



NEWS ROUNDUP

12 December 2022 [08:00 am]

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CCC IN THE NEWS:

- Climate Change Commission, UP Resilience Institute partner on disaster risk assessments

BUSINESS MIRROR

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By: Jonathan Mayuga

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By: Kyle Aristophere T. Atienza

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PHILIPPINE President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. will attend the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Summit in the United States in November, according to its ambassador to the US.

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CNN PHILIPPINES

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GMA NEWS ONLINE

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By: Jon Viktor Cabuenas

President Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr. on Sunday evening flew out to Brussels, Belgium to attend the Commemorative Summit between the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the European Union (EU).

MALAYA BUSINESS INSIGHT

[UN agency says economic turmoil, conflicts put global shipping growth at risk](#)

LONDON – The pace of global shipping activity is set to lose steam next year as economic turmoil, conflict in Ukraine and the impact of the pandemic weaken the outlook for trade, UN agency UNCTAD said on Tuesday.

MANILA BULLETIN

[\[Opinion\] Are we food-secure enough to weather global food crisis?](#)

By: William Co

Recently, I was invited as a panelist to a forum on boosting the Philippine agriculture sector and ensuring food security. As someone who is in agribusiness and previously worked as a Philippine agriculture attaché, I have witnessed the highs and lows of our farming and fishery sector. Sadly, for over the past decade or so, our country remains to be food-insecure, we are the most in emerging Asia. In that forum, I was able to share my thoughts on how our nation can achieve food security, which I believe is doable given the right policies and interventions.

[Marcos departs for Belgium, expects a productive trip](#)

By: Betheene Unite

President Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr. departed for Brussels, Belgium Sunday night, Dec.11, to participate in the European Union-Association of Southeast Asian Nations (EU-ASEAN) Business Summit, which he expects to be a productive and meaningful trip.

[PH, South Korea reinforcing strategic partnership on energy investments](#)

By: Myrna M. Velasco

Taking off from a two decade strategic partnership, the Philippines and South Korea are strengthening cooperation and prospective business tie-up on array of energy investments, including electric vehicle (EV) deployments and further rollout of energy efficiency initiatives, foray into innovative technologies like hydrogen development as

the energy sector's fuel of the future, and helping the Philippines on its plan to re-embrace nuclear technology in its power mix.

[Save the environment, minimize or terminate use of plastics](#)

"Plastic pollution seriously endangers the ecosystem, especially bodies of water like rivers that are vital to fishermen's livelihood."

[Zero tariff for imported electric vehicles will help ease global warming, mitigate climate change](#)

All of the major expatriate business organizations in the country — American, Japanese, Korean Australia-New Zealand, and European Union — have issued a call to make the government's planned temporary zero duty privilege on the importation of electric vehicles (EVs) more inclusive by opening it to all countries and for all types of EVs. Initial drafts of the proposed measure reportedly cover only the Philippines' special trading partner countries.

PHILIPPINE INFORMATION AGENCY

[PBBM to push for trade, economy, climate action as he departs for ASEAN-EU summit](#)

By: OPS

MANILA -- President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. departed for Brussels, Belgium on Sunday night, where he is set to push for Philippine priorities, particularly trade, maritime cooperation and climate action at the Association of Southeast Asian Nations-European Union (ASEAN-EU) Summit.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

[Academic sector, vital vs. climate change education: DepEd-DRRMS](#)

By: Stephanie Sevillano

MANILA – The Department of Education (DepEd) said Friday learners, teachers, and other personnel in the education sector may fulfill significant roles in the fight against the effects of climate change.

THE MANILA TIMES

[Agro-solar power farm to rise in General Santos](#)

By: Franz Sumangil

A 150-megawatt (MW) agrovoltaic solar power plant, touted as a "pioneering" renewable energy project in the country, will be built by a foreign-backed homegrown company in General Santos City. Yan Amante, president and chief executive officer of

Embrace Nature Power 1 Corp. (ENPC-1), said they are preparing for the construction of a solar farm and power plant in a 120-hectare property spanning portions of Conel and Mabuhay villages.

[DoE: Future-proofing energy security at 50](#)

By: Dafort Villaseran

THE occasion of the golden, 50th golden anniversary of the Department of Energy (DoE)'s foundation has coincided with the recent push of President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. for the DoE and other related agencies in the energy sector to ensure the sustainability of the country's power needs.

[Private sector investments urged for climate action](#)

By: Bella Cariaso

ENVIRONMENT Secretary Maria Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga is urging the private sector to invest in climate action amid growing uncertainties and mounting financial requirements for climate change adaptation and mitigation.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

[French think tank seeks partnerships with Philippine institutions](#)

By: Kaycee Valmonte

MANILA, Philippines – A French think tank is hoping to work with similar Philippine institutions to produce research work on a range of subjects, such as higher military education, climate change, maritime security, political warfare and information warfare.

[Law for carbon credit systems in Philippines pushed](#)

By: Danessa Rivera

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) is pushing for the creation of a law that will institutionalize carbon credit systems to streamline the country's climate change thrust.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

DAILY TRIBUNE

[Climate Change Commission, UP Resilience Institute partner on disaster risk assessments](#)

By TDT

The Climate Change Commission and the University of the Philippines Resilience Institute recently signed an agreement that is seen to further strengthen their partnership to develop a support mechanism for climate and disaster risk assessments

and to build the capacities of institutional stakeholders at the grassroots, particularly for LGUs.

Information and Knowledge Management Division

BUSINESS MIRROR

Citing economic gains, exec cites PHL readiness for '30×30' target

By: Jonathan Mayuga

The Philippines is ready and able to go for the global “30×30” target as part of its commitment to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), an official of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) said.

Theresa Teñazas, one of the country’s delegates and chief negotiator at the ongoing UN Biodiversity Conference in Montreal, Canada, told the BusinessMirror in a telephone interview that the Philippines, one of the mega-diverse countries in the world but also a biodiversity hotspot, is on track in protecting and conserving its rich biodiversity.

Tenazas, a lawyer, is the officer-in-charge (OIC) division chief of the DENR’s Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB).

“The Philippine delegation is here to negotiate a legally-binding agreement for the preservation of at least 30 percent of the land and ocean on the planet by 2030,” Tenazas told the BusinessMirror.

According to Tanazas, the economic benefits of conserving ‘30×30’ are strong. An independent study prepared by more than 100 economists and experts found that meeting the 30 percent target will generate financial and ecosystem services benefits at least five times the cost.

She added that the Philippines stand to benefit in meeting the “30 x 30” target, being a country besieged by natural calamities. The Philippines receives an average of 20 typhoons every year. It is also vulnerable to climate change-triggered extreme weather events and impacts like drought, storm surge and sea-level rise.

The Philippines is the first member-country in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) to officially support the global target. The latter is one of the goals that will be decided upon at the 15th Conference of the Parties (COP 15), which is referred to as the “Paris Agreement” for nature and people.

The Philippines has recently joined Cambodia, Japan, India, Bhutan, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Papua New Guinea and the Maldives as Asian members of the “High Ambition Coalition (HAC) for Nature and People.”

“As a member of the [HAC], we will definitely support and pursue the 30 x 30, (targets),” Tenazas said.

Co-chaired by Costa Rica, France and the United Kingdom, the HAC is an intergovernmental coalition of more than 100 countries that have committed to championing the “30×30” target.

The HAC eyes to help confront an escalating crisis facing the natural world that threatens up to one million species with extinction within decades.

The Philippines boasts of having a good number of protected and conserved areas in the Asean. It also has 10 Asean Heritage Parks which represents the so-called “cream of the crop” of protected areas in the region.

Establishing protected and conserved areas are among the most effective ways to prevent the destruction of wildlife habitat, which is the biggest driver of biodiversity loss around the world.

