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11 DECEMBER 2023 [ 08:45 am]

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#### [DOST showcases disaster mitigation initiatives in COP28 side event](#)

By: Ariel Rojas

The Department of Science and Technology (DOST), led by Secretary Renato Solidum Jr., hosted a side event at the ongoing 28th Conference of Parties (COP28) in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

## **BUSINESS MIRROR**

### **[PHL in COP28: Climate crisis needs action now](#)**

By: Jonathan L. Mayuga

The Philippines is pushing to accelerate climate financing of gender-responsive and nature-based solutions to address climate change and biodiversity loss at the ongoing 28th Conference of Parties (COP) Meeting in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

## **CNN**

### **[Controversy hangs over climate talks as countries weigh whether to ditch fossil fuels](#)**

By: Angela Dewan

The first week of the COP28 climate talks has come to an end not with the euphoria of the first days of breakthrough announcements, but with growing anxiety about whether the world will do anything about the main cause of the climate crisis: fossil fuels.

## **GMA**

### **[ADB OKs \\$200M loan for high-quality, climate resilient infra for PH](#)**

By: Ted Cordero

Manila-based multilateral lender Asian Development Bank (ADB) has green-lit a \$200-million loan for the Philippines to support the country's preparation for high-quality and climate-resilient infrastructure projects.

## **MANILA STANDARD**

### **[‘Ecocide’: How war and climate change are often linked](#)**

The link between climate change and war has been a running theme at COP28, highlighting how many countries suffer from both deadly conflict and environmental disasters.

## **NIKKEI ASIA**

### **[Fossil fuel phaseout up for debate at COP28 ministerial talks](#)**

By: Kazunari Hanawa

Negotiators at the COP 28 climate summit will tackle the contentious question of whether and how to end the use of fossil fuels at ministerial sessions starting Friday, an issue that pits advanced nations against emerging economies.

## **PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER**

### **[COP28: Showdown on climate finance, future of fossil fuels](#)**

By: Imelda Abaño

The United Nations climate summit reaches the halfway mark with wealthy nations making voluntary climate cash pledges and investments, while their representatives negotiated behind closed doors on tricky issues, such as what to do about fossil fuels and how to channel hundreds of billions of dollars in climate finance to developing countries.

### **[Net zero is not the answer to climate change](#)**

The spectacle of another annual climate conference is ongoing in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) until Dec. 12. Like Kabuki theater, performative set pieces lead from one to the other: politicians and celebrities arrive by private jets; speakers predict imminent doom; hectoring nongovernmental organizations cast blame; political negotiations become fraught and inevitably go overtime; and finally: the signing of a new agreement that participants hope and pretend will make a difference.

## **POLITIKO**

### **[Philippines Joins Blue Carbon Action Partnership To Enhance Coastal Resilience](#)**

By: Prince Golez

The Philippines has joined the Blue Carbon Action Partnership (BCAP) of the World Economic Forum (WEF) to solidify the government's pursuit of a green and blue socio-economic agenda.

## **SUNSTAR**

### **[Climate emergency](#)**

By: Rox Peña

The 28th meeting of the Conference of Parties (COP-28) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change opened in Dubai last November 29. The session started on a positive note after all parties showed solidarity by agreeing to operationalize the loss and damage fund and funding arrangements. This is one of the actions that affected climate-vulnerable countries like the Philippines have been waiting and fighting for. Hopefully this positive spirit will continue for the rest of the negotiations.

## **THE MANILA TIMES**

### **[\[Opinion\] The future of the UN fund for damages and losses due to climate change](#)**

By: Jaime J. Yambao

The 28th Conference of the Parties (COP28) of the United Nations Framework Agreement on Climate Change began on a positive note with the approval of the establishment of a fund to provide vulnerable developing countries immediate compensation for damages and losses caused by climate change disasters.

## **THE PHILIPPINE STAR**

### **[Philippines supports global renewables pledge at COP28](#)**

By: Gaea Katreena Cabico

The Philippines has signed a pledge to triple the world's renewable energy capacity and double energy efficiency during the COP28 climate talks in Dubai, the Department of Energy said Thursday.

## **CCC IN THE NEWS:**

### **ASIA PACIFIC-UN WOMEN**

#### **[Women's rights and leadership in focus at the Asia-Pacific Climate Week 2023](#)**

By: Trisha Albay

The energy transition must be just and grounded in human rights and gender equality. This was the key message at two side events co-organized by UN Women and the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) at the Asia-Pacific Climate Week (APCW) 2023 in Johor Bahru, Malaysia.

### **MANILA BULLETIN**

#### **[Continuing 'The Way Forward'](#)**

The Way Forward, CNN's highest-ranking and revolutionary talk show, enters its second season with a new crop of fascinating guests who will liven up your Tuesday nights.

**Information and Knowledge Management Division**

## **ABS CBN**

### **DOST showcases disaster mitigation initiatives in COP28 side event**

By: Ariel Rojas

The Department of Science and Technology (DOST), led by Secretary Renato Solidum Jr., hosted a side event at the ongoing 28th Conference of Parties (COP28) in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

The side event, held on December 1, highlighted science and technology interventions (STI) for disaster mitigation.

Two of the department's multi-sectoral collaboration disaster risk reduction (DRR) works were presented, namely, the impact-based forecasting and early warning system, and the GeoRisk Philippines (GeoRisk PH) Initiative.

“One emerging cross-cutting priority is digital transformation. With the frequent experiences of the Philippines to disasters and the imminent threats of climate change, there is a need for robust scientific data that allows us to prevent, adapt, and mitigate. Through data and governance, we change the Filipino narrative of resilience,” said Solidum.

The Multi-Hazard Impact-Based Forecasting and Early Warning System for the Philippines Project, funded by the Green Climate Fund, is an initiative to transition from traditional weather forecasting to a more practical and actionable multi-hazard impact-based forecasting and early warning system. PAGASA launched the project in April.

Highlighting the impacts, instead of hazards such as floods, landslides, severe winds, and storm surge, the initiative aims to be more people-focused, allowing enhanced understanding of risks.

“By envisioning the potential disaster risks not just for their community but also for their families and themselves as individuals, people are empowered to make more informed and proactive decisions,” PAGASA climate division head Thelma Cinco explained.

On the other hand, GeoRisk PH is an online resource that shows hazards, exposure, and other risk information necessary for disaster response planning and preparation. Various stakeholders including individuals, communities, private sector, civil society organizations, local governments, and national agencies can access and take advantage of the platform.

Various geospatial information and tools such as hazard maps, risk assessments, early warning systems, and decision support tools are available in its six platforms, including the HazardHunterPH, GeoAnalyticsPH, GeoMapperPH, Map and Feature Services, 3D Earth Risk, and Plan SmartPH.

