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22 NOVEMBER 2023 [08:30 am]

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By: Sharon Evite

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[Growing bamboo a strategy to climate change adaptation, sustainability](#)

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THE MANILA TIMES

[Voluntary carbon market in the Philippines](#)

By: Kelvin Lester Lee

MITIGATION of the effects of climate change is a growing concern around the globe. Due to this, the call to redirect financing and investments toward green and socially responsible projects has become louder. One of the ways countries can finance climate change mitigation goals that are otherwise not funded by public finance is through voluntary carbon markets (VCMs).

CCC IN THE NEWS:

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

[Climate Change Commission grilled again in Senate about 'frequent trips'](#)

By: Maila Ager

For two years now, the issue of its supposed penchant for travels hounded the Climate Change Commission (CCC) on Monday.

Information and Knowledge Management Division

ABS CBN

Northern Samar placed under state of calamity due to floods

By: Sharon Evite

The Northern Samar Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (PDRRMC) on Tuesday recommended putting the province under a state of calamity following incessant rains caused by the shear line that resulted in flooding, damaging infrastructures and crops.

An estimated of 74,500 families or 370,000 individuals are severely affected by the nonstop rains and widespread floods in the province.

The provincial local government unit has also declared suspension of classes in all levels for both private and public schools on Wednesday, November 22.

Work in all public offices, except disaster, health and public safety related agencies, and in private offices, except those in the banking, financial, health and food supply institutions, is likewise suspended.

ECO BUSINESS

'Intention is not enough': Philippine firms urged to step up action on net zero

By: Rhick Lars Albay

Of the 10 Asean countries, the Philippines is the only nation that has yet to commit to a hard net zero target.

Brunei, Cambodia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam have all announced national pledges to achieve net zero greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2050, aligned with the 1.5°C target set by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). Meanwhile, Indonesia is committed to achieving net zero by 2060.

Despite the Philippines committing to peak emissions by 2030 as part of its Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) under the Paris Agreement, a lack of a concrete net zero target, coupled with the nation's plans to expand its installed coal capacity by at least 2.6 gigawatts (GW) by 2025, are seen as impediments.

At a conference in Manila last month, Laure Nicole Stephanie Beaufiles, UK ambassador to the Republic of the Philippines and the Republic of Palau, underlined the need for stronger corporate action in the Philippines towards advancing net zero. She cited a report that showed at least one in five of the world's 2,000 largest public companies, which represent sales of nearly US\$14 trillion, now have net zero commitments.

"Intention is not enough. [In] moving from pledges to action, avoiding the very real threats of greenwashing is a must," Beaufiles added. "For commitments to be credible, we need effective plans and implementation. I would also argue that we need visibility and scrutiny."

Co-organised by the Net Zero Carbon Alliance (NZCA) in partnership with Eco-Business, the event gathered some 200 delegates representing 70 companies in the Philippines from the construction, manufacturing, real estate and aviation sectors, among others. NZCA is a private sector-led consortium initiated by the Energy Development Corporation (EDC), the biggest vertically-integrated geothermal energy producers in the world, and one of the country's largest renewable energy firms, that seeks to engage with Philippine corporations to achieve net zero emissions by 2050.

"Humans are unequivocally increasing greenhouse gas emissions to record levels. There is a necessity for action against the climate crisis that is staring us in the face," highlighted Jerome Cainglet, president and chief operating officer, EDC.

The Philippines was among the five largest carbon emitters in Asean in 2020 – contributing to 11 per cent of total emissions in the region. Asean’s total GHG emissions reached 668 million tonnes of CO₂e (carbon dioxide equivalent) in 2020, with coal power plants contributing 72 per cent.

“I believe achieving carbon neutrality as a transition to net zero is possible, regardless of what industry you are in,” added Cainglet, explaining that NZCA’s programmes aim to strategically develop and guide partners in coming up with their roadmap to achieve carbon neutrality through the sharing of best practices and scaling of carbon emission tracking and offsetting solutions.

In 2022 alone, the Philippines emitted approximately 146.5 million tonnes of CO₂e from energy consumption – an increase from the previous year’s total of 135.8 million tonnes – with commercial and industrial operations accounting for 53 per cent of the country’s energy consumption, according to the Department of Energy (DOE).

NZCA aims to reduce its member companies’ reliance on fossil fuels and lead the nation’s shift to renewable energy.

