasters caused by climate change.

Following a 4-year inquiry, the commission said that fossil fuel companies might be held legally and morally responsible for human rights violations in communities devastated by climate change.

"These companies are making enormous profits at the consequence of the impacts on communities within this country," Fry said.

The special rapporteur said the new climate change law should include the creation of "extra-territorial powers" to hold accountable the fossil fuel companies that are outside the country.

Fry will present a comprehensive report of his findings and recommendations to the UN Human Rights Council in June 2024.

Reactions to Fry

The DENR has "no statement as of the moment," it said, preferring instead to wait until Fry presents the report of his findings. GMA News Online has also reached out to the CCC, but has yet to receive feedback as of writing.

Meanwhile, Greenpeace Southeast Asia executive director Yeb Saño agreed that parts of the existing climate change law need to be revised and that elements in the CLIMA Bill must be considered.

"Incorporating the corporate accountability framework is really crucial, in line with making polluters pay and in the spirit of following through the recommendations of the CHR through the National Inquiry on Climate Change," he told GMA News Online.

For Aksyon Klima Pilipinas National Coordinator John Leo Algo, "what must not be lost in the CLIMA bill is setting stricter rules on holding fossil fuel corporations accountable for their actions that worsen climate change impacts and lead to human rights violations."

"Another key point is the establishment of a national loss and damage fund that will respond to the needs of victims of climate-related disasters, to be funded through several sources consistent with the 'polluters pay' principle," he added on email.

GMA News Online has reached out to Rep. Chatto but has not received feedback as of writing.

IBC 13

16th Climate Change Consciousness Week , layong ipaunawa ang problema ng climate change sa publiko

Nakararanas na ng malalakas na bagyo ang lugar sa Pilipinas na hindi naman kadalasang binabagyo noon. Mismong mga opisyal pa nga ng Climate Change Commission ang nakapagsasabi na ibang-iba na ang sitwasyon ngayon.

Ang mga karanasang ito ay lan lamang daw sa konkretong ebidensya ng lumalalang epekto ng climate change.

Kaya naman sa ilulunsad na Climate Change Consciousness Week sa ikatlong linggo ng nobyembre may mas malaking hamon daw ngayon para ipaunawa sa publiko ang problemang ito.

NSTV

Climate Change Commission Net Zero Challenge

In August 2023, the CC launched its own Carbon Neutrality Program titled the CCC Net Zero Challenge (NZC) in Caliraya-Lumot Watershed. The NZC aims to significantly offset the agency's carbon emissions and serves as CC's pioneer program in translating critical policy instruments, such as the National Strategy Framework for Climate Change (NFSCC), National Climate Change Action Plan (NCCAP), and the Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) into action.

Likewise, the NZC will complement disaster risk reduction and management by planting and growing trees. These trees will eventually help to modulate soil movement and stabilize slopes, lowering the risk of landslides and flash floods.

NZC is being implemented in collaboration with the National Power Corporation (NPC) and the Pate Sagip Sigla Palay Farmers Association, Inc. This multi-stakeholder partnership involves communities, with their people's organization as partners in site preparation and maintenance, giving them equitable benefits such as livelihood opportunities and ecological services from the activity.

Under the NZC, the Commission will plant 15,625 seedlings on 25 hectares of land in the Caliraya-Lumot Watershed in the municipalities of Lumban, Kalayaan, and Cavinti, Laguna, with a total carbon sequestration potential of 75.5 tCO₂ from 2023 to 2027.

The Commission also welcomes partnership opportunities to implement NZC in more local government units, encouraging collaboration and promoting sustainable development nationwide.

The second tree-growing activity for the NZC will kick off this year's Climate Change Consciousness Week on 19 November 2023, with the aim to enhance GHG sinks and reservoirs to contribute to meeting the NDC under the Paris Agreement.

The activity targets to plant 625 seedlings in one (1) hectare of land in Caliraya-Lumot Watershed with an average carbon sequestration potential of 3.02 tCO₂. 300 seedlings will be planted by the event participants, while the remaining 325 seedlings will be planted by Paete Sagip Sigla Palay Farmers Association, Inc.