An example of GeoRiskPH application is the calculation of population exposed to tsunami risk, possible tsunami heights based on different earthquake magnitude, and the corresponding affected population, Mabelle Cahulogan of Phivolcs showed in a presentation.

The projects are part of DOST's research agenda, which hopes to bolster local research and development in the fields of climate change, disaster response, and sustainable development.

“We believe that through STI, resilience is possible, and that Filipinos can come out as disaster victors, not disaster victims,” Solidum said.

## **BUSINESS MIRROR**

### **[PHL in COP28: Climate crisis needs action now](#)**

By: Jonathan L. Mayuga

The Philippines is pushing to accelerate climate financing of gender-responsive and nature-based solutions to address climate change and biodiversity loss at the ongoing 28th Conference of Parties (COP) Meeting in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

Climate finance is a key enabler to advance the understanding and implementation of nature-based solutions in the Philippines, DENR Undersecretary for Finance, Information Systems and Climate Change Analiza Rebuleta-Teh said in a statement.

As one of the countries most affected by climate change, the Philippines advocates a demand-driven and needs-based financing through a blended approach of grants, investments, and subsidies.

“The Philippines is pushing for accelerating climate finance. To be able to do that, we need to collaborate—the government, all countries, private sector, and philanthropic organizations—and really identify how we can achieve much-needed resources to implement nature-based solutions on the ground,” said Teh during a side event entitled “Reducing the climate finance gap with gender-responsive Nature-based Solution.” held at the Philippine Pavilion last December 4.

Nature-based solutions are approaches that employ natural processes or systems to solve societal problems in a sustainable manner. These may include reforestation initiatives, mangrove restoration projects, sustainable agricultural methods, and the creation of green infrastructure such as urban parks.

According to the World Bank, nature-based solutions can provide up to 37 percent of the emission reductions the world needs by 2030 to keep global temperature increases under 2 degrees Celsius.

Nature-based solutions also aid in the fulfillment of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, yet have not been sufficiently adopted, implemented, or financed.

“We should acknowledge that the purpose of nature-based solutions is to deliver affordable and scalable actions at the community level to fight against climate change,” added Teh added.

The DENR official also noted that aside from financing, implementing projects on nature-based solutions for the country should be planned through the lens of disaster



preparedness, so that these can significantly contribute to building resilience, mitigating risks, and adapting to the impacts of climate change.

“Aside from the financing barrier, we also need to address the governance barrier. While several initiatives mainstream gender in climate financing mechanisms, the challenge is how we leverage gender equity in climate financing by prioritizing adaptation and mitigation measures or projects that would build maximum co-benefits to the poor and other vulnerable sectors including women.”

As women constitute the majority of the world’s poor and are known to rely more on natural resources for their livelihood, they are more vulnerable to the effects of climate change than men.

Teh said addressing the knowledge gap is also a must, pointing out that some communities still implement food system practices that can actually harm the ecosystem and the habitat.

“There are several innovations and technologies that would need our communities to be capacitated to be informed so we need to address those gaps to accelerate climate finance.”

Climate finance is one of the major themes in COP 28. According to Article 9 of the Paris Agreement, developed nations are required to fulfill their prior commitments under the Convention by giving developing states financial support for their efforts to mitigate climate change and adapt to it. In addition, voluntary extension or maintenance of such support is recommended upon other Parties.

Developments in advancing nature-based solutions in the country have already made progress. In the forthcoming National Adaptation Plan and the Nationally-Determined Contribution Implementation Plan, various sectors and innovative practices supporting nature-based solutions are covered and promoted as means to secure food supply, sustain livelihoods, and restore the natural assets. The DENR also has existing partnerships with the private sector such as the Marubeni Philippines Corporation, Prime Infra, and Shell Pilipinas Corporation to reforest vast hectares of lands in the country to protect the habitats and also serve as carbon mitigation projects. The Philippines is also in the process of formulating the blue economy roadmap and has already issued guidelines on carbon accounting, verification, and certification system of Forest Carbon Projects as per DENR Administrative Order No. 2021-43.

**CNN**

## [Controversy hangs over climate talks as countries weigh whether to ditch fossil fuels](#)

By: Angela Dewan

The first week of the COP28 climate talks has come to an end not with the euphoria of the first days of breakthrough announcements, but with growing anxiety about whether the world will do anything about the main cause of the climate crisis: fossil fuels.

The trade-show-like pavilions — where countries have for days been touting everything from zero-carbon shipping to nuclear fusion energy — are slowly starting to empty. One European nation’s pavilion had just three staff members left late Wednesday morning, all rushing out to catch a flight home. Another representing climate vulnerable states had its lights switched off, no one at all inside.

The summit’s glamorous early days are over. What’s left now is the tedious, hard work between countries’ negotiators who are sorting the thorny issue of what to do about fossil fuels — pursuing what could potentially be the most ambitious COP outcome in years.

But journalists, delegates and civil society groups are still talking about the summit’s president, whose recent remarks cast a shadow over the negotiations.

Comments from Sultan Al Jaber that came to light on Sunday sent shockwaves through Expo City in Dubai: In a late-November panel discussion, he said there is “no science” behind the demand to phase out fossil fuel to keep global warming below 1.5 degrees Celsius – the goal of the Paris climate agreement. Al Jaber, who is also an oil executive, fiercely defended his commitment to climate science the next day, and said phasing out fossil fuels is “inevitable” and “essential.”

Days later, UN climate chief Simon Steill was asked by a reporter about Al Jaber during a news conference Wednesday, but refused to be drawn on the controversy, saying his focus was now on the summit’s critical negotiations.

US climate envoy John Kerry fended off similar inquiries. Kerry has publicly supported Al Jaber’s COP presidency several times, but chose not to wade into it at a press conference Wednesday. He had earlier told POLITICO that Al Jaber’s remarks perhaps “came out the wrong way” and could use a “clarification.”

Getting climate action on the same page as the science has never been more urgent; 2023 will officially be the hottest year on record, and even scientists are expressing

alarm that the climate impacts they're seeing are outpacing their predictions. The planet's average temperature this year is on track to be around 1.4 degrees above pre-industrial levels — just a hair below the Paris Agreement's threshold.

The impacts of the climate crisis weigh heavily on attendees at the talks — but there are now concerns among civil society groups and some delegates that Al Jaber's remarks may bleed into the negotiations themselves.

"The whole COP has been a conflict of interest," said Isabel Rutkowski from Germany, part of the European Youth Forum. "It's frustrating because the science is pretty clear, and you have a president for COP who is not following science. It's crazy."

A 'frustrating' distraction

Whether Al Jaber's comments will have an impact on final language around fossil fuels is yet to be seen, but countries are deeply divided over the issue.

The latest draft of the summit's key agreement included several options: One called for a phase-out of fossil fuels — the language widely supported by most climate scientists. Another called for a phase-down of fossil fuels, which is weaker language and leaves the door open for a future with more planet-warming pollution. Another option was to omit language on fossil fuels altogether.

