



NEWS ROUNDUP

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By: VG Cabuag

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By: Jovee Marie Dela Cruz

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BUSINESS WORLD

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By: Luisa Maria Jacinta Jocson

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[\[Opinion\] Economic projections for 2023 and beyond](#)

By: Bienvenido S. Oplas Jr.

The BusinessWorld Economic Forum (BWEF) 2022 today, Nov. 29, has as its theme, “Forecast 2023: Opportunity in Uncertainty.” I want to contribute to the discussion on economic forecast and projections in relation to the recently concluded big annual conference, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) 2022 or 27th Conference of Parties of UNFCCC (COP 27) in Egypt that ended on Nov. 19.

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MANILA BULLETIN

[Collaboration is key to sustainable agriculture – Israeli experts](#)

By: Ralph Lauren Abainza

Agriculture must meet the changing needs of the planet and the expectations of regulators, food processors, and retailers. Benchmarking of best practices is vital to ensure sustainability in agriculture. This is what experts from Israel shared with local stakeholders on Thursday, November 10, 2022, during a one-day learning exchange at the Bureau of Plant Industry in Quezon City.

[PH’s success is UN’s success — Manalo](#)

By: Joseph Pedrajas

Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) Secretary Enrique Manalo believes that “the success of the Philippines is the success of the United Nations (UN).”

MANILA STANDARD

[\[Opinion\] Is climate credo in high gear?](#)

The two-week 27th edition of the Conference of the Parties in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt has ended – with new heroes among participants from 190 countries, including the Philippines, hopeful something positive was pushed for global climate justice.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

[Framing disaster response differently: It's not just a 'one-off' event](#)

By: Cristina Eloisa Baclig

MANILA, Philippines—To make the Philippines' disaster risk reduction (DRR) system more robust, an expert presented key ideas—change how the country frames disasters, address development issues that are both causes and effects of disasters, and improve disaster risk communication.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

[ING bids to further raise ESG portfolio in PH](#)

By: Joann Villanueva

MANILA – Dutch banking giant ING aims to further increase its sustainable financing portfolio in the Philippines as the economy continues to recover as well as to help in the government's bid in addressing climate change.

THE MANILA TIMES

[Experts seek local plans vs climate change impact](#)

SCIENCE- and local-based action plans are crucial in addressing the worsening impacts of climate change in the country. This was highlighted during the 11th National Panel of Technical Experts (NPTE) Forum, where members recommended concrete action points to address the 10 leading climate risks in the Philippines.

[Germany to modernize PH jeepneys](#)

By: Bernadette Tamayo

GERMANY and the Philippines aim to modernize the latter's jeepney fleet by 2026 to fight the effects of climate change. In a statement on Monday, the German Embassy in the Philippines said global warming is the most pressing problem the world needs to address.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

[DOE expects completion of natural gas projects by Q1](#)

By: Richmond Mercurio

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Energy (DOE) expects the completion of natural gas projects in Luzon by the first quarter of 2023 to help stabilize power supply next year.

[How outcomes of G20, COP27 summits could affect Philippines' RE ambitions](#)

By: Gaea Katreena Cabico

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippines can achieve its conservative renewable energy ambitions regardless of the outcomes of the COP27 climate conference and G20 summit, and the country should attain the target as quickly as possible, an energy analyst said.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

ABS CBN

[Mga LGU hinimok na paghandaan ang epekto ng nagbabagong klima](#)

By: Lady Vicencio

Hinihikayat ng Climate Change Commission at University of the Philippines Resilience Institute ang mga lokal na pamahalaan na puspusang paghandaan ang epekto ng pagbabago ng klima, tulad ng mas malalakas na bagyo at patuloy na pagtaas ng temperatura.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

[VP Sara backs reforestation efforts vs. climate change](#)

MANILA – To increase carbon sinks and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, more trees should be planted, Vice President and Department of Education Secretary Sara Duterte said.

Information and Knowledge Management Division

BUSINESS MIRROR

Directors must ensure company operations don't harm the environment'

By: VG Cabuag

Directors of local firms should consider climate change-related risks in the discharge of their duties, to fulfill their companies' long-term legal, economic, moral and social obligations towards their shareholders and other stakeholders, according to a white paper commissioned by the Commonwealth Climate and Law Initiative (CCLI).

The opinion finds that under Philippine corporation law, the risks arising from climate change are within the scope of directors' duties to act in the best interest of the corporation and its shareholders. Directors owe their duties to stakeholders more broadly, and hold a stewardship role to ensure that company operations do not degrade the environment or contravene environmental laws.

"It is now globally recognized that climate change poses serious physical, transition, and liability risks to companies, and that climate change must be included in companies' enterprise risk management framework," the paper read.

"Under the 'comply or explain' approach of the Philippine corporate governance framework for publicly-held companies, boards of directors are encouraged to foster the corporation's long-term success, and to sustain its competitiveness and profitability in a manner consistent with its corporate objectives and 'the long-term best interests of its shareholders and other stakeholders'."

The said paper was authored by Cesar L. Villanueva, Lily K. Gruba, Angelo Patrick F. Advincula and Joyce Anne C. Wong.

Regulatory authorities, including the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), have taken detailed and specific steps to bring climate change risks to the attention of banks and insurers and listed companies. For example, the Sustainability Reporting Guidelines for Publicly-Listed Companies provide a Sustainability Reporting Framework to which Philippine publicly-listed companies must adhere on a comply or explain basis.

The new legal analysis finds that if sustainability reporting is made fully mandatory by the Philippine SEC, as is predicted for 2023, the failure to comply with the reporting rules may demonstrate gross negligence or bad faith in directing the affairs of the corporation in relation to climate change risks that the company may face, or regarding the company's obligation to refrain from harming the environment.

Boards of directors of both private and public companies should prepare for increased reporting standards and corresponding changes in their identification and management of climate-related risks, as well as employ value chain processes that take ESG, or environmental, social and governance, issues into consideration.

“This independent opinion of Philippine counsel adds to and complements opinions which we have commissioned in Malaysia, India, Hong Kong and Singapore. It finds that governance of foreseeable financial climate change risks forms part of directors’ duties and that directors have a stewardship role to ensure that company operations do not degrade the environment,” said Alex Cooper, lawyer at the CCLI.

