



NEWS ROUNDUP

25 November 2022 [08:00 am]

- Lawmaker says Filipinos will be 'guinea pigs' in nuclear pact with US
- Could blockchain-based insurance solve agricultural pains in the Philippines?
- World Bank: Philippines made significant progress in cutting poverty, but inequality remains high
- Miss Eco Teen PH Beatriz McLelland says COP27's 'loss and damage' fund proposal 'never enough'
- Marcos Jr. OKs tariff cuts for e-vehicles, parts
- [Opinion] Baha, baha, paano ka mawala?
- NEDA endorses EO cutting e-vehicle tariff to zero

CCC IN THE NEWS

- More investment in climate action to save lives and livelihood sought

ABS CBN

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BUSINESS MIRROR

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GMA NEWS

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By: Ted Cordero

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By: Jerome Aning, Tessa R. Salazar

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. has agreed to temporarily remove the tariff on imported electric vehicles (EVs) and lower the tax rate on their parts and components to promote usage and help cut the country's dependence on imported fuel, Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Arsenio Balisacan said on Thursday.

THE MANILA TIMES

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By: Arjo Atayde

First of 2 parts

THE following is from the privilege speech that the congressman from the first district of Quezon City delivered at the House of Representatives on Nov. 22, 2022.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

[NEDA endorses EO cutting e-vehicle tariff to zero](#)

By: Louella Desiderio

MANILA, Philippines — The National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) Board endorsed yesterday an executive order temporarily reducing the tariff rates on certain electric vehicles to zero percent to develop the industry and address the impact of climate change.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

BUSINESS WORLD

[More investment in climate action to save lives and livelihood sought](#)

By: Jonathan Mayuga

Top officials of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the Climate Change Commission (CCC) called for more investment in climate action while strengthening collaboration to achieve climate-resilient development during the opening ceremony of the 15th Global Warming and Climate Change Consciousness Week (CCC Week 2022) on Monday.

Information and Knowledge Management Division

ABS CBN

[Lawmaker says Filipinos will be 'guinea pigs' in nuclear pact with US](#)

MANILA — House Deputy Minority Leader France Castro is against negotiations for a civilian nuclear pact between the United States and the Philippines, saying it poses threat to the health and safety of Filipinos.

According to the ACT Teachers party-list representative, the Filipinos will become "guinea pigs" in this nuclear energy cooperation deal known as "123 agreement".

The pact, among initiatives announced during US Vice President Kamala Harris's recent trip to the Philippines, can lead to the future sale of US nuclear reactors to Manila.

"The US and the Philippines agreed to have a... testing of what we call the nuclear equipment here in the Philippines," Castro told ANC's "Headstart" Thursday.

"So, we are being made as guinea pigs in this experiment. This would affect our health, of course, our safety and the environment," she added.

The Makabayan bloc, led by Castro, has filed House Resolution 582 to investigate the "123 agreement".

The group said modular or microreactor nuclear power plants are still at an experimental stage and are only legally being made in US bases.

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. is a strong supporter of renewable energy and has insisted on the need to reconsider building nuclear power plants in the disaster-prone country.

However, before the United States can sell nuclear equipment to the Philippines, the two countries must sign the "123 agreement," which is designed to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons.

In her visit to Thailand, Harris also announced that the US would help Bangkok develop nuclear power through a new class of small reactors, part of a program aimed at fighting climate change.

The White House said the assistance was part of its Net Zero World Initiative, a project launched at last year's Glasgow climate summit in which the United States partners with the private sector and philanthropists to promote clean energy.

The US will offer technical assistance to Thailand to deploy the developing technology of small modular reactors, which are factory-built and portable. Such reactors are generally considered safer as they do not need human intervention to shut down in emergencies.

BUSINESS MIRROR

[Could blockchain-based insurance solve agricultural pains in the Philippines?](#)

The Philippines is one of the most typhoon-prone countries in the world, dealing with an average of 20 occurrences per year. According to the Philippine Climate Change and Food Security Analysis (CCFSA) study commissioned by the World Food Programme, typhoons and other extreme weather events have cost the country approximately Php 290 million in agricultural damages in the last decade. The recent typhoon Paeng alone caused Php 3.16 billion in damages to the sector.