The Mexican delegation is supporting a phase-down of fossil fuels, Benjamín Murguía, a technical advisor to Mexican negotiators, told CNN, given the difficulties of getting a "phase-out" through the country's parliament back home. The delegation doesn't disagree with all of Al Jaber's comments, but Murguía said it finds the controversies unhelpful.

"It's frustrating," said Murguía, who wanted to see more progress and "action" and fewer distractions.

"Mexico is a highly vulnerable country and we're facing that as our own fight," he said, pointing to Hurricane Otis, which killed dozens of people and tore through coastal cities. "We're trying to rebuild Acapulco now."

Reaching consensus on fossil fuels was always going to be a tough fight. The UN's Stiell said Wednesday that there was a "spectrum of positions" on the issue among the nations at the summit.

Two sources who were in the room for a late-night drafting session told CNN the US, China and Saudi Arabia all requested a large number of changes to the draft before it

was published. Those countries' negotiators were told to "take a scalpel" and be surgical with the text.

A delegate from the Philippines, which represents the G77 nations — a coalition of developing countries — described the US as taking a "broadsword" to the agreement, with nearly 200 edits or comments, the sources said.

Some of India's delegates expressed reservations on phasing out fossil fuels, according to the sources, but the country has previously supported a phase-down.

CNN is reaching out to the US, China, Saudi Arabia and India.

Al Jaber's influence over talks may become clearer next week, when ministers and senior officials join other delegates and discuss this language openly in public sessions, said Tom Evans, a policy advisor in climate diplomacy and geopolitics for the E3G climate consultancy.

And the controversy could, ironically, bring positive outcomes, he said.

"The fact that we have had so much scrutiny on the fossil fuel industry and on the comments on the fossil fuel transition is actually, maybe helpful in putting them under the spotlight and saying, 'If things do go south, we'll be pointing at the UAE,'" Evans said.

He cautioned that there were several other countries that were blocking progress on including a fossil fuel phase-out, and that failure in that regard wouldn't solely be the UAE's doing.

"But, we do see that pressure now playing into the discussions, constructively," he said.

## **GMA**

### **[ADB OKs \\$200M loan for high-quality, climate resilient infra for PH](#)**

By: Ted Cordero

Manila-based multilateral lender Asian Development Bank (ADB) has green-lit a \$200-million loan for the Philippines to support the country's preparation for high-quality and climate-resilient infrastructure projects.

In a statement on Friday, the ADB said the technical assistance loan financing for the ongoing Infrastructure Preparation and Innovation Facility (IPIF) will further support the Philippine government in preparing "high quality, inclusive, climate-resilient, and low-carbon public infrastructure to boost economic growth and improve Filipinos' access to jobs, markets, and public services such as education and health care."

The additional \$200-million loan for the IPIF is a follow-on of the initial \$100-million loan approved by the lender in 2017 to help the government prepare flagship infrastructure projects such as railways, roads, bridges, and flood protection facilities.

Moreover, the additional financing would also support the preparation of complex and critical climate-resilient road, bridge, transport, and flood risk management projects identified by the government as flagship projects.

The ADB said the latest IPIF loan will help accelerate early project implementation through feasibility studies and detailed engineering design that embeds climate-resilient features to support the Philippines in achieving its climate commitments and national adaptation priorities.

"The Philippines has raised its public infrastructure spending in recent years to steer the economy toward a sustainable, high-growth path," said ADB Senior Transport Specialist Daisuke Mizusawa.

"With this additional financing, we aim to help the government scale up the scope of its investments, further improve the readiness and quality of public infrastructure projects, and strengthen public investment management systems," said Mizusawa.

The lender said it will assist in building up the capacity of implementing agencies such as the Department of Transportation (DOTr) and the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) to implement large and complex infrastructure projects.

Apart from the loan, the Manila-based multilateral bank will extend a \$1.5-million technical assistance grant to support the strengthening of regulations and policies and enhance investment planning for low-carbon and climate-resilient infrastructure, and the development of frameworks and methodologies to consistently identify and mitigate climate risks in infrastructure projects.

The ADB said previous support under its IPIF has helped in the preparation of more than \$40 billion worth of ongoing and planned infrastructure investments, exceeding initial estimates.

These investments were financed by ADB, other development partners, and the government, according to the lender.

The lender added that its support for infrastructure development in the Philippines has steadily grown since 2018, and now accounts for almost 60% of ADB's total portfolio in the country.

The ADB has so far committed financing of \$8.4 billion for transport projects, including the Malolos Clark Railway Project and the South Commuter Railway Project, which are part of the North–South Commuter Railway system connecting Metro Manila to nearby northern and southern provinces.

These projects, along with other major bridge and public transport projects, are collectively expected to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 497,866 tons per year, the lender said.

The bank said it has also supported the preparation of about \$1.3 billion worth of projects that aim to reduce flood risks and enable climate change adaptation in major and principal river basins, including the Integrated Flood Resilience and Adaptation Project (Phase 1).

## MANILA STANDARD

### [‘Ecocide’: How war and climate change are often linked](#)

The link between climate change and war has been a running theme at COP28, highlighting how many countries suffer from both deadly conflict and environmental disasters.

At the UN climate talks in Dubai, war-torn Gaza, Yemen, Syria and Ukraine and have made their voices heard, complaining about the environmental impact of constant fighting.

“Ecocide,” read a slogan in Ukraine’s pavilion, which was covered with posters detailing the environmental impacts of Russia’s invasion.

A display showed the remaining half of a house, one of many hit by the destruction of the Kakhovka dam in June. Russia and Ukraine have traded blame for the disaster.

The other side of the story is how climate destabilisation and a scramble for resources can push climate-vulnerable countries into war.

Seventy percent of the most climate-vulnerable countries are also among the weakest politically and economically, according to the World Bank.

In Yemen, a parched country on the southern fringe of the Arabian Peninsula, a grinding eight-year civil war has increased pressure on diminishing water supplies, Yemeni Minister of Water and Environment Tawfiq Al-Sharjabi told AFP.

“Conflicts contribute a lot to increasing the suffering of citizens through their impact on environmental resources in general and water resources in particular,” he said.

South Sudan President Salva Kiir Mayardit told world leaders gathering at the start of COP28 that many of his people had been displaced by fighting over water.

“Peace and security are clearly affected as a result of climate change,” he said on Saturday, wearing his trademark black cowboy hat.

Gaza: ‘nothing left’

At the Palestinian pavilion, the first one ever at a COP, a presentation on the environmental impact of Israel’s occupation was broadcast on a big screen.

“Climate rights: on the other side,” read a slogan on the wall, suggesting that Israel defends its climate while violating the environmental rights of Palestinians living in Gaza and the West Bank.

