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BUSINESS MIRROR

[\[Opinion\] Day 1 of the Pilipinas Conference: Commitments from our government](#)

By: Victor Andres C. Manhit

Day 1 of the Pilipinas Conference turned out to be everything we had expected and more. Our esteemed guests from the public sector, private sector, civil society, as well as the diplomatic community, enthusiastically shared their time and their precious insights to deepen our discussions on how we can more effectively respond to the challenges of the times.

BUSINESS WORLD

[**DoE expects nuclear power to take 10 years before joining energy mix**](#)

By: Ashley Erica Jose

The Department of Energy (DoE) estimates a timeline of 10 years before nuclear power can join the energy mix.

CNN PHILIPPINES

[**Makabayan bloc files resolution seeking to probe US-PH nuclear energy deal**](#)

Metro Manila (CNN Philippines, November 23) — The Makabayan bloc in the House of Representatives has filed a resolution seeking to investigate the nuclear energy cooperation deal announced by United States Vice President Kamala Harris, citing threats to the health and safety of Filipinos and the environment.

MALAYA BUSINESS INSIGHT

[**Marcos: Pinoy seafarers need additional training on ‘green’ fuel**](#)

By: Jocelyn Montemayor

President Marcos Jr. yesterday emphasized anew the need to “upskill and reskill the seafaring workforce” in anticipation of the scheduled shift of ocean-going vessels to “greener” fuel such as hydrogen between 2030 to 2040.

MANILA BULLETIN

[**COP27 concludes with a step toward climate justice**](#)

COP27, or the 27th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, concluded last Nov. 20, 2022 in Sharm El-Sheikh in Egypt. Based on the closing statement of UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, the two-week event took “an important step toward climate justice.”

MANILA STANDARD

[**More Japanese firms interested in investing in PH manufacturing and renewable energy**](#)

By: Alena Mae S. Flores

The Philippine Economic Zone Authority said Tuesday more Japanese firms expressed interest to invest in the country’s manufacturing and renewable energy sectors.

NIKKEI ASIA

Inside the Trilateral Commission: Power elites grapple with China's rise Enigmatic group linking Asia, the U.S. and Europe opens up on eve of 50th anniversary

By Ken Moriyasu and Mariko Kodaki, Nikkei staff writers, and Shigesaburo Okumura, Nikkei Asia editor-in-chief

TOKYO -- On Saturday morning, some of Asia's best-known politicians, corporate leaders and academics gathered at a hotel conference room just steps away from the Japanese prime minister's office.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

Iligan eyes to be climate, disaster-resilient city

By: Nef Luczon

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY – Iligan is eyeing to become Mindanao's next disaster and climate-change-resilient city.

Marcos to DENR: Make mining firms comply with safety policies

By: Azer Parocha

MANILA – President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. on Tuesday directed the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to require small and large-scale mining firms to comply with policies that ensure safe working conditions for mining workers.

PH-Aussie action plan realized via emergency broadcast training

By: Marita Moaje

MANILA – The eight-day emergency broadcast training by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) in Canberra for members of the Philippine government media is a realization of the two countries' action plan on disaster management.

PH seeks cooperation with US on climate 'loss, damage': DFA

By Joyce Ann L. Rocamora

MANILA – President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. has sought for a possible cooperation with the United States on climate loss and damage during his bilateral meeting with Vice President Kamala Harris on Monday.

RAPPLER

[**\[Opinion\] Reflections from the hope spot: The indifference of COP27**](#)

By: Jannele Michelle Jimenez and Beatriz Mikaela Ermac

COP27 in hindsight

A few days after Severe Tropical Cyclone Paeng all but engulfed the entirety of the Philippines, the 27th iteration of the Conference of Parties (COP) began. There was a dystopian character to the unfolding of these events. In Egypt, world leaders, mostly men, gathered for a “family picture” in what seemed to be a brief pause amidst the politicking and the fruitless negotiations, all while our country finds itself reeling from the effects of another disaster.

THE MANILA TIMES

[**Climate change and the new Marcos brand of diplomacy**](#)

By: Daphne Oseña-Paez

WE saw the President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. brand of diplomacy at the 29th APEC Summit in Bangkok, Thailand, and I like it. It is refreshing and exciting. This was his first appearance on the world stage and he did well, as former president Gloria Macapagal Arroyo said. The Asia-Pacific region covers more than half of the world's economies. The president seemed very at ease among the leaders of major economies like France, Canada, China and Saudi Arabia, like he was in the comfort of old colleagues, or friends even. There was that light moment with Canada's Prime Minister Justin Trudeau when they both compared their printed socks.

[**Japanese firms keen to invest in PH – PEZA**](#)

By: Eireene Jairee Gomez

Japanese companies have committed to invest in the Philippines, the Philippine Economic Zone Authority (PEZA) claimed on Tuesday following a November 14 to 18 investment mission that sought present the Philippines as the best investment destination in Southeast Asia.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

[**DENR ordered to bolster regulatory powers on mining**](#)

By: Gaea Katreena Cabico

MANILA, Philippines — President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Tuesday ordered the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to strengthen its regulatory powers on small and large-scale mining to ensure the strict implementation of safety and health programs for workers.

THE VISAYAN DAILY STAR

[Opinion] Loss and damage

After a long, hard battle to get the world's wealthy nations mostly responsible for planet-heating emissions to pay for climate damages, vulnerable nations finally succeeded in making it a defining issue in the recently COP27 talks in Egypt.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

BUSINESS WORLD

First-ever conference to bring stakeholders together for the Net Zero Building and Net Zero City Summit 2023

Global Zero Carbon Partnership and Escom Events, in collaboration with the Department of Energy (DoE), Bases Conversion and Development Authority (BCDA), and Philippine Green Building Council (PHILGBC) as Official Endorsers of the event, have come together to support the initiative to bring together stakeholders in the value chain for Net Zero Building, Energy Efficiency, Building Technology, ESG, and Smart City Development for the first time at the year's flagship event — Net Zero Building & Net Zero City Summit Philippines 2023 on Jan. 10 at Dusit Thani Manila.

PHILIPPINE INFORMATION AGENCY

Climate Change Consciousness Week kick off draws climate, environment champions

By Alaine Allanigue

QUEZON CITY, (PIA) -- The 15th Global Warming and Climate Change Consciousness Week (CCC Week) kick off has drawn together various climate change and environment stakeholders in the Philippines in a collective push towards transforming climate change commitments into action towards a climate smart and climate resilient Philippines by 2050.

RMN NEWS ONLINE

CCC, nagsagawa ng tree planting sa La Mesa Nature Reserve sa QC

Nagsagawa ng tree planting activity ang Climate Change Commission (CCC) sa La Mesa Nature Reserve sa Quezon City (QC).

Information and Knowledge Management Division

BUSINESS MIRROR

[Opinion] Day 1 of the Pilipinas Conference: Commitments from our government

By: Victor Andres C. Manhit

Day 1 of the Pilipinas Conference turned out to be everything we had expected and more. Our esteemed guests from the public sector, private sector, civil society, as well as the diplomatic community, enthusiastically shared their time and their precious insights to deepen our discussions on how we can more effectively respond to the challenges of the times.

This is our seventh Pilipinas Conference, and I have reason to believe we will look forward to many more.

For this year, the continuing challenges posed by the pandemic are compounded by the issues posed by the Filipino people's perception of their current state, their expectations of their leaders, as well as by the various geopolitical, traditional and non-traditional threats that we are facing.

We are grateful that representatives from the government gave us an assurance that they have a fairly accurate picture of what the country needs at present and, more importantly, what is supposed to be done to respond to these needs and to propel our nation forward.

For instance, Secretary Amenah Pangandaman of the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) said that digital transformation is at the core of the reform agenda of her agency. It is her agency's goal to achieve efficiency across the government and enhance the digital economy, and this is best done through investing in digitalization and innovation.

She also said that they are making a conscious effort at energizing citizen participation in governance, specifically through the Open Budget Survey. The DBM is in the process of crafting the sixth National Action Plan under the Philippine Open Government Partnership initiative, amplifying the collaboration between the non-government sector and government agencies in the design, implementation, and monitoring of government programs.

Environment Secretary Ma. Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga said that the main takeaway from the 27th Conference of Parties in Egypt, with regard to climate change, is that the world remains way off its commitment to cut emissions. She acknowledged the role of the private sector as a critical actor in bridging the cost of energy transition and the just transition toward net zero. She pointed out that it is incumbent for society to prevent and mitigate factors that contribute to people's vulnerability — directly related to exposure, driven by development trajectory, and characterized by decades of unregulated urbanization, inequities in social services and social protection, and the disregard for ways by which our ecosystems actually support our communities.

"Lessons learned from past disasters need to be made part of our survival DNA," she said. She added that we need to invest in education training and capacity building to create support systems for risk governance based on the best available science. For its part, the private sector should adopt climate and disaster resilience into their core business value cycles. Many companies, she said, have already chosen to be agents of environmental conversation and champions of community progress and empowerment.