The DENR, the state agency mandated to manage the country’s natural wealth, is also required to implement the National Integrated Protected Areas System (Nipas) Act and the Expanded-Nipas, the Philippine Wildlife Act, National Cavies Act, among other environmental laws.

Scientific evidence shows that conserving at least 30 percent of the planet’s land and the ocean is crucial in addressing global biodiversity loss on top of storing carbon, preventing future pandemics, bolstering economic growth, increasing fisheries’ production and advancing Indigenous rights.

With Tenazas are fellow negotiators lawyer Rosette S. Ferrer and Jorace Tupas, DENR Undersecretary Ernesto D. Adobo Jr. is their adviser. Ferrer is also OIC chief of the DENR’s Legal Research and Opinion Division.

[New abnormal: Climate disaster damage 'down' to \\$268 billion](#)

By: Seth Borenstein

This past year has seen a horrific flood that submerged one-third of Pakistan, one of the three costliest US hurricanes on record, devastating droughts in Europe and China, a drought-triggered famine in Africa and deadly heat waves all over.

Yet this wasn't climate change at its worst. With all that death and destruction in 2022, climate-related disaster damages are down from 2021, according to insurance and catastrophe giant Swiss Re. That's the state of climate change in the 2020s that \$268 billion in global disaster costs is a 12% drop from the previous year, where damage passed \$300 billion.

The number of US weather disasters that caused at least \$1 billion in damage is only at 15 through October and will likely end the year with 16 or 17, down from 22 and 20 in the last two years, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. But because of Hurricane Ian, overall damage amounts are probably going to end up in the top three in American history.

Weather disasters, many but not all of them turbocharged by human-caused climate change, are happening so frequently that this year's onslaught, which 20 years ago would have smashed records by far, now in some financial measures seems a bit of a break from recent years.

Welcome to the new abnormal.

"We've almost gotten used to extremes. And this year compared to many years in the past would be considered a pretty intense year, but compared to maybe the most extreme years, like a 2017, 2020 and 2021, it does look like ... a slight adjustment down," said NOAA applied meteorologist and economist Adam Smith, who calculates the billion dollar disasters for the agency. "We're just getting used to it but that's not a good way to move into the future."

Wildfires in the United States weren't as costly this year as the last couple years, but the Western drought was more damaging than previous years, he said. America's billion dollar disasters in 2022 seemed to hit every possible category except winter storms: hurricanes, floods, droughts, wildfires, heat waves, hail storms and even a derecho.

When it comes to 2022's financial damages globally and the United States, Ian, which walloped Florida, was the big dog, even though Pakistan's flooding was more massive and deadly. In terms of just looking at dollars not people, Ian's damages eclipsed the drought-triggered African famine that affected more people. It also overshadowed river levels in China and Europe that dropped to levels so low it caused power and industrial problems and the heat waves in Europe, India and North America that were deadly and record-breaking.

Smith said NOAA hasn't finished calculating the damages from Ian yet, but there's a good chance it will have more than \$100 billion in damage, pushing past 2012's Superstorm Sandy that swamped New York and New Jersey, ranking only behind 2005's Katrina and 2017's Harvey for damaging hurricanes.

In the 1980s, the United States would average a billion-dollar weather disaster every 82 days. Now it's every 18 days, Smith said. That's not inflation because damages are adjusted to factor that out, he said. It's nastier weather and more development, people and buildings in harm's way, he said.

Globally "if you zoom in the last six years, 2017 to 2022, this has been particularly bad" especially compared to the five years before, said Martin Bertogg, Swiss Re's head of catastrophic peril.

"It felt like a regime change, some people called it a new normal," Bertogg said. But he thinks it was more getting back, after a brief respite, to a long-term trend of disaster costs steadily rising 5% to 7% a year.

US climate envoy John Kerry said the increasing number of disasters makes the case for reducing emissions.

"You're spending money now because we're not doing the things we ought to be doing," Kerry said in an interview with The Associated Press. "We'll be spending a hell of a lot more under much more stringent circumstances than we are today if we don't move faster."

Not every year has to be a whopper. The US got a break in 2019 when there were "only" 14 billion-dollar disasters, NOAA's Smith said.

"A growing body of evidence indicates that climate change is increasing the variability as well as the average" of weather disasters, said Stanford University environment director Chris Field, who led a United Nations 2012 report on extreme weather. "What this means is that in some years we get hit harder than others. In other years we get hit like never before."

"The important thing is that the trend in disasters is increasing," Field said. "And it will continue to increase until we halt the warming."

Looking at damages, mostly insured losses, can give a skewed picture because how much a disaster cost depends greatly on how wealthy the area that the disaster hit, less so than the scale of the disaster itself, said Debarati Guha-Sapir, who runs the Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters at the Catholic University of Louvain in Belgium.

And even more important, these figures are about dollars, not people, and that distorts the true picture, said Guha-Sapir and University of Washington health and climate professor Kristie Ebi.

“What is insured is a small fraction of total infrastructure and the people killed in Pakistan,” which lowers the damage amount despite 1,700 people killed, Ebi said.

The flood in Pakistan, which submerged one-third of a country that’s bigger than Texas, was not the only thing that hit that developing country.

“Pakistan just couldn’t catch a break this year. A January snowstorm killed 23 followed by a lethal spring heat wave, then devastating floods from June-October took over 1,700 lives and untold livelihoods,” said Jennifer Francis, a climate scientist at the Woodwell climate Research Center in Cape Cod. “Many other surprising, less publicized, and alarming events wreaked havoc on local communities, such as the sudden collapse of the lucrative snow crab fishery in the Bering Sea, rapid demise of European glaciers, inundation of several coastal villages in Alaska by ex-tropical cyclone Merbok.”

“Additional heat in the atmosphere is sucking moisture out of soils, exacerbating drought and heat waves,” Francis said. “Evaporation from oceans and land also increases the amount of moisture in the air, which provides more fuel for storms and heavier downpours.”

Swiss Re’s Bertogg said although climate change is at work he estimates two-thirds, perhaps more, of the rise in damages is due to more people and things in harm’s way.

Urbanization across the globe puts more people in dense environments, which increases damage when disaster hits, Bertogg said. Then add urban sprawl that takes those cities and makes them geographically bigger and thus more vulnerable, he said. A good example of that is how wildfires started damaging more homes in California as more homes got built in rural areas, he said.

Plus more construction is being built on the coast and along waterways making them more vulnerable to storms and flooding, with flooding as “the biggest threat for the global economy,” Bertogg said.

But NOAA’s Smith keeps searching for a little silver lining in storm clouds: “I just hope the trends get a little bit less profound and less stressful for society. We all need a break.”

BUSINESS WORLD

[LGUs, big and small, pursue public-private partnerships](#)

By: Kyle Aristophere T. Atienza

LOCAL governments are blazing the trail on public-private partnerships (PPP) for climate adaptation and infrastructure projects, but not all towns and cities could be expected to follow, according to analysts, given the factors on governance, technical capacity, and market demand.

Quezon City is among the local government units (LGUs) harnessing the potential of joint ventures with the private sector, with Mayor Josefina Tanya “Joy” Belmonte-Alimurung recognizing PPPs as crucial to the city’s green push.

“Quezon City consistently enters into partnerships with the private sector in this critical area,” she said in a Viber message. “We are open to partnerships and joint ventures with the private sector that will help us make our city more resilient [to climate change].”

Waste-to-energy facilities, energizing public buildings with solar power, rehabilitation of drainages and a main disposal facility, and adoption of electric vehicles are among the city’s priority projects for PPP, Ms. Belmonte said.

Quezon City, located in the capital region Metro Manila, is the richest city in the Philippines, with total assets of more P451 billion in 2021. It is also the country’s most populous city, accounting for more than two million of the Philippine population.

