



## NEWS ROUNDUP

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Biotech company Interstellar Labs proposes a bold response to climate change -- a spaceship-style pod that can grow plants efficiently and eventually be deployed to Mars.

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By: Aimee Williams

Tens of thousands of people are expected to descend on Dubai in the United Arab Emirates in the next few days for the UN's COP28 climate summit where, during the next two weeks, negotiators will spend long hours haggling over how to limit global warming.

## **MANILA BULLETIN**

### **[\[Opinion\] Let's contribute our share in addressing climate change](#)**

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#### **[Business leaders crucial to transition to low-carbon society](#)**

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The Climate Change Commission has stressed the importance of the business leaders' commitment to transform the country into a resilient, low-carbon society.

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#### **[Southeast Asia's voices of COP28](#)**

By: Liang Lei and Hannah Alcoseba Fernandez

Meet the people pushing to protect one of the most vulnerable parts of the world to global warming at the COP28 climate talks in Dubai.

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#### **[Working towards climate solutions with emphasis on equity](#)**

In a groundbreaking event, prominent business leaders and policy experts gathered on November 23 to discuss ambitious corporate climate action, emphasizing pro-poor and gender-sensitive solutions. The event featured distinguished speakers and panelists.

### **PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY**

#### **[CIF 2023: Cultivating conducive conditions for climate investments](#)**

Key stakeholders from the public and private sectors have sought to establish conducive conditions for climate-related investments aligned with national policies and sectoral needs.

**RAPPLER**

**[Filipino faith leaders to rich countries: 'Scale up' action vs climate change](#)**

By: Robbin M. Dagle

Faith leaders from various traditions gathered ahead of a major climate summit in Dubai to highlight faith's "tremendous" and "untapped" potential in accelerating climate action.

**Information and Knowledge Management Division**

**ABS CBN**

**[Climate change already reducing global GDP: report](#)**

Climate change is already shaving billions off the world's economy, with developing countries hardest hit, according to a new report published Tuesday ahead of COP28 climate negotiations.

The report by the University of Delaware estimated that impacts from human-caused climate change cut 6.3 percent from global economic output last year, when weighted across populations.

The figures reflect both direct consequences of climate change -- such as disruptions to agriculture and manufacturing, and reduced productivity from high heat -- as well as spill-over impacts on global trade and investments.

"The world is trillions of dollars poorer because of climate change and most of that burden has fallen on poor countries," said lead author James Rising of the University of Delaware.

"I hope that this information can clarify the challenges that many countries already face today and the support they urgently need to address them," he added.

When calculated without taking into account impacts borne by the average person, the global GDP loss was 1.8 percent of GDP -- or about \$1.5 trillion dollars -- in 2022.

"The difference between those two numbers reflects the uneven distribution of impacts, which concentrate in low-income countries and tropical regions that typically have more population and less GDP," the authors said in a statement.

Least developed countries experienced higher population-weighted GDP loss of 8.3 percent, with Southeast Asia and Southern Africa particularly affected -- losing 14.1 percent and 11.2 percent of their GDP respectively.

On the other hand, some developed countries benefited. Thanks to warmer winters Europe saw a nearly five percent net gain in GDP last year.

But such gains are "poised to erode" as hotter summers offset milder winters, warns the report.

At last year's COP27 talks in Egypt, nations agreed to set up a dedicated fund to help vulnerable countries cope with "loss and damage" from climate disasters and extreme weather.

While some details were recently agreed, the fund -- and in particular who contributes to it and how much -- will be a key point of negotiation at this year's COP28 talks in Dubai, which begin on Thursday.

Low- and middle-income countries have experienced a combined loss in capital and GDP totaling \$21 trillion, about half of the total 2023 GDP of the developing world, in the last 30 years, the report said.

The authors specify that losses are "conservative estimates" because the analysis does not account for non-market losses and impacts.

## [Plants in space 'biopod': a French firm's answer to climate change](#)

Biotech company Interstellar Labs proposes a bold response to climate change -- a spaceship-style pod that can grow plants efficiently and eventually be deployed to Mars.

The Paris and Los Angeles-based company has designed a controlled-environment capsule system that could one day allow crops to be grown in space.

Founded by Barbara Belvisi in 2018, Interstellar Lab, based just outside Paris, designs living crop systems in controlled environments on Earth for sustainable agriculture and in space to support astronaut life.

The BioPod is about 5 meters tall (16 feet) with a surface area of 55 square meters (592 square feet) and has a unique shape that allows it to be easily deployed. Its ellipsoid shape helps with airflow, heating and cooling.

Belvisi will be going to Dubai for the COP28 to drum up interest in the project and seek investors.

This year's U.N. climate conference, taking place from Nov. 30 to Dec. 12, is the world's 28th gathering of global leaders and thinkers to confront global warming since the first "Conference of the Parties" in 1995.

The Biopod was inspired by space technologies to offer a totally sealed production system, protected from weather conditions and seasons. It is rapidly deployable and requires no foundation or access to water.