“The opinion finds that directors may be held liable for gross negligence in performing their duties, but generally are able to take actions to mitigate the impacts of climate change on their company without exposing themselves to the risk of liability due to the business judgment rule.

“With climate change being at the forefront of the COP27 in Egypt last month, it is inevitable to continue to be deeply embedded in sustainability reports for the long term, according to Carlos Gatmaitan, CEO of the Institute of Corporate Directors.

“It is essential therefore that the framework for climate change as part of Sustainability Reports be reviewed towards a global standard. This publication is a major step for formalizing an SEC Memorandum Circular for proper duties and responsibilities of directors as well as disclosures and obligations of publicly-listed companies.”

“The legal opinion provides a unique opportunity to drive crucial conversations regarding the role of the private sector, particularly company directors, in tackling the climate crisis. It is essential reading for lawyers and company directors on the legal framework for managing climate risks and pursuing opportunities as the Philippines transitions to a net zero carbon economy. We believe this will lead to more companies in the Philippines establishing, and fulfilling, net zero transition plans within a Paris-compatible timeframe,” said Joyce Melcar Tan, senior lawyer at environmental law NGO ClientEarth.

[House forms TWG to unify 35 bills on creation of water resources department](#)

By: Jovee Marie Dela Cruz

The House Committee on Reorganization and House Committee on Public Works on Monday created a technical working group (TWG) for the drafting of a substitute bill to the 35 bills proposing the creation of the Department of Water Resources.

The two committees named House Committee Ways and Means Chairman Joey Sarte Salceda as the chairman of the TWG.

Pending issues for the TWG to resolve include the attachment of the National Irrigation Administration to the proposed department, inclusion of sewage systems under the jurisdiction of the department, and the inclusion of flood control planning in the department's functions.

Salceda was also the chairperson of the TWG for the bill during the 18th Congress.

Salceda explained the measures as "imitating the model for energy regulation in the country, where you have NEA [National Electrification Administration] for missionary connection, ERC [Energy Regulatory Commission] for rate regulation, Napocor [National Power Corporation] for generation, all under DOE [Department of Energy] for policy-setting and direction."

"Under the current system for water, you don't know where to go when you want to build a dam. Resource planning and management is disjointed. Disjointed governance means while water potential abounds, reliable, safe, and efficient delivery of potable water in the Philippines remains highly unequal," Salceda pointed out.

Salceda estimated that only 43 percent of the country's population has access to level 3 water supply, even as the country only uses 21 percent of its total potential water supply.

"We generate some 2200 mm of annual rainfall, nearly thrice what God gives China. So, we don't have a water scarcity issue. We have a water management issue," he explained.

Salceda also pointed out the highly unequal access to water, especially across income classes.

"91 percent of population has access to basic water services, but across regions, access ranges between 62 percent to 100 percent. 99 percent of top 20 percent of households have basic water services, while only 80 percent of bottom 20 percent have access," Salceda said.

Salceda added, "Wide inconsistency between the access to water of urban areas [61 percent] and rural areas [25 percent]. Rural areas' access tends to be run by local water districts."

Salceda described the proposed department as the “Apex body for the water sector responsible for water resources planning, policy formulation, and management of the ownership, appropriation, utilization, exploitation, development, sustainability and protection of water resources in the Philippines, except fisheries or aquaculture.”

The bill, Salceda said, aims “to ensure and accelerate universal access to water supply and sanitation services, to encourage responsible private sector participation, fostering and prioritizing infrastructure and public works that adopt innovative solutions and international best practices to address the challenges of climate change; and to declare all water and water treatment infrastructure projects as projects imbued with national interest.”

BUSINESS WORLD

[ADB touts microfinance role in building resilience vs climate change](#)

By: Luisa Maria Jacinta Jocson

MICROFINANCE institutions (MFIs) should be tapped in helping build resilience against climate change, especially for poorer and more vulnerable communities, according to the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

“Economic development supporting small- and medium-sized enterprises contributes to the resilience of the poor and vulnerable, including in urban areas,” the ADB said in a report.

“Building resilience against the impacts of climate change and geophysical shocks is critical for economic development and poverty reduction,” it added.

The world faces increasing flooding events; more frequent and longer heat waves; and stronger tropical cyclones, the ADB said.

The world’s extremely poor population is expected to rise to 132 million by 2030 due to the pandemic and climate change, according to the report.

“Microfinance institutions are well-positioned to be part of the solution. Additionally, MFIs in the region have a good history of serving women,” it said.

The ADB said that recent studies for urban MFIs operating in Bangladesh show contributions to savings, educational expenditure, and transportation expenditure, which increases labor mobility.

“MFIs in Bangladesh and Indonesia by and large focus their lending in urban areas. Some of the MFIs are concentrated in a single urban area. These concentrations compound the problems created by a geophysical shock,” it added.

In the Philippines, MFI initiatives should trickle down to the grassroots level, according to an economist.

“This is partly through applying environmental, social, and governance (ESG) standards on lending and investment decisions that help promote measures against climate change and make them more far reaching and more inclusive,” Rizal Commercial Banking Corp. Chief Economist Michael L. Ricafort said in a Viber message.

“These sectors in rural areas are also among the most prone to disasters due to climate change, especially the poorest of the poor and the most vulnerable or hardest-hit given limited resources and probably limited knowledge-awareness. Thus, technical, financial, preparedness, risk mitigated initiatives need to be targeted to them,” he added.

The report concluded that climate change and geophysical shocks are “creating an unresolved conundrum whereby the very financial institutions relied upon by the poor are also especially vulnerable to geophysical shocks, meaning that they are in a poor position to help their community when they are needed the most.”

“The balance sheet of the MFIs suffers, which means that they cannot respond to the community — either through recovery lending or by offering other forms of response immediately after the shock,” it added.

The ADB recommended implementing disaster risk financing solutions in order to support vulnerable communities.

“Efficient disaster risk financing solutions can be used to facilitate MFI recovery lending as an essential facet of building the resilience of the poor and vulnerable and, in turn, their communities,” the multi lender bank said.