Puerto Galera, a much smaller town located in an island province, is also pursuing its sustainable development goals “through the incorporation of more partnerships with the private sector.”

“Since the local government does not have the technical expertise in management and operation, as well as funding for some priority development projects like water system, waste resource recovery program and disaster risk management, the support of the private sector would truly be significant in the realization of the said programs,” Joan Margarrete “Teej” A. Yap, chief of Puerto Galera’s environmental and natural resources office, said in a Facebook Messenger chat.

Ms. Yap noted that Puerto Galera, which is known for its beaches and dive spots, already relies on partnerships with the private sector to implement projects that can make its tourism economy sustainable and make the island resilient to the threats of climate change.

“Some of the projects aligned to be under the PPP are the municipal waterworks system, construction of new communal irrigation for agri-tourism programs, small water impounding project, construction of artesian wells, spring development and rainwater collectors, among others,” she said.

She added that the town of about 42,000 people is also set to construct a P16.5-million waste recovery facility next year, which will also rely on investments from the private sector.

“The local government also believes that involvement of the private sector in the implementation of our government programs can also ensure economic development because technology and innovations could be expected,” Ms. Yap said.

Baguio City, dubbed as the country’s summer capital whose local officials have warned of the threat of irreversible urban decay, also sees PPPs as key to the realization of local climate adaptation projects and other development programs.

“The city government of Baguio plans to enter into more PPPs since its local funds would not be enough to simultaneously implement all the critical projects that need to be implemented,” Mayor Benjamin B. Magalong said via Viber.

“We see the private sector as our co-implementer of our strategies.”

The mayor said a mini-hydro power plant and waste-to-energy facility are among the city’s priority PPP projects.

Mr. Magalong, a retired police officer, said the city government ensures that public projects with private firms undergo public consultations.

“Project should start from the right process starting from the selection to ensure that the project is beneficial to the people. Conduct public consultation of the selected project to ensure that it will be supported by people being aware of the benefits that they enjoy from the project,” he said.

NOT ALL

But not all local government units (LGUs) — there are 81 provinces, 146 cities, and 1,488 municipalities in the Philippines — are ready for the PPP scheme.

“This is because PPPs are private investments that are very dependent on the existence of demand by markets and customers willing to pay for services,” Renato E. Reside, Jr., an associate professor at the University of the Philippine School of Economics, said in a Messenger chat.

Political risks in poorer LGUs are high, Mr. Reside said, adding that they may also struggle with operational and regulatory demands.

“Lower income LGUs will continue to be reliant on public funding and project development,” he said.

Lawmakers seek to amend the Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) law, with a proposed measure requiring approval from the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) Board only for projects worth over P5 billion.

Projects that cost more than P300 million need to be submitted to NEDA Board for approval upon the recommendation of NEDA's Investment Coordination Committee under the existing BOT rules.

Terry L. Ridon, convenor of infrastructure think tank InfraWatch, said lack of technical competence in terms of project preparation, monitoring, and implementation remains a threat to PPPs at the local level.

"LGUs should... undertake capacity-building relating to good governance and project planning to assure technical competence and ethical standards," he said in a Messenger chat. "The step forward is to require LGUs to undergo PPP trainings led by the PPP Center together with other infrastructure agencies."

Ms. Belmonte of Quezon City believes that transparency initiatives as well as anti-red tape efforts have helped them gain the trust of private players.

"First and foremost, we believe that ease of doing business initiatives that make it easier to do business and reduce red tape play a critical role, and so we have done a lot in this area such as putting various services online and increasing transparency," she said.

The city chief said they are planning to provide tax incentives for certain businesses to attract more private investments.

"Provided that we pursue projects that make sense and that are structured and priced correctly, we are confident that our PPPs will be honored," Ms. Belmonte said, noting that the city has a PPP selection committee, which chooses long-term projects and ensures that the city is not disadvantaged.

"In order to make PPPs work, we believe it is important that the partnerships are structured correctly to ensure that they are not disadvantageous to the city and likewise have mechanisms for the private sector to recoup their investments in a reasonable manner."

Mr. Magalong of Baguio said aside from tax incentives, internet connectivity and uninterrupted supply of water and electricity have boosted the city's attractiveness to private investments.

The highly-urbanized city also attracts PPP partners "by promoting good governance beyond politics," he added.

'PROFESSIONAL'

The national government's PPP Center has been assisting LGUs in terms of developing proposals and linkages with investors, among others,

"PPPs allow LGUs to get access not just on private sector financing but also on the technical expertise and efficiencies of qualified private sector players," PPP Center Deputy Executive Director Jeffrey I. Manalo said in a Viber message.

Mr. Manalo cited that the agency backs a Department of Environment and Natural Resources risk resiliency program that helps climate-vulnerable LGUs, composed of 24 provinces and 4 major urban areas.

"Through this technical assistance, a pool of experts was hired to assist in the preparation of resilience roadmaps," he said.

The PPP Center and the Department of Interior and Local Government have also released a joint memorandum circular that "contains a template PPP Code for joint venture agreements that LGUs can adopt as their legal framework for entering into PPPs," he said.

To mitigate political, legal and regulatory risks as well as demand risks that hinder PPPs, local leaders should create a "credible and professional" environment for businesses and investments, Mr. Reside said.

"PPP is ultimately attracted to stable macroeconomic, legal, regulatory and political environments... Political stability is necessary because investors typically desire to have a long-term horizon for demand and business planning purposes beyond the typical political electoral cycle."

[Marcos to attend APEC Summit in US in November, says ambassador](#)

By: ANO Tan

PHILIPPINE President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. will attend the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Summit in the United States in November, according to its ambassador to the US.

“President Marcos will be coming in November for the APEC meeting in the West Coast,” Philippine Ambassador Jose Manuel G. Romualdez told CNN Philippines on Thursday. “I am confirming that President Marcos will be attending together with all the leaders who have been invited to APEC.”

The presidential palace did not respond to a Viber message seeking comment.

The summit will be held in San Francisco, California on Nov. 12, US Vice-President Kamala D. Harris earlier said, noting that the US would work with APEC economies to pursue enhanced sustainability and decarbonization initiatives.

The Philippine president is also expected to meet with business groups during his stay in the US.

“By that time, we are ready to show the economic reforms and programs so that they will be enticed to come to Philippines,” Mr. Romualdez said.

Mr. Marcos attended the recent APEC meeting in Thailand, where he told global leaders threats such as climate change and conflicts all boil down to the fundamental concern of ensuring sufficient and sustainable food supply.

“First, food security is a serious global problem,” he said in a speech at the APEC CEO Summit in Bangkok. “This is felt by every household, by every family, by everyone.”

“The issues that the world faces now — from climate change, to inflation, to war — are viewed by the ordinary Filipino through the lens of food security,” he said.

The Philippine leader said climate change and food insecurity are “very closely interconnected,” noting that there have been steep declines in farm output and productivity due to changing weather patterns.

Mr. Marcos, 65, took the helm of the Philippine Agriculture department in June, vowing to boost local food production.

He also asked his fellow leaders to continue reinforcing global health systems, not only against new and emerging variants of the coronavirus, but also against other infectious diseases that may emerge.

Mr. Marcos said the global economy could not afford another series of lockdowns and travel bans that deflate consumer confidence, dampen tourism recovery and derail the stability of global markets.

“Governments must continue to invest in pandemic preparedness and in ensuring the resilience of the global health system,” he said. “Adopting the One-Health approach and strengthening health surveillance systems for emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases, from the human-animal-environment interface, can be part of the solution.”

The Philippine leader said in his first address to Congress in June the country would no longer enforce lockdowns during the pandemic.

Mr. Marcos also rallied Asia-Pacific leaders to do more to address the effects of climate change, which he said is “the most pressing existential challenge of our time.”