Meanwhile, Transportation Secretary Jaime Bautista said that the maritime industry is a crucial component in the country's socioeconomic rebound from the pandemic. Specifically, the Philippine Coast Guard is taking the lead at promoting maritime safety.

"The Philippines aims to be a major maritime nation that values the safety and protection of marine life and marine environment," he said. "We look at opportunities to forge collaborations with maritime-related agencies of other countries to benchmark our efforts at raising our maritime industry to global standards."

Closing the first day of the conference was Philippine Ambassador to the United States Jose Manuel "Babe" Romualdez.

"The evolving nature and emergence of security threats present a significant opportunity for both the Philippines and the United States to explore new areas of cooperation," he said in a recorded statement, adding that diplomatic relations between the two countries have been further strengthened by the Visiting Forces Agreement and the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement.

Ambassador Romualdez said that the defense and security aspects will continue to remain key pillars in the bilateral relations of the two countries, and that alliance between them is vital in maintaining peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific region.

After all, based on surveys, one of the most recent ones being commissioned by Stratbase this year, a large majority of Filipinos consider the United States as their most trusted country. Ambassador Romualdez said the alliance between the Philippines and the US will remain solid and stable, "underpinned by deep people-to-people ties forged by our shared experiences of the past decades."

For many years now, the Stratbase Group has been doing just this: bringing people together, providing the platform for interaction, provoking thought, sparking conversations, and translating all these into actionable policy recommendations, which we hope helps make a difference in people's lives.

There is no single sector that can and should drive the nation's affairs. There are no formulaic solutions or quick fixes. We acknowledge the complexity of what we are up against, the diversity yet interwovenness of our interests, but also the singularity of our aspirations — a better, more secure life for Filipinos. A guarantee that people will not only survive, but flourish.

I am thankful for our friends — key thinkers, policy shapers, decision makers — who continue to share their valuable insights during these conferences. I look forward to the conversations that we will have, and which we will hopefully sustain.

BUSINESS WORLD

DoE expects nuclear power to take 10 years before joining energy mix

By: Ashley Erica Jose

The Department of Energy (DoE) estimates a timeline of 10 years before nuclear power can join the energy mix.

"If you want to (tap) nuclear, small and modular (reactors are) more feasible. The technology exists in the US. In order for us to procure we need to comply with the international bilateral agreements," Energy Undersecretary Sharon S. Garin said on Tuesday.

Ms. Garin added: "If we do it the regular way (with) site (and) feasibility studies, I think (it will take) 10 years — 10 years to operational status," Ms. Garin said.

On Monday, US Vice-President Kamala Harris said that the US and the Philippines will launch negotiations on a nuclear energy program for civilian use.

Ms. Garin said that in order for the Philippines to procure small modular reactors it needs to comply with various international agreements.

"One of that is the 123 Agreement. (Ms. Harris announced that the US is) willing to start negotiations," Ms. Garin said.

Ms. Garin called the negotiations a good start in accessing US technology.

The 123 Agreement helps ensure that civilian nuclear energy programs are not diverted to weapons development and proliferation.

This agreement also establishes a legal framework for significant nuclear cooperation with other countries.

Ms. Garin said the Energy department is open to any technology to ensure energy security.

"We are open to any technology when it comes to renewable energy or green energy or transition to any kind of energy other than coal or petroleum. Nuclear can be a technology (that can be developed into a) better technology in 10 years," she said.

The International Atomic Energy Agency has laid down 19 milestones for countries seeking to develop a nuclear power program.

The Philippines is currently in the first stage — the establishment of a national nuclear policy.

In 2020, former President Rodrigo R. Duterte signed an executive order setting the national position on the development of nuclear energy.

Ms. Garin also said that the DoE is also looking to commission a third-party assessment on reviving the Bataan Nuclear Power Plant.

"We are not saying that Bataan is the only way to go, but we need to be very careful, we need to make sure the people... feel safe," Ms. Garin said.

Ms. Garin added that the DoE tap its 2023 budget to finance the third-party assessment.

"Hopefully we can use the 2023 budget for that so we can proceed. Once we know that it is safe or not. If it is safe, we can start deciding who will operate," Ms. Garin said.

CNN PHILIPPINES

Makabayan bloc files resolution seeking to probe US-PH nuclear energy deal

Metro Manila (CNN Philippines, November 23) — The Makabayan bloc in the House of Representatives has filed a resolution seeking to investigate the nuclear energy cooperation deal announced by United States Vice President Kamala Harris, citing threats to the health and safety of Filipinos and the environment.

ACT Teachers party-list Rep. France Castro, Gabriela Women's Party Rep. Arlene Brosas, and Kabataan party-list Rep. Raoul Dannel Manuel warned that Filipinos may be used as "guinea pigs" for testing nuclear equipment.

"Ang mahirap dito baka tayong mga mamamayang Pilipino ang ma-1-2-3 at maging mga guinea pig ng teknolohiyang ito na tine-testing pa lang ng US," Castro said in a statement.

According to the White House fact sheet released on Monday, the 123 Agreement, or the nuclear energy cooperation deal, will provide the legal basis for US exports of nuclear equipment and material to the Philippines.

The 123 Agreement also aims to support expanded partnerships on zero-emission energy and nonproliferation of nuclear weapons.

According to Philippine Ambassador to the US Jose Manuel Romualdez, the Marcos administration is considering bringing in US-developed small modular reactors to the country.

"As it is, modular or microreactor nuclear power plants are still at an experimental stage and are only legally being made in US bases. Early this year, the Pentagon's Strategic Capabilities Office announced the construction and testing decision that followed the office's Environmental Impact Statement work for Project Pele," Castro said.

Castro warned these experiments carry high risks of leaks and meltdowns.

"Given the high threats posed to the health and safety of Filipinos and our environment by experimental nuclear technology, it is therefore urgent that Congress and the Filipino people are clued in on the proposed terms and conditions and other details of the said 123 Agreement," the resolution read.

In July, President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. said he aims to prioritize the use of renewable energy sources, including nuclear energy, to address climate change and the country's disaster resilience capabilities.

MALAYA BUSINESS INSIGHT

Marcos: Pinoy seafarers need additional training on ‘green’ fuel

By: Jocelyn Montemayor

President Marcos Jr. yesterday emphasized anew the need to “upskill and reskill the seafaring workforce” in anticipation of the scheduled shift of ocean-going vessels to “greener” fuel such as hydrogen between 2030 to 2040.

The Office of the Press Secretary (OPS) said the President made the remark during his meeting with officials of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in Malacañang.

The OPS said Marcos emphasized that Filipino seafarers need additional training to be able to handle the use of alternative fuels that is being adopted by many countries in a bid to meet global decarbonization objectives.

“The seafaring industry needs to create habits to help with carbon emission reduction,” OPS said, quoting Marcos.

Last November 14, leading organizations across the shipping value chain and the largest producers of green hydrogen signed a joint statement during the 27th Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP27) that commits to the rapid production and use of low-carbon fuels based on green hydrogen to accelerate decarbonization of global shipping.

The shipping sector currently accounts for three percent of global greenhouse gas emissions but this is expected to grow to 50 percent by 2050 without intervention.

The President, during the recent Association of Southeast Asian Nations and Asia Pacific economic Cooperation summits, pushed for the development of renewable energy sources to address the problem of high power costs and said the Philippines had prioritized renewable energy options such as hydropower, geothermal power, solar and other low-emission energy sources.

Marcos also talked of the Philippines’ plans to raise the share of renewable energy in the country’s power generation mix to 35 percent by 2030 and 50 percent by 2040.

The President, during the 49th Founding Anniversary of the Career Executive Service Board (CESB) and 2022 Career Executive Service Lifelong Learning for Leadership Congress, urged the country’s career executive service officers and eligible to avoid temptations and corruptions as well while remaining committed to welfare of the people and the improvement of their lives.

Marcos asked them to remain vigilant against corruption and other acts that diminish public trust.

"Remember that we are here not for our own gain. We are here to bring forth a government that provides for the needs of the people," he said as he called on public servants to continue to support the government and to actively take part in pursuing the administration's 8-Point Socioeconomic Agenda.

The 8-Point Socioeconomic Agenda involves "policies that promote social justice, ensure food security, accelerate progress, protect our environment and address climate change."

"Let us reinvent ourselves and reinvent the bureaucracy... The welfare of the people and the improvement of our lives is of utmost importance," he added.

During the event, the President also vowed to carry out a review of Memorandum Circular No. 3, series of 2022, that extended the term of office of some government officials and employees until the end of the year or until a replacement has been named for the positions they are occupying.

"Let me assure our Career Executive Service Board and the affected CESEs occupying third-level positions in the government that the Office of the President is going to review the said memorandum, and look into the other hurdles faced by many CESEs in obtaining CES eligibility," he said.

After the event, the President led the 2022 Galing Pook Awards where he recognized the active response and effective leadership of local government units (LGUs) amid the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and other challenges.

"As your President, I'm deeply encouraged by the effective leadership we now see shining brightly amongst our LGUs," Marcos said, adding that everyone benefited from the active response and prompt delivery of services of the LGUs in the years of the pandemic.