Inside, a combination of technologies ensures a balance of conditions for climate (temperature, CO<sub>2</sub>, humidity), nutrition (nutrients, concentration, irrigation, pH) and light (intensity, photosynthesis and photoperiodism). It also includes AI-based management and monitoring software, as well as a replenishment service.

In collaboration with NASA, the space-based version of the BioPod for use on the Moon is set to be ready by 2027.

Keeping astronauts well-nourished for extended periods within the limited, zero-gravity confines of space vehicles in low-Earth orbit long has posed a challenge for NASA. For the past two decades, crews aboard the International Space Station have lived on a diet mostly of packaged meals with some fresh produce delivered on regular resupply missions.

ISS teams also have experimented with growing a number of vegetables in orbit, including lettuce, cabbage, kale and chili peppers, according to NASA.

But the imperative for self-contained, low-waste food production requiring minimal resources has become more pronounced as NASA sets its sights on returning astronauts to the moon and eventual human exploration of Mars and beyond.

Interstellar Labs also recently signed a partnership with L'Oreal's Green Sciences in the hopes of using the Biopod to develop a sustainable source of plants and to reduce the carbon footprint for transportation.

The biotech firm plans to sell each unit for \$350,000 once it is commercialized.

## FINANCIAL TIMES

### [COP28: What to expect at UN climate talks](#)

By: Aimee Williams

Tens of thousands of people are expected to descend on Dubai in the United Arab Emirates in the next few days for the UN's COP28 climate summit where, during the next two weeks, negotiators will spend long hours haggling over how to limit global warming.

COP talks are often fractious. This year, diplomats are expected to argue over whether to phase out fossil fuels and who should help poorer nations pay for climate damages.

Scientists are increasingly concerned about rapid warming and the frequent extreme weather events propelled by it. For the world to achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement — struck at COP21 in 2015, to limit global warming to 1.5C above pre-industrial levels — scientists from the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change now say greenhouse gas emissions need to fall by 43 per cent by 2030 compared with 2019.

As a result, an important part of the COP28 agenda is the “global stocktake” to assess progress countries have made towards cutting emissions. This year's summit is expected to make clear that the world is not on track to limit global warming by the amount agreed in Paris and that more needs to be done. But by whom, and how, will be among the key questions up for debate.

The global stocktake

Parties at COP28 will be expected to sign off on a document measuring how the world is progressing in reducing emissions in line with the Paris Agreement goal of limiting warming to 1.5C.

Countries will then need to agree on pathways to bring emissions under control. According to a UN report released this month, the world is heading for a temperature rise of between 2.5C and 2.9C and must take urgent action.

Despite almost 200 countries promising to set out plans for net zero emissions, many setting targets by 2050, the report said the world was “not on track”.



“Because of the global stocktake, the stakes are particularly high [at this COP],” says Alden Meyer, a senior associate at climate and energy consultancy E3G. “This is the chance to send a signal, to have transformation and the course correction . . . to say that we’re really going to double down on meeting what we committed to in Paris in 2015.”

### The future of fossil fuels

At COP27 in Egypt, more than 80 countries backed a proposal to gradually end the use of fossil fuels, which are by far the largest contributor to climate change, accounting for about three-quarters of greenhouse gas emissions. But the proposal was derailed by major oil and gas producing countries, including Russia and Saudi Arabia.

This year, countries are again heading for a clash over whether to get rid of fossil fuels, and in what timeframe. Negotiators will also have to agree on how abatement technologies, which capture and store carbon emissions, fit in.

The US and EU member states are among those countries calling for a timeline to phase out “unabated” fossil fuels (those burnt without the capture of emissions). However, Russia — one of the world’s largest crude oil producers — has already said it would oppose any deal to reduce the use of fossil fuels.

The UAE, an oil-producing country, will have the opportunity as the presiding nation to shape the outcome of these talks.

### The loss and damage fund

Countries agreed to set up a fund to help the developing world tackle the ravages of climate change when they met in Egypt last year, but at COP28 governments will have to actually set up the fund and fill it with cash.

Talks about the fund ahead of COP28 have been fraught, with tensions between developed and developing countries running high over who should pay into it, and who should be allowed to claim money from it.

Developing countries have argued that the developed world, which is responsible for about 80 per cent of carbon emissions, should pay into the fund. The US and others have pushed back on the suggestion that any countries should be obliged to pay.

A preliminary agreed text says the loss and damage fund will “invite financial contributions with developed country parties continuing to take this lead to provide

financial resources”. But this will need to be supported by all the almost 200 countries and adopted at COP. How much money will be contributed to the fund and who pays into it remain open questions.

John Kerry, US presidential climate envoy, said the US will commit “several million dollars”. The EU has pledged a “substantial contribution”.

### Methane and other greenhouse gases

The US and China agreed ahead of COP28 to rally other nations into having a summit on methane, a potent global warming gas, to be held as part of the talks. They agreed to include a broader array of greenhouse gas emissions in their next round of climate targets.