He said global agreements that seek multilateral solutions to the climate crisis, particularly the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement, have been in force “but not enough progress has actually been made as emissions continue to rise.”

[South Korea expresses interest in renewables dev't after PHL opens up foreign investment](#)

By: Ashley Erika Jose

THE DEPARTMENT of Energy (DoE) said South Korea is exploring “practical ways to cooperate” with the Philippines to help the latter achieve energy security via renewable energy, which was recently opened up to 100% foreign investment.

Soonchang Hong, Minister Counselor of the Korean Embassy, said during the 2022 Korea-Philippines Energy Forum Friday that the government of South Korea is deepening its understanding of Philippine energy policy and suitable technologies to further its participation in the energy industry’s development here.

In November, the DoE, citing a legal opinion from the Department of Justice (DoJ), announced that the renewable energy industry is open to full foreign ownership.

Energy Undersecretary Felix William B. Fuentebella said at the forum that the DoE is hoping that South Korea can help the Philippines achieve energy security through renewables.

“Our collaboration in this opportunity is very important. We see more potential,” Mr. Fuentebella added.

“The importance of energy has recently been highlighted due to the global supply chain disruption, climate change,” Mr. Hong added. In July, the Philippines and South Korea discussed possible cooperation in nuclear technology and renewables.

“Energy is emerging as a core factor in national security and carbon neutrality, and the Korean government is (hoping to come up with) a feasible and reasonable energy mix to include nuclear power and renewable energy and to secure strong resources and energy security,” said Sanglim Lee, Research Fellow of the Korea Energy Economics Institute (KEEI).

Regarding the Bataan Nuclear Power Plant, “almost everything is complete. Our recommendation is we would like to support Bataan’s rehabilitation and reinforce safety requirements,” Sebin Cheon, senior manager at Korea Hydro and Nuclear Power Corp. told reporters on the sidelines of the forum.

President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. has discussed the possibility of including nuclear power in the energy mix to enhance energy security.

The DoE has estimated a timeline of 10 years before nuclear power can be integrated into the energy mix.

CNN PHILIPPINES

[Bill for reparation for climate crisis-related loss to be filed in 2023](#)

By: Lois Calderon

An NGO is pushing for a bill that will hold companies accountable for the impact their operations have on the environment.

Rainfall patterns are changing, temperatures are rising. The weather has become extreme, disaster hits your region for the first time, you lose your home, even the lives of people you love and you wonder who's responsible and who to run after her so you can seek reparation, it's called climate justice, the big phrase but is now taking shape as advocates try to translate it into law.

The Greenpeace movement has drafted a proposed legislation so that companies with the largest carbon footprint will be held accountable. The bill is called "clima" or the Climate Accountability Bill, under that measure greenhouse gas emitter is set break, a certain threshold will be fined.

Effectively building a fund that will partly pay for damaged and loss, incurred by the most vulnerable communities.

The bill was written barely a month after world leaders struck a landmark agreement during the United Nations Climate Conference or COP27 held in Egypt last month.

The decision was a breakthrough because Nations, the carbon majors agreed to build a loss and damage fund for country's most vulnerable to the Climate crisis.

That loss and damage fund was 30 years in the making, according to Greenpeace no decisions have been made yet on who should pay for the fund, where the money will come from, and which countries will benefit. But the Philippines is upping the ante with the "clima bill".

Congressman Edgar Chato is emerging as the bill principal sponsor.

Other reforms are being readied the Department of Environment says is again, reviewing the Philippines mining policy.

Ian Frye United Nations special rapporteur on human rights and climate change weighs in on the mining debate, electric vehicles

The clima bill scrutinizes climate change through the lens of Human Rights because under a declaration adopted by the United Nations last July access to a clean healthy and sustainable environment is a universal human, right

GMA NEWS ONLINE

Marcos leaves for Belgium to attend ASEAN-EU Summit

By: Jon Viktor Cabuenas

President Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr. on Sunday evening flew out to Brussels, Belgium to attend the Commemorative Summit between the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the European Union (EU).

In a speech prior to his departure, Marcos said the Philippines will serve as the country coordinator between ASEAN and the EU, with discussions on global and regional security challenges, sustainable development, and economic cooperation.

“In addition to pursuing ASEAN’s interests as country coordinator for the EU, I will always certainly push for Philippine priorities within the context of the ASEAN-EU cooperation particularly in post-pandemic economic recovery and trade, maritime cooperation, and of course, climate action,” he said.

“Although I am representing the Philippines, I am now also representing all of ASEAN but nonetheless, as I have mentioned, Philippine interests will always enter into all of my discussions,” he added.

Marcos is scheduled to attend the 10th ASEAN-EU Business Summit on December 13, and the ASEAN-EU Commemorative Summit on December 14.

Aside from the Philippines, ASEAN member states include Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam.

During his trip Marcos is also set to hold bilateral talks with his counterparts from European countries, and meet with the Filipino community in Belgium.

“These events provide an opportunity to drum up economic interests once again, and engagement for the Philippines in view of the presence of key business leaders in Europe,” he said.

Earlier this month the European Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines (ECCP) said major European firms in the renewable energy sector are looking at entering the Philippine market in the coming year.

The Joint Foreign Chambers of the Philippines (JFC), which counts the ECCP as a member, targets \$128 billion worth of foreign direct investments (FDI) into the country by the end of 2030.

Data from the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP), however, show that FDI net inflows into the country fell by double-digits to \$797 million in August, marking the fourth straight month of declines.

MALAYA BUSINESS INSIGHT

[UN agency says economic turmoil, conflicts put global shipping growth at risk](#)

LONDON – The pace of global shipping activity is set to lose steam next year as economic turmoil, conflict in Ukraine and the impact of the pandemic weaken the outlook for trade, UN agency UNCTAD said on Tuesday.

The world's largest investment banks expect global economic growth to slow further in 2023 following a year roiled by Russia's invasion of Ukraine and soaring inflation.

The slowdown is expected to impact shipping, which transports more than 80 percent of global trade, although tanker freight rates could stay high.

In its Review of Maritime Transport for 2022, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) projected global maritime trade growth would moderate to 1.4 percent this year and stay at that level in 2023.

This compares with estimated growth of 3.2 percent in 2021 and overall shipment volume of 11 billion tons, versus a 3.8 percent decline in 2020.

For the overall 2023-2027 period, growth is predicted at an annual average of 2.1 percent, a slower rate than the previous three-decade average of 3.3 percent, UNCTAD said, adding that "downside risks are weighing heavily on this forecast".

"The recovery in maritime transport and logistics is now at risk from the war in Ukraine, the continued grip of the pandemic, lingering supply-chain constraints, and China's cooling economy and zero-COVID policy, along with inflationary pressures and the cost-of-living squeeze," UNCTAD said in the report.

A surge in consumer spending in 2021 pushed container shipping markets to record levels with ports backed up around the world, which was also partly due to the effects of lockdowns.

UNCTAD said the "logjam in logistics will dissolve with the rebalancing of demand and supply forces", but added the risks of industrial action in ports and hinterland transport had increased.

UNCTAD called for investment in maritime supply chains to enable ports, shipping fleets and hinterland connections to be better prepared for future global crises, climate change and the transition to low-carbon energy.

"We need to be better prepared to cope with shocks to global value chains," UNCTAD Secretary General Rebeca Grynspan told reporters.

ough new sanctions on Russian oil shipments taking effect from December are likely to boost already high tanker rates as buyers race to replace cargoes and are forced to use longer routes, a leading ship manager said.

In the latest action against Russia in response to its invasion of Ukraine that began in February, the European Union imposed ban on Russian crude imports from Dec 5, and Russian oil products from Feb 5.

Designed to deprive Moscow of revenues that could finance its action in Ukraine, the measures will force one of the world's top oil producers and exporters to seek alternative buyers further afield.

