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By: Neeraj Singh Manhas and Genevieve Donnellon-May

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THE PHILIPPINE STAR

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Information and Knowledge Management Division

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[\[Opinion\] COP29's new climate finance deal: Will India and China step up?](#)

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India and China, the world's two most populous nations, are central to global climate efforts. Together, they represent over a third of the global population and contribute significantly to global emissions. As major economies and leaders in the developing world, their actions will play a decisive role in achieving – or hindering – global climate goals.

The recent 29th Conference of the Parties (COP29) in Azerbaijan underscored this reality, marking a significant step forward in the global climate agenda. With key agreements reached to accelerate climate action, the summit, dubbed the “climate finance COP,” saw countries unite to establish a more ambitious climate finance target, aiming to accelerate action on emissions and adaptation.

A key outcome was the establishment of the New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG), which will replace the expiring US\$100 billion target and commit to mobilizing US\$300 billion annually for developing countries by 2035..

However, the NCQG falls short of the US\$1.3 trillion target developing countries had advocated for — and even that figure may be insufficient to fully address their climate financing needs.

Key questions remain: Who will shoulder the costs? Will the funding be in the form of grants, concessional loans, or private sector loans? And, crucially, how will these resources be allocated and distributed? These uncertainties must be addressed for the NCQG to be truly effective.

The new agreement holds significant implications for both India and China. As central players in this climate finance commitment, their contributions, alongside global support, will be crucial in determining whether the world can meet its climate objectives.

As a major emerging economy, India faces the challenge of balancing climate goals with economic development and poverty alleviation. Recent discussions at COP29 underscored India's need for increased climate finance to transition to a low-carbon economy.

New Delhi has long argued that developed nations, responsible for the bulk of historical emissions and with higher levels of economic development, should shoulder a larger share of the financial burden. While India has made progress in renewable energy — setting an ambitious target of 500 gigawatts (GW) of non-fossil fuel-based energy by 2030—it still faces significant obstacles in scaling these efforts without substantial financial and technological support.

The NCQG's commitment to mobilizing US\$300 billion annually for developing countries offers hope. But India's call for more substantial climate finance remains unmet.

India's approach to climate action is inherently linked to its development priorities. Despite this, India ranked 10th in the latest Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI), with a relatively low per capita emission of 2.9 tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO₂e), well below the global average of 6.6 tCO₂e. This ranking reflects India's proactive climate policies, demonstrating that sustainable growth is achievable even for developing countries.

However, India has repeatedly emphasised that climate finance should not come with strings attached, such as green standards or policy restrictions that could hamper its economic growth. For New Delhi, the key challenge will be to balance its development needs with climate commitments, ensuring that financial assistance is both equitable and transparent.

China, for its part, has also faced scrutiny. At COP29, China came under intense scrutiny for its insufficient contributions to climate finance. As the world's largest emitter, its financial commitment to global climate action is increasingly seen as a critical test of its leadership on the world stage.

Under the 2015 Paris Agreement, climate finance responsibility falls on developed nations due to their historical emissions. However, negotiators have increasingly urged China to take on a larger financial role.

While China maintains its stance as a developing country and resists mandatory contributions, its voluntary pledges have raised questions about its commitment — setting the stage for continued debate on China's financial responsibility in global climate action.

Critics argue that China's rising global influence, its strong industrial capacity and its status as the world's largest greenhouse gas emitter necessitate greater responsibility in addressing climate change. As global pressure for climate action intensifies, China's role in climate finance will face heightened scrutiny – especially if Beijing aims to assert greater influence in shaping international climate diplomacy.

Since 2016, China has committed over US\$24.5 billion in climate finance to developing nations, according to Chinese officials. Annual contributions are estimated at around US\$4 billion – roughly 5% of what developed countries contribute. While significant, it still falls short of the US\$100 billion annual target for developed nations, a responsibility China has yet to meet.

Although China has emerged as a key player in climate finance, it operates outside the traditional United Nations framework and on its own terms. Notably, a significant portion of its financial contributions is in the form of loans rather than grants, raising concerns about the long-term sustainability and potential debt burdens of recipient nations.

As China's geopolitical and economic power expands, its climate finance strategy will face increasing pressure, especially as calls for greater transparency and more robust commitments intensify.