“It does seem that, finally, climate actors and national leaders around the world are recognising that methane is the key to limiting near-term temperature rises,” says Paul Bledsoe, a former White House official and a lecturer at the American University. “For most of the last 30 years, these talks have been completely dominated by CO<sub>2</sub>, and other greenhouse gases have been essentially ignored.”

Although China has so far declined to join the global methane pledge — a broad agreement between 150 countries to collectively reduce methane emissions by 30 per cent by 2030 — it has announced it will track and reduce its methane emissions. However, it has not specified any targets or timelines. US officials say they hope to announce additional grant funding to tackle methane emissions at COP28.

### Financing adaptation

Rich countries will be under pressure to deliver on existing pledges to help poorer countries adapt to global warming — including a commitment made at COP26 in Glasgow to spend \$40bn per year in adaptation finance by 2025.

A recent UN report found that developing countries need up to \$387bn a year to adapt to climate change. But there is a “gap” of about \$360bn between the money needed and the amount being spent.

## MANILA BULLETIN

### [\[Opinion\] Let's contribute our share in addressing climate change](#)

A bill that seeks to institutionalize a legal framework for climate loss and damage accountability has been filed in the House of Representatives.

The measure — the proposed Climate Accountability (CLIMA) Act — seeks to institute policies and systems to address climate change, protect communities from climate change-induced losses, damages, and human rights harms, and provide mechanisms for accountability and reparations from those responsible for worsening the climate crisis, including corporate interests such as the fossil fuel industry.

The dependence on, and the excessive use of fossil fuels, like coal, oil, and gas, have exacerbated climate change. In fact, the burning of fossil fuels has been the main driver of climate change as they produce heat-trapping gases — or what are called greenhouse gases — that cause global warming.

As former United Nations secretary-general Ban Ki-moon once said, “The clear and present danger of climate change means we cannot burn our way to prosperity. We already rely too heavily on fossil fuels. We need to find a new, sustainable path to the future we want. We need a clean industrial revolution.”

The bill filed in the House of Representatives, the first of its kind in the world, is a step in the right direction. It will set the tone on how to address the impact of climate change and hold those accountable for worsening the climate situation.

It is necessary to come up with a whole-of-nation approach to address climate. It is no longer enough to warn the public about its adverse effects. We need a more aggressive approach, like demanding reparation from those who contribute to climate change. Those who want to avoid reparation, like corporate entities using fossil fuel, must shift to clean energy.

Based on the House bill, the proposed CLIMA Act will provide the framework for limiting fossil fuel expansion and aligning businesses with the Paris Agreement. It also mandates payment of climate reparations to communities impacted by climate change.

The Paris Agreement is a legally binding international treaty on climate change adopted by 196 parties at the UN Climate Change Conference (COP21) in Paris, France, in 2015. Its overarching goal is to hold “the increase in the global average temperature to

well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels” and pursue efforts “to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels.”

This could be easier said than done. But this is attainable if everyone on this planet contributes his or her share in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

A shift to renewable energy, which has already started around the world, albeit, at a slow pace, is one major factor that could help address climate change.

In the Philippines, a number of companies are now venturing into renewable energy — some into solar power and others into hydro power. However, the country remains heavily reliant on fossil fuel.

The House of Representatives took one big step by filing the proposed Climate Accountability Act. If passed into law, this measure could help expedite the shift to renewable energy and help reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Let’s all contribute our share in addressing climate change to have a better place to live in.

## CCC IN THE NEWS:

### DAILY TRIBUNE

#### [Business leaders crucial to transition to low-carbon society](#)

By: Lade Jean Kabagani

The Climate Change Commission has stressed the importance of the business leaders' commitment to transform the country into a resilient, low-carbon society.

In a recent gathering of business leaders and policy experts for a roundtable discussion on corporate climate action, CCC Secretary Robert E.A. Borje said it is crucial for the sector "to scale up and deliver in a predictable manner, considering the moral imperative at stake—the lives, livelihoods, and future of our people."

The discussion revolved around the mutually reinforcing roles of both government and the private sector in achieving verifiable emission reduction goals.

Speaking at the discussion, Jaime Zobel Urquijo, Chief Sustainability Officer and Risk Officer at Ayala Corporation, highlighted the importance of metrics and baselining.

"We identify our baseline emissions on a yearly basis, and we are fortunate to have a net-zero commitment and a visionary leader in the person of the CEO of Ayala Corporation," he said.

Chaye Cabal Revilla, CFO and Chief Sustainability Officer at Metro Pacific Investments Corporation emphasized that "baselining and measurement" are both crucial to environmental stewardship plans.

"We had to set the tone from the top, formalize sustainability committees, and take stock of our strategy. We want to be net negative and fortify our environmental stewardship plans," she said.