Agriculture is a major industry in the Philippine economy, representing about ten percent of its gross domestic product. At the groundwork of the industry are small-scale farmers, usually holding less than three hectares of farmland, leading agricultural production. Despite being the major contributors to the industry, most of these farmers live in poverty. The Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) states that most rice farmers got a net return per hectare of Php 16,832 in 2020, which is a little more than 20% of the average Php 70,000 per hectare capital required for rice farming.

With limited financial means, farmers heavily rely on loans to raise capital for their work. This situation makes them vulnerable when they lose income when crops are destroyed by floods and droughts. With their initial mortgage unpaid, farmers often raise capital through fresh loans, exposing them to a high risk of debt accumulation.

“Farmer productivity has declined over the years due to insufficient support. Often, families of farmers decide to sell land for more immediate income amid pressing needs and what would have been the next generation of farmers are seen to pursue better-paying jobs,” shared Mario Berta, Country Manager for the Philippines at Igloo. “On top of these challenges, there are recurring natural disasters that significantly hurt the livelihoods of farmers. This calls for a strengthened initiative that will mitigate the impact of catastrophes.”

While extreme weather conditions may not be prevented, preparations can be made to ensure the fastest recovery for the agriculture sector. The provision of crop insurance can help and will enable farmers to begin farming anew after a calamity. However, the current process of insurance claims settlement takes a lot of time and requires tedious backend processing. In addition to this, agents have to brave the difficult journey of visiting farms in the wake of typhoons and manually assess the damage to the insured’s assets. This extended processing time adds to further loss of income for the farmers.

“Crop insurance needs to be automated so the farmers can receive their payouts sooner and get back on their feet quicker,” said Berta.

Igloo is a regional insurtech firm with a mission to make insurance accessible and affordable for all through technology. It facilitates digital insurance underwritten by partner insurance companies and offered in partner distribution channels such as e-commerce platforms and mobile wallets. Recently, Igloo introduced Weather Index Insurance, its first blockchain-based parametric insurance that automates claims through a smart contract on the blockchain.

Weather Index Insurance is an innovative approach to insurance provision that pays out benefits on the basis of a rainfall level, the predetermined index, for loss of assets and investments resulting from weather and catastrophic events. The claim is automatically paid when the rain index hits the flood or drought threshold. This eliminates the need to individually verify claims thereby reducing transaction costs, and allowing for a quicker claims settlement process. The business rules governing claims payout being hosted on

a public blockchain help leverage the attributes of transparency, consistency, and unbiasedness thereby making the setup credible.

“We believe that Weather Index Insurance is a potential product that will reduce the vulnerability of farmers to adverse weather conditions. The expected increase in the speed of claims processing will enable farmers to have a better chance of recovery from catastrophes and increase productivity and competitiveness,” added Berta.

However, he also recognized that there are enormous challenges needed to be addressed to make blockchain-based insurance palatable to farmers. These hurdles include the country’s low insurance penetration rate, financial inclusion, and access to digital services in rural areas, among others.

“When we bring Weather Index Insurance to the Philippines, Igloo will work with organizations such as rural banks, farmer’s cooperatives, and relevant government agencies to address these pain points and ensure that the insurance solution becomes a viable option that farmers can rely on for faster recovery,” said Berta.

“The unprecedented pace of climate change coupled with COVID-19 induced supply chain shocks have made it absolutely necessary to scale up agri-insurance solutions for the smallholder farming community. Igloo is trying to bring forth an integrated approach with the wider ecosystem to strengthen farm-level resilience by focusing on product and distribution innovation,” shared Raunak Mehta, Co-founder and CEO at Igloo.

The Weather Index Insurance is available in Vietnam but is set to roll out in more agriculture-driven SEA countries like the Philippines, Indonesia, and Thailand. Igloo is currently speaking to potential partners that can underwrite and distribute the product to underserved farmers in Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao. Committed to delivering Insurance for All, Igloo welcomes more collaboration with the public and private sector to guarantee the highest level of national protection.

GMA NEWS

[World Bank: Philippines made significant progress in cutting poverty, but inequality remains high](#)

By: Ted Cordero

The Philippines has made significant gains in reducing poverty, but income inequality remains with the super-rich capturing a substantial portion of the national income, multilateral lender World Bank said in its latest report.