COP29 set a crucial milestone with the NCQG. For India and China, the conference underscored their pivotal roles in funding global climate action. Both countries must now lead by example. After all, their actions will shape the future of climate diplomacy and global sustainability.

BUSINESS WORLD

Filipino PWDs struggle more in disaster recovery and preparedness — study

By: Patricia B. Mirasol

Persons with disabilities (PWDs) in the Philippines have more challenges in preparing for and recovering from disasters in comparison to those without disabilities, according to a 2024 nationwide survey by the Harvard Humanitarian Initiative (HHI).

Released this International Day of Persons with Disabilities, the survey found that almost half (48%) of PWDs report not recovering at all from disasters, compared to 24% for the rest of the population.

“These findings underscore the critical importance of providing appropriate and adapted assistance, including medical support, in disaster recovery efforts to foster true resilience and recovery for this group,” Patrick Vinck, HHI director of research and co-lead of the study, said in a December 3 press statement.

HHI collected data from 4,608 Filipinos between February–March 2024 to understand the factors that contributed to disaster and climate resilience.

PWDs represented in the study include individuals who experience difficulties with vision, hearing, and communication, or physical activities such as walking, climbing steps, or self-care. It also included disabilities associated with lower levels of wealth and education.

The most frequently reported impact of disasters by both PWD and non-PWD groups is financial and material (77% for the former and 76% for the latter). Less than a fifth (3%-17%) feel that past disasters impacted their physical and mental health and resulted in displacement, death of a relative, and social impact.

The study’s results further indicated that, on average, PWDs are less prepared for disasters (17.1 out of a total 50) than those without disabilities (19.3 out of 50).

PWDs likewise scored 14-57% lower than non-PWDs on the following dimensions: training and drill participation (2.3 vs. 3.6), material measures (3.9 vs. 4.5), access to information (4.3 vs. 4.9), and planning (3.6 vs. 4).

PWDs tend to have stronger social support networks (3.1) than non-PWDs (2.3), though.

“These results clearly show the importance of creating more inclusive training programs that are accessible and relevant to PWDs,” said Vincenzo Bollettino, program director of the HHI Resilient Communities Program and co-lead of the study.

“It is important that future research focuses on illuminating the specific kinds of barriers PWDs face in preparing for disasters and identifies the kinds of interventions that contribute best to PWD disaster resilience,” he said in the same press statement.

GMA NEWS

[Acts resulting in greenhouse emissions a breach of int'l law, SolGen tells ICJ](#)

By: Joahna Lei Casilao

Philippine officials have submitted before the International Court of Justice (ICJ) that acts of states resulting in anthropogenic greenhouse gases (GHG) emissions over time and causing climate change should be a breach of obligation under international law.

Solicitor General Menardo Guevarra made the remark during the oral proceedings at the ICJ on the question of the obligations of states regarding climate change.

“[T]he Philippines submits that any act or omission attributable to a State which results, or has resulted in, anthropogenic GHG emissions over time thereby causing climate change is a breach of a State’s obligation under international law,” he said.

“Such act or omission is an internationally wrongful act which necessarily gives rise to a corresponding legal consequence pursuant to international law,” he added.

He said states affected by wrongful acts of other states in respect to climate change may demand enforcement of remedial actions, including cessation or reparation.

Further, Guevarra said that the obligation of states to the environment should not be confined within the limits of specific international agreements.

“The insidious effects of climate change require that the entire plethora of customary international law, general principles of international law, and various conventions and treaties be correlated and applied simultaneously,” he said.

According to Guevarra, the obligation not to cause transboundary harm under customary international law compels all states to ensure that activities in their territory must respect the environment of other states.

Guevarra said the Philippine government concedes that economic development is necessary, but stressed that states must not compromise future generations.

“[W]e should not compromise the long-term sustainability of resources; we should not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their own needs,” he said.

Aside from Guevarra, the Philippine delegation was composed of Ambassador Eduardo Malaya, Ambassador Carlos Sorreta, and Assistant Solicitor General Bernard Hernandez.

For his part, Sorreta argued that climate change is also a threat to international peace and security. He said the maintenance of peace and security is also an obligation under the United Nations Charter.

“States are bound to address the climate crisis within a legal framework that maintains peace and security, respects sovereignty, and upholds human rights,” he said.