"So, I thank you for letting our people know that they are in safe hands, even if the health crisis and other succeeding challenges gave us enough reason to fear," he added as he expressed hope the local government units would continue to give their best in the present journey into the new normal.

He asked them to be consistent and persevering in their endeavors as well as to support his administration in building a country "where efficient, competent, and effective leadership is the hallmark of Philippine governance."

The 10 outstanding programs by various LGUs are The Green Wall of Alcala (Alcala, Cagayan); Advancing and Sustaining Good Governance and Community Actions towards Resiliency and Empowerment (Basilan Province); Bataan Public-Private Partnership Programs (Bataan Province); Balik-Biñan Project: Tourism Development through Heritage Conservation (Biñan City, Laguna);

From Black to Green: Fishponds, Eco- Tourism and Full Employment (Brgy. Cayabu, Tanay, Rizal); Trekking to Unlock Community Ailments and Difficulties (TUCAD) (Goa, Camarines Sur); “I-BIKE” A Program Promoting the Development of the Iloilo City Bike Culture (Iloilo City); Yaru: A Whole-of-Community Approach Towards Disaster Management (Itbayat, Batanes); Libertad Fish Forever Savings Club (Libertad, Antique); and Basta Piddigueño, AgriHenyo: Consolidated Farm Production System (Piddig, Ilocos Norte).

Galing Pook recognizes, capacitates and promotes innovation, sustainability, citizen empowerment and excellence in local governance and has empowered hundreds of LGUs to develop programs and social innovations through the Galing Pook Awards, Galing Pook Academy and Galing Pook Advocacies.

MANILA BULLETIN

COP27 concludes with a step toward climate justice

COP27, or the 27th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, concluded last Nov. 20, 2022 in Sharm El-Sheikh in Egypt. Based on the closing statement of UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, the two-week event took “an important step toward climate justice.”

“I welcome the decision to establish a ‘loss and damage fund’ and to operationalize it in the coming period,” Guterres said, as he underscored the fact that voices of those on the frontlines of the climate crisis must be heard.

“Loss and damage,” as the UN defines it, “are those arising from the adverse effects of climate change, which include those related to extreme weather events but also slow onset events, such as sea level rise, increasing temperatures, ocean acidification, glacial retreat and related impacts, salinization, land and forest degradation, loss of biodiversity and desertification.” To put it simply, “loss and damage” is the result of human-induced climate change, which has caused widespread adverse impacts and related losses and damages to nature and people.

Through the years, establishing a funding mechanism to compensate vulnerable nations for “loss and damage” from climate-induced disasters has been a thorny issue. It could also be recalled that the Philippines, in past and present COP meets, has called for this compensatory move. No less than the President, in his first UN General Assembly address, said that the country is the “least responsible yet suffers the most from climate change.”

“The Philippines is a net carbon sink... we absorb more carbon dioxide than we emit. And yet, we are the fourth most vulnerable nation to the effects of climate change,” the President said. “This injustice must be corrected, and those who need to do more must act now. Industrialized countries must fulfill their obligations under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and Paris Agreement to cut their greenhouse gas emissions, provide climate financing and technology transfer.” This statement forms the foundation of the stand of the Philippines on the negotiation table.

During days of intense negotiations, developing countries made strong and repeated appeals for the establishment of a “loss and damage fund” to compensate countries most vulnerable to climate change, yet contributed little to it.

“Clearly this will not be enough, but it is a much-needed political signal to rebuild broken trust,” Guterres said.

Though COP27 presented a step toward climate justice, some governments and organizations were not satisfied with the outcome, as there were gaps and challenges that were not addressed. The UN chief acknowledged it and reminded the world of the

remaining priorities regarding climate action, including the ambition to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions and keep alive the Paris Agreement's 1.5-degree Celsius limit.

"We need to drastically reduce emissions now — and this is an issue that this COP didn't address," Guterres lamented. He said that the world still needs to "make a giant leap on climate ambition, and to end its addiction to fossil fuels by investing in renewable energy."

It turns out that the conclusion of the COP27 summit is just the beginning of more work needed for the planet. Reiterating a statement from Kenyan environmental activist Elizabeth Wathuti, she said, "COP27 may be over, but the fight for a safe future is not. It is now more urgent than ever that political leaders work to agree on a global deal to protect and restore nature."

Now, more than ever, Filipinos must not waver in the call for climate justice as our future, and our children's future, which is now at stake.

MANILA STANDARD

More Japanese firms interested in investing in PH manufacturing and renewable energy

By: Alena Mae S. Flores

The Philippine Economic Zone Authority said Tuesday more Japanese firms expressed interest to invest in the country's manufacturing and renewable energy sectors.

PEZA concluded an outbound investment mission in Japan on Nov. 18 to position the Philippines as the best investment destination in Southeast Asia.

PEZA officer-in-charge director-general Tereso Panga cited investment opportunities for Japanese stakeholders and locators in the Philippines.

"Although they [Japanese] are already the number one ranking investor in economic zones under PEZA, we are still encouraging them to invest more in the Philippines," Panga said.

He said PEZA draws guidance from the priority strategy of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr., specifically on agriculture and renewable energy.

"We are also guided by DTI's science technology innovation-driven industrialization strategy," Panga said.

PEZA pitched the Philippines for investments, especially for export production in ecozones.

The Department of Trade and Industry, Board of Investments, Department of Foreign Affairs, Department of Energy and Philippine Trade and Investment Center-Tokyo also joined the investment mission.

"As of September, PEZA has a total of 898 Japanese enterprises located in our economic zones with cumulative investments of P739.599 billion," Panga said.

"Meanwhile, from January to September 2022, P11.262 billion of investments were made from Japanese investors, with \$13.258 billion of export income generated and 351,335 direct jobs created," Panga said.

Board of Investments managing head Ceferino Rodolfo said the Japanese investors are pioneers and leaders in key areas in renewable energy and digitalization.

PEZA signed two strategic partnerships recently. It signed a memorandum of understanding with Junca Global Partner Inc. and a registration agreement with Kurabe Industrial Philippines Inc.

PEZA and Junca agreed to aggressively promote the Philippines as an investment destination not only for manufacturing companies in Japan but also for startups that wanted to collaborate with local startups.

Junca Global is engaged in stem cells biotech, fintech and blockchain technology.

"With the signed MOU, PEZA and Junca will collaborate in bringing renewable energy technologies to ecozones and thereby enable locator companies to remain globally competitive while at the same time contributing to mitigating the effects of climate change pursuant to the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement," Panga said.

Meanwhile, Kurabe, an electronics company, will operate in a five-hectare lot in Lima Technology Center-Special Economic Zone in Lipa City, Batangas.

Kurabe will engage in the manufacturing and assembly of car seat heaters, steering wheel heaters and heating wires.

Panga said business meetings with potential investors were "serious and have heightened interest to invest in areas under the renewable energy, electronic vehicle and agro-industrial sector."

NIKKEI ASIA

Inside the Trilateral Commission: Power elites grapple with China's rise Enigmatic group linking Asia, the U.S. and Europe opens up on eve of 50th anniversary

By Ken Moriyasu and Mariko Kodaki, Nikkei staff writers, and Shigesaburo Okumura, Nikkei Asia editor-in-chief

TOKYO -- On Saturday morning, some of Asia's best-known politicians, corporate leaders and academics gathered at a hotel conference room just steps away from the Japanese prime minister's office.

At each place on the table was a large envelope that contained the detailed biographies of the roughly 50 attendees and a white folder with the words "The Trilateral Commission."

First time attendees were elated. One Japanese professor told one of the panels he "truly appreciated" the invitation, because "The Trilateral Commission has been a big enigma to me."

"Some websites say that all the significant events in the world have been predetermined by the Trilateral Commission," he said to laughter from the veteran attendees. "We don't know who's in, what they are saying," he said.

That, however, may start to change.

This year's meeting in Tokyo -- the first since the pandemic started -- is a moment of unprecedented glasnost for the secretive organization, which will celebrate its 50th anniversary next year. Created during the depths of the Cold War to steer the "trilateral" U.S.-Japan-Europe security partnership, its deliberations, and the influence it supposedly wields, has been the subject of much speculation.

The invitation-only nature of the gathering -- not to mention the high profile participants -- has been one of its attractions over the last half-century, insiders admit. The Asia Pacific Group includes a young Japanese politician viewed as a future prime minister, multiple former Finance Ministry officials tasked with shepherding the yen -- collectively known as the "Currency Mafia" -- as well as a relative of the Japanese Imperial family.

But the image of exclusivity and power is also a liability. The commission has become a bugbear for critics who believe it to be some sort of star chamber of unelected and unaccountable elites. The rise of populism has seen politicians promoting theories about clandestine conspiracies and shadow government. While in office, U.S. President Donald Trump himself frequently inveighed against "unelected deep state operatives" as he put it in one tirade in 2018.

On Saturday, however, the proceedings of the commission were opened to three reporters from Nikkei Asia. They were permitted to attend the meeting of the commission's Asia Pacific Group on Nov. 19 and 20, on the condition that the discussants would not be quoted by name. This was the first time in its five decades that members of the press have been allowed to sit in for all of the sessions at the Asia Pacific Group.