In its report “Overcoming Poverty and Inequality in the Philippines: Past, Present, and Prospects for the Future” released Thursday, the World Bank said that poverty rate in the Philippines fell by two-thirds in the past three decades —from 49.2% in 1985 to 16.7% in 2018— “driven by high growth rates and the expansion of jobs outside agriculture.”

The multilateral lender also said that by 2018, the middle class had expanded to nearly 12 million and the economically secure population had risen to 44 million.

In his keynote address during the report’s launch, National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) chief Arsenio Balisacan said that as Socioeconomic Planning Secretary of two administrations and “having served in other capacities, I can say with conviction that our efforts to reduce poverty and inequality have come a long way.”

The World Bank report, however, said that inequality is still high in the country despite the gains in poverty reduction.

“Yet inequality remains high: the top 1% of earners together capture 17% of national income, with only 14% being shared by the bottom 50%,” the World Bank said.

With an income Gini coefficient —a measure of distribution of income among the population—42.3% in 2018, “the Philippines had one of the highest rates of income inequality in East Asia,” it said.

Balisacan said the World Bank report is a welcome analytical piece that is both timely and relevant.

He said the findings in the report will be useful as inputs and references to the strategies the government is going to implement through the upcoming Philippine Development Plan or PDP 2023-2028.

“The Philippines aims to become a middle-class society free of poverty by 2040, but we know from global experience that no country has managed to make this transition while maintaining high levels of inequality,” said Ndiame Diop, World Bank Country Director for Brunei, Malaysia, Philippines, and Thailand.

“Inequality of opportunity and low mobility across generations wastes human potential and slowdown innovation, which is crucial for building a competitive and prosperous economy that will in turn improve the well-being and quality of life of all Filipinos,” said Diop.

GMA News Online has reached out to the Office of the Press Secretary for its comments on the matter, but it has yet to reply as of posting time.

At a separate Palace briefing, Balisacan said the 8-point socioeconomic agenda and the upcoming Philippine Development Plan, PDP 2023-2028 is intended to address the

issues like that “and that is to accelerate poverty reduction while ensuring that the rapid growth, that the plan for the medium-term will also be very inclusive.”

“Inclusive, meaning that the economic opportunities will not only for the upper income groups but even more importantly for the lower and middle income groups,” he said.

“So it’s ‘everybody’s boat is lifted by the rising tide’ as they say. And that way, again, inequality will be reduced in a significant way and we’ll support the poverty reduction thrust of the government,” he added.

The Philippine Development Plan (PDP) 2023-2028 contains targets and strategic actions of government agencies in the next six years.

On the other hand, the administration's 8-Point Socioeconomic Agenda contains policies that promote social justice, ensure food security, accelerate progress, protect our environment, and address climate change.

The World Bank report also highlighted that the expansion of secondary education, mobility to better-paying jobs, access to basic services, and government social assistance have started to reduce inequality since the mid-2000s.

However, unequal opportunities, slow access to tertiary education among low-income households, inequality in returns to college education, and social norms putting the heavier burden of childcare on women has slowed down the narrowing of inequality in the Philippines, the report said.

For his part, Balisacan described the report as providing a picture of how inequality and poverty are embedded over a person’s life cycle — from maternal health that impacts mother and child, to children’s access to education and health services, and to employment and income opportunities.

“Inequality shapes outcomes later in life, such as employment opportunities and income, which in turn influence how much support adult Filipinos are able to provide for their children to help maximize their potential,” said Nadia Belhaj Hassine Belghith, Senior Economist with the East Asia Poverty Global Practice covering Thailand and the Philippines who led the study.

COVID-19 pandemic

Meanwhile, the report noted the COVID-19 pandemic has partly reversed decades-long gains in reducing poverty and inequality in the Philippines.

“In 2021, poverty rose to 18.1% despite large government assistance. The economy has begun to rebound but signs are emerging that the recovery will be uneven. Prolonged loss of income has taken a heavy toll on the poorest households. With food prices going up and a reliance on adverse coping strategies, among them eating less,

there is a risk of serious consequences for the health and nutrition of children in vulnerable households,” the World Bank said.