As leaders, you cannot be sustainable as an organization if you, as an individual, do not buy it. As a woman leader, we also try to influence women's organizations to push for sustainable practices," Revilla added.

Leah Marie Ayeng, General Manager of Prestige Paper Products, said investing in more sustainable products will not only contribute to accelerating climate consciousness but also enhance the viability of enterprises.

“I believe that a responsible business is also a profitable business,” she said.

Ted Monroy, Country Representative, United Nations Industrial Development Organization Country Office Philippines, said there’s a need for the sector to focus on renewable energy and supporting local development, particularly since climate change has been affecting typhoon pathways in Mindanao.

“If there’s no energy, there’s no development,” Monroy stressed.

Meanwhile, Horia Adrian, President and CEO of Holcim Philippines Inc., said there is a need to adopt sustainable solutions to climate change as it may consume a huge chunk of the planet by 2030

“Sustainability is very tangible because it affects the entire world. People should feel sustainability in their hearts. God gives you, but God does not put it in your pocket. We can provide the solution, but the solution has to be used,” he said.

Further, Borje underscored the need for the government to craft policies that would urge environmental-friendly businesses, to protect the planet from the negative impacts of some businesses.

“There is no business on a dead planet. The bottom line is connected to sustainability and profitability. That is the paradigm shift we need to encourage,” he said.

“What we need to do is scan the horizon and give it a climate change lens. We are learning that climate change is the governance challenge of our generation,” he added.

At the conclusion of the discussion, the panelists unanimously agreed on the interconnectedness of sustainability, profitability, and societal well-being.

The discussions wrapped up with a call for collective business action, acknowledging the crucial role of corporates in driving an ambitious path towards a resilient and sustainable future.

## ECO BUSINESS

### [Southeast Asia's voices of COP28](#)

By: Liang Lei and Hannah Alcosoba Fernandez

Meet the people pushing to protect one of the most vulnerable parts of the world to global warming at the COP28 climate talks in Dubai.

Southeast Asia, home to 680 million people, has a complex relationship with climate change.

None of the region's nations industrialised early enough to warrant historical responsibility for climate breakdown. But Southeast Asia is nonetheless a growing carbon emitter, and one of the only regions in the world where coal is growing in the energy mix.

While the archipelago is at the forefront of climate risks, individual nations differ dramatically in their ability to respond to intensifying storms, floods and droughts – Singapore, for instance, has a per-person gross domestic product nearly 80 times that of Myanmar.

At COP28, nations will spar on disaster funds, the workings of carbon markets, and the role of fossil fuels – issues Southeast Asia have huge stakes in.

Eco-Business is featuring five Southeast Asians who will be attending COP28. Here's more about their work, concerns and aspirations for the negotiations in Dubai.

Robert Borje

A climate negotiator from the Philippines

Robert Borje grew up in Mindanao, the southernmost island group in the Philippines.

In a speech at a climate justice roundtable on Thursday, he shared how the 1990s was a tumultuous time of armed conflict and poverty in the Muslim region. He was not particularly conscious of climate change back then.

It was only in 2013, when he was a diplomat for the Philippines at the United Nations, that Typhoon Haiyan – the deadliest storm to smash into the archipelago – moved him to the urgency of curbing global warming.

Today, Borje is commissioner of the government body that represents the Philippines in the negotiations at COP.

It will be his second time attending COP as vice chairperson of the Philippine Climate Change Commission since he was appointed to his role in March last year. His term will run until 2027.

The Philippines is eyeing loss and damage as a key issue that it will be lobbying for, as questions over how the fund will operate, who will pay for it, who will benefit, and how it will be governed are expected to be tackled at the conference. Borje will be participating in the debate for climate finance, along with delegates from the departments of finance, energy, science and technology.

The career diplomat said the US\$9.9 million worth of local climate funds approved by the commission in October is not enough. Since 2012, the government has been mandated to direct at least US\$18 million into what is called the People's Survival Fund used for climate change adaptation initiatives.

"What we want is a replenishment of the fund and ... a drastic improvement in the process and the procedure so that we can truly say to the entire world that the Philippines is a model when it comes to climate finance," Borje told civil society leaders at the roundtable event, held three days before he left for Dubai on Monday.

"When I personally go out there and negotiate for unlocking of climate finance, we can tell them we are doing it in the Philippines with our limited resources, [therefore] you in the international community, developed countries have that moral obligation to do much, much better."

Jemilah Mahmood

A humanitarian veteran from Malaysia

Dr Jemilah Mahmood has witnessed intense human suffering in her over 20 years working in disaster and war relief. So she sees the first-time inclusion of a health theme at COP28 as a "huge step forward" – given how global warming is already wrecking humanity's collective well-being.

In the coming weeks, governments worldwide are expected to endorse two declarations, one on health, and the other on relief, recovery and peace. Both documents, drafted by



summit host United Arab Emirates, will call for greater political will, along with more funding and collaboration.

“People in the health sector have been pushing very hard for years for a COP to include a health theme,” Dr Jemilah said.