The effort by the Asia Pacific Group to disclose the discussions is not necessarily aimed at demystifying it to critics, however. Instead, the press has been invited to highlight a rift that may be emerging between Asia and the other wings of the organization.

"We feel that the U.S. policy toward Asia, especially toward China, has been narrow-minded and unyielding. We want the people in the U.S. to recognize the various Asian perspectives," said Masahisa Ikeda, an executive committee member of the Trilateral Commission. Ikeda has been named the next director of the Asia Pacific Group, and is scheduled to assume the position next spring.

Collective wisdom

Each new candidate for Commission membership is carefully scrutinized before being allowed entry. As a rule, members who take up positions in their national governments -- which is uncannily common -- give up their Trilateral Commission membership while in public service. Those include U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken, Jake Sullivan, the U.S. national security adviser, Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen and Indian External Affairs Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar.

This revolving door between the commission and senior government ranks has always been fodder for conspiracy theorists. Its first director in 1973, Zbigniew Brzezinski, later became U.S. President Jimmy Carter's national security adviser. The very existence of the commission, meanwhile, seems predicated on the question of whether governing should be left to the people. It is a question the commission itself has tackled head-on since 1975: Is democracy functioning? Or does someone need to guide it?

That year, three scholars -- Michel Crozier, Samuel Huntington and Joji Watanuki -- wrote a report for The Trilateral Commission titled "The Crisis of Democracy." In it, Huntington wrote that some of the problems of governance in the U.S. stem from an "excess of democracy."

"In many situations the claims of expertise, seniority, experience and special talents may override the claims of democracy as a way of constituting authority," he controversially wrote, giving the analogy of a university where teaching appointments are subject to approval by students. Such a school "may be a more democratic university but it is not likely to be a better university," he stated.

In similar fashion, "Armies in which the commands of officers have been subject to veto by the collective wisdom of their subordinates have almost invariably come to disaster on the battlefield," he added.

Social critic Noam Chomsky has repeatedly criticized the Trilateral Commission for being undemocratic. But this sentiment -- that experts with experience and expertise can steer society toward a better place -- lives on in the commission.

A new sentiment has now emerged from the Asia Pacific Group: Without input from Asia, the U.S. may lead the world into a dangerous confrontation.

Getting smart

The spirit of democracy was clearly on display on Saturday in a speech by Rahm Emanuel, the U.S. ambassador to Japan -- and in the criticism of the speech that followed. "Democracy vs. autocracy: You are going to see 2022 as an inflection point in the success of democracy," Emanuel said, pointing to the U.S. midterm elections, the French presidential elections and the elections in Israel -- where in all instances the election results were accepted.

"Go convince the kids in Tehran that autocracy's best days are ahead. Go convince the kids that have fled Hong Kong that the best days for autocracy are ahead," he said. While democracy is sloppy and messy, "the institutions of the democratic process, the political stability of the United States, NATO, the European countries, have held," the ambassador said.

Takeshi Niinami, the Trilateral Commission's Asia Pacific Group chairman, second from right, speaks at a meeting on Nov. 19 when Rahm Emanuel, the U.S. ambassador to Japan, second from left, delivered a speech that stirred debate. (Photo by Ken Kobayashi) Emanuel implied that the days of trusting Beijing are over. He reminded participants that Chinese President Xi Jinping once looked U.S. President Barack Obama in the eye, and promised he would never militarize the islands in the South China Sea -- but went on to do just that.

"At a certain point you either play the fool or get smart," Emanuel said.

After answering several questions from members, the envoy left. But in the coffee break that followed, some attendees disagreed.

"What is the ambassador saying?" a former Japanese official said on background. "We must engage China. If we force countries to choose sides, the Southeast Asian nations will choose China. The key is to not force them to choose," he said.

In Washington, the concept of engaging China -- the hope that if China were to be invited to international institutions like the World Trade Organization, then China would

look more like Western nations -- is dead. The attempt to do so during the Obama administration is now considered to have been a failure.

The administration of U.S. President Joe Biden has taken a starkly different approach. In its first National Security Strategy, released in October, the Biden administration noted that China is "the only competitor with both the intent to reshape the international order and, increasingly, the economic, diplomatic, military, and technological power to do it."

The U.S. recently announced sweeping new restrictions preventing China from obtaining advanced computing chips and chip-making equipment.

For the first time since he became U.S. president, Joe Biden met in person with Chinese President Xi Jinping on the sidelines of the G20 summit in Bali, Indonesia, on Nov. 14. © Reuters

But the idea of engaging China is not dead in the eyes of the Trilateral Commission, especially in the Asia Pacific Group, which included members from Japan, South Korea, India, Singapore, the Philippines and Vietnam.

"I feel very much embarrassed and disappointed to see the complete void of Chinese participation in this meeting," said a former Japanese financial official, who demanded that the secretariat explain why this happened. COVID-19 and the recently held national congress of the Chinese Communist Party may have been the reason nobody from China agreed to join, the secretariat explained. There are nine Chinese members of the commission and all were all sent invitations, the secretariat told Nikkei.

A veteran member from the Philippines agreed, saying there is no point talking about Asia without the participation of the region's largest country.

The member expressed concern about dividing the world into two camps. "When two elephants fight, the ants get trampled. And we're feeling it. When two elephants fight to the death, we will all be dead. And the question is: What for?"

Too much democracy

If the Tokyo gathering demonstrated anything, it is that Asia's elites are nervous that the world is heading in the wrong direction, fueled by the intensifying competition between the U.S. and China and the decoupling that awaits. And the problem, in the view of many of the participants, is America. Huntington's injunction against "an excess democracy" is still embedded in the thinking of many of the Trilateral Commission's members. But this time, it's the U.S. penchant for exporting its ideology that is the main concern for many.

During the Trilateral Commission's recent meeting, concerns were raised over the growing rivalry between the U.S. and China. (Photo by Ken Kobayashi)

A South Korean professor told Emanuel in the Q&A that there are concerns in Asia about the zero-sum thinking in U.S. foreign policy toward China. "We have to develop some deliverable strategy to persuade and engage un-like-minded countries as well."

A former Japanese diplomat noted that the world's current problems are as much the result of a change in America as they are the result of China's behavior. From North Korea's missile launches to the Ukraine war, "Every single issue we witness today is coming from a change in the international structure," he said, noting there are two elements to this shift. "One is a very clear decline of U.S. deterrence. Two, no longer can globalization and the interdependency of nations be a source of stability."

There were also members who noted how the liberal international order that Washington advocates is different from the original liberal order that was formed after World War II. "The original order, led by the U.S., sought a multifaceted extensive international system based on multilateral institutions and free trade among the democratic bloc," a South Korean academic said. The Six Party Talks on North Korea's nuclear weapons was one such example of the original order, the academic said, noting that the U.S., China and Russia were all at the table.

More recently, "The U.S. has been encouraging companies to move back home or to allied or friendly countries," she said. "Under such moves, only like-minded countries are grouped in a mini-lateral way because the smaller and more flexible arrangement seems more effective for them."

Ironically, it is China that is calling for an international order closer to the original concept, standing for a so-called global community with a shared destiny for mankind, she said. "Nevertheless, few countries believe that multilateralism advocated by China has universal values. This is because there is little trust for China."

An Indian first-time participant talked about the need for the international community to adapt to a rising Asia. "Most of the global institutions, the anchor point, the center of gravity has always been in the West. That clearly needs to shift. The Asia-Pacific needs to be the anchor point and there is no way you can wish China away."

The discussion expanded further than just geopolitics. A South Korean economist noted that his country would inevitably have to choose between the U.S. and China for tech purposes.

"There is an increasing number of dual-purpose products in the manufacturing sector," he said. "Therefore, if you want to stay ahead in competitiveness, you have to choose which tech ecosystem you want to belong to. The choice that we are pressured into is not politics but also very much economic pressure."

Inequality was a major topic of discussion. One Indian economist stressed that decoupling -- the further separation of the Chinese and U.S. economies -- cannot be the answer. Of the millions of Chinese who have been lifted out of poverty in the last four

decades, he said "It was interdependence that pulled people out of poverty -- at the cost of losing manufacturing in advanced economies. We need to push the benefits of interdependence."

James Kondo, an executive committee member, told Nikkei that Asia is the "biggest beneficiary" of globalization.

"Asia has risen from poverty by becoming the factory for the Western consumer market, but this has led to new inequalities in the West," he said.

Asia, therefore, will continue to push for globalization, which is a decidedly different posture from the West, Kondo said. "Views toward the future are asymmetric. Asia has to demonstrate that Asia's dynamic growth will be the source of growth for Western businesses."

The next China

During the two-day gathering, it became clear that one bloc of participants strongly support Emanuel's views: India.

India's view of China saw a marked shift in June 2020 when a clash with Chinese troops in the Himalayan border area -- mostly hand-to-hand combat -- resulted in the deaths of 20 Indian soldiers.

"India has taken a very hard line on China. In fact, whatever Ambassador Emanuel said, 90% would be echoed by the Indian official circles," an Indian foreign policy analyst said.