“Law is essential to ensure a future where all can live with dignity, security, and resilience in the face of a dramatically changing climate,” he added.

In March 2023, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution calling for the world body's top court to outline legal obligations related to climate change.

In a separate statement, Greenpeace welcomed the arguments of the Philippine delegation, saying it is a welcome lifeline for the call for climate justice.

“[The ICJ's advisory opinion] has moral authority, and persuasive authority. The interpretation or advisory opinion of the ICJ can be cited eventually to interpret international law,” Atty. Ryan Jay Roset of the Legal Rights and Natural Resources Center said in a statement

“If there's a case brought between states, you can actually say that in this advisory opinion, states have the legal obligation to address climate change, and as a consequence, they should actually do something to prevent or address it,” he added.

MANILA STANDARD

[Early warning systems to protect Iloilo communities from disaster](#)

By: Caloy Lozada

Ilonggos stand to benefit from enhanced disaster preparedness as the Iloilo Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office (PDRRMO) led efforts to strengthen Early Warning Systems (EWS) in the province.

In a meeting with local disaster officers and technical experts, the PDRRMO outlined plans to install Automated Rain Gauges (ARGs), Water Level Monitoring Systems, and Automated Weather Stations (AWS) in flood-prone areas.

These systems will provide real-time data to help communities respond quickly to natural disasters, especially flooding, which continues to affect six municipalities.

The integration of solar-powered AWS units was proposed to ensure these systems remain operational during power outages, a common issue during severe weather.

Standardized data reporting templates will also improve coordination among local governments, ensuring timely and accurate information reaches vulnerable communities.

“This initiative directly benefits Ilonggos by providing advanced tools to anticipate and respond to disasters, saving lives and reducing damages,” PDRRMO head retired colonel Cornelio Salinas said.

The group plans to submit a funding proposal to Iloilo Governor Arthur Defensor Jr., ensuring the project’s swift implementation for the safety and resilience of provincial communities.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

[House reso calls for climate, disaster emergency declaration](#)

By: House reso calls for climate, disaster emergency declaration

A lawmaker has filed a resolution urging the government to declare a climate and disaster emergency from 2024 to 2030.

In House Resolution 2105, Albay 2nd District Rep. Joey Salceda cited recent events, including the devastation caused by tropical cyclones Kristine (Trami) and Leon (Kongrey), which resulted in 162 deaths, 22 missing persons, and PHP10.56 billion in damage to infrastructure and PHP7.04 billion to agriculture.

Salceda said Typhoon Nika (Toraji), along with Super Typhoons Ofel (Usagi) and Pepito (Man-yi), devastated areas already affected by earlier tropical cyclones, causing PHP469.8 million in infrastructure damage and PHP8.64 million in agricultural losses, which affected 1.8 million people across 34 provinces.

"Given the disproportionate disaster and climate risks the Philippines is facing, there is a great need to push for loss and damage mechanisms, including disaster and climate financing in all international negotiations and platforms," Salceda said in a news release on Monday.

The resolution urges President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. to proclaim 2024 to 2030 as the disaster and climate emergency years.

It also calls for the establishment of a Disaster and Climate Emergency Fund, with an initial allocation of PHP1 billion for 2025, to bolster climate-resilient programs and disaster recovery initiatives.

It further recommends the issuance of a presidential proclamation mandating all government agencies, local government units, and state-owned corporations, government financial and insurance institutions, and state universities and colleges to adopt a "build forward better faster" approach to address the disaster and climate crisis.

The resolution calls on Congress to pass critical legislation, including the Department of Disaster Resilience bill and calls for the inclusion of climate-focused strategies in the Philippine Development Plan.

RAPPLER

[Top emitter China tells World Court that UN treaties cover states' climate obligations](#)

China told the top UN court on Tuesday, December 3, that existing UN treaties should provide the basis for its advisory opinion on states' legal obligations to fight global warming and address the consequences of their historic contributions to it.

The UN General Assembly, after a campaign spearheaded by small island states, asked the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to issue an opinion on countries' legal responsibility for the negative impact of climate change. One of those states, Vanuatu, on Monday asked the court to recognize the harms climate change had caused and order reparations for its consequences.