MANILA BULLETIN

[\[Opinion\] Are we food-secure enough to weather global food crisis?](#)

By: William Co

Recently, I was invited as a panelist to a forum on boosting the Philippine agriculture sector and ensuring food security. As someone who is in agribusiness and previously worked as a Philippine agriculture attaché, I have witnessed the highs and lows of our farming and fishery sector. Sadly, for over the past decade or so, our country remains to be food-insecure, we are the most in emerging Asia. In that forum, I was able to share my thoughts on how our nation can achieve food security, which I believe is doable given the right policies and interventions.

Truth to tell, the Philippines remains to be rooted in agriculture, despite the challenges it continues to face. However, agriculture's contribution to the GDP only accounts for 10 percent when its contribution could even reach 30-45 percent including allied services. As of 2021, the sector accounted for 24.2 percent of the total employment share. Half of the country's 10 million population, 51.1 percent or 56 million Filipinos live in rural areas whose main source of livelihood is farming.

These numbers show that we are not reaching our full potential as an agricultural nation essentially due to some issues confronting our industry including productivity, competitiveness, technology, post-harvest facilities, and access to credit, among others. These are the same issues that we continue to face. As a result, the country is unable to provide sufficient food for its people and relies heavily on imports to feed our growing population. Hence, the Philippines is a food-insecure nation.

Food security is a long-standing dream that we remain to aspire for our country and its people. In fact, the Philippines recorded the greatest number of food insecure people in Southeast Asia in 2017 and 2019 with 64 percent or 59 million Filipinos, respectively, suffering from moderate to severe lack of consistent access to food, according to the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization report.

Similarly, in the latest Global Food Security Index Q2 2022 by Deep Knowledge Analytics, the Philippines placed 146 out of 171 countries or the most food insecure country among its peers in the East and ASEAN region generating a score of only 5.05 out of possible 10 premised on these three key indicators – food accessibility; crisis level; and food system and economy resilience.

Now, the Philippines, like many other countries, is facing skyrocketing food inflation due to supply issues and the high cost of fuel. Our inflation rate as of November was at eight percent while our trade food deficit in the last three years was at a negative two percent of GDP, the largest in Asia.

Unlike our neighbors, Thailand and Vietnam, who have the biggest trade surplus, the Philippines is a net importer. These countries can use food protectionism should they wish to, especially when there is a global supply crisis, something that the Philippines can't do.

One of our major imports is rice. This year alone (as of August), we imported 2.719 million metric tons and the bulk of which was imported from our neighboring countries Vietnam, Myanmar, Thailand, and Pakistan. While they have the advantage of producing rice because of the Mekong River which they use for irrigation, the Philippines can certainly improve its rice production if given the right support and interventions. Important would be lowering the costs of inputs, good infrastructure such as irrigation, sufficient post-harvest facilities, and noteworthy to mention also is climate change adaptation, among others.

While we depend on these countries for rice supply, we also have to strengthen our partnership and trade cooperation with them to ensure that we secure ample supply for our expanding population. We can probably tap Cambodia as a major trading partner for rice whether in terms of export or investment like setting up a rice processing plant in the country.

There is a need to urgently develop our food resilience. While working on our food security, we should also ramp up our productivity so we become less reliant on imports. We have to push for agriculture and manufacturing supply chain-enhancing infrastructure projects. Given the importance of farming and fishery to our economy, the government must allocate more funding and provide additional grants to cover the sector's continuing needs for farm and fishery inputs such as seeds, fertilizers, crop protectants, feeds, irrigation and machinery, research and development and access to markets.

Certainly, we all agree on the need for a lot of policy reforms, direction setting, and most of all, technology intervention. With the Marcos government's commitment and with the support of the private sector to revive and modernize the agriculture sector, we hope this would eventually translate to better productivity and income for farmers, availability of supply, and food at every table.

[Marcos departs for Belgium, expects a productive trip](#)

By: Betheene Unite

President Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr. departed for Brussels, Belgium Sunday night, Dec.11, to participate in the European Union-Association of Southeast Asian Nations (EU-ASEAN) Business Summit, which he expects to be a productive and meaningful trip.

“After the successful series of summits hosted by ASEAN chair Cambodia last month, I look forward to productive and meaningful summit that recognizes ASEAN and the EU’s four and a half decades of longstanding relations,” Marcos said in his departure speech.

The President stressed the significance of the Philippines’ participation in the summit as it is the present country coordinator for ASEAN-EU Dialogue Relations until 2024.

He will attend the ASEAN-EU Commemorative Summit on Dec. 14. He will also meet King Philippe of Belgium.

“Proceeding the commemorative summit is the 10th ASEAN-EU business summit hosted by the EU-ASEAN Business Council, a C-Suite luncheon on the occasion of the Business Summit will be hosted for ASEAN leaders and guests from the private sector,” he said.

“It is up to me as a coordinator, the Philippines is the coordinator country between ASEAN and EU so I will deliver the closing remarks at the C-Suite luncheon and at the Business Summit itself,” he added.

The President further said that these events will “provide opportunity to drum up economic interest once again and engagement for the Philippines in view of the presence of key business leaders in Europe at the event.”

During his stay in Brussels, the Chief Executive said he will hold bilateral meetings with some of his counterparts in Europe such as Belgium, Estonia, Czech Republic, Spain, Denmark, Germany, Poland, Finland and the Netherlands.

He is expected to discuss various areas of cooperation, especially on post-pandemic recovery, energy, food security, maritime security, digital transformation, climate change action, and biodiversity management and conservation.

Marcos will also spend time with the Filipino community there.

[PH, South Korea reinforcing strategic partnership on energy investments](#)

By: Myrna M. Velasco

Taking off from a two decade strategic partnership, the Philippines and South Korea are strengthening cooperation and prospective business tie-up on array of energy investments, including electric vehicle (EV) deployments and further rollout of energy efficiency initiatives, foray into innovative technologies like hydrogen development as the energy sector's fuel of the future, and helping the Philippines on its plan to re-embrace nuclear technology in its power mix.

In his opening remarks at the 2022 Korea-Philippines Energy Forum which coincided with the Department of Energy's (DOE) National Energy Consciousness Month, Energy Undersecretary Felix William B. Fuentebella renewed his call on the South Korean investors to reinvigorate their interest on injecting fresh capital into the Philippine energy sector.

The strengthening of collaboration between the two countries serves as a follow-through to the bilateral discussion Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. and South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol on the sidelines of the ASEAN Summit last month, in which they discussed prospective accord on energy investments – primarily on nuclear energy and renewable energy (RE) installations, including offshore wind which is reckoned as the 'next frontier' of investments in the Philippine energy sector.

The speakers from both countries extensively examined the shifting geopolitics of energy; the implication of high energy prices to consumers; the constraints on supply chain and infrastructure developments; as well as the economic turbulence that could affect energy technology deployments under the 'Industry 4.0' paradigm as well as on overall investments moving forward.

According to Fuentebella, "the holding of the forum is symbolic of the decades-old relationship of the Philippines and Korea which has evolved into a strategic partnership."

The energy official chiefly stated the Philippine government's desire for this partnership to escalate into a stronger relationship, "particularly in expanding Korean investments in the Philippine energy sector."

Soonchang Hong, Minister Counselor of the Korean Embassy, qualified that "the importance of energy has recently been highlighted due to the global supply chain disruption, climate change and the 4th industrial revolution."

Between the two countries, South Korea is to a large extent the "more mature energy market" be it on clean technology ventures like EVs or on trailblazing hydrogen fuel development; and more so on nuclear power installations. Hence, this is an Asian neighbor economy that the Philippines can lean on not just for investments but also on wrapping its mind around major takeaways that it can apply in advancing developments in the domestic energy scene.