"India has gone out of its way to drive Chinese investment out of the country. China's foreign direct investment to India fell 74% last year. Not because China didn't want to invest, but the Indian government did not want Chinese companies to be inside the country," he said, citing the border clashes in the Himalayas as the reason for the souring sentiment.

"There is no interest on the Indian side for dialogue with China," the journalist said. He noted that Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi met Chinese President Xi Jinping 11 times in six years, only to see increased provocations by the Chinese.

An Indian Commission member echoed that sentiment. "For everybody focused on the Ukraine war, I urge you to look at the fact that there are 120,000 soldiers from India and China in an eyeball-to-eyeball faceoff for the last three years. It is not only North Korea that needs to observe a rules-based order. It is also powers like China that need to do so."

Takeshi Niinami, chairman of the Trilateral Commission's Asia Pacific Group, speaks to Nikkei Asia on Nov. 19. (Photo by Ken Kobayashi)

Takeshi Niinami, chairman of the Trilateral Commission's Asia Pacific Group, told Nikkei Asia on the sidelines of the event that "There is so much value in hearing different perspectives. The lack of Chinese attendance is the missing part. We want the Chinese to take part." Niinami serves as chief executive of Japanese beverage maker Suntory Holdings.

Educating America

The origins of The Trilateral Commission go back to an effort in 1972 by David Rockefeller, the head of New York's Chase Manhattan Bank, to include Japan in the Bilderberg Group, an annual gathering of intellectuals to foster dialogue between Europe and North America and to prevent another world war.

When rejected by the Dutch royal family, which chaired the Bilderberg Group, Rockefeller created a new gathering with Japan as a member.

"The original intent was to educate Japan to be part of the Western alliance," the above-mentioned former Japanese diplomat, who has long been a Trilateral Commission member, explained. But now, it is important for the Asia Pacific Group to inform the U.S. and Europe about the views in the region on the great power competition, he said.

David Rockefeller, photographed in the 1980s, former head New York's Chase Manhattan Bank, was a founding member of what is now known as the Trilateral Commission. © Getty Images

The Trilateral Commission is different from the World Economic Forum in Davos, which is a more general, open debate, and is different from the United Nations, which includes everybody, the former official said. "The Trilateral Commission has a clear mission."

One of the merits of the commission may be to detect early trends. From this meeting, one unspoken theme seemed to be on the minds of some members. "Is India going to be the next China?" a South Korean academic whispered during a coffee break.

Not all countries are complaining about the return of geopolitical competition. While East and Southeast Asia feel forced to choose by U.S.-China decoupling, India, for example, has benefited massively from a bidding war between Moscow and Washington for its allegiance. During the sessions, Indian members spoke of the windfall benefits the U.S.-China competition is gifting the subcontinent.

"India has been getting a triple discount on oil," the Indian analyst explained. While India purchased discounted oil from Russia, the U.S. looked the other way, trying not to alienate New Delhi for geopolitical purposes. "As the Russian share of our oil market increased, the Saudi Arabians and the Iraqis, who are also interested in India for geopolitical and market reasons, began to undercut the Russian price," he said.

"At one point we were getting discounted Russian oil, further discounted oil from Saudi Arabia and a third discount from Iraq."

Other countries like Bangladesh would not be offered a similar discount, he added. "India is arguably one of the few countries that can play the geopolitical game."

Trilateral Commission members from Japan, South Korea, India, Singapore, the Philippines and Vietnam gathered in Tokyo on Nov. 20 ahead of the group's 50th anniversary. (Photo by Ken Kobayashi)

The U.S.-led trend of friend-shoring, or moving factories to like-minded nations, may also benefit India.

The new leverage is giving India more clout. Explaining why India pulled out of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership in 2019 [a trade agreement championed by China], an Indian member said: "We were determined not to give China a back door free trade entry into the Indian market ever again."

India, which has a tradition of non-alignment, has been using its neutrality to its full benefit. One India member said the Quad framework -- partnership with the U.S., Australia, and Japan -- is gradually becoming more efficient in realizing new Delhi's ambitions.

A South Korean academic said: "India can't continue to be on the sidelines of international institutions. Otherwise India will be the next China," imposing their own values and priorities on the world.

One veteran of The Trilateral Commission -- a former Philippine cabinet minister -- said it would be up to the next generation to make a breakthrough. Four David Rockefeller fellows -- future candidates for membership in their twenties -- were present at the Tokyo gathering. The veteran posed them a question.

"Just in the past week, we edged toward a nuclear confrontation," he said, referring to the missile blast in Poland, that was initially suspected to be a Russian-made missile, but was more likely a Ukrainian air-defense missile that landed in NATO territory by mistake .

"And we edged toward that because of the type of zero sum games that us elders are playing. Is this what you want for your future? You don't want a situation in the future where everybody's edging toward the cliff and being macho about it without realizing that this is a zero-sum game that could wipe out the planet. It is beyond climate change," the veteran said.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

Iligan eyes to be climate, disaster-resilient city

By: Nef Luczon

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY – Iligan is eyeing to become Mindanao's next disaster and climate-change-resilient city.

Mayor Frederick Siao said the local government entered a three-year partnership through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with stakeholders under the "Adopt-A-City" program of the National Resilience Council (NRC).

"With my deep advocacy in disaster resiliency, I firmly believe that risk reduction is a cross-cutting issue that requires a long-term planning perspective, mainstreaming and integration across sectors, and a change in mindset from response to preparation and prevention," Siao said in a statement Tuesday,

The "Adopt-A-City" plan is an innovative pathway for businesses to collaborate directly with local governments, academic partners, civil society organizations and communities in transforming local climate and disaster risk landscapes.

The three-year program includes tracks in leadership, governance and science and technology to guide the city in the development and implementation of scientific and technology-based plans, policies and systems to make their area more resilient.

"Just as important is the realization that reducing risks and impacts of disasters is a shared responsibility among the many actors and other concerned stakeholders," Siao said.

One of the private stakeholders partnering with Iligan City's local government is the Aboitiz Foundation, the corporate social responsibility arm of the Aboitiz Group.

Maribeth Marasigan, the Aboitiz Foundation president and chief operations officer, described the Adopt-A-City Program in Iligan as a "start of a meaningful partnership in co-creating resilient, empowered and sustainable communities."

"I am confident that this multi-stakeholder and integrated system approach can further develop the coherent positions needed for operationalizing Disaster Risk Reduction and contribute to the greater commitment in achieving resilient cities and communities," Marasigan said.

Meanwhile, representing the academic community in the program is the Mindanao State University - Iligan Institute of Technology (MSU-IIT).

During the MOU signing earlier this month, MSU-IIT Vice Chancellor for Research and Extension Gaudencio C. Petalcorin Jr. assured the institution is ready to support the needs of the city through its various research outputs.

"We offer the knowledge and expertise of our faculty members and institution through our Mindanao Center for Resiliency. The Adopt-A-City program is in line with MSU-IIT's vision to create a new academic program on disaster resilience in our university," he said.

Marcos to DENR: Make mining firms comply with safety policies

By: Azer Parocha

MANILA – President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. on Tuesday directed the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to require small and large-scale mining firms to comply with policies that ensure safe working conditions for mining workers.

In a meeting with DENR officials at Malacañan Palace on Tuesday, Marcos lamented the failure of mining firms, particularly those involved in illegal activities, to provide adequate safety measures inside the mines.

"Ang kawawa diyan 'yung mga miners. They have no safety. Ang daming namamatay (The miners are victims here. They have no safety. A lot of them die)," he said.

Marcos said there is a need to enhance social protection and security for workers in the mining industry.

"We might be able to access financing, they might be able to access social protection," he added.

He also urged the DENR to address bottlenecks to regulate the small-scale mining industry.

"Gusto natin ma-legalize ang mga small-scale mining firms kasi marami sa kanila illegal, kaya walang protection ang mga minero (We want to legalize the small-scale mining firms because many of them are illegal, so the miners have no protection)," Marcos said.

"Gusto nating palakasin ang regulatory framework para maka-operate sila ng legal, upang mabigyan ang ating minero ng assistance at protection para sa ligtas nilang pagtatrabajo (We want to strengthen the regulatory framework so they can operate legally, to give our miners assistance and protection for their safe work)," he added.

Reducing carbon emissions

Meanwhile, Marcos also underscored the need for the seafaring industry to create habits to help with carbon emission reduction.

He raised the need to "upskill and reskill" the seafaring workforce to address the scheduled shift of ocean-going vessels to green hydrogen as a fuel source from 2030 to 2040.

He said seafarers would need "additional training" to be able to handle alternative fuels to meet global decarbonization objectives.

During the recently-concluded 27th Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP27) in Egypt, leading organizations

across the shipping value chain and producers of green hydrogen signed a joint statement committing to the rapid production and use of low-carbon fuels based on green hydrogen to accelerate decarbonization of global shipping.

The shipping sector currently accounts for 3 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions but is expected to grow to 50 percent by 2050 without intervention.

Marcos has repeatedly pushed for the development of renewable energy sources to address the problem of high power costs in the country.