The report said that policy priorities to reduce inequality in the Philippines can be structured around three themes, including healing the pandemic’s scars and building resilience, setting the stage for a vibrant and inclusive recovery, and promoting greater equality of opportunity.

Healing pandemic’s scars will require promoting greater vaccine booster uptake, overcoming the learning loss due to COVID-19, strengthening social assistance, unemployment insurance programs for the informal sector, and taming inflation, the World Bank said.

Setting the stage for vibrant recovery entails reskilling of workers, promoting entrepreneurship, increasing the participation of women in the labor force, and raising the productivity of agriculture.

Promoting greater equality of opportunity entails increasing access to quality health care, increasing equality of opportunity in education, and improving access to quality housing, among others, the lender said.

Equality of opportunity needs to target the lagging regions and other people disadvantaged in accessing these because of the circumstances of their birth, it said.

Baliscan said the World Bank report will provide analytical support to the Eight-point Socioeconomic Agenda of the Marcos Administration which underscores the importance of protecting households.

“The path towards a prosperous society where opportunities are available for all is certainly challenging, but our resolve to reach this goal remains strong and our commitment, firm,” Balisacan said.

“It will take everyone – from government agencies to members of the private sector and civil society – to do our share in shaping the policies and actions that will lift the lives of our fellow countrymen now and in the future,” he added.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

[Miss Eco Teen PH Beatriz McLelland says COP27's 'loss and damage' fund proposal 'never enough'](#)

By: Armin Adina

MANILA, Philippines — At the recent United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP27), member-countries agreed to set up a fund to help poor countries that are more vulnerable to the impact of climate change. But a Filipino teen environmental advocate demanded more from them.

“It will never be enough when it comes to saving the people and the environment. But it’s one step closer to having a better future and giving that opportunity to have a better life for the people who are suffering,” reigning Miss Eco Teen Philippines Beatriz McLelland told the Inquirer at the sidelines of her send-off press conference at Luxent Hotel in Quezon City on Nov. 21.

“I hope that everybody hears it, and creates more projects, and take that as an inspiration to give more opportunities to the people,” continued the country’s representative to the 2022 Miss Eco Teen International pageant in Egypt next month.

McLelland also encouraged her fellow youth to be more involved in environmental projects. “I hope that in the future we can work with the COP, and I hope I could meet some of the members when I come to visit Egypt,” she said.

If given the chance, she said, she would propose that richer countries explore “eco anxiety” projects. “It’s all about the youth having to fear of their future because of the ongoing climate crisis, not only in the Philippines but the rest of the world,” she explained.

McLelland said the project aims to inspire hope from that fear. “It doesn’t only take stakeholders to do that, it also takes the youth to be part, to be involved, and to raise the concerns, and be able to be involved in projects, and for them to be heard as well,” she added.

This is also the reason why, for her, it is still necessary to hold a “Teen” pageant even if the Miss Eco International organization already mounts a “Miss” competition.

“We stand for so many advocacies that we are passionate about, and that we deserve to be heard because young people as well can create change,” McLelland explained.

She said the youth is more aware of their surroundings and are not afraid to speak up about causes if given the chance. “I’m really thankful that there are still ‘teen’ pageants for that, for opportunities to be given to young women like myself,” she continued.

McLelland captured her national title at the 2022 Miss World Philippines pageant in June, and will represent the Philippines in the 2022 Miss Eco Teen International competition in Egypt on Dec. 11 (Dec. 12 in Manila).

Her predecessor Tatyana Austria finished second last year, while Roberta Tamondong became the first winner from the Philippines when she won in 2020.

[Marcos Jr. OKs tariff cuts for e-vehicles, parts](#)

By: Jerome Aning, Tessa R. Salazar

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. has agreed to temporarily remove the tariff on imported electric vehicles (EVs) and lower the tax rate on their parts and components to promote usage and help cut the country's dependence on imported fuel, Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Arsenio Balisacan said on Thursday.

An executive order to implement the tariff modification as approved by the National Economic and Development Authority (Neda) Board, which is chaired by the President, is now awaiting Mr. Marcos' signature, Balisacan said at a Palace briefing.