Counselor Hong said “the forum is a great opportunity to deepen understanding of energy policies and technologies, and seek practical ways to cooperate in the energy sector between the two countries.”

The event had drawn roughly 100 participants from various energy stakeholders from both countries – including private energy firms, state-owned enterprises, car manufacturing firms, research and development (R&D) institutes as well as experts and other professionals in the field.

Dr. Sanglim Lee, research fellow at the Korea Energy Economics Institute (KEEI), emphasized that “energy is emerging as a core factor in national security and carbon neutrality.”

He detailed out the five goals of South Korea along that sphere – including game plans to: establish a feasible and reasonable energy mix to include nuclear power and renewable energy; secure strong resources and energy security; realize energy efficiency improvement and market structure based on market mechanisms; promote the export of energy technology and foster new growth engines such as nuclear power, hydrogen, and solar and wind power; and to enhance energy welfare and policy acceptance.

Given Korea’s heavy reliance on imported energy, Gayon Kim, manager of the Korean Energy Agency (KEA), similarly zeroed in on the traction their country has been gaining with the enforcement of energy efficiency measures – including investments on energy-saving facilities in industries; integration of energy efficient designs in construction of buildings; propagation of high efficient and environment-friendly vehicles for transport; on top of stimulating lifestyle changes for consumers by encouraging them to shift into energy efficient appliances, such as LED lighting and inverter technologies.

On the EV rollout space, Dr Jongsu Kang, director of the Korea Automotive Technology Institute (KATECH), indicated that “the Korea government is supporting the development of electric shuttle bus for ASEAN.”

Specifically for the Philippine market, Taeyoung Kwak, senior manager of Kia corporation, disclosed that Kia and KATECH are proceeding with the design and development of electrified purpose built vehicle (PBV) , which is expected to be delivered by 2025.

Nuclear power installations is another strategic area of investment that Korea has been setting its sights on, including continued collaboration on any proposed repowering of the idled Bataan Nuclear Power Plant (BNPP) as well as targeted deployment of small modular reactors (SMRs) which would be ideal for the off-grid domains of the Philippines.

Chaeyoung Lim, Vice President of the Korea Atomic Energy Research Institute (KAERI), specified that they are developing the system integrated modular advanced reactor (SMART), which is Korea’s own technology experiment on SMR – and that enabled it to

join the league of more than 70 prototypes of SMRs currently being pioneered and tested on by various energy markets globally.

Lim noted their SMART model is “100 times safer than the current nuclear power plants and has competitive economics which acquired standard design approval in 2012.”

For the targeted rollout of the SMART nuclear technology, he conveyed that “KAERI has maintained partnership with other countries such as Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, and Jordan in technology transfer, joint R&D projects, and human resources development.”

Save the environment, minimize or terminate use of plastics

“Plastic pollution seriously endangers the ecosystem, especially bodies of water like rivers that are vital to fishermen’s livelihood.”

With this in mind, the House of Representatives passed on third and final reading this week House Bill No. 4102 that proposes to raise the ₱20 excise tax on single-use plastic bags by 400 percent. The bill defines single-use plastic bags as secondary level plastics made of synthetic or semi-synthetic organic polymer such as “ice,” “labo,” or “sando” bags, with or without handle, used as packaging for goods or products.

This is another step in the right direction to reduce plastic waste and help save the environment. It will likewise be a good complement to Republic Act No. 9003 (Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000) and Republic Act No. 11898 (Extended Producer Responsibility Act).

The environment problem is enormous, no doubt about it. In fact, United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres amplified the magnitude of the global problem when he called on governments and multinational corporations to stop the “the orgy of destruction.”

“With our bottomless appetite for unchecked and unequal economic growth, humanity has become a weapon of mass extinction,” Guterres said ahead of the formal opening of biodiversity talks in Canada. “Our land, water, and air are poisoned by chemicals and pesticides, and choked with plastics.”

In pushing for House Bill 4102, Albay Rep. Joey Salceda, one of the authors, noted that the Philippines is the third largest contributor to plastic pollution. This is backed by a World Bank study that shows “a staggering 2.7 million tons of plastic waste are generated in the Philippines each year, and an estimated 20 percent ends up in the ocean.”

With stiffer tax under this measure, together with the Extended Producer Responsibility Act, we express hope that this will discourage manufacturers from producing single-use plastic and instead come up with more environment-friendly packaging products in a bid to lessen plastic pollution that seriously impacts biodiversity and climate change.

As the product connotes, single-use plastic is used only once. The product doesn’t fully decompose and only breaks down into pieces, the process of which takes hundreds of years. And since it is produced from fossil fuels, the greenhouse gases it emits during production contributes to climate change.

And just to underscore the adverse effects of single-use plastic, American oceanographer and environmental activist Philippe Cousteau Jr. once said: “One of my big pet peeves is single-use plastic bags. I think it’s one of the stupidest ideas in the

world.” The single-use plastic bag bill is a good complement to the Extended Producer Responsibility Act, which requires obliged corporations—the brand owners and product manufacturers—to recover 80 percent of their plastic packaging wastes or face up to ₱20 million fine.

We commend our lawmakers for coming up with measures to address this global concern. Discouraging the production and use of single-use plastic bags may come with a stiff price as producing a more environment-friendly product may mean higher cost. But the higher price tag is pittance compared to its long-term beneficial effect on mankind. What is paramount is the preservation of the environment for the sake of survival.

Let humanity be an instrument of survival, instead of being a weapon of mass extinction.

[Zero tariff for imported electric vehicles will help ease global warming, mitigate climate change](#)

All of the major expatriate business organizations in the country — American, Japanese, Korean Australia-New Zealand, and European Union — have issued a call to make the government's planned temporary zero duty privilege on the importation of electric vehicles (EVs) more inclusive by opening it to all countries and for all types of EVs. Initial drafts of the proposed measure reportedly cover only the Philippines' special trading partner countries.

Earlier, National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) Director General Arsenio Balisacan said in a Malacañang briefing that an Executive Order prescribing zero tariff on EVs is now being considered by President Ferdinand Marcos, Jr. Once this is issued, the Philippines could be the first ASEAN country to grant zero tariff on EV importation.

The Electric Vehicle Association of the Philippines (EVAP) has been pushing for the grant of zero tariff importation on pure EVs and plug-in hybrid EVs only. The removal of the 30 percent duty on EVs could reduce cost by as much as ₱300,000 a unit.

Widespread use of electric vehicles is one of the effective ways for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. It enhances the attainment of the objective to contain global warming by ensuring that ocean temperature does not rise by more than 1.5 degrees Centigrade. Climate change has been wreaking havoc, particularly in Climate Vulnerable Countries (CVCs) like the Philippines.

Ironically, the Philippines and other CVCs have suffered the most from massive typhoons and floods, even while contributing the least to greenhouse gas emissions. In the recently-concluded COP 27 climate summit held in Sharm el-Sheik, Egypt, a “loss and damage fund” was established; details will be threshed out in COP 28 to be held next year in the United Arab Emirates.

A recent Yale School of the Environment study found that “the total indirect emissions from electric vehicles pale in comparison to the indirect emissions from fossil fuel-powered vehicles.” Moreover, “in addition to the direct emissions from combusting fossil fuels — either at the tailpipe for conventional vehicles or at the power plant smokestack for electricity generation — (the study) shows that electric vehicles have a clear advantage emissions-wise over conventional vehicles.”

China, which is the largest emitter of carbon dioxide in the world, with 10,668 million metric tons in 2020 has set a goal of 20 percent EV penetration in many of its eastern provinces by 2030. The United States, the second largest CO₂ emitter at 4,713 million metric tons, “has set a goal to make half of all new vehicles sold in the U.S. in 2030 zero-emissions vehicles, and to build a convenient and equitable network of 500,000 chargers to help make EVs accessible to all Americans for both local and long-distance trips.”