China, one of the world's top two emitters of the greenhouse gases that cause global warming together with the US, said it understood the "enormous difficulties" faced by developing countries such as the small island states, which are vulnerable especially to rising sea levels and increasingly violent storms.

But Ma Xinmin, a legal advisor in China's foreign ministry, told the court that the existing treaties produced by UN-backed climate change negotiations, which include many non-binding provisions, should be the benchmark for determining states' obligations.

"China hopes that the court will uphold the U.N. climate change negotiations mechanism as the primary channel for global climate governance," Ma said.

While advisory opinions from the ICJ, often called the World Court, are not binding, they are legally and politically significant.

Experts say its eventual opinion on climate change will probably be cited in climate change-driven lawsuits in courts from Europe to Latin America and beyond.

Over a hundred states and organisations will give their views in the coming weeks. The United States is due to address the court on Wednesday. The court's opinion is expected to be delivered in 2025.

THE GUARDIAN

[Fury as US argues against climate obligations at top UN court](#)

Climate justice campaigners have condemned the US after the world's largest historic greenhouse gas emitter argued against countries being legally obliged to combat the climate crisis.

The US intervention came on Wednesday as part of the historic climate hearing at the international court of justice (ICJ) in The Hague, where island nations and other climate-vulnerable countries are calling for wealthy polluting nations most responsible for climate breakdown to be held legally responsible.

Climate disasters are wreaking havoc across the planet, with dwindling hope of the current climate pledges curtailing global temperatures as the US and other fossil fuel nations continue to expand production.

Yet according to the US, the United Nations framework convention on climate change (UNFCCC) and 2015 Paris agreement and other existing non-binding treaties should be preserved and are the best way forward.

The current UN climate change regime "embodies the clearest, most specific, and the most current expression of states' consent to be bound by international law in respect of climate change", Margaret Taylor, legal adviser at the state department, told the ICJ judges on Wednesday.

"Any other legal obligations relating to climate change mitigation identified by the court should be interpreted consistently with the obligations states have under this treaty regime," added Taylor.

Climate justice activists responded with fury.

"Once again, we witness a disheartening attempt by the US to evade its responsibilities as one of the world's largest polluters," said Vishal Prasad, director of Pacific Islands Students Fighting Climate Change. "The US is content with its business-as-usual approach and has taken every possible measure to shirk its historical responsibility, disregard human rights and reject climate justice."

Ashfaq Khalfan, Oxfam America's climate justice director, said: "It is absurd for the Biden administration to argue before the ICJ that countries do not have clear legal obligations to reduce carbon pollution, especially as it prepares to turn over the

executive office to a proven climate denier like president-elect Trump, whose policies are likely to deeply harm US climate action.”

Australia, China and Saudi Arabia – major fossil fuel economies and among the world’s worst greenhouse gas emitters – also argued against legal accountability that developing nations are pushing for.

After years of campaigning by vulnerable nations and the global climate justice movement, the UN asked the ICJ to provide an advisory opinion on what obligations states have to tackle climate change and what the legal consequences could be if they fail to do so. More than 100 countries and organisations are testifying over the course of two weeks, and many hope the hearings will elevate science to the forefront, ensuring international law reflects the realities of climate breakdown and the urgent need for transformative action.

ICJ advisory opinions are non-binding but carry significant legal and political weight, and this will likely be referred to as an authoritative document in future climate litigation and during international climate negotiations.

Those most vulnerable to climate change – predominantly Pacific nations led by Vanuatu – are pushing for fair financial support and compensation for irreversible loss and damage from the states most responsible as they face an existential threat from rising tides, floods, drought and other climate disasters.

On Wednesday, Vanuatu’s special envoy for climate change, Ralph Regenvanu, said his country was “disappointed” at the US and others. “These nations, some of the world’s largest greenhouse gas emitters, have pointed to existing treaties and commitments that have regrettably failed to motivate substantial reductions in emissions ... these treaties are essential, but they cannot be a veil for inaction or a substitute for legal accountability.”

Taylor also appeared to dismiss the idea that the ICJ should propose in its opinion that historic emitters be held responsible for past pollution. “An advisory proceeding is not the means to litigate whether individual states or groups of states have violated obligations pertaining to climate change in the past or bear responsibility for reparations ... nor would it be appropriate to do so,” she said.