In his attendance at the 29th Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Summit in Bangkok last week, he said the Philippines is currently focused on using renewable energy sources such as hydropower, geothermal power, solar and other low-emission energy sources.

He said his administration is particularly setting a target of a 35 percent share of renewable energy in the power generation mix by 2030 and 50 percent by 2040.

Marcos earlier called for the amendment of the Republic Act (RA) 7076 or the People's Small-Scale Mining Act of 1991 to incentivize small-scale mining and provide social assistance and labor protection for all small-scale miners.

Under the law, small-scale mining refers to a mining activity that relies heavily on manual labor using simple implementations and methods.

RA 7076 also pertains to small-scale mining as an activity that "does not use explosives or heavy mining equipment."

The DENR expressed commitment to review mining laws, including small-scale mining, to ensure that standards are updated and that the provision of the implementing rules and regulations takes full advantage of remote sensing and innovation in artificial intelligence.

Mining accounts for less than 1 percent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP), although the Marcos administration is eyeing the industry to be one of the major contributors to the country's economic development.

It has been estimated that 70 to 80 percent of small-scale miners in the Philippines operate illegally.

PH-Aussie action plan realized via emergency broadcast training

By: Marita Moaje

MANILA – The eight-day emergency broadcast training by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) in Canberra for members of the Philippine government media is a realization of the two countries' action plan on disaster management.

Philippine Ambassador to Australia Hellen De La Vega said the Foreign Affairs and Trade departments of both countries adopted a plan of action in August 2021 where priority areas of cooperation on exchange of best practices on disaster risk reduction and management and emergency communications were identified.

With climate change and extreme weather disturbance affecting several countries, De La Vega said it is important that the two countries adopt a framework to enhance communication to the public, especially in remote and rural areas.

"I'm very pleased that the action plans were executed and realized within the time frame," De La Vega said in an interview over the weekend.

"It was actually a commitment from the two sides, Philippines and Australia, to cooperate on best practices on disaster risk resilience and management and on emergency communication kaya nasabi ko na (that is why I said) this is already a realization, an operationalization of how Australia can support the Philippines in emergency communication through your visit here on emergency broadcasting," she added.

De La Vega said the Philippines and Australia are both maritime nations so they face common challenges.

Several areas in Australia have been flooded in recent days after heavy rainfall in vast areas in the eastern part. No Filipinos have been reported affected so far, according to the embassy.

Flood warnings have been issued across New South Wales (NSW) and Victoria due to continuous rains.

The NSW State Emergency Service performed eight flood rescues during the weekend and received 255 calls for help.

The flooding has taken a toll on the country's agricultural sector, affecting wheat and barley crops and the sheep and dairy industries, according to international reports.

"As a maritime archipelagic nation, we can definitely relate to Australian experience," De La Vega said.

She added that Australian authorities are monitoring disaster events in the Philippines.

Media members and management staff from the Philippine Information Agency, Philippine Broadcasting Service, Radio Television Malacañang, People's Television Network, Intercontinental Broadcasting Corporation, Philippine News Agency and National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council attended the study visit from Nov. 12 to 19.

The group visited the ABC, meteorology, emergency management and fire service agencies to have an increased understanding of the processes and protocols for effective emergency broadcasting and communications.

The Emergency Broadcasting Development Project was funded by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and implemented by the International Development Unit within the ABC.

PH seeks cooperation with US on climate 'loss, damage': DFA

By Joyce Ann L. Rocamora

MANILA – President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. has sought for a possible cooperation with the United States on climate loss and damage during his bilateral meeting with Vice President Kamala Harris on Monday.

In a statement issued Tuesday, the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) said Marcos is interested to partner with Washington D.C. beyond climate mitigation and relief.

"(President Marcos) expressed interest in pursuing further discussions and possible cooperation with the US on the damage and loss concept, beyond mitigation and relief, to build on the discussions at the COP27," the agency said.

Loss and damage refers to climate change's negative impact that cannot be avoided by mitigation and adaptation, such as extreme weather events, sea level rise, and glacial retreat among others.

Last Sunday, the 2022 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP27) in Egypt closed with a breakthrough agreement to establish a new fund to help vulnerable countries respond to loss and damage.

One of the main focus of Harris' trip to the Philippines is to spur cooperation on a range of issues, including advancing clean energy and addressing the climate crisis.

Among the United States' latest initiatives are the establishment of an energy policy dialogue as well as the launch of negotiations for civil nuclear energy cooperation or the so-called "123 agreement".

The 123 agreement, once in force, would allow the US exports of nuclear equipment and material to support the country's energy security and climate goals.

Aside from climate change, Marcos and Harris also discussed peace and security against the backdrop of the global and regional developments.

The two underscored the importance of upholding an international rules-based regime and maintaining open communication lines between and among partners to prevent any miscalculations and misunderstandings.

"President Marcos reiterated the independent foreign policy adopted by the Philippines, which is based on national interest and the country's commitment to peace," the DFA said.

[**\[Opinion\] Reflections from the hope spot: The indifference of COP27**](#)

By: Jannele Michelle Jimenez and Beatriz Mikaela Ermac

COP27 in hindsight

A few days after Severe Tropical Cyclone Paeng all but engulfed the entirety of the Philippines, the 27th iteration of the Conference of Parties (COP) began. There was a dystopian character to the unfolding of these events. In Egypt, world leaders, mostly men, gathered for a “family picture” in what seemed to be a brief pause amidst the politicking and the fruitless negotiations, all while our country finds itself reeling from the effects of another disaster.

In a discussion with another Filipino climate justice activist, she had revealed to me how MAPA activists, in the tradition of Greta Thunberg, are paraded in front of the world as beacons of an elusive hope. “They want Gretas to inspire them,” she said, indignant, “but my country is drowning. They can go and inspire themselves.”

Even Greta Thunberg herself was notably absent at COP27. Perhaps the act of inspiring had begun to feel futile.

I digress. How does one talk about COP27 and not think about how a dear friend had been displaced when Typhoon Haiyan devastated Tacloban, how her father had used a bed frame to create a makeshift bridge into their neighbor’s window, narrowly escaping the water rising beneath them, a fragile tether to life in a drowning city? How her sister had flown in from Manila in the aftermath, expecting to search for dead bodies among the mass graves, and instead found a family, alive but altered forever by the trauma of climate injustice?

How, indeed, does one talk about COP27?

As one follows the conference, there is a sense of climate change being discussed almost as if it were theoretical, a crisis that is approaching but has yet to arrive, one item on a long list of others that seem more pertinent, more brutal.

Filipinos present at COP27 gathered to commemorate the 9th anniversary of Typhoon Haiyan.

The UN Secretary General António Guterres said in his speech that we are on a “highway to climate hell.”

In the Philippines, we are already there.

Juxtaposed with the affairs on the global stage, realities of environmental defenders on the ground are vastly different. I write this from Negros Occidental, an island in the

Philippines. The former is known as a vanguard of dissent in its many forms, and a place of heightened militarization. The latter is, by track record, the most dangerous place for climate justice activists in Asia.

Ours is a working class-led movement. At times, with P20 left in their pockets, activists would walk to and from meetings, hunger-stricken, and opt for coffee to mitigate starvation. With scarcely any operational budget, and the looming threat of abuse, they here have had to make do with very little.

And yet Negros' climate movement has triumphed against repressive political dynasties and draconian corporations. With three coal projects halted in the '90s, and more in recent years, one begins to ask how — and equally important, why.

They call the island the capital for renewable energy, the hope spot. With enough capacity to power the entirety of Negros, it stands as the perfect theater for staging a just transition, a template which the entire country could adapt. The irony, however, is that this capacity remains latent.

The capital for renewable energy imports dirty energy.

Perhaps why is best answered by the fact that it is clear that only two options remain: just transition, or death.

World leaders are fond of using figures to evoke emotion, as if we were literary devices instead of people, embellishments added to ensure applause, merely vessels for inspiration. Eight billion lives in peril. Amidst the collapse, the flooding, the banging on our doors — either by the agents of a repressive state or the unforgiving whip of another storm — the only space we were given at the fanfare of COP27 was within liminal cracks of statistics, our lived experiences narrowed down to data.

This is why we hinge our hopes upon people power. This is our how. The movement most recently won against San Miguel Corporation (SMC) through its subsidiary, Reliance Energy Development Inc. (REDI). The plan for a 300-Megawatt Liquified Natural Gas plant in San Carlos City was opposed by civil society organizations, communities, the church, and youth-led groups that clamored in a spectrum of strategic spaces. After months of groundwork, they withdrew their application for an Environmental Compliance Certificate (ECC) on the 15th of October, a document necessary to proceed.

The project is yet to be officially canceled, which means that SMC-REDI may attempt to apply for an ECC again. Yet this win reveals a titular truth: the language of resistance speaks clearly and eloquently, and it was heard.

World leaders would do well to remember that.