For example, two of NZCA’s members – Silliman University in Dumaguete City, Negros Oriental and Knowles Electronics in Cebu City – began running their operations on entirely renewable energy in the last four years. According to power equipment supply company First Gen Energy Solutions, Silliman University prevents at least 974.5 tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions annually by leveraging geothermal energy.

Eight of NZCA’s partner firms reported reducing their carbon emissions through decarbonisation programmes from 2021 to 2022 – accounting for a 9 per cent cut in emissions in one year, according to data NZCA captured in 2023. Fifty-nine per cent of NZCA’s members’ energy requirements are now met with renewable energy from EDC and other clean energy resources.

“As our number [of NZCA members] increases, we have the chance to significantly change the path we are currently on,” Cainglet underscored. “About 10 years ago, measuring our Scopes 1 and 2 emissions was viewed as unnecessary and unfeasible – let alone requiring our suppliers and contractors to do the same. Many businesses are now aware of the need to step up their decarbonisation programmes and now also track Scope 3 emissions.”

Coal problem

The Philippines' heavy reliance on coal-fired energy generation and dependence on external funding to support such projects is, however, hindering its decarbonisation efforts, according to a report by S&P Global.

Despite a government policy to halt applications to build coal-fired power plants in 2020, the Philippines' installed coal capacity still grew by nearly 14 per cent in the span of two years to 12,428 megawatts (MW) in 2022, according to data from the Department of Energy.

The Philippines' largest banks have still funnelled some US\$867 million into fossil fuel financing post-2020, in spite of a moratorium that excluded coal projects already in the pipeline. Coal still accounts for 44 per cent of the country's energy mix, while only 29 per cent of the installed capacity is comprised of renewable energy sources.

While the nation aims to increase the share of renewable energy in its power generation mix to 35 per cent by 2030 and 50 per cent by 2050 under the Philippines' National Renewable Energy Programme, a total of 52,826 MW of additional capacity is needed by 2040 – more than six times the current capacity.

Renewable potential

The Philippines must leverage its renewable energy potential to reduce its reliance on fossil fuels imports, said Francis Giles Puno, vice chairman and chief executive officer of EDC. "When you look at the Philippine grid today, we probably have more renewable energy potential simply because our country doesn't have a lot of indigenous fossil fuels. [Some] 90 per cent of our coal supply is imported fuels," explained Puno during the opening plenary, which discussed "the state of net-zero corporate pledges in the Philippines."

Southeast Asia remains a major fossil fuel importer, with the Philippines and Thailand accounting for 40 per cent of the total combined oil imports in the region in 2020.

The Philippines plans to install an additional 0.76 GW of wind and 18.5 GW of solar power capacity by 2030, as established in the Philippines Energy Plan (2020-2040), with the country aiming for solar and wind power to account for 16.5 per cent of its total projected energy generation in 2030 and meet 38 per cent of the nation's demand increase in the coming decade.

Solar power may see exponential growth at an average annual growth rate of 22 per cent until 2030 across five key Asian economies, including the Philippines. While solar

energy only accounted for 1.7 per cent of the Philippines' electricity in the first six months of 2022, an estimated US\$78 million of potential fossil fuel costs were avoided.

A matter of survival

Agnes De Jesus, chief sustainability officer of First Philippine Holdings Corporation, EDC's parent company, noted how businesses must be held accountable in the nation's journey towards net zero.

Because many businesses rely on the natural world and environment, the onus is on every company and individual to assume responsibility or bear the consequences, De Jesus emphasised. "For survival, we need the environment. Businesses need the environment for raw materials, physical protection, and business continuity," De Jesus said, noting how climate-induced extreme weather continues to threaten businesses. "We've experienced damage to facilities and even difficulty accessing our worksites due to [more frequent] floods, typhoons [and other natural disasters]."

In 2020 alone, super typhoon Goni wrought some US\$56.3 million in infrastructure damage to the power sector of 25 provinces across the country, according to the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council.

According to a report by global energy think tank Ember, of the Philippines' electricity demand rise from 2015 to 2021, only 12 per cent was met with clean electricity, while electricity from coal generation met 85 per cent of the demand.

"There's a positive story here. It's great to see so many [partners] in the room now [at this NZCA conference] being able to share each other's experiences and go from strength to strength to achieve net zero," highlighted Karen Ferguson, head of climate, science and tech at the British Embassy Manila, who spoke during the conference's opening plenary.