The ICJ is one of three international courts tasked with producing an advisory opinion on the climate crisis, alongside the international tribunal for the law of the sea (Itlos) and the inter-American court of human rights. Itlos found earlier this year that greenhouse gases are pollutants which states have a legal responsibility to control – that goes

beyond the UNFCCC. The inter-American court held hearings in Barbados and Brazil this year and is expected to be the next to publish its opinion. The ICJ ruling will likely take many months.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

'Internationally wrongful act': Gov't demands legal remedy for climate change damages at top UN court

By: Dominique Nicole Flores

The Philippine government asserted before the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on Tuesday, December 3, that countries most responsible for driving climate change are committing an "internationally wrongful act."

It called on these nations to provide reparations, marking one of the Marcos Jr. administration's boldest statements on climate justice.

At the landmark climate change hearings in The Hague, Netherlands, Solicitor General Menardo Guevarra emphasized that the Philippines' position is to hold nations accountable for the largest contributions to greenhouse gas emissions.

"The Philippines submits that any act or omission attributable to a state which results or has resulted in anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions over time, thereby causing climate change, is a breach of a state's obligation under international law," he said.

Guevarra presented the escalating climate challenges faced by the Philippines, including record-breaking heat and increasingly severe storms.

He referred to the recent train of cyclones, many of which were super typhoons, which battered regions with no memory of strong storms. Guevarra also mentioned how the country reached 55°Celsius in May this year. Both have caused several class suspensions.

For 16 consecutive years, the Philippines has been ranked the most disaster-prone country on the World Risk Index, with its score worsening slightly in 2024.

A developed country's responsibility

Guevarra also said that nations failing to "faithfully conform to their international obligations" under existing laws, conventions and treaties established with the United Nations are committing an "internationally wrongful act."

"The commission of such internationally wrongful act triggers state responsibility with its necessary consequences, and carries with it the obligation of the responsible state to cease the wrongful conduct and make full reparation therefore," he said.

Examples of legally binding international agreements include the Paris Agreement and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), adopted by nearly 200 nations.

The Paris Agreement, ratified in 2015, compels countries to cooperate in limiting the rise in global average temperatures to no more than 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels.

Meanwhile, the UNFCCC places the burden of responsibility on developed, heavily industrialized countries, as they are the largest contributors to greenhouse gas emissions inducing global warming.

As developing countries like the Philippines are disproportionately affected by climate change, Guevarra argued that countries should have the right to “demand the enforcement of remedial actions.”

This could include ceasing the “internationally wrongful act” and obtaining reparations for the damages caused, he added.

An international legal remedy. Drawing on the Philippine legal concept of the Writ of Kalikasan, which safeguards environmental rights, Guevarra suggested that the ICJ consider a similar international remedy.

He said that the Philippines “has no inch of doubt” that international law imposes a broader responsibility on countries contributing to climate change, stressing that these nations can do more to reduce their emissions.

Climate change a threat to global peace and security
Acknowledging that climate change is also caused by goals of economic development, Guevarra said that a country “must operate within a paradigm of non-compromise.”

Meanwhile, Philippine Representative to the UN Carlos Sorreta said that climate change does not only affect the environment but it is also a “serious threat to [the] maintenance of peace and security.”

“Rising sea levels, extreme weather events, and resource scarcity fueled by the climate crisis destabilize regions, exacerbate conflicts, displace peoples, and imperil sovereignty and territorial integrity,” Sorreta added.

Amid threats to its territorial waters, including the West Philippine Sea, Sorreta also said the fundamental role of the 2016 South China Sea Arbitration ruling also mandates protection from “future damage and preservation.”

“States are bound to address the climate crisis within a legal framework that maintains peace and security, respects sovereignty, and upholds human rights,” he said.

The ICJ, in the biggest case on climate change to date, began hearing arguments from 98 countries and 12 international organizations on Monday, December 2.

This followed Vanuatu's request for an advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice, seeking clarification on states' legal obligations under international law to protect the climate system, as well as the consequences for failing to uphold these commitments.

The proceedings also come after the 29th Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC, which has faced criticism from several developing nations over the modest 300 billion USD annual climate finance deal by 2035.

Civil society groups have called for at least 1.3 trillion USD for climate adaptation, disaster response and mitigation.

The public hearings at the ICJ will run until December 13.

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