Climate justice is social justice

Communities caught in the worst of disasters are those with less social capital and mobility, those in scanty structures unable to withstand the harsh whips of heavy storms. Such challenges are further exacerbated by gender. Women, particularly mothers, find themselves shouldering the risks to protect their families. These dangerous housing conditions intersect with socio-economic issues, threatening the livelihood of women whose financial opportunities are scarce to begin with, especially in rural areas.

A few weeks after a typhoon, I have conversed with families who were forced to deepen themselves further in debt for pieces of plywood, or had resorted to eating their own livestock to survive. Already struggling with housing instability and food insecurity, groups such as the LGBTQ+ community and PWDs are left to fend against discrimination in evacuation centers. Not only does dirty energy heat up the planet, but they also endanger the communities surrounding their plants, creating health and safety hazards on the ground.

At its core, climate justice is social justice. The day after our victory against SMC, we lined the streets alongside sectors that have borne the brunt of this crisis. They carried placards speaking not only of rage and grief, but also of the way forward. Climate movements around the world have adopted that phrase “no more false solutions.” We only need to look to the grassroots to find the true ones.

The sirens of the climate emergency are blaring, and it is high time for a just and rapid transition to renewable energy. Reducing to 1.5 Celsius is impossible otherwise. Yet it is a doorway through which we can enter into another world, one liberated from corporate capture, oppression, and the myth of economic progress – but we can only cross gently and justly. It is critical to center these marginalized sectors in seeking to reimagine entire economies. For it is their homes, their livelihoods, and their ways of life that cause them to stand in the front line of the climate fight.

If we do not heed them, the door will close.

THE MANILA TIMES

Climate change and the new Marcos brand of diplomacy

By: Daphne Oseña-Paez

WE saw the President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. brand of diplomacy at the 29th APEC Summit in Bangkok, Thailand, and I like it. It is refreshing and exciting. This was his first appearance on the world stage and he did well, as former president Gloria Macapagal Arroyo said. The Asia-Pacific region covers more than half of the world's economies. The president seemed very at ease among the leaders of major economies like France, Canada, China and Saudi Arabia, like he was in the comfort of old colleagues, or friends even. There was that light moment with Canada's Prime Minister Justin Trudeau when they both compared their printed socks.

With the Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, President Marcos threw in a little nostalgia about how his father, the late President Ferdinand E. Marcos, would send him as an emissary to Saudi Arabia during the oil crisis. In this bilateral meeting they discussed the important issue of energy, Saudi Arabia being the world's largest oil producer. There were reciprocal invitations for state visits in the future. More importantly, the Crown Prince committed to pay for the unpaid salaries of more than 10,000 overseas Filipino workers who lost their jobs in construction when they declared bankruptcy in 2015-2016. The Saudi government will also establish an insurance system to secure the salaries of future OFWs. According to Migrant Workers Secretary Susan Ople, it was refreshing to see both leaders sitting and talking like old friends, both visionaries and both proud of the Filipino workers.

With France's President Emmanuel Macron, the President discussed potential cooperation in agriculture, energy and defense. The two had met in person on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in New York last September. During this bilateral meeting, they discussed a potential partnership in nuclear energy. Though both Saudi Arabia and France are not members of APEC, their leaders were invited as guests at the informal dialogue with the Asia-Pacific leaders.

France is one of the European Union's best performing countries in decarbonizing their energy mix and is well on its way to achieving a 40 percent reduction in GHG emissions by 2030. France has minimized its reliance on petroleum, coal and gas by increasing its use of nuclear energy. It will be remembered that Marcos Jr. had mentioned the possibility of reviving the Bataan Nuclear Power Plant, a project under his father which was mothballed in 1986 due to safety concerns. A lot has happened in the nuclear industry since, including small and portable nuclear reactors.

In the conversations with climate change activists, nuclear energy is still a bit of a bad word despite it having zero carbon emissions. The world is, however, facing pressures from all angles beyond environmental catastrophes brought by climate change, including post-Covid economic recovery, food security, regional tensions and the war in Ukraine. Europe is facing a very cold winter as much of their gas is supplied by Russia.

These challenges are forcing nations to re-evaluate their commitments to the proposed single solution to reducing carbon emissions by switching to renewable sources of energy. Germany has gone back to the use of liquefied natural gas to reduce its dependence on Russian energy. It is a bitter pill to swallow, the return to fossil fuels with the use of gas. The world cannot rely on renewables like solar and wind alone as an alternative to phasing out fossil fuels. It will have to go through a gradual hit or miss cocktail.

In the meantime, while Europe and other bigger economies try to navigate through this winter's energy crisis, the Philippines is in a unique resilient position of having been so used to an energy and environmental crisis through the decades while looking at a better mix for our energy sources. The President knows that to reach our long-term economic goals, we need a stable supply of energy that is not reliant on one source, hence, the talks with Saudi Arabia for oil and France for nuclear, and other possibilities discussed bilaterally with Australia, New Zealand and China. All that in four days.

It is a very interesting time for Marcos Jr to be stepping into the world stage as our president. These person-to-person meetings after the pandemic-induced lockdowns, do a lot more than just achieve points in bilateral discussions. They provide a platform that has long been missing in diplomacy and business forums — the human touch, the light moments, the laughter. And it seems, Marcos Jr. has it — the Marcos brand of diplomacy we saw from his father and mother, a mix of wit and charm that can even knock the socks off some of the most politically correct leaders of this time, like Trudeau and New Zealand's Jacinda Ardern. He continues to represent the Philippines as a sovereign nation in a peaceful Asia-Pacific region, who is a friend to all, and enemy to none.

Japanese firms keen to invest in PH – PEZA

By: Eireene Jairee Gomez

Japanese companies have committed to invest in the Philippines, the Philippine Economic Zone Authority (PEZA) claimed on Tuesday following a November 14 to 18 investment mission that sought present the Philippines as the best investment destination in Southeast Asia.

Business meetings with potential Japanese investors were "serious" and resulted in "heightened interest to invest," acting PEZA chief Tereso Panga said in a statement.

Specifically, a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to promote the Philippine was signed with Japan's Junca Global Partner Inc., while a registration agreement was inked electronics company Kurabe Industrial Philippines Inc. for the manufacture of car heating parts in Lipa, Batangas.

Under the deal, PEZA and Junca will push the Philippines as an investment destination for established manufacturing companies and start-ups that want to collaborate with local start-ups.

"With the signed MoU, PEZA and Junca will collaborate in bringing renewable energy technologies to ecozones and thereby enable locator companies to remain globally competitive while at the same time contributing to mitigating the effects of climate change pursuant to the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement," Panga said.

Hisayuki Nagatome, Junca chairman and chief executive officer, said the firm would "invest and bring in the latest technology in the Philippines through PEZA, especially in the field of artificial intelligence, blockchain system, biotech and stem cell, and wellness products."

Kurabe, meanwhile, will engage in the manufacturing and assembly of car seat heaters, steering wheel heaters and heating wires on a 5-hectare lot in the Lima Technology Center-Special Economic Zone in Lipa City, Batangas.

Panga said that as of September, PEZA had a total of 898 Japanese enterprises operating in Philippine economic zones with cumulative investments of P739.599 billion. A total of P11.262 billion in investments were made in the first nine months of 2022, he added, creating 351,335 direct jobs and \$13.258 billion in export income.

In a related development, acting PEZA deputy chief Aleem Siddiqui Guiapal said on Tuesday that 13 pending economic zone projects, amounting to about P18 billion, would be set up in areas outside Metro Manila, particularly in the provinces of Batangas, Bataan, Davao, Sarangani and Cavite.

Of the 13, Siddiqui said seven will be for manufacturing, four for IT (information technology) parks, one a knowledge, innovation, science and technology park, and one an agro-industrial ecozone.

There are about 420 economic zones across the Philippines, 40 of which are located in Mindanao.

Siddiqui also said that the PEZA would recognize investors who contributed to the growth and development of various industries in the country this Friday.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

DENR ordered to bolster regulatory powers on mining

By: Gaea Katreena Cabico

MANILA, Philippines — President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Tuesday ordered the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to strengthen its regulatory powers on small and large-scale mining to ensure the strict implementation of safety and health programs for workers.

"We want to legalize small-scale mining firms because many of them are illegal, so the miners have no protection," Marcos was quoted as saying. The Office of the Press Secretary said Marcos made the instruction in a meeting with DENR officials.

"We want to strengthen the regulatory framework so they can operate legally in order to give our miners assistance and protection for safe working conditions," he added.

Alyansa Tigil Mina welcomed the order of Marcos to the environment department.

"Both mining laws that regulate small-scale and large-scale mining are outdated and not designed to ensure safety of small-scale miners nor respond to the challenges of climate change or impacts," ATM national coordinator Jaybee Garnanera said.

Marcos may certify as urgent bills on small-scale mining, including the amendment to Republic Act 7076 or the Act Creating a People's Small-Scale Mining Program. The OPS said this is to "incentivize small-scale mining, to provide social assistance and labor protection as well as government assistant programs."

"I think for now the need is for the regulatory capabilities, especially the small scale," Marcos said.

The DENR earlier expressed commitment to review mining laws to ensure that standards are updated and that the provision of the implementing rules and regulations takes full advantage of remote sensing and innovation in artificial intelligence.