“I think [the effort] is timely, because we are all just coming through a pandemic,” she said, adding that the link between planetary damage and infectious diseases is now clear.

The 64-year-old, who founded the global humanitarian nonprofit Mercy Malaysia in response to the Kosovo war in 1999, and in recent years advocated for healthcare workers to focus more on climate change, also thinks the COP28 health declaration will need a stronger stance against coal, oil and gas – a late-October draft omits the term “fossil fuels” entirely.

“Unless we are really talking about reducing fossil fuels, then we are constantly going to be putting out fires,” Dr Jemilah said. She is one of over 30 signatories in an open letter by global health professionals asking for a phase-out of fossil fuels to be included in the declaration.

Dr Jemilah is the co-founder and executive director of the Sunway Centre for Planetary Health, a university think-tank that works at the intersection of public health and climate issues.

Key issues in Southeast Asia, she said, include preparing for more outbreaks of diseases such as dengue and malaria, stemming from climate shifts. Biodiversity loss is also causing food security issues, she added.

COP28 will be Dr Jemilah’s first time at the summit in-person. She will be speaking at the health, humanitarian and Malaysia pavilions. She anticipates “a bit of a circus” around the huge conference, but added that the focus must be on outcomes.

“Health workers are the most trusted people in the world and our voices must be stronger,” she said, adding that the sector needs to get better at understanding and communicating climate risks.

She also will be keeping a keen eye on the loss and damage funding negotiations, and how developed countries have been trying to avoid strong terms obligating payments,

while paying homage to the recently deceased Bangladeshi scientist Saleemul Huq, widely regarded a pioneer of the global loss and damage movement.

“I ask myself, in today’s world, where is the global solidarity, to want for others what you want for ourselves?” Dr Jemilah said.

Her take-home message? “Everything we do now, no matter how small, will contribute to some change. We have no time to lose, with everything stacked against us. I think we just need to push on”.

Tual Sawm Khai

A solitary voice from Myanmar

Dr Tual Sawm Khai, 31, has seen his fair share of extreme weather. In 2015, nine million people were affected by flooding and landslides. Dr Khai’s home region, the mountainous Chin state, declared a state of emergency, and he was involved in rehabilitation and emergency response work for over six months.

“I’m a survivor, you can say,” Dr Khai, who is from the Zomi-Chin ethnic group, said of the experience.

Myanmar is one of the most vulnerable countries to climate risks – Cyclone Mocha killed 145 people and affected millions this year – but Dr Khai worries that the world is not caring enough about Myanmar’s climate vulnerability, with public attention firmly on the nation’s civil war.

Since the military overthrew the elected government in 2021, there has been no official representation from Myanmar at COP summits. It is not clear if anyone will be present at COP28 either. Both the junta and exiled government are vying for recognition at the United Nations, and hostilities have recently flared.

Dr Khai, currently a researcher at the United Nations University in Malaysia, will be at COP28 with Mountain Sentinels, a United States-based nonprofit that champions the sustainability of mountain environments and communities worldwide. His research has been focused on climate, health and migration issues.

He will be speaking about how 3 billion people rely on mountain ecosystems for food, water and livelihoods, and how mountain communities are often marginalised, while their knowledge is key to climate adaptation.

Dr Khai will also be looking for opportunities to raise awareness of what has been happening in Myanmar. Extreme heat has been ruining crops, environmentally destructive mining has increased under the military administration, and desperate farmers are turning back to opium farming, Dr Khai said. For these reasons, he doesn't want the junta to represent the country at COP28.

There is the issue of Myanmar's dam-building ambitions too. There are 29 sizable hydropower dams in the country and dozens more are in the pipeline.

Dr Khai singled out the Myitsone Dam, a 6-gigawatt megaproject that will flood an area equalling 60 per cent the area of Singapore, as a project that needs to stop because of the environmental and social harm it will cause. Construction has been suspended for over 10 years, though there have been murmurs about it restarting.

"We need to raise awareness globally that this dam should never be built," he said.

It will be Dr Khai's first COP, an experience he is both excited and nervous about. He would also have attended COP26 in Glasgow in 2021 as a United Nations youth advocate, but couldn't get his visa approved in time.

Dr Khai has been making inquiries about compatriots attending COP28, but thus far hasn't found any other Burmese organisations going. Ground-up environmental groups are rare in Myanmar, he said, and the civic space is getting narrower for non-government organisations because they need to register with the military government.

"I think I might be the only one [from Myanmar] there," he concedes.

Ning Yiran

A youth advocate from Singapore

One of Ning Yiran's most enduring impressions of a COP conference came from watching videos of policymakers moved to tears in 2015, when the Paris Agreement climate deal was adopted after days of intense negotiations.

But the 23-year-old felt conflicted when offered the chance to witness such negotiations up close at COP28. The opportunity came via a government climate programme, which will be sending 20 youths from the city-state to the summit.