Hadeel Ikhmais, a climate expert with the Palestinian Authority, told AFP that Israeli bombardments in Gaza have destroyed desalination plants, waste-water treatment facilities, and water wells.

“Plans to combat climate change were drawn up based on what was on the ground,” but since the start of the Israel-Hamas war on October 7, “there is nothing left”, she said.

Robert Mardini, head of the International Committee of the Red Cross, said his organisation’s climate-related projects in Gaza have all been halted.

“The Gaza Strip is a place where dwindling water resources, reduced quality of water and unpredictable weather events are already a challenge,” he told AFP.

“Some small projects the ICRC had been supporting over the past years really helped the communities cope with the consequences of climate change,” he said, adding that “unfortunately, they are now halted”.

Gideon Behar, Israel’s Special Envoy for Climate Change and Sustainability, said at a side event that “one should differentiate between geopolitical issues and the climate issues.”

“In a place like COP we should make our utmost to concentrate on the climate crisis and to deal with geopolitical issues in other arenas.”

## Fire and floods

After nearly two years of war in Ukraine, experts say the environmental damage will affect generations to come.

As well as the Kakhovka dam disaster, which caused massive, deadly flooding, the conflict has generated about 150 million tons of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, mostly from fuel and fires, a deputy Ukrainian minister said this week, citing a study by the Initiative on GHG Accounting of War.

Nearly 30 percent of Ukraine’s forest zones and about one-fifth of its natural parks have been affected by the war, said Ruslan Strilets, minister of environmental protection and natural resources.



COP28 became the first of the UN's Conference of the Parties to hold a thematic day dedicated to peace, drawing a link between war and climate change, and urging more funding for the most troubled countries.

Libya, Yemen and Syria, all territorially contested states gripped by war, are mostly locked out of climate finance because they don't meet the requirements set by donors at multilateral institutions.

All have weak central governments, and with a high risk that aid money will end up in the hands of militants, many donors stay away.

## NIKKEI ASIA

### Fossil fuel phaseout up for debate at COP28 ministerial talks

By: Kazunari Hanawa

Negotiators at the COP 28 climate summit will tackle the contentious question of whether and how to end the use of fossil fuels at ministerial sessions starting Friday, an issue that pits advanced nations against emerging economies.

The draft text of the "global stocktake" agreement released Tuesday offers three options for a transition from fossil fuels: an "orderly and just" phaseout, "accelerating efforts" toward a phaseout and "rapidly reducing" their use, and leaving it out of the final version entirely.

The text states explicitly that limiting global temperature rise to 1.5 C above preindustrial averages, the goal set in the 2015 Paris accord, will require slashing emissions by 60% from 2019 levels by 2035.

A steep cut in fossil fuel usage is essential to meeting that goal. The possibility of a phaseout was discussed last year, and though it was left out of that agreement, industrialized countries advocated vocally for strong action on this front.

The proposed phaseout language in this year's text is in line with the views of the U.S. and Europe. The "orderly and just" option reflects consideration for the reluctance of emerging countries.

If developing economies shut down coal-fired power plants, they will need assistance with jobs for workers and securing alternative electricity sources as they transition to cleaner forms of energy. These countries have been pushing hard for financial and technical support for decarbonization from their industrialized counterparts.

Developed nations seek to hint at such support by adding the word "just," in hopes of bringing emerging countries on board.

Saudi Arabia, whose abundant oil resources fund the government, has said it will not agree to fossil fuels being singled out in the text, and has been joined on this by China and Russia.

India, which is adopting renewables at a breakneck pace but still relies heavily on coal, also opposes a phaseout. Although it has taken steps toward decarbonization by pausing construction of new coal plants, it still sees fossil fuels as a necessity in balancing climate fight with economic growth.

The draft also includes an option for a "rapid phaseout of unabated coal power," or coal without measures to curb the emissions it generates, this decade.

Japan is not entirely in step with the U.S. and Europe on coal, stressing the role of it and other fossil fuels in maintaining a stable electricity supply. Meanwhile, the United Arab Emirates and other Middle Eastern countries, which produce mainly oil and gas, are seen as less resistant to the idea of scrapping coal.

Countries also hope to enshrine a target of tripling renewable energy capacity by 2030 in the agreement. A total of 118 countries signed on to this pledge Saturday.

The United Nations has warned that global warming will shoot past 2 C, let alone the 1.5 C target, if greenhouse gas emissions continue to rise at the current pace. Much of the world is already seeing serious damage from drought and heat waves, and Antarctic sea ice has dropped to record lows.

COP28 participants have agreed on a framework for a new "loss and damage" fund to help developing countries harmed by climate change, under the umbrella of the World Bank. Industrialized countries will be urged to contribute public and private money, and emerging economies will be encouraged to pay in voluntarily.

## PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

### COP28: Showdown on climate finance, future of fossil fuels

By: Imelda Abaño

The United Nations climate summit reaches the halfway mark with wealthy nations making voluntary climate cash pledges and investments, while their representatives negotiated behind closed doors on tricky issues, such as what to do about fossil fuels and how to channel hundreds of billions of dollars in climate finance to developing countries.

With a record 97,372 delegates from 195 countries at the 28th Conference of Parties (COP28) climate summit, including more than 240 from the Philippines, this is potentially the largest in its history. But some 2,456 fossil fuel lobbyists have also been granted access to the summit.

The two-week meeting in the oil-rich United Arab Emirates started with strong appeals from world leaders for greater efforts to curb greenhouse gas emissions and help poor nations adapt to the changing climate.

“We have been pushing for the operationalization of the loss and damage fund and in terms of meeting our targets, we are on our way in maintaining but still we hope to reduce our own emissions,” said Environment Secretary Maria Antonia Yulo Loyzaga, head of the Philippine delegation to COP28.

“The Philippines [will] need to revisit our long-term climate development plan and that is the discussion in the coming year,” she said.

The Philippines put forward to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change its “Nationally Determined Contributions,” or a long-term strategy to combat climate change: a 75-percent target to reduce emissions from 2020 to 2030 in the agriculture, waste, industry, transport, and energy sectors.

At COP28, the European Union announced that the Philippines has been added to the official list of countries supporting a pledge to triple renewable energy and double energy efficiency by 2030 through its Global Pledge on Renewables and Energy Efficiency, making the list to 125 countries so far that signed the pledge.

#### Climate investments

While finance continues to be the focus in a multitude of meetings at COP28 and with wealthy countries still to fulfill the \$100-billion climate finance goal, Loyzaga said the Philippines was being aggressive in investing in clean energy in the power grid and

tapping the private sector to advance the country's agenda in transitioning to renewable energy.

"The demands and urgency of climate change requires us to be agile, adaptive, and responsive. The private sector has resources that have not yet been fully made available to the vulnerable. So we are going to get these resources in order to survive in terms of funding and innovations," Loyzaga said.