MFIs have used disaster risk financing solutions to either expand lending into vulnerable regions or to pre-plan recovery lending programs, the ADB said.

The report also recommended the use of a single debt instrument to wrap normal credit with contingent credit and contingent capital together into one loan agreement.

“Contingent credit rebuilds liquidity and contingent capital flows with risk transfer instruments that are treated as subordinate debt and can be quickly converted to capital under Basel. The risk transfer goes to the global capital markets,” it added

[Opinion] Economic projections for 2023 and beyond

By: Bienvenido S. Oplas Jr.

The BusinessWorld Economic Forum (BWEF) 2022 today, Nov. 29, has as its theme, “Forecast 2023: Opportunity in Uncertainty.” I want to contribute to the discussion on economic forecast and projections in relation to the recently concluded big annual conference, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) 2022 or 27th Conference of Parties of UNFCCC (COP 27) in Egypt that ended on Nov. 19.

PROJECTIONS 2022 AND 2023

The Philippines had the deepest economic contraction in Asia in 2020 at -9.5%, followed by a mild recovery of 5.7% in 2021. This year, it is on the way to having the fourth fastest growth in East and South Asia at around 7.8%.

The multilaterals, especially the ADB through its Asian Development Outlook (ADO) September 2022 Update, and the IMF World Economic Outlook (WEO) October 2022 Update, have bad and low projections of only 6.5% Philippines growth this year, even if they knew that growth in quarters 1 and 2 (Q1, Q2) was already at 7.7%. When Q3 growth came out at 7.6%, it showed their projections as having archaic and ugly assumptions because they will now assume that Q4 growth will only be 2.9% — bad and unrealistic. My own projection for Q3, which I wrote in this column on Aug. 15, was 7-7.5% growth, and for Q4 is 7.5-8% growth.

This year will further cement the new trend that South East Asia and South Asia are the fastest growing regions in the world. Malaysia, the Philippines, Vietnam, and India will be the head of the pack (Table 1).

Finance Secretary Benjamin Diokno, as head of the economic team, is doing a good job in assuring the public and investors that important market-oriented reforms like the Public Service Act amendment, and the Foreign Investment and Retail Trade Liberalization Acts are in place, and no tax hikes will be done in major sectors like individual and corporate income, VAT, excise on energy products, even in so-called “sin products.”

These are good moves by Secretary Diokno. With the Philippine inflation rate already at 5.1% from January-October 2022 vs. 2% in 2020, and 3.9% in 2021, any tax hike on major sectors will have inflationary effects, especially if the tax hike is on energy products.

Last week, rumors about Secretary Diokno were published in at least two publications: “Biz Buzz: Cabinet member on way out?” (Philippine Daily Inquirer, Nov. 21) and “Mar, Gibo in play too? Salceda is top pick for DoF as Marcos grows weary of Diokno’s incompetence” (bilyonaryo.com, Nov. 21). A good quote from the President came out in the story “Marcos dismisses as ‘fake news’ report Diokno on way out at DoF”

(BusinessWorld, Nov. 22), referring to BizBuzz and Bilyonaryo as dishonest and indulging in irresponsible reporting. The public should mark these two outlets.

PROJECTIONS MEDIUM- TO LONG-TERM

There is a trend that high and rising consumption of fossil fuels (FF) — oil, natural gas, and coal — leads to high and sustained growth. And declining consumption of FF leads to low and declining growth.

In two tables accompanying this piece, I chose the biggest economies and arranged them in group A for North and South America, group B for Europe, group C for Northeast and South Asia, and group D for the ASEAN-6.

Energy consumption is expressed in Petajoules (PJ). One PJ is equivalent to 23,885 tons of oil equivalent, or equivalent to 277.78 megawatt-hours (MWH) of electricity.

The G7 countries — the US, Canada, Germany, the UK, France, Italy, and Japan — have had high FF consumption historically, which partly explains their high GDP per capita. Russia and Asian countries like South Korea, Taiwan, and Singapore, also have high FF consumption both in total and PJ per million population (Tables 2 and 3).

From 2020 to 2021, there was big decline in FF consumption by G7 countries except Canada and this contributed to their low average growth of 1.7% or lower over the last decade. In contrast, the rest of Asia — especially China, India, and ASEAN-6 — have had rising FF use and this contributed to their high average growth of 2.4-7.4% in the last decade. Their per capita GDP has also expanded significantly.

The long-term economic projections would be a continuation of this trend: low, anemic growth of below 1.7% for G7 and other rich countries, and 2.5% and higher growth for developing countries in Asia.

PHILIPPINES ENERGY REFORMS

The Philippines and the rest of developing world should continue their sustained FF use if they wish to have cheap and reliable energy 24/7 that will power their growth and industrialization. The Philippines, in particular, had the lowest FF use in the ASEAN-6 in 2021, only half of Vietnam's, one-fourth of Thailand's, one-eighth of Malaysia's, 1/13th of Taiwan's and South Korea's, and 1/40th of Singapore's.

In the power sector, the Philippines should focus on more FF plants, with 24/7 reliable and dispatchable on-demand power. Big reforms are needed in the distribution sector too as many electric cooperatives in the provinces are so inefficient and wasteful — they charge high prices with frequent power fluctuations and brownouts, and they are protected by politics via the National Electrification Administration (NEA). If they cannot be efficient, their monopoly franchise areas should shrink and efficient corporate distribution utilities like Meralco should take over.

On energy bureaucracy, UP College of Business Administration Professor Emeritus Epictetus Patalinghug, made this observation and I say Amen to it:

“The EPIRA*-led restructuring of the energy sector created a more efficient private run generation sector, but slowly enlarged the energy sector bureaucracy: DoE, Napocor, PSALM, NEA, ERC, WESM, Transco**. The octopus has multiplied post-EPIRA with no evident reduction in the cost of electricity per kilowatt hour. System losses and management inefficiency among electric coops have not disappeared.”

* Electric Power Industry Reform Act

** Department of Energy, National Power Corp., Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp., National Electrification Administration, Energy Regulatory Commission, Wholesale Electricity Spot Market, National Transmission Corp.