For one, there is the issue of carbon emissions flying from Singapore to Dubai – 900 kilograms for a round trip. Ning has also been reflecting on what her presence at the summit will achieve, where she does not expect to have a platform to speak.

“I’m not sure if my participation will really make a difference to COP28,” Ning said.

It was ultimately the learning opportunity that convinced the youth advocate and environmental studies graduate from liberal arts college Yale-NUS to make the trip.

While in school, Ning worked with non-profit Advocates For Refugees to raise funds for a theatre group in Malaysia founded by displaced Afghans. She was part of a student movement that last year called for local universities to divest from fossil fuel firms.

Her undergraduate thesis examined how Southeast Asia’s renewables megaprojects, such as dams and solar farms, were displacing local communities. Some of these projects have attracted Singapore’s interest as potential sources from which to import low-carbon electricity. She found that while governments often talk about the economics and benefits of the green energy transition, local communities that are affected by renewables projects want to address issues such as climate justice and dignity.

“I want to attend COP28 to try to make sense of what I feel are two separate worlds that sometimes can end up in their own echo chamber,” Ning said.

Ning is also planning to share her experience at the summit through social media – “so that more people can feel excited, or frustrated, with us, and also benefit from the access and experiences we get to have”, she said.

She expects COP28 to be hectic and emotionally overwhelming, based on her friends’ experiences at last year’s COP27 where issues they cared about were sometimes dismissed by negotiators or caught up in power plays.

Meanwhile, Ning is keeping up with the latest developments. She has scrutinised United Nations climate reports, and tracked how loss and damage talks have been running overtime, with contentions in areas such as if the World Bank is fit to host a new fund.

She hopes to see the fund for helping vulnerable countries rebuild after extreme climate events fully address developing country concerns. There must also be agreement on a phaseout of unabated fossil fuels that leaves no one behind, she said.

“It is very easy to just go there and have a good time. But I want to go prepared, so that the spot I’m taking up is justified. I think that’s the pressure I’m putting on myself,” Ning added.

Hadi Prayitno

An Indigenous Peoples observer from Indonesia

Hadi Prayitno has been working with communities, including Indigenous Peoples in Indonesia, for over two decades. But it is only now that he will be attending a conference that will tackle the rights of vulnerable groups at the same international level as the COP.

The 41 year-old is attending the world’s most important climate negotiations as the stakeholder engagement manager of United States-headquartered nonprofit Wildlife Works, which advocates for the voluntary carbon market as an effective and equitable financial mechanism to stop deforestation.

“I’m very excited and feeling lucky because the same opportunity is not provided to all people. I can learn many things from this event, even if my role is only as an observer,” Prayitno says.

Colleagues who attended previous conferences described to him how the Glasgow summit in 2021 was very grand, followed by a more understated event in Egypt last year.

He does not expect too much festivity for the one he is about to attend in Dubai, but what matters to him, he says, is the opportunity to learn and exchange experiences with countries similar to Indonesia which have some of the world’s biggest natural forests and communities of Indigenous Peoples, such as the Democratic Republic of Congo and Brazil.

"A successful negotiation will be when all parties declare loudly what they will do to respect the rights of Indigenous People and local communities," he said.

## PHILIPPINE INFORMATION AGENCY

### Working towards climate solutions with emphasis on equity

In a groundbreaking event, prominent business leaders and policy experts gathered on November 23 to discuss ambitious corporate climate action, emphasizing pro-poor and gender-sensitive solutions. The event featured distinguished speakers and panelists.

"This is a historic event to include business leaders in the commitment to transform the country into a resilient, low-carbon society," said Secretary Robert E.A. Borje of the Climate Change Commission.

"It's crucial to scale up and deliver in a predictable manner, considering the moral imperative at stake—the lives, livelihoods, and future of our people," he added.

The discussion, moderated by Ms. Ping Manongdo, Southeast Asia Partnerships Manager and Philippines Country Head at Eco-Business, revolved around the mutually reinforcing roles of both government and the private sector in achieving verifiable emission reduction goals.

Mr. Jaime Zobel Urquijo, Chief Sustainability Officer and Risk Officer at Ayala Corporation, highlighted the importance of metrics and baselining.

"We identify our baseline emissions on a yearly basis, and we are fortunate to have a net-zero commitment and a visionary leader in the person of the CEO of Ayala Corporation," he shared.

Ms. Chaye Cabal Revilla, CFO and Chief Sustainability Officer at Metro Pacific Investments Corporation, emphasized, "Baselining and measurement are crucial. We had to set the tone from the top, formalize sustainability committees, and take stock of our strategy. We want to be net negative and fortify our environmental stewardship plans."

"As leaders, you cannot be sustainable as an organization if you, as an individual, do not buy it. As a woman leader, we also try to influence women's organizations to push for sustainable practices," she added.

Ms. Leah Marie Ayeng, General Manager of Prestige Paper Products, underscored that investing in more sustainable products will not only contribute to accelerating climate consciousness but also enhance the viability of enterprises.