Since the start of the climate summit here, the Philippine government has been showcasing its adaptation and mitigation measures, including discussions with the business sector, international lending agencies, and governments.

Some of the government's investments are in agro-solar farms, offshore wind projects, and deploying other new technologies that aim to help the country transition to low-carbon energy.

As of 2023, the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) said the country hit the P1-trillion, or \$18.2-billion, mark in investment approvals from three new offshore wind projects.

This brings the total investment approvals of renewable energy to almost P900 billion, or 90 percent, of the \$18.2 billion that the DTI approved in the Board of Investments.

#### Retire coal-fired plants

DTI's executive director for industry development services Corazon Halili-Dichosa said the amount reflected a 187-percent increase from last year, or P742 billion, accounted for by wind energy projects. "So we are getting more foreign investors very interested in the renewable energy market of the Philippines," Halili-Dichosa said.

While the Asian Development Bank (ADB) has announced that it will program \$10 billion in climate finance for the Philippines, between 2024 and 2029, ADB president Masatsugu Asakawa urged the Philippines to retire old and existing coal power plants as part of the country's shift to renewable energy sources.

"There are old and operating coal plants in the Philippines. There are many and they must retire and if possible they must realize a smooth transition from a renewable energy," Asakawa said. "So I encourage the Philippines to eliminate its old coal plant operations to help projects in the country promote climate and environmental sustainability goals."

Asakawa was referring to ADB's Energy Transition Mechanism for Indonesia, Vietnam, and the Philippines, which aims to use concessional and commercial capital to

accelerate the retirement or repurposing of fossil fuel power plants and replace them with clean energy alternatives.

Asked to comment on ADB's offer, Loygaza said the government had yet to discuss this matter.

"The Philippines will have to do what it needs to do in order to afford that transition, and so one of the ways to do it is basically to have thorough discussions on this. We need to be able to afford it, and those are our limitations," Loyzaga told the Inquirer. "We go by the country's energy priorities outlined by Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla and support that fully. And hopefully, ADB will see that that's the rational way for the Philippines," she said, adding that the Philippines aims to meet its renewable energy target by at least 35 percent by 2030 and 50 percent by 2040.

Under the Marcos administration, priorities include developing indigenous sources and possibly adopting a nuclear strategy in the energy mix.

#### Solutions-driven

Climate activists, on the other hand, staged several small protests demanding an end to the use of fossil fuel and for wealthy countries to help poor countries shift to clean energy.

"Just energy transition is still in its infancy in the Philippines. Yet this must be accelerated if our country aims to achieve long-term security, while achieving climate and sustainable development goals," said John Leo Algo, national coordinator of Aksyon Klima, the Philippines' largest civil society network for climate action.

Algo said the lack of transparency and meaningful engagement with civil society groups also raised concern over the positions carried by the Philippine delegation at the COP28. "The Philippine government wants a solutions-driven approach for this year's COP, and it is clear that the only solution to the climate crisis is a total phaseout of fossil fuels," said Krishna Ariola, founder of Hope for Youth.

"Any future that includes fossil fuels is not solutions-driven, and continues to put the future of our generation on the line in exchange for profit of the already wealthy," she said.

## Net zero is not the answer to climate change

The spectacle of another annual climate conference is ongoing in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) until Dec. 12. Like Kabuki theater, performative set pieces lead from one to the other: politicians and celebrities arrive by private jets; speakers predict imminent doom; hectoring nongovernmental organizations cast blame; political negotiations become fraught and inevitably go overtime; and finally: the signing of a new agreement that participants hope and pretend will make a difference.

This circus has been repeated since the 1990s. Despite 27 previous conferences with iterations of ominous speeches and bold promises, global emissions have inexorably increased, punctuated just once, by the economic shutdown of COVID-19. This year is likely to see higher emissions than ever before.

Almost every rich country preaches far more than it delivers. This is exemplified by the European Union, which has promised more than anyone else, yet—when forced by Russia’s barbaric invasion of Ukraine to cut off gas imports—went looking in Africa for more oil, gas, and coal. Meanwhile, almost every poor country understandably prioritizes prosperity, which means abundant, cheap, and reliable energy—which still means fossil fuels.

Underpinning the climate summit farce is one big lie repeated over and over: that green energy is on the precipice of replacing fossil fuels in every aspect of our lives. This exaggeration is today championed by the International Energy Agency, which has turned from an impartial arbiter of energy data to the proponent of the far-fetched prediction that fossil fuels will peak within just seven years.

The claim ignores the fact that any transition away from fossil fuels is occurring only with enormous taxpayer-funded subsidies. And while major energy players like Exxon Mobil and Chevron Corp. are moving back to investment in fossil fuel, big bets on green energy have failed spectacularly. Over the past 15 years, alternative energy stocks have plummeted in value, thus sending the pensions of ordinary workers tumbling due to virtue signaling pension companies while general stocks have increased more than four-fold.

What won’t be acknowledged in the UAE—because it has never been acknowledged at a global climate summit—is the awkward reality that while climate change has real costs, climate policy does, too.

In most public conversations, climate change costs are vastly exaggerated. Just consider how every heat wave is depicted as an end-of-the-world, cataclysmic killer,

while the far greater reductions in deaths from warmer winters pass without being remarked on. Yet the costs of climate policy are bizarrely ignored.

Analyzing the balance between climate and policy costs has been at the heart of the study of climate change economics for more than three decades. Renowned economist William Nordhaus is the only climate change economist recognized with a Nobel prize. His research shows that we should absolutely do something about climate change: Early cuts in fossil fuel emissions are cheap and will reduce the most dangerous temperature rises. But his work also shows that highly ambitious carbon reductions will be a bad deal, with phenomenally high costs and low additional benefits.

Climate activists, who insist we should listen to the science, have consistently ignored this research and encouraged rich world leaders to make ever-greater climate promises. Many leaders have even gone so far as to promise net-zero carbon emissions by 2050.

Despite this likely being the single costliest policy ever promised by world leaders, it was made without a single peer-reviewed estimate of the full costs. Earlier this year, a special issue of *Climate Change Economics* made the first such analyses. It shows that even with very generous assumptions, the benefits of pursuing net zero will just slowly inch upwards over the century. By mid-century, the benefits—meaning the avoided costs from climate change—could reach about \$1 trillion each year.

But the costs would be much, much higher. Three different modeled approaches show far higher costs than benefits for every year throughout the 21st century and far into the next. By 2050, the annual costs of the policy range between \$10 and \$43 trillion. That's 4 to 18 percent of global GDP. Consider that the total tax intake of all governments across the world today is about 15 percent of global GDP—and politicians would potentially have us spend more than that. Across the century, the benefit is 1.4 percent of global GDP while the cost averages out at 8.6 percent of global GDP. Every dollar in cost delivers perhaps 16 cents of climate benefits. Clearly, this is an atrocious use of money.