Philippines still leads regional peers in climate change performance

The Philippines jumped 11 spots to land at 12th place out of 63 countries* in the Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI) 2023 report by Germanwatch, NewClimate Institute, and Climate Action Network.

The CCPI is an independent monitoring tool for tracking countries' efforts to combat climate change which aims to enable transparency in national and international climate politics and enables comparison of climate protection efforts and progress made by individual countries. It assesses a country's performance in four categories, namely: greenhouse gas emissions, renewable energy, energy use, and climate policy. In the latest report, the Philippines outperformed its peers in the Asia-Pacific region with an overall score of 62.75. However, it had a mixed performance across the four categories of the CCPI.

MANILA BULLETIN

[Collaboration is key to sustainable agriculture – Israeli experts](#)

By: Ralph Lauren Abainza

Agriculture must meet the changing needs of the planet and the expectations of regulators, food processors, and retailers. Benchmarking of best practices is vital to ensure sustainability in agriculture. This is what experts from Israel shared with local stakeholders on Thursday, November 10, 2022, during a one-day learning exchange at the Bureau of Plant Industry in Quezon City.

In his opening speech, Israel's ambassador to the Philippines Ilan Fluss shared his intention to further boost the cooperation between Israel and the Philippines to modernize the country's agriculture. Israel is known for their remarkable agricultural transformation through modern technology.

Nina Lehmann, an Israeli expert specializing in agricultural extension, emphasized agriculture's need to adopt climate-resilient and sustainable practices given the worsening effects of climate change. "We cannot rely anymore on rain, we have to support the plants when rain is not on time. The changing climate also affects the appearance and behavior of pests and disease," she said.

Another Israeli expert, Simenski Eliyahu, underscored the importance of crop management and digging deeper than what seems the obvious problem. He shared their thorough study on pest development in their project dealing with a mango pest called cecid fly (locally known as kurikong).

Moshe Broner, an Israeli expert on water technology, shared the Israeli way of managing water in farms and highlighted the importance of science-based water and soil management to ensure high crop yields. In Israel's experience, full government support for smallholder farmers is vital in realizing technological advancements.

Jacqueline Sy Go, a social entrepreneur and owner of a cacao farm in Mindanao, shared that working with Israeli consultants enabled her to increase the success rate of their farm. According to her, working with Israeli experts made her realize the importance of knowing the principle behind every practice or method and creativity in solving crop-related issues. "The sharing of experience, the sharing of life itself, I think Filipinos really have to be open-minded. It's time to be open, to be on the ground, and get in touch," she said.

During an open forum, the Israeli experts shared the importance of meeting the farmers halfway to convince them to adopt the proposed practices and technology. Experts and the government should let the farmers realize that the new technology is beneficial through local demonstration. The technology should be at the level the farmer would be willing to adopt, not necessarily the latest or the costliest, according to Lehmann.

Israel is committed to continuing its collaboration with the Philippines to help boost the country's agricultural sector.

PH's success is UN's success — Manalo

By: Joseph Pedrajas

Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) Secretary Enrique Manalo believes that “the success of the Philippines is the success of the United Nations (UN).”

In his remarks during the UN Day last week, Manalo believed that the country’s contributions to the 193-member organization not only enabled it “to cope with seismic transitions” but also “to spark breakthroughs in cooperation that are needed in these extraordinary times.”

During the event, DFA said, Manalo stressed the Philippines’ “active role in shaping the UN since its establishment in 1945.”

Apart from being a founding member of the organization, the Philippines also continues to champion priorities, such as climate change, gender equality, human rights, migration, and food security, the DFA added.

“As a pioneering member of this esteemed organization, the Philippines was not simply invited to join the club. We helped build it. The success of the Philippines is the success of the UN,” Manalo said in his remarks before the gathering of various government agencies, members of the diplomatic community, and heads of international organizations

Noting the important role of the Philippines in the world’s multilateral system in the coming years, Manalo called for stronger collaboration between the country and the UN Country Team.

That, he said, could be done through more frequent consultations between the country and the UN in the development of the new Partnership Framework for Sustainable Development (PFSD).

The PFSD is a nationally-led strategy co-created by the Philippines and the UN to ensure that the UN’s programs and initiatives support the Philippines’ national development goals. The document harmonizes the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Philippine Development Plan, and AmBisyon 2040.

“Neither the Philippines nor the UN alone can singlehandedly confront today’s challenges,” he said.

“Working together, complementing each other’s strengths, and pursuing a sustainable future side by side remains the only way forward,” he added.

MANILA STANDARD

[\[Opinion\] Is climate credo in high gear?](#)

The two-week 27th edition of the Conference of the Parties in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt has ended – with new heroes among participants from 190 countries, including the Philippines, hopeful something positive was pushed for global climate justice.

The summit, held annually since the first UN climate agreement in 1992, concluded on November 20, with a decision to establish and operationalize a fund to compensate vulnerable nations for ‘loss and damage’ from climate-induced disasters.

The UN Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres, was upbeat and welcomed the decision, calling it “an important step towards justice” and called, in the same breath, for “a giant leap on climate ambition” as he stressed the need to “drastically reduce emissions now.”

The COP27, under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, has taken what Guterres called “an important step towards justice.”

How this step will be given flesh and bones in the next few months before the 28th episode of COP, in the United Arab Emirates from November 30 to December 12, 2023, bears watching.

The UN chief has underlined the aspirations of participants and the countries they represented when he said “Together let’s not relent in the fight for climate justice and climate ambition. We can and must win this battle for our lives.”

The ways in which we talk about the climate crisis have changed a lot in recent years.

For a long time, global warming was primarily understood as an environmental concern – imprint images of wildfires, floods, a frightening and devastating sight in the Philippines and elsewhere, and extreme weather, along with various calls to “save the planet,” “save the rainforest” and “save the polar bears.”

Today, we concede that climate change is very much a human crisis; that ‘the environment’ isn’t some niche issue that can be easily separated from human concerns; that it’s not just the polar bears that are in danger, but us who inhabit the continents.

With this shift has come the recognition indeed that the solutions to the climate crisis are not just a scientific matter, but a political one too – which raises the call on governments to shift the gear to higher level of commitment.