“I believe that a responsible business is also a profitable business.”

Mr. Ted Monroy, Country Representative, United Nations Industrial Development Organization Country Office Philippines, explained, "Climate change affected typhoon pathways in Mindanao. If there's no energy, there's no development. We focus on renewable energy and supporting local development."

Mr. Horia Adrian, President and CEO of Holcim Philippines Inc., issued a warning: "We will consume 2.5 planets by 2030 if we continue like this. Sustainability is very tangible because it affects the entire world."

"People should feel sustainability in their heart. God gives you, but God does not put it in your pocket. We can provide the solution, but the solution has to be used," he emphasized.

During the Q&A session, the speakers addressed queries ranging from advertising strategies focused on sustainability to convincing SMEs to adopt environmentally friendly practices.

"Advertising is expensive but cheap talk. We design, build, and operate our business with the least environmental destruction. It's more costly, but it's in our DNA," stated Ms. Revilla when asked about advertising sustainability.

"We just need to be a lot more creative in unlocking value," said Mr. Urquijo.

In closing remarks, Secretary Borje emphasized, "There is no business on a dead planet. The bottom line is connected to sustainability and profitability. That is the paradigm shift we need to encourage. The government needs to craft policies to support these."

"What we need to do is scan the horizon and give it a climate change lens. We are learning that climate change is the governance challenge of our generation," he added.

The panelists unanimously agreed on the interconnectedness of sustainability, profitability, and societal well-being. The event concluded with a call for collective business action, acknowledging the crucial role of corporates in driving an ambitious path towards a resilient and sustainable future.

For updates on the CCC Week commemoration visit the Climate Change Commission's website at <https://climate.gov.ph> and [www.facebook.com/cccpnl](http://www.facebook.com/cccpnl). (CCC)

## PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

### CIF 2023: Cultivating conducive conditions for climate investments

Key stakeholders from the public and private sectors have sought to establish conducive conditions for climate-related investments aligned with national policies and sectoral needs.

During the Climate Investment Forum (CIF) 2023 at Crowne Plaza Manila Galleria on Nov. 20, the participants called for stronger collaboration between the government and private sector to scale up sustainable and green investments that propel economic growth, as laid out in the Philippine Development Plan (PDP) 2023-2028.

In his keynote address, Department of Finance Secretary Benjamin Diokno outlined the country's first Sustainable Finance Roadmap which sets the stage for a comprehensive whole-of-government approach to promote sustainable finance.

The roadmap includes strategic plans such as integrating risk management, encouraging climate related disclosures, and participating in international initiatives.

"We are laying the groundwork for enabling a just transition where every sector, every community, and individual can thrive," he emphasized.

Diokno highlighted the crucial role of the "Green Forces" referring to the Inter-agency Technical Working Group for Sustainable Finance that reviews the sustainable finance landscape, addresses policy gaps, and integrates sustainability into microeconomic policies.

Director Nieva Natural of the National Economic and Development Authority presented enabling mechanisms for climate investment, including the PDP 2023-2038, emphasizing the need for investments from the private sector to augment public investments and funds.

The World Bank, through its Country Climate and Development Report, explained the benefits of investing in climate solutions.

"The cost of climate adaptation is substantial but easily outweighed by the economic benefits of reduced climate damage. Mitigation measures would increase GDP by about 0.5 percent in 2040 and generate 80,000 jobs," it said.



Dr. Selva Ramachandran, Resident Representative of the United Nations Development Programme, reiterated their commitment to support the country's efforts in climate-resilient development and accelerating climate investment and financing.

"Together, we can forge a path towards sustainable development, harnessing the strength of bayanihan for positive change," Ramachandran said, emphasizing the need for increased private sector engagement,

The event also featured a presentation on the Strategic Investment Priority Plan by Director Sandra Marie Recolizado of the Board of Investments.

During the panel discussions, panelists discussed topics such as security concerns in climate programs, private sector thoughts on new technologies, and challenges faced by organizations in investing more in climate action.

Commissioner Rachel Anne Herrera emphasized the need for collaborative efforts between the public and private sectors to address climate challenges.

She expressed optimism for the country's sustainable future, noting that the Philippines is poised to lead the region in sustainable finance, fostering innovation and prioritizing climate-related investments.

"With sustained support of our partners from the private sector and business community, we shall be leveraging on boosting collaboration aimed towards maximizing opportunities and available resources beyond the defined landscape of climate financing," she pointed out.

Herrera said that in line with the pronouncements upheld by President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr., "we must mitigate, adapt to, and be part of the solution -- embark on advocacies, programs, and initiatives that will help us preserve our home."

"This year's CIF serves as a testament that through our strong collaboration, we can achieve and accomplish more. We hope to further strengthen our linkages beyond this forum, in the aim of carrying out fit-for-purpose and transformational climate interventions," she said.

The CIF 2023 is part of the 16th Global Warming and Climate Change Consciousness Week held Nov. 19 to 25.