The only thing that could avoid this summit being a retread of 27 other failures is if politicians acknowledge the real cost of net zero policy—and instead of making more carbon cut promises, vow to dramatically increase green energy research and development.

This would help innovate the price of low-carbon energy below that of fossil fuels so every country in the world will want to make the switch. Instead of subsidizing today's still-inefficient technology and trying to brute force a transition by pushing up the price of fossil fuels, we need to make green technologies genuinely cheaper.



Sadly, that seems a far-fetched hope. Instead, this climate summit looks set to be another wasted opportunity producing yet more hot air.

## POLITIKO

### [Philippines Joins Blue Carbon Action Partnership To Enhance Coastal Resilience](#)

By: Prince Golez

The Philippines has joined the Blue Carbon Action Partnership (BCAP) of the World Economic Forum (WEF) to solidify the government's pursuit of a green and blue socio-economic agenda.

The partnership agreement signed between Environment Secretary Maria Antonia Yulo Loyzaga and WEF Center for Nature and Climate managing director Neo Gim Huay on December 3 on the sidelines of the 28th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties in Dubai aims to strengthen coastal ecosystems, boost blue carbon conservation and mitigate climate change.

"This effort is supported by the Government of the United Kingdom through the UK Blue Planet Fund, specifically the Climate and Ocean Adaptation and Sustainable Transition," the Department of Environment and Natural Resource (DENR) said in a news release.

This collaboration, according to the DENR, effectively creates the National Blue Carbon Action Partnership (NBCAP) and will bring support from WEF for the government to work with businesses, communities and civil society organizations to restore, conserve and sustainably manage coastal ecosystems.

"The Philippines, endowed with rich biodiversity and extensive coastlines, is home to vast blue carbon ecosystems. We look forward to working with the Blue Carbon Action Partnership to facilitate the inclusive, whole-of-society approach to developing a shared ambition for blue carbon, community resilience, inclusive development and unlocking the Philippines' potential to provide nature-based climate solutions for the rest of the world whilst supporting our programs for protected areas and preparing the country for participating in the new blue economy," said Loyzaga.

The NBCAP will contribute to the following strategic pillars:

- \*convene communities and moderate multilateral conversations relevant to structuring particularly multilateral government structure, and groups working on impact;

- \*generate new insights and roadmaps to support the creation of National blue carbon baseline analysis, national blue carbon roadmap, and national blue carbon finance roadmap; and

\*catalyze strategic action to support the implementation of the blue carbon and finance roadmaps, and global collaborations with complementary initiatives.

“We wish to unlock the Philippines’ potential to provide nature-based climate solutions not just for ourselves but for the rest of the world while supporting our programs on protected areas, and preparing our country for participating in the new blue economy,” the secretary said.

“The role of the private sector cannot be diminished. And this would be a call for the private sector to go beyond (environmental, social, and governance), and to integrate biodiversity protection and climate action into core business value cycles, instead of (corporate social responsibility) options,” she added.

Blue carbon is the carbon stored in coastal and marine ecosystems such as mangroves, seagrasses, and marshes.

Coastal ecosystems absorb and store enormous amounts of blue carbon from the atmosphere and oceans, helping to solve climate change.

The Philippines is the second country to partner with the BCAP after Indonesia.

## SUNSTAR

### Climate emergency

By: Rox Peña

The 28th meeting of the Conference of Parties (COP-28) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change opened in Dubai last November 29. The session started on a positive note after all parties showed solidarity by agreeing to operationalize the loss and damage fund and funding arrangements. This is one of the actions that affected climate-vulnerable countries like the Philippines have been waiting and fighting for. Hopefully this positive spirit will continue for the rest of the negotiations.

Two days before COP-28, the House of Representatives approved on third and final reading House Bill No. 9084 entitled “Climate Change Resilience Act” which would declare a climate change emergency in the country and create a program to mitigate and address its effects.

The bill has several components. It includes the open sharing of data amongst the national government agencies, local government units (LGUs), civil society organizations (CSOs), academe, and the private sector. Included too is probabilistic Climate Risk Assessments considering all possible scenarios, likelihood and inherent uncertainties, associated impacts of climate change, and the climate change projections in extremes.

Another component is the multi-level national educational plan on climate resilience from

primary to tertiary levels of the education system, including the country’s research and development program. The children and youth shall be provided with climate education and green skills and included in all climate-related decisions and in all national, regional and international climate negotiations and decisions.

The bill requires that the link between health and climate change be reflected in decision making at all levels of governance. It also mandates that the right to a safe, clean, healthy, and sustainable environment shall be recognized and policies and processes to safeguard this right shall be adopted.

The proposed law also provides for increasing investment in climate change adaptation and resilience in critical services, such as water, sanitation and hygiene systems, health, and education. This is to protect the children, communities, and the most vulnerable from the worst impacts of climate change.

The last component calls for ecosystem protection strategies to be pursued. This includes insurance and financing, innovations and information technology, green-grey solutions or infrastructures, nature-based solutions, urban green spaces, and vulnerability assessment by LGUs assisted by the relevant national government agencies.

At the Senate, there are two pending bills which will most likely be consolidated. Senate Bill No. 2027 entitled "Climate Change Emergency Declaration Act" filed on March 21, 2023 by Senator JV Ejercito and Senate Bill No. 650 with the same title filed by on July 14, 2022 by Senator Imee Marcos. Both are pending at the committee levels.

There is still a long way to go before the proposed law will be passed. Meanwhile, let's hope that there will be positive developments in the COP 28 before it ends on December 12.

## THE MANILA TIMES

### [\[Opinion\] The future of the UN fund for damages and losses due to climate change](#)

By: Jaime J. Yambao

The 28th Conference of the Parties (COP28) of the United Nations Framework Agreement on Climate Change began on a positive note with the approval of the establishment of a fund to provide vulnerable developing countries immediate compensation for damages and losses caused by climate change disasters.

The jubilation of the Philippines and other countries that have been in the forefront of the advocacy for such a fund must have been tempered down by the paucity of countries that pledged contributions to the fund, and the wide gap between the total amount pledged and the projected amount needed by vulnerable countries. With just a few days remaining of the COP28, only these countries have made pledges: the United States (\$175 million), Germany (\$100 million), the United Arab Emirates (UAE) (\$100 million), the United Kingdom (\$50.5 million) and Japan (\$10 million). The total of \$425.5 million is obviously a long way from the needed \$100 billion.

Still to be heard from are the No. 1 gas emitter, China, and the No. 1 and No. 2 producers of fossil fuels, Saudi Arabia and Russia. Ditto for the rest of the European Union that before the sanctions on Russia for President Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine were leading customers of Russian oil and natural gas, and ergo significant emitters of greenhouse gas emissions.