Further, the event aims to engage stakeholders to raise their consciousness on the global goal of reaching net zero emissions to curb climate change.

RAPPLER

[PH, poor countries stand to lose if World Bank hosts climate loss and damage fund – expert](#)

By: Iya Gozum

United Nations (UN) Special Rapporteur Ian Fry has expressed “grave reservations” on the recommendation to make the World Bank the host of the climate loss and damage fund that was decades in the making.

Poor and vulnerable countries like the Philippines may be unlikely to receive proper compensation for climate disasters, Fry, the UN Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights in the context of climate change, said in a press conference on Wednesday, November 15,

“I have grave reservations about the World Bank being an administrator of a loss and damage fund for a variety of reasons because the bank is dominated by developed countries in their board,” Fry said.

The World Bank also finances fossil fuel projects, he added.

In a landmark agreement at the 2022 Conference of Parties (COP), rich countries finally agreed to provide climate aid to poorer nations, but the details have yet to be finalized.

The purpose of the loss and damage fund is to assist developing and vulnerable countries to respond to droughts, floods, rising sea levels exacerbated by climate change.

Almost a year later, a special UN committee in its fifth meeting agreed to recommend the World Bank as host of the fund for an interim period of four years.

This recommendation, among other talks held prior to the COP, is expected to be threshed out in Dubai.

Conflicts of interest had often delayed climate negotiation breakthroughs. Fry said that at the 2022 COP, the United States – the biggest shareholder in the World Bank – tried to make contributions to the loss and damage fund voluntary.

With these contexts in mind, “you can’t expect to get a fair decision-making process,” said Fry.

“[I]t’s unlikely that people on the ground will get a proper loss and damage finance if the World Bank administers it,” said Fry.

Delayed better outcome vs ‘quick bad outcome’

Despite climate action being a race against time, Fry said it would be better to delay the conclusion of a loss and damage fund than get a “suboptimal fund” – a view that may not be shared by others.

“I suspect the COP president will try and push this decision through, which is disappointing,” said Fry. “I think we should delay a conclusion and come up with a better outcome than have a quick bad outcome.”

For Robert Borje, vice chair of the Philippines’ Climate Change Commission, it’s not one or the other.

While the loss and damage fund had been a major advocacy for developing nations for the past decades, Borje said the fund remains “reactive.” The other work is improving the country’s climate adaptation measures, such as infrastructure, disaster management, and food security.

“That was never the end,” Borje told reporters in October.

Tensions are expected to arise in relation to a possible unsatisfactory agreement for many parties. Aside from the loss and damage fund, COP 2023 will take stock of the countries’ progress on meeting the goals set in the Paris Agreement.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

[60 percent of Pinoys live in low-lying, high-risk areas](#)

By: Bella Cariaso

About 60 percent of Filipinos reside in low-lying places and are highly at risk amid the threat of climate change, according to an official of the Climate Change Commission.

CCC Policy Research and Development Division chief Jerome Ilagan said that the Philippines is number one in the latest report of countries high in climate risk worldwide.

“At least 60 percent of the Philippine population resides in low-lying places and therefore highly at risk if the global warming is never addressed or insufficiently addressed,” Ilagan said in a speech during the recent launching of CLIMACTION Towards a Net Zero Philippines in Pasay City.

Ilagan added that among climate induced drivers where the country is always exposed – especially the vulnerable communities – are agriculture, waste, industry, transport, forestry and energy.

“There must be continuing inventory of our greenhouse gases. Emission sectors include agriculture, waste, industry, transport, forestry, and energy. We are less emitter in the world but we suffer more,” he noted.

CCC Secretary Robert Borje said that the country suffered at least P673.3 billion in damage in the last 10 years or from 2011 to 2021 brought by the typhoons, citing the importance to raise the global systemic challenge of climate change especially to developing nations like the Philippines during the 28th United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Conference of Parties in the United Arab Emirates in December where President Marcos is expected to attend.

“That (P673.3 billion damage from typhoons) is for a 10-year period so that is really big. What is important is we realized that it’s not going to be just a function of our public investment. We need to involve the international community because again climate change is a global systemic challenge and we only contribute as much as to greenhouse gas emission and those most responsible should do more,” Borje said.

=END=