"Movements like NZCA can guide [companies] – whatever their level of readiness [for decarbonisation may be]. No one company can embark on this journey alone; it takes a group of like-minded companies and individuals. This is why alliances like NZCA are necessary," said EDC's Cainglet.

"Climate action is a matter of urgency as we continue to experience the ever-increasing impacts of our warming planet. NZCA aims to contribute practical measures toward decarbonisation that Philippine businesses can take, starting with interventions such as renewable energy," concluded Allan Barcena, executive director of the NZCA and assistant vice president and head of corporate relations and communications, EDC.

NIKKEI ASIA

[Asia's climate-driven health crisis raises alarm ahead of COP28](#)

By: Sayumi Take

2023 is set to be the world's hottest year on record, and the consequences for the human body are deadly.

Record-shattering temperatures can cause headaches, dizziness and nausea. Disease-carrying mosquitoes flourish after torrential rain and devastating floods. Polluted air causes shortness of breath and respiratory illnesses. The health emergencies that accompany climate change are shaking communities across the globe.

The impact on Asia is already profound. The continent has warmed at twice the speed of the global average in the past 30 years due to its huge land mass, according to the World Meteorological Organization (WMO).

More people in Asia are dying or falling ill than ever before due to high temperatures, the United Nations scientific body Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) reported in 2022. Heat stress is one of many health risks. Dengue and malaria are increasing in Thailand and Malaysia, while respiratory diseases caused by air pollution are rising in Indonesia. Even mental disorders like depression and anxiety are associated with climate change, according to a 2022 report by the IPCC.

"These impacts that we're seeing today could be just a symptom of a very dangerous future unless we tackle climate change urgently," warned Marina Romanello, executive director of the authoritative Lancet Countdown on Health and Climate Change report.

Health is an often neglected aspect of climate change discussions, but the struggle by some in the medical community to focus attention on the health effects of global warming has just won a significant victory. Next month, the first meeting of health ministers and senior health officials will take place on the sidelines of the 28th United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP28) in Dubai. Participants from over 50 countries are expected to gather.

"Just the fact that 50 or more health ministers are coming [together] is a milestone," said Martin Edlund, chief executive at nonprofit Malaria No More and a veteran of global efforts to combat climate-health issues.

The absence until now of health policy decision-makers in high-level climate discussions is reflected in a global lack of resources, with reports showing that less than 0.5% of overall funding from multilateral climate finance sources is allocated to projects targeting health, Edlund said.

Medical systems are scrambling to cope with more patients due to climate change, and the health community is eager to pressure governments to help. In November, the World Medical Association and other groups representing 46 million health professionals published a letter to COP28 President-Designate Sultan Ahmed Al-Jaber, demanding that at the upcoming conference, "countries commit to an accelerated, just and equitable phaseout of fossil fuels as the decisive path to health for all."

Under the United Nations' Paris Agreement, about 200 countries have committed to limiting the Earth's temperature rise to below 1.5 C compared with preindustrial levels. Breaching that limit would have devastating consequences: increasing heat waves, longer warm seasons, and more serious droughts, rain and tropical cyclones, scientists say.

But in 2022, the global average temperature reached 1.2 C above preindustrial levels and is on course to warm as much as 2.9 C unless more stringent countermeasures are taken, according to the WMO and U.N. Environment Programme.

"Health-centered climate action can still deliver a prosperous future if we act today" to limit global warming, said Romanello of the Lancet. But "if we don't act now ... we know that we will definitely not be able to cope with the increase in those health hazards."

Heat waves: record-breaking tragedy

On a July midday in Japan's northeastern Yamagata prefecture, a teenage girl was found unconscious next to her bicycle on a sidewalk. She had been on her way home from her junior high school, where she had been attending club activities. She was rushed to a hospital with symptoms of heatstroke and died that night, according to local news reports. The high temperature that day was 35.5 C, 7 C higher than the 1991-2020 average highest daily temperature for July, according to the Japan Meteorological Agency.

"I have no words for our inability to send her home safely," the head of the city's board of education told a news conference two days later, bowing deeply before reporters. "I am very sorry for her loss."

The incident, in a prefecture known for its cold winters and winter sports, jolted the educational community into strengthening measures for ensuring children's health, bracing for more frequent and extreme summers ahead.

Japan's summer heat this year was the highest since records began in 1898, at 1.8 C above the 1991-2020 average. That is three times higher than the global average rise in temperature of 0.6C, which was also a record. The nation's highest temperature for 2023, 40 C, was recorded in Fukushima prefecture, which borders Yamagata.