It serves as a platform for enhanced collaboration between the government and private sector, addressing challenges and capitalizing on opportunities in climate investments. The forum seeks to expedite the transition towards a climate-resilient and low-carbon future.

## RAPPLER

### [Filipino faith leaders to rich countries: 'Scale up' action vs climate change](#)

By: Robbin M. Dagle

Faith leaders from various traditions gathered ahead of a major climate summit in Dubai to highlight faith's "tremendous" and "untapped" potential in accelerating climate action.

"People of faith have a most important, crucial role in combating the environmental crisis that we're facing, and together we can do this," said Archbishop Charles Brown, papal nuncio to the Philippines, at an interfaith dialogue held on Thursday, November 23.

The event was organized by the Climate Change Commission (CCC) and the faith-based organization Living Laudato Si' (LLS) as part of Philippine Climate Change Week. It took place a week before the 2023 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP28) happening from November 30 to December 12, 2023, in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

During Thursday's event, eight representatives from Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, and indigenous peoples' (IP) groups signed a manifesto urging for "paradigm-shifting decisions" that would "scale up" action and truly address the impact of climate change at COP28.

The call mainly urged developed nations to adequately fund and support developing nations and vulnerable communities as they adapt to and mitigate the effects of a changing climate.

They also urged the Philippine COP28 delegation to "properly represent" the country by "demanding the finance, support, and justice owed by big polluters."

Funding to compensate for the "loss and damage" brought by the effects of climate change to vulnerable countries is among the most contentious issues that nations will tackle at COP28.

The manifesto also reiterated faith and religious leaders' commitments to educate and practice the sustainable use of resources within their communities in response to the climate crisis.

Secretary Robert Borje, vice chair and commissioner of the CCC, received the document from the faith leaders. Archbishop Brown and Rodne Galicha, executive director of LLS, served as witnesses.

Borje underscored how faith can give “direction, values, and motivation to make us do so much more” to address the climate crisis. He also recognized that faith-based organizations are among the first to respond to the impacts of climate change.

### Religious commitments

The event was also an opportunity for different faiths to share their commitments and perspectives on climate and the environment.

Brown pointed out the Catholic Church’s unique position to have a “definitive and defining influence on the problem of climate change” as an institution with nearly 1.4 billion adherents worldwide.

Pope Francis, leader of the Catholic Church, has emerged as one of the most prominent voices for climate and the environment. He is set to participate at the UN’s annual climate conference, the first pope to do so.

San Carlos Bishop Gerardo Alminaza, vice chair of the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of the Philippines’ social action, justice, and peace commission, reiterated pronouncements of the Catholic bishops on the environment, including commitments to divest from coal and other extractive industries.

Father Dionito Cabillas of the Iglesia Filipina Independiente (IFI), commonly known as the Aglipayan Church, issued a similar call seeking the end to destructive activities such as widespread deforestation, open-pit mining, and reclamation.

“The IFI believes that the Philippine economy will not improve if the decades-long plunder of our natural wealth in our country and the destruction this has caused our environment and communities will not be reversed,” Cabillas said.

### Diverse perspectives, shared imperative

Shakuntala Vaswani, cofounder of Peacemakers’ Circle Foundation, shared that in Hinduism, “nature is not viewed merely as a resource but as a sacred and divine entity.” Thus, the “reverence for nature provides a spiritual foundation for environmental stewardship.”

Hindu ethics, which lies on the principle of ahimsa or nonviolence, can serve as a guide “to live in harmony with all living beings including the environment,” Vaswani said.

Mahadil Dammang, representative of the National Commission on Muslim Filipinos, expressed that there are about 200 verses in the Qur’an which concern the environment.

“The reality is that nothing could be more Islamic than protecting God’s most precious creations, which is the Earth,” said Dammang. “Rising temperatures, melting ice caps, and extreme weather events are not just scientific phenomena but challenges that test our commitment to the principles of justice and responsibility embedded in our faith,” he said.

Representatives from indigenous peoples also urged greater recognition and protection for their contributions to addressing climate change.

Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, executive director of IP organization Tebtebba and a Kankanaey Igorot, said that IPs worldwide number at around 400 million or 5% of the population, who live in 20% of the world’s territory. However, 80% of the world’s biodiversity, where much of the sequestration of carbon emissions happens, is found within IP territories.

This means that much of the sequestration of carbon emissions happens within IP territories “in spite of the gross human rights violations that we are faced with,” Corpuz said.

Corpuz reiterated that “in spite of the gross human rights violations that we are faced with,” indigenous peoples “will continue our commitment to make this world more sustainable and the ecosystems.”

Lineth Brondial of the Tzu Chi Foundation, an international Buddhist humanitarian organization, mentioned that about 84% of the world identify with a religion.

“If we look at it, this is our power: Our impact is huge and if we use our influence on championing sustainable solutions for the humanity and our planet, it will make a huge difference,” Brondial said.

**=END=**