Our discussions on the climate must include more than just data and statistics on degrees of warming and atmospheric carbon concentration, but also concepts like power, access to resources, and justice.

Since the climate setback is a human crisis and a political crisis, that means its solutions need to take into account the messy and complex world of global politics.

'Climate justice' as a hypothesis grants that, although global warming is a global crisis, its effects are not felt evenly around the world.

The worst effects of the climate crisis—for example extreme heat, flooding and crop failures—are disproportionately felt by countries and communities in the Global South.

We are affected.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

[Framing disaster response differently: It's not just a 'one-off' event](#)

By: Cristina Eloisa Baclig

MANILA, Philippines—To make the Philippines' disaster risk reduction (DRR) system more robust, an expert presented key ideas—change how the country frames disasters, address development issues that are both causes and effects of disasters, and improve disaster risk communication.

Last November 8, President Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr. announced his plan to put the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) under the supervision of his office to make it a “more robust system.”

An expert, however, pointed out that in order to truly make a difference in how the country manages and reduces risks of disasters and hazards, the government should first examine and address several disaster risk and response-related issues.

Among these issues, according to Timothy James Cipriano—a geographer and professor whose research focuses on hazards and disasters—is the way disasters are currently being seen or framed.

“We see disasters as a one-off event that happens, [and then] after that, we recover,” Cipriano told INQUIRER.net.

Cipriano urged the government to focus on and invest in key development issues, like poverty and inequality, as part of the country's disaster risk reduction efforts.

In this article, INQUIRER.net takes a closer look at how issues like poverty and inequality—which are among the lingering effects of disasters—could also make Filipinos more vulnerable to the other long-term impacts of disasters.

The article will also discuss how changing disaster framing, and effective communication can help change the country's disaster risk and response system.

Vulnerability: Cause and effect

According to Cipriano, investing more in development, empowering communities, and improving the quality of life of Filipinos would help the country recover easily from disasters.

“It should be recognized that [...] communities are vulnerable [to hazards] because of poverty, and [the government] is not investing in them,” he said, adding that poverty in itself is also a disaster issue.

According to the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), disaster risk is a combination of the severity and frequency of a hazard, the number of people and assets that are exposed to the hazard, and their vulnerability to damage.

Vulnerability, as defined by the UNDRR, refers to “the human dimension of disasters” and is “the result of the range of economic, social, cultural, institutional, political and psychological factors that shape people’s lives and the environment that they live in.”

Among the social factors related to vulnerability is poverty. While vulnerability is not only about poverty, UNDRR stressed that “extensive research over the past 30 years has revealed that it is generally the poor who tend to suffer worst from disasters.”

Moreover, the UN agency explained that poverty is considered both a driver and consequence of disaster risk, especially in countries with weak risk governance, since economic pressures force people to live in unsafe locations—which increases their exposure to disasters.

According to data from the World Risk Report 2022, which ranked the Philippines as the most disaster-prone among 193 countries, the country also received a very high vulnerability score of 54.81.

The World Risk Index defines vulnerability as the predisposition of populations to be vulnerable to damage from extreme natural events or the negative impacts of climate change.

The index also measures the three dimensions of vulnerability and its factors, including:

Susceptibility: the structural characteristics and general conditions of societies that increase the overall likelihood of populations suffering damage from extreme natural events and entering a state of disaster.

Coping capacities: the abilities and measures of societies to counter adverse impacts of natural events or climate change through direct actions and available resources.

Adaptive capacities: the long-term processes and strategies to achieve anticipatory changes in societal structures and systems to counteract, mitigate, or purposefully avoid future negative impacts.

The Philippines had very high scores on those three dimensions, emphasizing the country’s very high likelihood of experiencing destructive impacts of disasters, as well as its lack of coping capacities and adaptive capacities.

In the 2010 “Land tenure and natural disasters” report by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Luis Eleazar—a land tenure, natural resources, and environmental planning and management expert who worked as a consultant for national and international institutions such as FAO and World Bank—explained more the connection between poverty, vulnerability, and disasters.

“Disasters particularly affect poor, vulnerable, and food-insecure households due to their disadvantaged economic, social, and political conditions; these conditions determine these households’ vulnerability to such disasters,” Eleazar said.

According to him, this sector includes those who either own and cultivate small farms on flood plains, hillsides, and the edges of river systems and coastal areas or, for economic reasons, live informally on fragile public lands such as critical watersheds, forests, and coastal zones.

“These people are those most vulnerable to and least capable of coping with disasters, particularly when their impact results in major changes in land use or changes in the sources of livelihood of the affected communities,” he added.

A recent report by the Asian Development Bank emphasized that the urban poor in the Philippines are already experiencing the immense impacts of disasters and climate change—and are likely to do so more severely in the years to come.

Amplify voices in communities

Disaster risk reduction plans, according to Cipriano, should include inputs from the communities that are directly hit by hazards and impacts of disasters.

“For me, it’s important to [hear] voices from communities [and integrate them] in disaster risk reduction plans,” he said.

“Although it is being recognized by [Republic Act] 10121, perspectives of the communities are mostly neglected by our local government units or policymakers in DRR,” he added, noting the various civil society and grassroots organizations that are active in amplifying voices of people living in disaster-prone communities.

Cipriano explained that inputs and comments from this segment of the population would contribute to improve the country’s disaster risk reduction and management efforts.

Perspectives from these people, such as farmers and fisherfolk, are crucial since they are the ones who are usually directly impacted and affected by the effects of disasters.

“It is better if we seek their perspectives in terms of how hazards and disasters affect their lives since they are the ones who are experiencing it the most. We cannot assume that they have zero knowledge, in fact, they are [very knowledgeable],” he said.

Assessing, communicating ‘uncertainties’

Citing the devastating impacts of severe Tropical Storm Paeng in a village in Maguindanao, Cipriano highlighted the need to improve the country’s disaster risk assessment and how disaster risks are communicated in disaster-prone communities.

Flash floods and landslides caused by torrential rains from Paeng buried hundreds of houses in Datu Odin Sinsuat town's Barangay Kusiong, which lies at the foot of the 446-meter Mt. Minandar.