The extreme heat in Japan during mid-July-August this year "could not have happened without the temperature boost due to human-induced global warming," an analysis by the country's Meteorological Research Institute confirmed in September.

Extreme heat is the most dangerous kind of extreme weather, according to a November report by the WMO. About 489,000 people are estimated to have died annually due to heat between 2000 and 2019, with Asia placed under an exceptionally high burden, having suffered 45% of the deaths. Abnormally high heat can cause people to suffer potentially deadly illnesses such as heat exhaustion and heat stroke. It also can contribute to deaths from heart attacks and other heart diseases, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

This summer's extreme heat wave dealt an especially severe blow to northern Japan, which is unaccustomed to prolonged high temperatures. The region dealt with 12,032 emergency heat stroke cases from May to September, twice as many as for the same period of 2022, according to the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications.

"Japan's average temperature is rising faster than the rest of the world, partly due to natural factors, but climate change is intensifying the results," said Hisashi Nakamura, professor in climate dynamics at the University of Tokyo.

In April, India, Bangladesh, Laos and Thailand were also hit by unusual levels of heat, "largely driven by climate change," according to an international team of scientists with the World Weather Attribution group.

In India, where temperatures rose to 44 C in some areas in April, 264 people died due to heat as of June 30, the highest number since 2017, according to health ministry data.

In a particularly shocking event, about a dozen people died of heatstroke in western Maharashtra state after attending a government-sponsored award ceremony outdoors

under the harsh sun. April is one of the hottest months in India, and the nation's main opposition party has accused the government of "negligence" over the matter.

"The frequency of these extreme events and unpredictability in terms of their timing have been increasing over the last few years," Sunil Dahiya, an analyst at the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air, told Nikkei. "Every year, the high-temperature record keeps breaking, so it is definitely a manifestation of climate change."

Heat-attributable deaths and damage are inconsistently reported and take time to analyze, the WMO's November report warned. The human toll of extreme heat is "far higher" than often reported, it said, and heat-related mortality could be 30 times higher than current estimates.

In Japan during the past couple of decades, yearly heat stroke-related deaths -- like the one in Yamagata -- have more than quadrupled to a rolling average of 1,134 for the 2017 to 2021 period, up from 229 for 1997-2001, according to calculations by the Ministry of the Environment. The crisis has been exacerbated by the country's aging population. Health ministry data shows that around 85% of those who died by heatstroke in 2021 were 65 or older.

Concerned by these figures, the Japanese government in May approved an action plan to halve the number of heatstroke deaths by 2030. Measures include supporting schools to install air conditioners and urging local governments to secure "cooling shelters" -- air-conditioned or cooled buildings that provide respite and safety during extreme heat.

While wealthy countries like Japan struggle with heat, the challenge becomes greater for developing nations that lack the resources to sufficiently attend to the threats.

Under India's heat action plans, the India Meteorological Department issues alerts to help regions manage heat waves. The department also cautions workers in heat-exposed sectors such as construction to avoid direct sunlight and advises rescheduling of strenuous jobs to cooler times of the day.

Ensuring the effectiveness of the plans has been challenging. An analysis of 37 action plans of Indian municipalities in March by the Centre for Policy Research, a nonprofit think tank based in the nation, found that a majority are underfunded and not regularly updated.

Dengue and malaria: climate change killers

Abnormal heat has dire side effects.

On April 15, Thailand recorded an all-time high temperature of 44 C in Tak, a northern province. Warnings of heatstroke spread in a country where an average of 43 people die every year from hot weather, according to the Department of Medical Services.

But the indirect risks of extreme heat are just as deadly: The spike in temperatures this summer along the Thai-Myanmar border boosted the population of disease-carrying mosquitoes that breed there. Border provinces including Tak, Mae Hong Son and Kanchanaburi suffered the highest incidence of dengue and malaria this year.

The surging mosquito population has reversed years of progress made in Thailand to eradicate malaria, with cases topping 2,500 by midyear.

Dengue cases have risen similarly this year, totaling 127,838 as of November compared to 46,755 in 2022. The WHO categorized this year's Thai dengue outbreak as "severe," putting it down to a prolonged rainy season and warmer ground temperatures. Thailand is set to match or surpass its 2019 record of 131,157 dengue cases by the year's end.