Under the EO, tariff rates on certain EVs, such as passenger cars, buses, minibuses, vans, trucks, motorcycles, tricycles, scooters and bicycles would be cut to zero for a five-year period. Tariffs on certain EV parts and components would also be lowered to 1 percent from 5 percent also for five years.

Balisacan, who heads Neda, said the zero import tariff on EVs would not apply to hybrid-type EVs, or those that give users the option to use fuel or electricity.

PH rejects same-sex marriage: We're not ready for that, says DOJ's Remulla
"In particular, the EO will temporarily reduce the most-favored nation (MFN) tariff rates to zero percent for five years on completely built-up, or CBU, units of some EVs, except for hybrid-type EVs," he said.

The Neda Board also indicated that the tariff modification would be reviewed after a year of implementation to assess its impact on the development of the EV industry ecosystem, he added.

The EO, according to Balisacan, would help broaden the list of countries that can supply EVs to the Philippines and encourage consumers to shift to electric-run vehicles and promote the growth of the domestic industry.

Tax perks

"We want to encourage the adoption, the use of e-vehicles because that will address pollution issues and, of course, adaptations to climate change; and we believe that's the future. But more importantly, we want to be part of the value chain globally in this drive to get to these new industries, new growth drivers. And hopefully, we can develop our own industries, and this reduction in tariff is part of that building up of the ecosystem," he said.

The tariff reduction on EVs followed the lapsing into law last April 15 of Republic Act No. 11697, or the Electric Vehicle Industry Development Act, which laid the policy framework for the manufacture, assembly, and importation of these vehicles and their parts and components; construction, installation and maintenance of charging stations and related support infrastructure; research and development, and regulation of the sector.

E-vehicle producers that would set up shop in the country and other auxiliary businesses related to EVs could also avail themselves of other tax incentives and fiscal perks from the Department of Trade and Industry, according to Balisacan.

Fiscal incentives

The EV manufacturing industry has been included in the government's Strategic Investment Priority Plan, which means manufacturers can get fiscal incentives, such as income tax holiday of up to seven years.

Current tariffs on e-vehicle imports are between 5 percent and 30 percent, depending on whether the vehicles come from MFN and free trade agreement (FTA) partner countries or not.

In July, Trade Secretary Alfredo Pascual noted that eliminating tariffs would help the country's EV industry develop an ecosystem for a viable market that could support the production of EVs here.

Level playing field

For instance, he said such move would put Italian EV makers on a level playing field alongside the country's FTA partners that enjoy lower tariff rates.

Asked if the government would not lose money from the tariff reduction, Balisacan replied: "No, because we have really been reducing the tariffs for those vehicles that are not actually yet locally produced. And as of now, the quantity of those [EVs] is not that big. We want to encourage the adoption of EVs that will eventually increase the demand for support systems like chargers. It can even develop value-adding services for our industry."

Data from the Electric Vehicle Association of the Philippines (Evap) showed that the total EVs registered at the Land Transportation Office from 2010 to 2021 included 5,520 e-motorcycles, 7,220 e-trikes, 311 cars, 43 sport utility vehicles. or SUVs, 815 utility vehicles, 12 trucks and 10 buses, or a total of 13,934.

5-year test

The government decision to cut tariffs has "a great effect on the promotion of EV use, and we need that to verify which vehicle segment we need to concentrate on and ultimately assemble locally. Five years is a good time to test the market," said Evap chair emeritus Ferdinand Raquelsantos.

"Definitely, the Philippines is a viable market for EVs," he stressed.

Evap president Edmund Araga added: "It is a great opportunity for the industry to flood the market with more types and models of (CBU) EV units to help promote the industry. We at Evap already made a bold statement that switching to EVs will be beneficial, not

only to our environment and our health, but this would also help us save on fuel imports.”

“More and more EV charging stations are now ready for use, in malls, gas stations and hotels,” he added. The total number of stations as of July 2021 was 278, mostly located in Luzon.

Raquelsantos, who is also the president of the Electric Vehicle Owners Society, described the country’s EV infrastructure as “fast growing.”