Among those buried in the rubble were residents of the village.

In an interview, Datu Odin Sinsuat Mayor Lester Sinsuat said while residents and officials braced for tidal waves, they failed to prepare for a landslide since "there has never been a landslide in the Datu Odin's history."

"The people and local government units were caught off guard," Cipriano said, adding that possible lapses in how details about the severe tropical storm were taken into account.

"There should be better risk assessment so that the public would know details such as what time it would rain, how much rain the severe tropical storm would bring, what are we going to do at the barangay level and at the municipal level," he explained.

"Disaster managers should bridge the communication gap between the science perspective and the public. The public must understand how these disasters and hazards would impact them,"

Cipriano stressed the importance of communicating the uncertainties of disasters to the public.

"We always hear conversations on the ground such as 'this never happened to us before' or 'this is the first time [such damage] happened to us.' So we have to also communicate uncertainties, and it must be incorporated in our plans, especially on disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation, land use plans, and development plans," he said.

"We have to account uncertainties that's why we are doing risk assessments at the barangay level or municipal level based on climate change scenarios—like if we're dealing with floods, landslides, storm surges—that's the science-based part that [must be included] in our policies," he added.

Learn data story-telling

Aside from strengthening the communication and collaboration between disaster managers, the national and local government, science agencies, and the public when it comes to disaster risk and response, Cipriano suggested that scientists should also learn more about data storytelling.

Scientific data and figures, according to him, complement the *danas* or human experiences—including stories of people who have and continue to experience the impact of disasters.

“I think data storytelling must be learned by scientists as well. I think we have to work on data storytelling, and we really have to work on our science communication,” he said.

“Scientists must be very good communicators too. We know that it’s challenging, but it’s a skill that each scientist and expert must possess,” he added.

“You place [a] premium [on] local knowledge, and you integrate it with scientific knowledge.”

Cipriano, who also works as a senior lecturer at the Department of Geography at the University of the Philippines (UP) and a faculty member of the Philippine Normal University (PNU), said students appreciate lessons or topics more when he pairs it with storytelling.

As a researcher, when writing about disasters, he said he always tries to answer questions frequently asked by people, such as “what should we do about [these disasters]?” or “how should we apply these data to address the issues?”

“I admit that most of the scientists are staying at their ivory towers. It would be better if they immerse with the community [...] to get a better understanding of the experiences [of those who are hit and affected by disasters and hazards],” said Cipriano.

“From there, we can create a story [that shows us] the experiences of the people that are more than what the maps [and data] can tell us. The possible scenarios and what we can do about it,” he added.

Including communities and integrating their perspective in studies and policies could also give them power and ownership over their risk assessments.

“That’s why we really appreciate it when government agencies are willing to work with experts. We greatly appreciate it, too, when we work with the communities—including the residents, farmers, and fisherfolk—since we gain more knowledge from them than the knowledge we impart to them.”

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

[ING bids to further raise ESG portfolio in PH](#)

By: Joann Villanueva

MANILA – Dutch banking giant ING aims to further increase its sustainable financing portfolio in the Philippines as the economy continues to recover as well as to help in the government's bid in addressing climate change.

ING Country head Hans Sicat, in a reply to e-mailed questions from the Philippine News Agency, said the bank's financing for environmental, social and governance (ESG) projects "continues to grow rapidly."

Sicat said the bank ended 2021 with 317 sustainable finance transactions, which is more than twice of what they had in the previous year.

"In the first half of 2022, we were involved in 205 sustainable finance transactions. We have set ambitious sustainable financing targets, such as a goal of mobilizing € 125 billion in sustainable finance by 2025 for Wholesale Banking globally," he said.

Sicat said the bank's domestic operations is notable for mergers and acquisitions, corporate advisory and capital markets, "and we intend to strengthen our capabilities and position in these areas" as the economic recovery continues.

"As a bank and ESG thought leader, we want to increase our focus and support to clients in sustainability, as well as invest in the growth prospects of the renewable energy, technology, media and telecommunications, infrastructure and financial institutions sectors. We have been beefing up our team, with senior hires, to support these growth ambitions," he said.

The bank recently celebrated its 32nd year in the Philippines.

"There's a growing sense of urgency on climate change," Sicat said. "It is clear that governments, businesses and individuals have to all step in and help address it."

"We have closed several first-of-their-kind deals and many of our green financing deals were the first done by our clients. In the Philippines, we are proud to advise our clients on their sustainable finance framework, to be their 'go-to' bank for the issuance of their first green bond, and provide financing for sustainable projects that would support their transition to a sustainable and low-carbon economy," he added.

THE MANILA TIMES

[Experts seek local plans vs climate change impact](#)

SCIENCE- and local-based action plans are crucial in addressing the worsening impacts of climate change in the country. This was highlighted during the 11th National Panel of Technical Experts (NPTE) Forum, where members recommended concrete action points to address the 10 leading climate risks in the Philippines.

The 16-member panel laid out strategies and action plans for each of the risks identified to support the national and local governments in formulating and crafting science-based policies.

"In order to deal with and find appropriate and sustainable solutions to the issues caused by the economic and non-economic impacts of climate change, the NPTE members will work together with various entities, such as government agencies, civil society organizations, private and public education institutions, and local government units, to undertake science-based climate change adaptation, mitigation, and disaster risk reduction and management action plans," said Dr. Doracie Zoleta-Nantes, NPTE chairman.

The forum also became an avenue for local government units (LGUs) to share their experiences in the recent extreme weather events that hit the country.

Leyte Third District Rep. Anna Victoria Veloso-Tuazon, vice chairman of the House of Representatives committee on climate change, shared that the extreme weather events, which have been made worse by climate change, have had a tremendous impact on their local community.

"Our Provincial Disaster Risk Management Plan states that 1,090 of our 1,641 barangay in the 40 municipalities of the province — or 66.4 percent — are flood susceptible, and 29 of the coastal municipalities, five of which are in my district, and all three cities, are vulnerable to storm surge," Tuazon said.

The area's basic social services, primary sources of livelihood — agriculture and fishing — as well as infrastructure development are all severely affected by floods and rain-induced landslides.