ATM's Garnagera said the environment department should consider publicly supporting the proposed Alternative Minerals Management Act as a starting point to crafting new mining policies. The bill seeks to place more safeguards for the environment, indigenous peoples, and host communities.

"Our alliance is also recommending that DENR consult local governments and indigenous communities to identify policy reforms in effectively managing the country's natural resources," Garganera said.

"It is important that DENR ensure that Filipinos benefit from minerals and that mining does not displace or affect communities or bring additional environmental and social problems with their operations," he added.

THE VISAYAN DAILY STAR

[Opinion] Loss and damage

After a long, hard battle to get the world's wealthy nations mostly responsible for planet-heating emissions to pay for climate damages, vulnerable nations finally succeeded in making it a defining issue in the recently COP27 talks in Egypt.

In the end, a decision to create a loss and damage fund was the first item confirmed after fraught negotiations, with nations clashing over a range of issues around curbing planet-heating emissions.

Loss and damage covers a broad sweep of climate impacts, from bridges and homes washed away in flash flooding, to the threatened disappearance of cultures and whole island nations to the creeping rise of sea levels.

Observers say that the failure of rich polluters to curb emissions and to meet their promise of funding to help countries boost climate resilience means that losses and damages are inevitably growing as the planet warms.

"The establishment of a fund is not about dispensing charity," said Pakistani climate minister Sherry Rehman. "It is clearly a down payment on the longer investment in our joint futures, in the down payment and an investment in climate justice."

After last-minute tussles over wording, the final loss and damage document decided to create a fund, as part of a broad array of funding arrangements for developing countries "that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change."

Depending on how deeply the world slashes carbon pollution, loss and damage from climate change could cost developing countries \$290-580 billion a year by 2030, reaching up to \$1.8 trillion by 2050, according to a 2018 research.

Although it is good that the wealthy nations responsible for most planet-heating emissions have finally agreed to contribute to a loss and damage fund that can help vulnerable countries like the Philippines cope with the increasingly disastrous effects of climate change, it is still ultimately up to us to be ready and prepared for whatever may come as the planet continues to heat up.

The existence of a loss and damage fund may help, but we would be better off being prepared and implementing the necessary and sustainable initiatives that can mitigate the impacts of climate change.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

BUSINESS WORLD

First-ever conference to bring stakeholders together for the Net Zero Building and Net Zero City Summit 2023

Global Zero Carbon Partnership and Escom Events, in collaboration with the Department of Energy (DoE), Bases Conversion and Development Authority (BCDA), and Philippine Green Building Council (PHILGBC) as Official Endorsers of the event, have come together to support the initiative to bring together stakeholders in the value chain for Net Zero Building, Energy Efficiency, Building Technology, ESG, and Smart City Development for the first time at the year's flagship event — Net Zero Building & Net Zero City Summit Philippines 2023 on Jan. 10 at Dusit Thani Manila.

This one-day conference will cover the following topics such as Climate Ambition, Net Zero Pathways, Energy Efficiency, Electric Mobility Business Models, Smart Cities/Buildings, Circular Economy, Sustainable Urban Development, and ESG.

Speakers for this event will be Director Patrick Aquino (Director of Energy Utilization Management Bureau [EUMB] of DoE), Sec. Robert E.A. Borje (Vice-Chairperson and Executive Director of Climate Change Commission), Joy Esther Gai (Programmes Head for Asia Pacific Region of World Green Building Council), Raymond Rufino (Chief Executive Officer of NEO Office PH), and Alexander Ablaza (President of Philippine Energy Efficiency Alliance, Inc.) to name a few.

The event also includes an exhibition of the world's leading technological innovations in urban planning, carbon management, and building solutions. It is an ideal setting for connecting with business partners, products, and solutions for your projects.

PHILIPPINE INFORMATION AGENCY

Climate Change Consciousness Week kick off draws climate, environment champions

By Alaine Allanigue

QUEZON CITY, (PIA) -- The 15th Global Warming and Climate Change Consciousness Week (CCC Week) kick off has drawn together various climate change and environment stakeholders in the Philippines in a collective push towards transforming climate change commitments into action towards a climate smart and climate resilient Philippines by 2050.

With the theme "Sama-samang Tumutugon sa Hamon ng Nagbabagong Klima," the CCC Week 2022 was graced by top environment official Secretary of Environment and Natural Resources Maria Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga, climate change and environment champion Senator Loren Legarda, Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources Chair Senator Cynthia Villar, and House of Representatives Committee on Climate Change Chair Bohol First District Representative Edgar Chatto scheduled to address the event.

Its opening ceremony is a collective push towards transforming climate change commitments into action towards a climate smart and climate resilient Philippines by 2050.

Secretary Yulo-Loyzaga has been designated the Official Representative of President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. in the Climate Change Commission. Secretary Yulo-Loyzaga was Executive Director of the Manila Observatory, the President of the National Resilience Council, a member of the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction's (UNDRR) Asia Pacific Science Technology Advisory Group and a Director of the UNDRR's Alliance for Disaster Resilient Societies (ARISE).

Senate President Pro-Tempore Loren Legarda, on the other hand, has been recognized as a "Game Changer for Asia," a champion for climate change action and the environment, "Global Thinker," voice for indigenous peoples, a women and children's rights champion, and a passionate advocate.

Senator Legarda has worked for the enactment of key legislation on climate change, environment, and disaster governance, including the Clean Air Act, the Solid Waste Management Act, the Climate Change Act and the Philippine Disaster Risk and Management Act.

She is also recognized globally for good environmental governance. She is the UNDRR Global Champion for Resilience, the UNFCCC National Adaptation Plan Champion, Commissioner of the Global Commission on Adaptation and Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF) Ambassador for Parliaments.

Senator Cynthia Villar is the Chairperson of the Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources since 2013 and the Chairperson of the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Food.

Senator Villar was instrumental in the enactment of the Extended Producer Responsibility bill for plastics and other waste.

She was founder and Chair of the Villar Foundation (now the Villar Social Institute for Poverty Alleviation and Governance). Villar SIPAG's key program thrusts and projects included environment protection and the establishment of the Las Pinas-Paranaque Wetland Park.

Bohol First District Representative Edgar Chatto is the Chairperson of the House Committee on Climate Change.

During his chairmanship of the Committee during the 18th Congress, he pushed for the declaration of a state of environmental and climate emergency and championed the call for the Philippines to seek climate justice.

As Vice Governor of Bohol, he led the passage of the Bohol Environment Code. Moreover, during his tenure as Bohol governor, an ordinance was passed that prohibited the establishment of a coal-fueled power plant here in the province.

The opening ceremony will be immediately followed by the Climate Investment Forum, 2022 which will bring together various stakeholders to identify strategies in achieving the Philippine Nationally Determined Contribution targets, priority actions on climate finance, and opportunities for climate action.

Other activities to be held during the CCC Week include training-of-trainers on the formulation of enhanced Local Climate Change Action Plan on (21-25 Nov. 2022); Leveraging Local Budgets in the Context of COVID-19 Recovery and Sustainable Environmental Management Webinar (Nov. 22); the 11th National Panel of Technical Experts Forum (Nov. 23); and Kaalamang Klima: Climate Change Webinar Workshop for the Youth (Nov 25).

Partnerships with Aboitiz Equity Ventures and Aboitiz Foundation, Inc., and the University of the Philippines Resilience Institute (UPRI) will also be formalized and signed during the week.

CCC Week began Saturday, Nov. 19, with a Thanksgiving Mass and Tree Planting and Growing Activity in the La Mesa Nature Reserve. CCC officials, staff, and representatives from various groups planted 200 Narra, Dao, and Sablot seedlings to contribute to the improvement of the country's carbon sinks and reservoirs.

Pursuant to Presidential Proclamation 1667 s. 2008, the CCC spearheads the annual observance of the Global Warming and Climate Change Consciousness Week every Nov. 19th to 25th, aimed at raising consciousness on addressing the impacts of the changing climate.

For more information about the upcoming CCC Week 2022 activities, visit the CCC social media pages at [@cccpHL](https://www.instagram.com/@cccpHL).

RMN NEWS ONLINE

CCC, nagsagawa ng tree planting sa La Mesa Nature Reserve sa QC

Nagsagawa ng tree planting activity ang Climate Change Commission (CCC) sa La Mesa Nature Reserve sa Quezon City (QC).

Ayon sa CCC, bahagi ito ng kanilang paggunita sa ika-15 Annual Global Warming and Climate Change Consciousness Week na nagsimula ngayong araw.

Aabot sa 200 puno ng Narra, Dau at Sablot na isang rainforest tree ang itatanim sa bahagi ng La Mesa Watershed Protected Area.

Pinangunahan ito nina CCC Commissioners Vice Chair and Executive Director Robert Borje at Commissioner Rachel Herrera.

Kasama rin sa lumahok sa aktibidad ang iba't ibang ahensya ng pamahalaan, private sector at civil society group.

Batay sa CCC, ang aktibidad na ito ay tugon nila sa panawagan ni Pangulong Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr., na mabawasan ang epekto ng climate change.

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