Similar moves by the governments of India, Russia, and Japan, the next top CO2 emitters, will go a long way to complement the efforts of countries like the Philippines that, ironically, contributes a negligible amount of only 0.35 percent of the global carbon footprint.

Indeed, the tariff exemption of imported EVs will go a long way to a more sustainable Philippine environment.

[PBBM to push for trade, economy, climate action as he departs for ASEAN-EU summit](#)

By: OPS

MANILA -- President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. departed for Brussels, Belgium on Sunday night, where he is set to push for Philippine priorities, particularly trade, maritime cooperation and climate action at the Association of Southeast Asian Nations-European Union (ASEAN-EU) Summit.

In his departure speech at the Villamor Airbase, President Marcos said this would be the first meeting between ASEAN and EU member states' leaders at the EU headquarters.

"I am pleased to highlight the Philippines' role as country coordinator for ASEAN in its dialogue relations with the EU," said the President.

"And after the successful series of Summits hosted by ASEAN Chair Cambodia last month, I look forward to a productive and meaningful Summit that recognizes ASEAN and the EU's four-and-a-half decades of long-standing relations," Marcos pointed out.

The President said the summit is celebrating 45 years of ASEAN-EU relations with in-depth discussions on the most relevant issues concerning both regional organizations, such as global and regional security challenges, sustainable development and economic cooperation, among other things.

The chief executive will deliver remarks at the C-Suite Luncheon and the ASEAN-EU business summit, saying the events serve as an opportunity to "drum up economic interests once again, and engagement for the Philippines in view of the presence of key business leaders in Europe at the event."

The President will also call on King Philippe of Belgium, as well as hold bilateral meetings with some of his counterparts in Europe.

In a briefing on Friday, Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) Assistant Secretary Daniel Espiritu said President Marcos is expected to hold ten bilateral meetings on the sidelines of the ASEAN-EU summit.

The President is expected to meet with the leaders of Belgium, Estonia, the Czech Republic, Spain, Denmark, Germany, Poland, Finland, the Netherlands and the European Union.

Marcos will also meet with the business community and will have one-on-one meetings with corporations that will be expanding their presence in the Philippines. President Marcos is also expected to meet the Filipino community in Belgium.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

[Academic sector, vital vs. climate change education: DepEd-DRRMS](#)

By: Stephanie Sevellano

MANILA – The Department of Education (DepEd) said Friday learners, teachers, and other personnel in the education sector may fulfill significant roles in the fight against the effects of climate change.

In a statement, the DepEd - Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Service (DRRMS) said addressing climate change entails a demand for collective action, including raising awareness of the issue.

“Our small actions, when united, can make a long way in our fight against climate change,” DepEd-DRRMS Director Ronilda Co said, referring to the DepEd’s initiative for the 6th National Climate Change Conference (NCCC).

“In collaboration with the UPLB (UP Los Banos) - University Library ALIVErery BOOKS Program, the DepEd DRRMS conducted the 6th NCCC with the theme ‘Responding to Climate Change: Role of Education towards Climate Change Action’ to provide a space for knowledge-sharing and learning platforms on the science of climate change, challenges, and opportunities,” the DRRMS said.

Co noted that achieving and maintaining awareness among learners and other groups within the education sector through conferences such as this are crucial, considering the Philippine setting where natural calamities often cause disruptions and damage to schools.

“We believe that by encouraging (the) participation of learners and DepEd personnel in climate change adaptation and mitigation, we can have a deeper grasp of climate change, especially the challenges and opportunities confronting us,” she added.

With this in mind, the DepEd-DRRMS conducted the climate change conference on November 23 to 25 where webinars, action stories, and dialogues with climate change experts were highlighted.

Since the reopening of face-to-face classes on August 22, many schools have implemented class suspension due to inclement weather, flooding, and even earthquakes, including the destructive effects of a magnitude 6.4 earthquake in Abra and Severe Tropical Storm Paeng, among others.

Meanwhile, the DepEd ordered the building of temporary learning facilities and used alternative class delivery modes for affected areas.

The DepEd earlier said it has begun its initial consultation with experts to build disaster-resilient schools, as well as hopes for increased quick response funds for school rehabilitation and repairs, whenever destroyed by natural calamities.

THE MANILA TIMES

[Agro-solar power farm to rise in General Santos](#)

By: Franz Sumangil

A 150-megawatt (MW) agrovoltaic solar power plant, touted as a "pioneering" renewable energy project in the country, will be built by a foreign-backed homegrown company in General Santos City. Yan Amante, president and chief executive officer of Embrace Nature Power 1 Corp. (ENPC-1), said they are preparing for the construction of a solar farm and power plant in a 120-hectare property spanning portions of Conel and Mabuhay villages.

Amante said they are investing around \$285 million or roughly P16 billion in the project, which is set to break ground in the third week of January. "We will be employing 1,500 workers for the construction phase, which will be completed in 12 months,"

Amante said in her presentation to the city council last Tuesday. She added that ENPC-1, which is based in Purok Guadalupe in Barangay Conel, is 60 percent owned by a local company and 40 percent equity by an undisclosed United States-based funder.

The project area covers a total of 61 hectares in Conel village and 59 hectares in Mabuhay village which are part of a Forest Land Grazing Management Agreement held by the family of Grace Leyson Beronio. Amante said the company has partnered with a Croatian energy firm for the adoption of the agrovoltaic technology for the project, which will be among the first of its kind in the country. She explained that agrovoltaic is primarily a combination of energy and agricultural activity, with the solar panels installed at least 2 to 3 meters above the ground and with the land below utilized for growing various crops.

Amante said they are initially planning to plant upland rice and ginger and later on develop a green tea plantation on the ground hosting over 200,000 solar panels for the project. "The project adopts a symbiotic design unlike the traditional solar farms wherein the ground remains unused and barren," she said.

She also stressed it will help mitigate the impact of climate change as well as prevent flash floods and landslides or erosion, she said. According to Amante, a solar power plant would be a cheaper power alternative for local electric cooperatives as its generation charge could only reach P5.90 per kilowatt-hour (kWh), she said. She said that would translate to an actual power rate of P8 to P9 per kWh, which is below the average P10 to P11 rate in General Santos City charged by South Cotabato 2 Electric Cooperative (Socoteco 2).

Amante also noted it will benefit other areas in the country as the solar power plant will be connected to the Mindanao power grid through the Mabuhay-Klinan substation of the National Grid Corporation of the Philippines. For General Santos City, Amante believed it could earn around P225 million annually in income and corporate taxes in the eighth year of the company's operations or after the seven-year government tax holiday for renewable energy projects.

The plant will hire 50 local workers for its operations and more manpower, possibly including able senior citizens, for its agriculture projects."It can also be promoted for tourism since it is considered as a pioneering project here in the Philippines," she said.City Vice Mayor Rosalita Nuñez expressed full support to the project, which she described as something very unique.

"We're very happy seeing this project come into fruition. We don't see any problem passing a resolution interposing no objection for this," she said.Records from the Department of Energy showed that ENPC-1 submitted the required permitting documents for the solar power project in March 2018.The company conducted public consultations in September with residents of the project site and other concerned stakeholders.

[DoE: Future-proofing energy security at 50](#)

By: Dafort Villaseran

THE occasion of the golden, 50th golden anniversary of the Department of Energy (DoE)'s foundation has coincided with the recent push of President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. for the DoE and other related agencies in the energy sector to ensure the sustainability of the country's power needs.