Flooding is one of the 10 climate-induced risks identified by the NPTE.

Among other risks are rising sea levels, coastal erosion, increasing frequency and severity of tropical cyclones, extreme drought, temperature increase and rising urban heat index, extreme rainfall, climate-influenced diseases, changing wind patterns, and biodiversity loss.

About P515.51 billion in losses and damage have already been attributed to climate risks in the country from 2010 to 2020.

To prepare for and adapt to the effects of climate change, Tuazon emphasized the importance of technical advice from local scientists and academicians, especially in the areas of marine spatial planning, riverbank stabilization, agroforestry development, upland reforestation, and mangrove protection and management.

For climate change adaptation, she noted that data gathering is crucial for developing risk management and science-based programs.

Germany to modernize PH jeepneys

By: Bernadette Tamayo

GERMANY and the Philippines aim to modernize the latter's jeepney fleet by 2026 to fight the effects of climate change. In a statement on Monday, the German Embassy in the Philippines said global warming is the most pressing problem the world needs to address.

The catastrophic effects of the climate crisis can be felt extensively in more and more parts of the globe with the Philippines being one of the most vulnerable countries, the embassy said.

"We consider the climate crisis the greatest security challenge of our time," German Ambassador to the Philippines Anke Reiffenstuel said. "The world cannot afford to wait longer. We need to end the fossil age and rapidly reduce emissions."

This is why Germany, he said, has "massively upped the pace on the shift to green energy with the aim of being climate neutral by 2045."

"Globally, Germany is a reliable partner of countries that are vulnerable to the effects of climate change, such as the Philippines," Reiffenstuel said.

Being a "priority country" of the International Climate Initiative, Germany is implementing over 50 projects in the Philippines costing around P5.2 billion in the areas of climate, environment and biodiversity.

Since 2014, the German development agency Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) has been implementing projects that aim to transform the public transport system in the country, a key sector for reducing emissions in the Philippines.

"Jeepneys, a part of everyday Filipino life, use diesel to run — a fossil fuel proven to contribute to the production of ground-level ozone," the embassy said.

"Traffic jams in the city provoke longer idle time for jeepneys and other vehicles that employ fossil fuels," it added.

A GIZ study in 2016 showed that there were 250,000 jeepneys in the Philippines with 55,000 of them operating in Metro Manila alone. They account for 40 percent of vehicle trips making them the biggest contributor of greenhouse gas emissions in the transport sector.

Together with the Department of Transportation, the GIZ embarked on the Jeepney+ NAMA (Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Action) project, which aimed to establish a modern, sustainable and climate-friendly transport system in Philippine cities, the embassy said.

"By 2026, the project strives to modernize the jeepney fleet and reduce the share of diesel-powered vehicles by 22 percent. This means replacing them with electric jeepneys and public transport vehicles that follow the Euro 4 emission standard," it explained.

The project also helps craft systems that will make public transport more efficient for its users.

Institutional reorganization and planning will also help in fully modernizing the country's jeepney fleet.

"The aim is to help establish people-oriented cities, empowered by efficient, dignified, and sustainable mobility," the ambassador said.

"The transport sector — in Germany and in the Philippines — is key when it comes to reducing emissions. Focusing on public transportation benefits especially the lower-income segments of society and has positive and sustainable long-term effects," Reiffenstuel said.

"In Germany, we have expanded the rail networks and financially incentivized the use of public transportation while the taxes on airfares were increased," he pointed out.

Germany has also invested in making cycling more attractive and in incentivizing individuals to switch to e-mobility, the ambassador said.

Through another GIZ-powered project called "TRANSfer," the embassy said similar initiatives are being implemented to also modernize the Philippines' bus systems.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

[DOE expects completion of natural gas projects by Q1](#)

By: Richmond Mercurio

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Energy (DOE) expects the completion of natural gas projects in Luzon by the first quarter of 2023 to help stabilize power supply next year.

“Our foremost concern is to ensure that there is enough capacity supplied through various sources, most especially in the coming summer months to sustain the power supply in the country,” Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla said.

The DOE said two liquefied natural gas (LNG) projects are slated for commissioning by March 2023 based on the progress reports provided by the project proponents to the agency.

AG&P is on track to complete its first integrated LNG import terminal in Barangay Ilijan in Batangas City.

Commissioning is scheduled in March next year while the commercial operation is targeted in April.

This additional power source, according to the DOE, is impactful as Luzon copes with a power supply deficit.

FGEN LNG Corp., a subsidiary of First Gen Corp. with BW LNG providing LNG storage and regasification services, is also scheduled for the commissioning of its LNG terminal in March 2023.

Commercial operation of the terminal is set in June 2023, in line with the arrival of LNG supply to fuel First Gen’s existing gas-fired power plants, such as the 1,000-MW Sta Rita power plant, 500-MW San Lorenzo power plant, 414-MW San Gabriel power plant and the 97-MW Avion power plant.

Lotilla said there is a need to diversify the country’s power sources, including the use of imported natural gas.

“Given its scheduled availability at the end of the first quarter of 2023, liquefied natural gas is considered an important source for fuel diversification,” Lotilla said.

“This will complement ongoing efforts of the Malampaya consortium to optimize sustainably the remaining indigenous gas in the Malampaya-Camago reservoir,” he said.

Lotilla said LNG is also aligned with the goal of transitioning to a low carbon future and stabilizing power supply from variable renewable energy.

Natural gas is seen supporting the intermittent renewable sources due to its ability to provide flexible capacity.

This flexibility allows LNG plants to serve not only peaking requirements to support renewables and ancillary power, but also to provide mid merit and base load requirements.

Regulatory framework has already been put in place and its downstream natural gas development plan has been completed to guide policy makers and stakeholders for the entry of LNG in the country.

Under the country's roadmap for a clean energy scenario, the government aims to transition to a cleaner energy and low-carbon future, which considers increasing the contribution of natural gas power generation as a transition fuel through the establishment of LNG receiving terminals and regasification facilities.