THE MANILA TIMES

[\[Opinion\] Baha, baha, paano ka mawala?](#)

By: Arjo Atayde

FFirst of 2 parts

THE following is from the privilege speech that the congressman from the first district of Quezon City delivered at the House of Representatives on Nov. 22, 2022.

THIS representation rises in this chamber for the first time on a matter of personal privilege, to speak regarding an urgent concern that directly affects the lives of my constituents and the lives of millions of Filipinos who live in Metro Manila. It is an issue that, if not addressed, may also derail the aspirations of the Philippines to become — as President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. says — "Asia's Fastest Rising Star."

The issue is flooding in the National Capital Region.

Many of us in the House are intimately familiar with this problem. There are those of us who have been stuck in traffic resulting from heavy afternoon downpours. The House has suspended work in the past because of widespread flooding in the metropolis. Many of us have had to cancel or postpone meetings in parts of Metro Manila following heavy rains because roads are impassable.

Isa sa mga lugar na apektado ay ang aking distrito. Unfortunately, our district is not alone in its misery, as many parts of Metro Manila become inaccessible and are paralyzed when rains pummel our capital.

The damage caused by floods in the whole country, not just Metro Manila, is substantial. The Philippine Statistics Authority recently revealed that the total cost of damage due to natural extreme events and disasters that hit the country in 2021 was P60.7 billion. This is 27 percent higher than in 2020, when the damage cost us P47.8 billion.

The future appears just as bleak. A report by global professional services company GHD, "Aquanomics: The economics of water risk and future resilience," points out that our country "is ranked as the fourth most affected country in the world for water-related disasters, with approximately 20 typhoons entering the country each year, often bringing torrential rain and flooding." These floods and tropical storms, according to the report, could result in losses amounting to \$89 billion between 2022 and 2050. At the current exchange rate, that is equivalent to P5.1 trillion, Mr. Speaker.

Flooding in Metro Manila is a painful constant that is reflected in the headlines of articles that report them. Please allow me to provide some examples:

– In 2012, a major daily published an article that read "Philippine stocks fall as investors assess impact of floods."

– In 2014, an international wire service posted a similar article online, which said, "Heavy rain floods Philippine capital; markets, schools shut."

– In 2017, a respected international business publication came out with a piece entitled "Philippine markets shut as waist-high storm waters flood capital."

– An editorial in a broadsheet in 2018 shouted, "Paralyzed by floods."

– In 2020, in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic, an international media outfit ran an article with this headline: "Manila paralyzed after Typhoon 'Vamco' sweeps across Philippines."

– Last year, the same broadsheet that published the "Paralyzed by floods" editorial came out with another editorial titled "Paralyzed by floods... again."

What people around the world have read about, my constituents experience on a regular basis. In my first month as representative, thunderstorms and heavy rains caused sudden flooding in several barangay in my district. In Barangay Mariblo, Barangay Sto. Domingo and Barangay Talayan, residents experienced waist-deep floods. Sa mga barangay sa Bungad, San Antonio, Katipunan at Damayan naman, hanggang tuhod ang baha. Dun sa West Riverside sa Barangay Del Monte, hindi na makalabas ang mga tao sa kani-kanilang bahay dahil sa tindi ng baha.

Many roads in my district were impassable, which made it impossible for families to go out and buy food and other basic necessities. Ganun kalala, Mr. Speaker.

With assistance from our city and barangay officials as well as national government agencies, we extended aid to families who needed food and water. In the days and weeks that followed, we put in place teams to monitor and respond to flooding, and have in several instances donated pumps to chronically affected residents whose homes are flooded even after a light downpour.

While I commend my fellow officials in Quezon City for their assistance, especially the barangay captains in our district, these actions are stopgap measures at best, and will not address the roots of our perennial flooding problem.

Pwede namin abutan ng tulong ang mga nasalanta, pero hindi ito sapat para maaayos ang matinding problema ng baha.

There is nothing we can do about our climate and our weather, Mr. Speaker. As mentioned earlier, our country is beset by 20 typhoons a year on average. We have a rainy season that stretches from June to November, but it is not uncommon to be hit by heavy rains and typhoons in our so-called dry season. Note that our first typhoon this year — Typhoon "Agaton" — struck us last summer, in April. As we have seen the past

decade, extraordinary amounts of rainfall are no longer uncommon; if anything, they are getting more frequent because of climate change.