To avail and benefit from the fund, the Philippines may be competing with a great and growing number of countries vulnerable to the widening range of climate change disasters, including flooding, destruction of agriculture, storms, hurricanes, cyclones, landslides, drought, wildfires, desertification and famine. The Philippines was and remains at the top of the countries vulnerable to the effects of frequent, highly destructive typhoons and fast-rising sea levels.

In these categories of vulnerabilities, the Philippines is joined by 70 other countries. It is nowhere among the 10 most vulnerable in the more comprehensive list of disasters. (In this more general category are Somalia, Syria, Pakistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Afghanistan, Yemen, Chad, South Sudan, Central African Republic, Niger, Kenya, Ethiopia, and others). Since Super Typhoon "Yolanda" (Haiyan) in the Philippines, each year has brought new countries to the list of climate change-vulnerable.

The need for the fund is already existent, nay, urgent. The world is in a climate crisis because the emission of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere has been increasing fast and, consequently, the globe is warming up fast, too.

If trends continue, the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has figured that the peak will be reached earlier than 2050, and the 1-percent Celsius limit to global warming could probably be breached. Vulnerable countries, despite their negligible contribution to the greenhouse gases, have been in mortal danger and will face even greater, nay, unimaginable dangers from that point. With the fast warm-up of the planet, the fast disappearance of the polar ice caps, glaciers and sea ice, sea levels have risen fast.

In 2022, the global sea level rose by a record-high 4 inches, half in one year alone of the 8 to 9 inches level since 1880. By next year, how much higher will the seas be? How much longer will it be before the Second Great Flood drowns all of poor humanity? The poor will drown but the rich may survive in aircraft carriers.

The last IPCC report inspired the UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres to demand not a reduction but a phaseout of fossil fuels. On its second day, more than half of the 198 countries gathered at COP28, including the United States, the 27 countries of the EU and the more than 70 climate-vulnerable archipelagos, island and small-island states, likewise called for a fossil fuel phaseout

But the discussion afterward was reportedly increasingly divided with the oil-producing countries opposed to a phaseout. Earlier, the world's oil-producing countries were agreeable to reaching zero emissions, including Saudi Arabia, Russia, China and the UAE. Fossil fuels are after all finite resources. Saudi Arabia has prepared for the time its oil reserves will be exhausted and worked at the diversification of the country's economy.

But in COP28, Saudi Arabia openly opposed cuts in the production of fossil fuels. It instead pledged to make the production of fossil fuels cleaner with developing technologies. It will continue to produce fossil fuels until its reserves are exhausted. By the irony of fate, even as the climate change crisis worsens, its oil industry has continued to be lucrative.

How the outcome document of COP28 will turn out may depend on how firm the United States is regarding a phaseout. Although it happened when the presidents belonged to the Republican Party, the US has a history of opposing the phaseout of fossil fuels. The Bush 2 administration left the Kyoto Protocol of 1997 because it was mandating stopping the production of fossil fuels.

The Trump administration believed the man-made climate change emergency was a hoax and pulled the US out of the UN framework agreement altogether. It has been observed that the US language at COP28 has shifted from calling for a phaseout to advocating expediting the development and deployment of relevant technologies such as those geared to capturing carbon emissions. This would bring the US position to that of Arab oil-producing countries suggested by the host country's criticism that there was no science to the phaseout.

A factor that could condition the prospects of the Loss and Damage Fund is the growing insecurity of the world due to the invasion of Ukraine by Russia, the Israel-Hamas war and the growing aggressiveness of China in the South China Sea being added to the border conflicts and civil wars that have by now seemed endemic to Africa. Russia has turned itself into a war economy, announcing the biggest budget for the military ever in its history.

Countries everywhere are allocating more and more of their resources to strengthening their defense establishments. Many would find this development ironic if they knew that much of the climate change crisis can be traced to war and the military. Governments that have been parties to conflicts have failed or refused to report the amounts of weapons, ammunition and vehicles they used in the conflict and that presumably sent up greenhouse gases to the atmosphere.

At the reported urging of the US, the emissions caused by the military have been excluded from climate treaties such as the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreements of 2015. They have been exempted from scrutiny and blame. Recent studies have however shown that even in peacetime, the armed forces top the institutional sources of the emissions. War inevitably entails destruction. Just the early weeks of Putin's invasion of Ukraine resulted in widespread toxic substances choking the atmosphere.

Money is not all that peoples of the developing world need to deal with the climate change crisis. More and more people are forced to desert the places they were born and grew up in because eking a living there has become impossible.

In more resilient countries, internal displacement may be a sufficient solution. But for those lacking in this quality, there is no choice for climate change victims but to migrate to more foreign countries. The increasing flood of refugees due to climate change has caused concern in the international community that there is no international legal instrument directly protecting the human rights of climate change refugees.

Philippine migration offices do not yet pick those people moving overseas for climate change reasons, but it has been reported that some 4 million Filipinos have left the country for those reasons. This we think is more than enough justification for the



Philippines to join in the advocacy for an international convention including climate change victims in the world's definition of a refugee and the human rights guaranteed to him.

## THE PHILIPPINE STAR

### [Philippines supports global renewables pledge at COP28](#)

By: Gaea Katreena Cabico

The Philippines has signed a pledge to triple the world's renewable energy capacity and double energy efficiency during the COP28 climate talks in Dubai, the Department of Energy said Thursday.

The Philippines is among the over 120 countries supporting the European Union-led Global Renewables and Energy Efficiency Pledge.

The energy department said the move is aligned with the government's target of increasing the share of renewables in the country's generation mix to 30% by 2030 and to 50% by 2040.

It added that the pledge is in line with the Philippines' goal of reducing electricity and oil consumption by 10% by 2050.

Abandoning coal, oil and gas for cleaner energies such as solar, wind and hydroelectric is essential if the world is to meet the goal of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius and avoiding the most catastrophic impacts of climate change.

"We are united by our common belief that to respect the 1.5°C goal in the Paris Agreement, we need to phase out fossil fuels. We do that by fast-tracking the clean energy transition, by tripling renewables and doubling energy efficiency," European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said.

The first week of negotiations at COP28 ended Wednesday with countries unable to produce an updated version of a draft agreement that includes language on phasing out planet-warming fossil fuels. However, the document also has an option to leave the issue off the final text.

#### Renewable potential

Center for Energy, Ecology and Development deputy executive director Avril De Torres welcomed the government's move to support the pledge, and urged it to translate this "by ditching coal and gas, and halting any exploration of dangerous technologies like nuclear energy."

"We are a country capable of more than tripling our use of renewable energy," she said.

An analysis commissioned by CEED suggests that the Philippines should end its coal dependency by 2035 and almost entirely phase out gas-fired generation by 2040 to meet the 1.5C goal.

The power generation in the Philippines heavily relies on fossil fuels, with the country generating 60% of its electricity from coal.