[How outcomes of G20, COP27 summits could affect Philippines' RE ambitions](#)

By: Gaea Katreena Cabico

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippines can achieve its conservative renewable energy ambitions regardless of the outcomes of the COP27 climate conference and G20 summit, and the country should attain the target as quickly as possible, an energy analyst said.

Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air Southeast Asia analyst Isabella Suarez said the government's target to raise the share of renewable energy in the energy mix to 35% by 2030 "felt achievable" even before the major global summits in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt, and in Bali, Indonesia.

Suarez said this is due to key policy revisions and announcements such as the higher quota for contracted renewable energy, and the opening of the country's clean energy sector to full foreign ownership.

"I think getting to the 35% target as quickly as possible even before 2030 should be a priority, not only because of the achievability, but also because it's the surest way for us to improve our energy security in the near term," she said.

By 2040, the Philippines is eyeing a 50% share of renewable energy in the country's overall generation mix.

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. reiterated these clean energy goals during the Asia-Pacific Cooperation CEO Summit in Thailand this mid-November.

'Hard to attain'

But for Philippine Movement for Climate Justice national coordinator Ian Rivera, the country's renewable energy targets "will be difficult to attain, even how conservative those targets are" following the outcomes of COP27 and G20.

"But that does not mean for the Philippines not to review and enhance its targets," Rivera said.

At the landmark climate summit in Egypt, nations agreed to set up a "loss and damage" fund that will compensate poorer countries battered by climate disasters.

Groups welcomed the creation of a long-overdue fund for climate victims as a step forward in attaining climate justice, although it will likely take several years to hammer out its details such as the timelines for establishing the facility and the sources of funding.

While COP27 closed with a breakthrough agreement to provide loss and damage funding, it failed to make progress on raising mitigation ambition and scaling up climate finance.

The Sharm El Sheikh deal positively mentioned renewable energy, but the text missed the opportunity to set clearer ambition on renewable energy and energy efficiency to meet the target of capping global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius, a safe limit according to scientists.

The COP27 deal also reiterated calls from the COP26 pact in Glasgow to accelerate “efforts towards the phasedown of unabated coal power and phase out of inefficient fuel subsidies.”

Such language was also present in the final text from the G20 meeting in Bali, prompting criticisms from climate and clean energy campaigners.

“1.5C does not live or die in a negotiating room, but COP27 has shown that the political will to drive the collaboration and investment needed to stay under that limit is still yet to be found,” said Tom Evans, policy advisor and mitigation expert of climate change think tank E3G.

“The G20 statement completely ignores the recommendation of climate science that we need to phase out all fossil fuels—including oil and fossil gas—if we wish to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius,” said Ivan Enrile, IBON International’s climate justice programme lead.

Raise ambition

To align with the 1.5 degrees Celsius target, the Philippines needs to increase the share of renewables in the power generation mix to 80 to 83% by 2030, according to a Climate Analytics research commissioned by the Center of Energy, Ecology, and Development.

The research also said that the country must phase out all fossil fuels by 2035.

CEED executive director Gerry Arances stressed that more than doubling the government’s current renewable energy ambitions is possible, especially with pronouncements on fast tracking offshore wind development.

“At 31 GW, the capacity of all approved offshore wind contracts combined already exceeds the total capacity we have installed nationally today. Much more of our other available renewable energy sources also wait to be tapped,” he said.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

ABS CBN

[Mga LGU hinimok na paghandaan ang epekto ng nagbabagong klima](#)

By: Lady Vicencio

Hinihikayat ng Climate Change Commission at University of the Philippines Resilience Institute ang mga lokal na pamahalaan na puspusang paghandaan ang epekto ng pagbabago ng klima, tulad ng mas malalakas na bagyo at patuloy na pagtaas ng temperatura.

Ayon sa Climate Change Commission ang extreme weather events tulad ng Bagyong Ondoy at Ulyssess ay ilan lang sa epekto ng pagbabago ng klima. Dagdag nila isa itong banta na dapat magawan ng paraan.

Sa pakikipagtulungan ng CCC sa UP Resilience Institute nais nilang magamit ng mga LGU at komunidad ang siyensya para mabawasan ang climate change.

Ayon sa UPRI ang mga extreme weather event na dating tuwing isang daang taon lang nangyayari ay maaring maulit sa mas maiksing panahon. Mas mapaminsala na rin ang mga ito.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

[VP Sara backs reforestation efforts vs. climate change](#)

MANILA – To increase carbon sinks and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, more trees should be planted, Vice President and Department of Education Secretary Sara Duterte said.

In her message at the 15th Global Warming and Climate Change Consciousness Week (CCC Week 2022) on Nov. 25, Duterte expressed her support for the Climate Change Commission's (CCC) tree planting and growing activity.

"The Philippines is highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. We are already experiencing an increased frequency of extreme weather events, sea level and temperature rise, and changes in rainfall patterns that threaten our biodiversity, food security, and public safety," she said.

To mitigate the impacts of climate change, Duterte underscored the need to increase the country's carbon sequestration capacity through nature-based solutions, particularly through tree planting and growing activities.

The CCC collaborated with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC), and the Society of Filipino Foresters Inc. (SFFI) for the Carbon Neutral Program (CNP) Convergence.

The agencies and other partner organizations under the CNP Convergence have initiated and taken part in various tree-planting and growing programs, the most recent of which was the CCC Week kick-off activity on Nov. 19. The CCC and various stakeholders planted 200 Narra, Dao, and Sablot seedlings at the La Mesa Nature Reserve.

"Let us support President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.'s call to plant more trees to help reduce the impacts of climate change, increase our country's climate resilience, and enable our country's sustainable development," Duterte said.

Watch the full message of the Vice President through this link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9IFBrA_ps7w

Duterte was among the leaders and legislators that expressed support for the 15th Global Warming and Climate Change Consciousness Week (CCC Week 2022).

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 to transform climate change commitments into action toward a climate-smart and climate-resilient Philippines by 2050.

Pursuant to Presidential Proclamation 1667 s. 2008, the CCC spearheads the annual observance every Nov. 19 to 25, aimed at raising consciousness on addressing the impacts of the changing climate.

For more information about CCC Week 2022 activities, visit the CCC social media pages at @cccphl or its website at <https://climate.gov.ph>.

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