Dengue and malaria, both already endemic in many Asian countries, are rapidly expanding as intensifying heat, rainfall and humidity create new habitats suitable for the mosquitoes that carry the virus and parasite that causes each disease. Hotter seas have also made 17% of Asia's coastlines suitable for the transmission of water-borne viruses that cause severe skin and digestive infections, according to the 2023 Lancet Countdown report.

The damage is intensifying in Malaysia this year as well. As of Nov. 10, the country recorded 100,936 cases of dengue, up 96.9% compared to the same period of 2022, according to the Ministry of Health. Deaths from dengue have more than doubled to 78 cases compared to 35 the previous year.

The nation's health care system is already straining with the burden of treating between 60,000 to 90,000 dengue cases annually. The situation is likely to worsen with climate change, according to Azrul Mohd Khalib, chief executive of Galen Center for Health and Social Policy. "We need to plan long-term for these public health emergencies. It is a matter of when they occur, not if."

Bangladesh, meanwhile, is experiencing its most severe dengue outbreak on record, with over 1,500 deaths reported this year so far, according to the government. An abnormal amount of rainfall, high temperatures and high humidity have led to an

increased mosquito population that is putting "huge pressure" on the health system, WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus warned in September.

Pakistan was hit by unprecedented flooding in 2022 -- which experts say was linked to climate change -- resulting in conditions that contributed to at least a fourfold increase in the number of malaria cases, to more than 1.6 million for the year, according to the WHO. People who were able to escape flooding are now dealing with the swarms of mosquitoes breeding in the stagnant pools of water, the organization said.

Vaccines for these diseases have been largely absent as effective types are only recently emerging. Proven and cost-effective initiatives to counter the diseases aim to eliminate human contact with the insects, such as setting up long-lasting insecticidal nets, spraying insecticides on houses' interior walls and limiting the breeding of mosquitoes.

The WHO in 2001 endorsed the first such nets, produced by Japan's Sumitomo Chemical, which applied technology originally used to repel insects from its factories' windows. The nets, aimed at preventing malaria, are made of fiber that incorporates insecticide and is structured so that the chemical seeps out over the years. The company now sells over 200 million nets annually to international financing organizations that donate them to communities in Africa and Asia.

The company is also making a small plastic disc containing a chemical that regulates insect growth. The product, endorsed by the WHO in 2017, is inserted into water, a common breeding site for mosquitoes that carry viruses. It is effective for over six months.

"Dengue is increasing rapidly, especially in urban areas. ... We launched the product as a business in the past year or so," said Takao Ishiwatari, who leads the anti-mosquito initiatives at Sumitomo Chemical. The company is expanding in countries like Thailand, Malaysia, the Philippines and Brazil by selling the discs in batches to governments and international organizations. But such businesses, though worthy, are not very profitable, and making them more rewarding would motivate more companies to be engaged in combating health issues, Ishiwatari said.

Another measure being tested is to breed mosquitoes with Wolbachia, a common bacterium that naturally occurs in 50% of insect species. The bacterium is safe for humans and the environment but competes with viruses like dengue and Zika, making it harder for the viruses to reproduce inside the mosquitoes and spread among people.

A trial study in Indonesia led by the nonprofit World Mosquito Program in which Wolbachia mosquitoes were released in the city of Yogyakarta between 2017 and 2020 confirmed a 77% reduction in dengue cases and 86% fewer related hospitalizations.

Bad air days

Rising global temperatures are not the only deadly side-effect of burning fossil fuels. The process, combined with crop burning and wildfires, over the past 50 years has also led to an increase in emissions of harmful pollutants in Asia. Air pollution is estimated to be responsible for 4 million early deaths in the Asia-Pacific region every year, according to a 2022 report by the Asian Development Bank.

Of the world's 10 most polluted cities in 2022, nine were in Asia and six in India alone, according to Swiss air-quality tech company IQAir. Across the continent, the number of young healthy people developing respiratory problems due to polluted air is rising.

Ika Rahmatul Layly, 42, thought she had caught a regular cold in early August when she came down with a cough, stuffy nose and mild fever. The resident of South Tangerang, on the outskirts of Jakarta, said she would usually recover from such symptoms after taking vitamin C and resting for a couple of days.

But the symptoms persisted for three months, necessitating at least five visits to three different doctors. She was finally diagnosed with "an acute respiratory infection, caused by the pollution," Layly told Nikkei Asia.