We have no power over the weather and the amount of rain that falls in Metro Manila, Mr. Speaker. Neither do we have the power to turn back the clock and reverse the growing population and rapid urbanization of Metro Manila, which have exacerbated the consequences of decades of logging that have greatly reduced the forest cover in upland areas around the National Capital Region.

But we can, my friends and colleagues, call attention to this issue and urge the appropriate agencies and offices to take the steps necessary to address the issues that contribute to flooding in Metro Manila

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

[NEDA endorses EO cutting e-vehicle tariff to zero](#)

By: Louella Desiderio

MANILA, Philippines — The National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) Board endorsed yesterday an executive order temporarily reducing the tariff rates on certain electric vehicles to zero percent to develop the industry and address the impact of climate change.

The board endorsed the tariff cut on certain e-vehicles and their parts and components during the board's meeting yesterday, its first under President Marcos.

"We want to encourage the adoption, the use of e-vehicles because that will address pollution issues and, of course, adaptations to climate change; and we believe that's the future," Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Arsenio Balisacan said at a press briefing in Malacañang.

"But more importantly, we want to be part of the value chain globally in this drive to get to these new industries, new growth drivers. And hopefully, we can develop our own industries, and this reduction in tariff is part of that building up of ecosystem," he added.

The EO also aims to expand market sources and encourage consumers to consider acquiring e-vehicles, improve energy security by reducing dependence on imported fuel, the NEDA said in a statement.

The order will modify tariff rates on certain e-vehicles like passenger cars, buses, mini-buses, vans, trucks, motorcycles, tricycles, scooters and bicycles, including their parts and components. It will reduce the most favored nation tariff rates to zero percent for five years on completely built up units of certain e-vehicles, except for hybrid-type vehicles. The order will also implement tariff modification on certain parts and components of e-vehicles from five percent to one percent for five years.

"As of now, the hybrid will not be affected by this change in the tariff rates. But as we said, we will review the performance of this reform after one year to see if there is a need to also include the hybrid," Balisacan said.

The board will review the tariff modification a year after its implementation to assess its impact on the development of the e-vehicle industry ecosystem.

Balisacan did not provide estimates of revenue loss resulting from the EO but claimed it won't be that much.

The board also approved NEDA's guidelines for processing public-private partnership proposals.

The new procedures seek to harmonize the review and approval of the NEDA board and the Investment Coordination Committee. The process also covers the preparation and submission of government agencies of PPP projects with the joint evaluation of the NEDA Secretariat, the PPP Center, and the finance department.

The guidelines also include the updated list of documentary requirements for solicited and unsolicited PPP proposals, NEDA said.

The NEDA board also approved a new project funded through official development assistance as well as changes on five ongoing projects.

Approved was the P11.42-billion Philippine Fisheries and Coastal Resiliency (FishCoRe) project of the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR). The project aims to enhance the management of fishery resources and improve the value of production of fisheries in select fisheries management areas. It also seeks to address the problems in the fishery sector, reduce poverty incidence and ensure food security.

At the meeting, Marcos, also the chairman of the NEDA board, cited projections stating that a few decades from now, there would be more saltwater fish cultivation as a result of overfishing.

“So we have to get into the industry. We’ve been pushing it since we started using fingerlings to the Pangasinan aquaculture,” Marcos said.

“For some reason aquaculture is not flourishing, it is not developing. That’s why this is important for me. I think this is where — if not all, it will be part of our food supply. It will give very good income for our fisherfolk,” he added.

The seven-year investment will support the implementation of reforms in fishery and aquaculture management in the country.

FishCoRe’s components include supporting the development and implementation of appropriate fisheries management policies, establishing support facilities for the rehabilitation of coastal and maritime habitats, and improving institutional capacities for strengthened enforcement.

ODA funding

Of the P11.2 billion project cost, P9.6 billion will come from official development assistance to be provided by the World Bank. The remaining P660.6 million would be funded by the government through the BFAR, and P1.16 billion from private sector partners and beneficiary groups or cooperatives.