According to the analysis, an additional 152 terawatt-hours will be required by 2050 to meet future electricity demand and phase out fossil fuels.

Weaning off fossil fuels and shifting to renewables will reduce electricity cost and generate around one million jobs, the report also found.

“It’s high time for the country to seize that potential,” De Torres said.

Greenpeace Philippines energy transition campaigner Khevin Yu said that the Philippines needs stronger policies that will mandate “urgent and just transition, and an actual energy transition blueprint that is ambitious and reflects leadership that goes beyond mere lip service.”

## CCC IN THE NEWS:

### ASIA PACIFIC-UN WOMEN

#### [Women's rights and leadership in focus at the Asia-Pacific Climate Week 2023](#)

By: Trisha Albay

The energy transition must be just and grounded in human rights and gender equality. This was the key message at two side events co-organized by UN Women and the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) at the Asia-Pacific Climate Week (APCW) 2023 in Johor Bahru, Malaysia.

APCW 2023 provided a platform for policymakers, practitioners, businesses and civil society to exchange on climate solutions, barriers to overcome and opportunities realized in the Asia-Pacific region. Hosted by the Government of Malaysia in the city of Johor Bahru, APCW 2023 took place from 13-17 November 2023.

To address climate change, countries around the world have committed to achieving “net zero” in the first half of this century, as outlined in the Paris Agreement. Net zero means balancing greenhouse gas emissions with their removal, primarily through cutting down emissions to as close to zero as possible. One way to achieve this is to transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy.

The first side event, co-organized with UN Climate Change (UNFCCC), explored the challenges women and marginalized groups face in accessing decentralized renewable energy and ways to ensure they are not left behind.

Tove Goldmann, First Secretary, Regional Development Cooperation Section at the Embassy of Sweden in Bangkok, opened the session by highlighting the importance of multistakeholder collaboration for a just energy transition. Ms Goldmann shared about EmPower: Women for Climate-Resilient Societies, a joint UN Women and UNEP programme that works with governments, communities, women entrepreneurs, civil society, the private sector and other partners with support from the Governments of Sweden and New Zealand.

“Our support should not end after women-led cooperatives and enterprises have access to renewable energy. They cannot fully harness its benefits without capacity building support in running and expanding their businesses,” said panelist Toni Madulid, Executive Director at Reboot Philippines, a youth-led organization advocating for a just energy transition.

Joe Mari Francisco, the alternate Gender and Climate Change Focal Point at the Climate Change Commission of the Philippines, raised that there is sometimes a gap between the support provided by development partners and the support needed by communities. Mr Francisco shared the Philippines' initiatives to bridge this gap, such as local government units conducting discussions with communities, including rural women.

The second side event, co-organized with UN Human Rights (OHCHR), discussed the challenges and opportunities to strengthen women's land rights as a cornerstone of climate change solutions.

Despite being the traditional custodians of land, women tend to have less access to resources, protection, decision-making, and leadership, affecting their ability to adapt to the impacts of climate change.

Ili Nadiah Dzulfakar, Chair and Programme Director at Klima Action Malaysia highlighted that women's participation in sustainable land management is crucial to address climate change. Yet, they continue to face security risks when engaging in negotiations and decision-making spaces. Ms Dzulfakar noted that environmental and social safeguards need to be in place to ensure respect for human rights, especially Indigenous Peoples' rights and those of local communities and environmental human rights defenders.

Pasang Dolma Sherpa, Executive Director at the Center for Indigenous Peoples' Research and Development (CIPRED), shed light on the importance of Indigenous Peoples' traditional knowledge, cultural practices and skills on climate change resilience as well as sustainable management of the natural resources, forest, ecosystem and biodiversity.

Insights from the event will support the first global stocktake of global climate action under the Paris Agreement at the UN Climate Change Conference (COP28) in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

## MANILA BULLETIN

### Continuing 'The Way Forward'

The Way Forward, CNN's highest-ranking and revolutionary talk show, enters its second season with a new crop of fascinating guests who will liven up your Tuesday nights.

This season started with interviews from former Western Command (WesCom) head, retired MGen. Juancho Sabban, shared his experiences as one of WesCom's most talked-about commanders because of his encounters with Chinese-led vessels and poachers.

Flag-Officer-in-Command Vice Admiral Toribio Adaci Jr. provided insights into the government's national security stance at the West Philippine Sea, favoring diplomatic channels. Vice-Mayor Beltsazar Alindogan of Kalayaan, Palawan, shared his experience as a civilian government official who helps his people traverse the intricacies of dealing with foreign intrusions while making a living from the seas.

The retired former WESCOM chief, Lt. Gen. Sabban, also opined that oil and gas exploration should now be resumed in the WPS despite the ongoing Sino-Philippines tension in the area.

Sabban specifically mentioned the Recto Bank (International name: Reed Bank), which is said to be rich in oil and gas deposits. The United States Energy Information Administration claimed Reed Bank could hold up to 5.4 billion barrels of oil and 55.1 trillion cubic feet of natural gas.

The Philippine Navy's Flag-Officer-in-Command, on the other hand, called for a "whole-of-government approach" as the best strategy in protecting the country's sovereignty over its territories, especially in the WPS where China has been constantly distressing and water cannoning both Filipino fishermen and the Philippine Coast Guard.

But while recommending the "whole-of-government approach," the Navy Chief also underscored the importance of pursuing the modernization of the Navy and the entire armed forces. He also supported calls for joint military exercises with countries like the United States and Japan.

Kalayaan municipal vice mayor Billy Alindogan also hoped that President Bongbong Marcos Jr.'s administration would make true his promise to build better infrastructure on

Pag-asa Island and the other islets in the Kalayaan Island Group (KIG) to help its residents and the Filipino fisherfolks whose livelihood depends in the area.

Alindogan further said he asked the government for bigger boats to help the fishermen explore the “commercialization” of their fishing industry.

The ever-capable host, Atty. Karen Jimeno will also tackle deeper issues surrounding the blue economy in future episodes with guests such as former NAPOCOR Chairman Guido Delgado, Secretary Robert Borje of the Climate Change Commission, tech wizard Mario Domingo, and Mayor Norman Ong of Rizal, Palawan, among many others.

This season will also feature in-depth discussions on climate change, renewable and non-renewable energy, national security, and technology. The show, produced by the 70-year-old Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement, is part of the organization’s advocacy in highlighting the country as MANA.

Its president, Mr. Edicio de la Torre, coined the term "Maritime and Archipelagic Nation." Apart from the featured experts, the show also presents snippets of fishermen's lives affected by the unwanted intrusions of foreign entities who use bigger, more technologically advanced boats and equipment against their more conventional fishing vessels.

The Way Forward’s second season can be seen on CNN Philippines every Tuesday at 8 p.m. Replays will be announced, and this season can also be viewed on YouTube after the initial telecast.

**=END=**