She blamed the filthy air she was forced to breathe, despite wearing a surgical mask, whenever she was stuck in traffic on her scooter during rush hour. Many of her friends and neighbors contracted almost identical symptoms around that time and received similar diagnoses, she said.

Jakarta was the world's most polluted major city for several days in a row in August, according to IQAir. Emissions from vehicles and coal-fired power plants near the Indonesian capital are believed to be responsible for the hazardous air, aggravated by a particularly bad drought and unusually high temperatures brought by the El Nino weather phenomenon between July and October.

The alarming levels of toxic pollutants prompted the Jakarta municipal government to impose a two-month work-from-home policy for half of the city's civil servants; the dictate expired in October.

President Joko Widodo at one point ordered cloud seeding to induce rain, but the lack of clouds over greater Jakarta conspired against the idea. As part of long-term solutions, the government said it would keep pushing for the early phaseout of coal plants and accelerate the development of renewable energies and carbon tax.

Pandu Riono, an epidemiologist at the University of Indonesia, told Nikkei he suspects that the combination of polluted air and hotter conditions is contributing to the rising prevalence of a range of health issues, including diarrhea, heart attacks and mental health problems.

"Food becomes spoiled faster when left outside, causing spikes in diarrhea cases," Riono told Nikkei. "Older people in particular are becoming more prone to heart attacks ... especially when the air is toxic due to pollution. And the rising temperatures, combined with air pollution ... are causing the quality of life to deteriorate, causing people a lot of discomfort. So, many are becoming stressed out, leading to an increase in mental health problems."

Some local governments, including in India, home to most of the world's top 50 polluted cities last year, have tried introducing bans on construction or restrictions on car use to curb air pollution.

Experts say countries must kick their fossil fuel habits to have any chance of reducing air pollution and its health impacts. "The only solution [for India] is reducing the consumption of fossil fuel," Dahiya, of the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air, told Nikkei. "We are losing more than a million lives every year just due to air pollution."

No time to waste

The WMO warned in November that 2024 may be "even warmer" than 2023, with more intense heat waves, heavy rain and other extreme events in some regions. While El Nino impacts are partly to blame, "this is clearly and unequivocally due to the contribution of the increasing concentrations of heat-trapping greenhouse gases from human activities," Secretary-General Petteri Taalas warned in a news release.

"Climate change is an unchanging trend and will undoubtedly enhance temperature levels. We have to take measures to adapt to the situation while making efforts to decarbonize and avoid the worst," said professor Nakamura of the University of Tokyo. "The problem is, the change is happening at a scale so rapidly that the ecosystem can't keep up."

Health officials at COP are expected to discuss the connection between climate change and health, ways to build climate-resilient health systems, and how to mobilize investment in health, according to the COP28 presidency.

"The [climate change] challenge is getting harder, but the solutions are getting better," said Edlund of Malaria No More. "If we move fast, we can address these diseases so that climate [change] won't make them worse over time."

Data shows that "we're starting to increase our capacity to adapt to current levels of climate change, but we know that we're heading to at least 1.5 degrees, probably much more than that if we don't act now," said Romanello of the Lancet. From building a resilient and decarbonized health system and increasing health funding to ensuring a just transition and rapidly phasing out fossil fuels, "there's a lot more that we should be doing, particularly as we head to COP28."

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

[Gov't vows to make climate-sensitive policies for children](#)

By: Krixia Subingsubing

Ahead of the upcoming 28th United Nations Climate Change Conference in Dubai next month, leading government figures have pledged to make climate-related policies more responsive to children, acknowledging their unique vulnerabilities and growing anxieties about climate change.

During the annual World Children's Day celebrations last Sunday, Vice President Sara Duterte, Quezon City Mayor Joy Belmonte, the United Nations Children's Fund (Unicef) and youth delegates to the COP28 also committed to provide them "the platform and opportunity [to] voice their concerns and ideas" about solving the climate crisis.

"The climate crisis is a child's rights crisis and it hits Filipino children hard," Duterte said. "[They] struggle with fear and uncertainty about the climate crisis, but in spite of this, they are not passive climate victims. We must listen to their voices and empower them to take action."

"Youth are our most active force in nation-building, and we must maximize their skills and talents to secure the success of our climate change initiatives," echoed Belmonte.

These calls come amid efforts to improve its current slate of climate policies, including its nationally determined contribution (NDC) plans, which are climate action plans to cut emissions and adapt to climate impacts.