A total of 354,905 registered fisherfolk in 24 provinces with a coastal and marine area of about 32 million hectares are seen to benefit from the project, which is also expected to create 26,877 jobs.

Also approved was the request of the transportation department for the use of savings, change in scope, and loan validity extension for the first phase of the maritime safety capability improvement project, as well as its request for 19-month loan validity extension for the new communications, navigation, surveillance/air traffic management systems development project.

The maritime safety capability improvement project involves the acquisition of 10 multi-role response vessels to boost the Philippine Coast Guard's response capability during coastal maritime incidents.

The new communications, navigation, surveillance/air traffic management systems development project, meanwhile, involves the construction of the Manila ATM Automation System and the Manila ATM Center Building in Pasay City, and the installation of communications and surveillance equipment in 10 radar sites.

The board also approved the request of the public works department to extend by 12 months the implementation period and the validity of the loan for the Samar Pacific Coastal Road project.

It also approved the request for change in scope of works, increase in cost, and reallocation of contingency cost to civil works category for integrated disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation measures in low-lying areas of Pampanga Bay project.

The Samar Pacific Coastal Road project involves the construction of 11.30 kilometers of the unpaved section of the road and the construction of three bridges with a total length of 261 linear meters. The project in Pampanga Bay, meanwhile, seeks to maximize drainage efficiency, minimize flood damage to properties, and improve trading and market activities in the towns of Macabebe, Masantol, Minalin and Sto. Tomas.

The request for change in scope for the Philippine Competition Commission (PCC)'s capacity building to foster competition project was also approved. The project is designed to strengthen the institutional and individual capacities of PCC and other agencies with competition-related mandates.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

BUSINESS WORLD

[More investment in climate action to save lives and livelihood sought](#)

By: Jonathan Mayuga

Top officials of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the Climate Change Commission (CCC) called for more investment in climate action while strengthening collaboration to achieve climate-resilient development during the opening ceremony of the 15th Global Warming and Climate Change Consciousness Week (CCC Week 2022) on Monday.

With the theme “Sama-samang Tumutugon sa Hamon ng Nagbabagong Klima,” CCC Week 2022 draws 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.

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

In a news statement, DENR Secretary Maria Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga, who represents President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. in the CCC stressed the importance of investing in initiatives to pursue climate resilience.

Citing the record-high P453.11 billion for climate change adaptation and mitigation at P289.73 billion, Lozaga stressed the need for more investments to support the country’s climate-resilient development.

“More investments are still needed if we are to make transformative strides to achieve climate-resilient development. The coming years will present more opportunities to show how the whole-of-society effort can shape the future of our country,” Lozaga said.

Sen. Cynthia Villar, Chairperson of the Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources, Chairperson of the House Committee on Climate Change and Bohol First District Representative Edgar Chatto also joined the activity.

In her recorded message, Villar remarked that the impacts of climate change on biodiversity, food security, and our communities are becoming even more pronounced, thereby needing serious and urgent attention from all.

“We should take climate change more seriously and urgently. We should rally all communities to institute appropriate strategies to [this] make environment climate-resilient and not to initiate activities that would aggravate the sufferings of the people,” said Villar. “Filipinos are called to do their parts to counter the ill effects of climate change,” she added.

Chatto, for her part, highlighted the need to collectively strengthen the capacities of communities to reduce loss and damage.

“The vulnerability of our society is measured in three aspects: Susceptibility, Coping, and Adaptability. We may not control the natural events, but we need to strengthen our susceptibility measures, our coping mechanisms in minimizing damage, adaptation or our long-term strategies to anticipate changes to mitigate or avoid the adverse effects and impacts,” said Chatto.

The Opening Ceremony of the CCC Week 2022 took place at Novotel Manila. The Climate Investment Forum 2022 immediately followed the ceremony, which brought together various stakeholders to identify strategies in achieving the Philippine Nationally Determined Contribution targets, priority actions on climate finance, and opportunities for climate action

“I wish to thank our partners from the national and local governments, the business sector, the private sector, the academe, and civil society for joining us in this mission. The Commission shall continue to bring everyone together to ensure a dynamic synergy as we pursue greener and more resilient pathways towards a sustainable future,” said CCC Vice Chairperson and Executive Director Robert E.A. Borje.

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