A 2022 Unicef report had classified the Philippine NDC as a Category C plan, meaning that there was little to no children-related policies integrated in it, despite being a high-risk country to climate change.

Children face unique vulnerabilities to the impacts of climate change, which has triggered stronger and more frequent typhoons and droughts.

Millions are often displaced from their homes during floods, while many are forced to halt their schooling, said Unicef country representative Oyunsaikhan Dendevnorov.

Filipino children have also been ranked as the most affected by "ecoanxiety," defined as chronic fears about environmental doom, Dendevnorov added.

But this year, the COP28 delegates led by Deputy Finance Secretary Luwalhati Tiuseco said they would do their best to make sure that children-centered concerns are represented in the upcoming negotiations especially for loss and damages and climate financing.

She added that they were currently accepting plans and proposals on the inclusion of the children's agenda in the negotiations.

For her part, Belmonte expressed hopes that any climate financing commitments could trickle down to local governments so they can craft a sound climate plan that's responsive to children.

[Marcos: Transport modernization to fight climate change](#)

By: Nestor Corrales

Despite its traditional look, the iconic Filipino jeepney is “being heavily modernized” as part of the country’s efforts to lessen its carbon footprint and to help mitigate the impact of climate change, according to President Marcos.

Speaking at the Daniel K. Inouye Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies here on Monday, the President also highlighted the Filipino jeepney before discussing regional security issues before an audience of experts and US officials.

The program moderator noticed the “little artifacts” on the table beside the President before he took questions from the audience.

“These are jeepneys. If you don’t know what a jeepney is, these are the jeeps that were left behind by the Americans after the war (World War II), which were converted into transport systems,” Mr. Marcos said.

He said these comprised “a very large percentage of our transportation system.”

“And the reason that we are highlighting them is because we are in the midst of an effort to go fully electric when it comes to public transport,” he added.

The President said “This is our continuing effort as a response, of course, to climate change—to improve the mix of energy consumption and supply from the traditional fossil fuel to more renewable.”

“And that is why we put them out here to remind all that despite their very traditional look, [the jeepneys] are being heavily modernized,” Mr. Marcos said.

He presented his plan for the traditional Filipino jeepney as drivers and operators in Metro Manila and other provinces held protests ahead of the Dec. 31 deadline for the consolidation of franchises under the government’s public utility vehicle modernization program.

SUNSTAR

[Growing bamboo a strategy to climate change adaptation, sustainability](#)

THE Department of Science and Technology (DOST) highlighted growing bamboo as a strategy in climate change adaptation and sustainability for Mindanao during a disaster risk reduction and management (DRRM) forum in Cagayan de Oro City.

The forum was attended by 65 participants representing 20 local government units (LGUs) and organizations coming from various parts of the country.

The DOST-led forum, “Tala-Kawayan: Bamboo in DRR and Carbon Crediting,” was conducted on October 4 as a venue to inform and build networking for local bamboo stakeholders in Mindanao.

The forum was also designed to spread awareness on the benefits of bamboo in disaster risk reduction efforts and how communities with large resources of bamboo could take part in the Carbon Crediting initiatives.

The first panel of speakers were lawyer Burt Estrada, CEO of Bukidnon Tagoloanon Mulahay Ha Kabukalagan Agriculture Cooperative (Buktamaco); and Christopher Ua-o, head of Manufacturing at RIZOME Philippines. They emphasized bamboo's transformative impact in Indigenous People Areas through the Bamboo Value Chain Development Program.

“The program increased the family income of people involved in the program,” Estrada said while mentioning the program's effect on enhancing community resilience in disaster-prone areas.

He also underscored that bamboo is a sustainable solution in disaster-prone regions, offering economic opportunities and enhancing resilience.

Ua-o stressed the importance of collaborative efforts between community-based organizations, businesses, and policymakers. He underscored the significance of these alliances in championing bamboo's role in disaster risk reduction.

“When we use more bamboo then we avoid using wood, steel and concrete which are responsible for 25 percent of our carbon dioxide emission,” Ua-o said.

The second panel delved into Government and Policy Support for Carbon Crediting Bamboo, featuring insights from Director Romulo Aggangan of DOST-Forest Products Research and Development Institute, Dr. Florentino Tesoro of Bamboo Professionals Inc., and Rene “Butch” Madarang, Executive director of the Philippine Bamboo Industry Development Council.

Tesoro discussed the history and concept of Carbon Crediting and its relation to the global push against climate change. Aggangan stressed the need for research and development to optimize bamboo's growth and carbon sequestration capabilities, emphasizing the importance of science and innovation. Madarang reaffirmed support from non-government organizations to bamboo initiatives and its future role in carbon crediting, “by recognizing [Bamboo’s] versatile properties, its role in disaster resilience, its soil stabilization capabilities, and its potential to earn carbon credits, we are poised to harness bamboo’s full potential.”

In the open forum and press conference led by Philippine Information Agency (PIA)-Northern Mindanao Director Franklin Gumapon, they explored bamboo processing challenges in Mindanao and the necessary government support for processors.

Myrna Decipulo, recognized as one of the pillars of the bamboo industry in Mindanao, concluded the forum, expressing delight in the Department of Science and Technology's robust support.

She underscored the forum's significance in advancing crucial conversations for the region's bamboo sector.

The forum was part of the activities of Handa Pilipinas: Innovations in Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Exposition Mindanao leg. It was the first DRRM exposition in Mindanao.

THE MANILA TIMES

Voluntary carbon market in the Philippines

By: Kelvin Lester Lee

MITIGATION of the effects of climate change is a growing concern around the globe. Due to this, the call to redirect financing and investments toward green and socially responsible projects has become louder. One of the ways countries can finance climate change mitigation goals that are otherwise not funded by public finance is through voluntary carbon markets (VCMs).

VCM is where private individuals and organizations issue, buy and sell carbon credits outside of regulated or mandatory carbon pricing instruments. Each carbon credit represents 1 ton of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions that was not emitted into the atmosphere. One credit is issued for each metric ton of GHG emissions avoided, reduced or removed.

In some developing countries, VCM has managed to provide the necessary financing for many carbon projects where it is traditionally difficult to attract private investments due to factors such as high-risk perception and high-debt levels, among others.

Because of the growing discussions that VCM is gathering around the globe, the Asean Capital Markets Forum (ACMF) released a study on VCM titled "Accelerating Decarbonization in Asean through Voluntary Carbon Markets" discussing, among others, the opportunities of VCM among member countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

In terms of this study, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand and Indonesia already established their respective voluntary carbon credit exchanges, while Vietnam, Brunei and Laos have shown different levels of readiness to establish carbon exchanges but have yet to make commitments in this regard.

In the Philippines, House Bill 7705 was filed in the House of Representatives for the proposed "Low Carbon Economy Act," which includes the establishment of a carbon trading system, which is in essence a VCM.

As VCM shows good potential as a source of financing for projects toward decarbonization and lowering of GHG emissions, it seems high time for the Philippines to revisit and further discuss opportunities for VCM in the country.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

[Climate Change Commission grilled again in Senate about 'frequent trips'](#)

By: Maila Ager

For two years now, the issue of its supposed penchant for travels hounded the Climate Change Commission (CCC) on Monday.

This time, Senate Minority Leader Aquilino “Koko” Pimentel III asked about the CCC’s participation in the Conference of Parties (COP27) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change held in Egypt late last year.

“Just to destroy this bias against the commission, there have been talks since last year that you’ve always been traveling,” Pimentel said in Filipino when the Senate tackled in the plenary the proposed P147 million budget of the CCC for 2024.

He proceeded to ask if there was truth to the allegation that the Philippines had 89 delegates to the COP27.

Responding for the CCC, sponsor of the agency’s budget, Sen. Imee Marcos clarified that only 12 of the 89 delegates were from the commission.

“They were combined from different agencies. But there are really a lot of them,” Marcos said, speaking partly in Filipino.

Pimentel next asked if indeed the delegates from CCC extended their stay in Egypt for another week.

Marcos surmised the COP27 was a “contentious meeting” so negotiations had extended beyond the convention period.

But when Pimentel asked if she was happy with the explanation of the commission, Marcos said: “I still think — you and I being of Ilocano origin — they are spending too much on travel.”

Senate Majority Leader Joel Villanueva joined the discussion, saying: “It is not acceptable also from the people of Bulacan.”

Later on, upon Pimentel's query, Marcos pointed out that only P4.999 million — or just under P5 million of the P147 million budget proposal of the CCC — was set aside for its local and foreign trips.

The same issue on their foreign trips was raised against the commission when it defended on the Senate floor its budget for 2023.

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