Since immediate and medium-term plans for energy development and power supply in the Philippines have been tackled, the golden measures of the DoE for "future-proofing energy security at 50" have dived deeply into detailed steps and projected outcomes. Projections have covered the use of renewable energy that have also ramped up the nation's initiatives to overturn the negative effects of climate change. Initiatives have even mapped out the success of the first green auction and how it led to preparations for the second one in June 2023. Preparations have presented new or supplemental investments in renewable energy capacities, using more sustainable energy sources to meet power requirements. Most importantly, the DoE presents how the long-term intent has been to reduce electricity costs. To round things off, the Energy department has intended to show how power security has been a top priority of the present administration.

More effort for green energy needed

In an Oct. 11, 2022 article of The Manila Times (TMT), it was reported that transitioning to more green energy had become even more pressing in the face of the heightened impact of climate change. Although the government had already made initial moves to distance itself from carbon-intensive energy and fossil fuels, coal continued to lord it over the energy mix of the country.

DoE data showed that the majority of Philippine energy, specifically 56.8 percent, was generated through imported materials. Last year, coal imports were at 31.238 million metric tons (MMT) while this year's imports were up by 35.836 MMT, revealing an 87.2-percent dependence on outsourced coal.

For carbon-intensive energy, the Philippine mix stood at 37.1 percent coal, 34.6 percent oil and 5.5 percent natural gas. For green energy, the mix was 16.5 renewables, 4.5 percent hydropower and 1.8 percent geothermal.

Within the framework of the updated National Renewable Energy Program, the government intended to raise the percentage of renewables to 35 percent by 2030 and 50 percent by 2040. This framework was mandated by Republic Act 9513 or the Renewable Energy Act of 2008 for nurturing, using and commercializing renewable energy sources.

First green auction and the next

Through the DoE's first round of its Green Energy Auction Program, the private sector was able to secure mandates for contributing toward the country's renewable energy capacity.

As far back as 2021, the DoE awarded offshore wind service contracts to PetroGreen Energy Corp.

In June 2022, the DoE released results that Solar Philippines won 70 percent of the Green Energy Auction Program's renewable energy capacity and 91 percent of all the solar capacity for auction, which allowed it to reach 10-gigawatt energy capacity.

In July 2022, the DoE declared Pavi Green Renewable Energy Inc. as the successful bidder for its Naga solar power plant initiative with a bid capacity of 40.40 megawatts. Upon implementation, the Naga solar power plant would be able to supply a minimum of 15,000 households annually and would be able to lessen carbon emissions by about 144,680 metric tons of carbon dioxide.

In November of this year, top officials of the DoE met up with the President to inform him that preparations were underway for the second Green Energy Auction Program that was set for June 2023 to entice investments in new or supplemental renewable energy to reduce power costs in the long-term.

New investments in renewable energy capacities

In order for energy sources to be considered green, these were precluded from polluting the environment in the manner that fossil fuels did. Naturally, this implied that not all renewable energy sources qualified as being green. A prime example of this was how power generated from burning organic material from sustainable forests, while technically renewable, was still not green because the process polluted the air with excessive carbon dioxide. Thus, the DoE went on record, stating that it was reviewing measures to raise the Philippines' renewable-energy capability for addressing government requirements.

"Our dependence on imported fuel is a major factor [in power outages and energy-related problems], and therefore, over time, we need to decrease our dependence on imported sources of fuel and develop the indigenous resources," DoE Secretary Raphael Perpetuo Mercado Lotilla said.

Early in October, the ruling of the Department of Justice to allow 100-percent foreign ownership of green energy allowed the DoE to briskly formulate measures to capitalize on new and supplemental investments on green renewables. Indeed, a great number of policies and foreign investors were needed to meet the sustainable energy targets of the DoE for the years 2030 and 2040.

Policies enacted to offset energy costs

Also on October 11, another TMT article reported that energy costs would stay in flux. This was attributed to the Russian invasion of Ukraine earlier in the year that disrupted global energy supplies and sent power prices into the stratosphere. Policies enacted

since the invasion began have regulated prices to a certain extent, but international markets continued to be in a fluid state.

The country also continued to experience pump price surges. DoE data on Sept. 27, 2022, showed that petrol prices increased by P14.85 per liter, diesel went up by P29.40 per liter and P kerosene was up by P24.10 per liter.

To assist in offsetting the effects of energy price increases, the government raised to P6.1 billion the total budget for targeted subsidies while the Social Welfare department began distributing targeted cash transfers.

Last June 1, an excess of 300,000 eligible tricycle drivers got cash subsidies. More than 180,000 public utility vehicle operators and drivers received a P6,500 fuel subsidy from the Pantawid Pasada initiative. Over 158,000 fisherfolk and farmers each got P3,000 in fuel discounts.

Meanwhile, the Energy Regulatory Commission rejected the petition of local power producers for a 30-centavo-per-kilowatt-hour increase.

Power security as a top priority

In terms of energy increase, what the country needed was technology that was immediately available and feasible, that optimized reliability and environmental sustainability, and that eliminated or reduced dependence on imported energy sources, which was identified by the DoE as one of the Philippines' biggest challenges when it came to energy security.

Through the three sources of animal waste, of plant waste from agriculture and of garbage, natural gas was produced by the Philippines in abundance that could be harvested with tried-and-tested technologies to greatly meet the country's energy requirements and largely eliminate the need for energy imports.

Cost-effective and efficient energy systems on a large scale, such as hydrogen fuel cells, also made for a practical transition into renewables.

To future-proof the country, renewable energy would be best used as supplementary power, reducing baseload demand by distributing to buildings, villages or remote islands from microgrids or local power networks rather than the national grid.

On its own terms and in terms of facilitating investments in renewable and green technologies, the DoE has, so far and in all appearances, been on track and showed no signs of being derailed for the foreseeable future.

[Private sector investments urged for climate action](#)

By: Bella Cariaso

ENVIRONMENT Secretary Maria Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga is urging the private sector to invest in climate action amid growing uncertainties and mounting financial requirements for climate change adaptation and mitigation.

During her speech at the Climate Investment Forum (CIF), Yulo-Loyzaga added that more investments for sustainable projects are needed to help reduce the country's carbon footprint.

Yulo-Loyzaga said that at least P453.11 billion will be allocated for the climate change programs in 2023.

She said this represents at least 8.6 percent of the P5.268-trillion National Expenditure Program (NEP) for next year.

"However, more investments are still needed if we are to make transformative strides to achieve climate-resilient development," Yulo-Loyzaga said.

She said that out of the P453.11 billion funding, around 75 percent or P338.21 billion will be spent for climate adaptation, which includes programs for the development of resilient crops and livestock production systems and technologies.

Yulo-Loyzaga said the remaining 25 percent or P114.9 billion will be used for climate mitigation consisting mainly of promotion of renewable energy and improvement of traffic infrastructure-mobility to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

The 2023 NEP carries the highest allocation for climate expenditures by far, accounting for a significant increase of about 56 percent from this year's climate budget of P289.73 billion.

"Both public and private sectors have a critical opportunity to invest in resilience which is vital not just to our country's development, but to our planet's very survival," Yulo-Loyzaga.

The CIF gathered senior government officials, climate international experts and members of the business community to discuss how climate-friendly enterprises can further engage the private sector to invest in priority climate enterprises that contribute to global efforts to slash GHG emissions.

Yulo-Loyzaga's call for greater private sector involvement in the climate change fight came on the heels of her recent participation as head of the Philippine delegation to the recently concluded COP27 or the 27th session of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Egypt.

"Groups like Bloomberg Philanthropies and the UN sustainable energy team, working together, had the Philippines to be one of the three countries that will now apply a method of calculating the cost of energy transition to net-zero by 2050," she said.

She added that the private sector has emerged as a critical actor in bridging the cost of transitions toward non fossil-based sources of power which is estimated to be in the trillions for some countries and sectors.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

[French think tank seeks partnerships with Philippine institutions](#)

By: Kaycee Valmonte

MANILA, Philippines – A French think tank is hoping to work with similar Philippine institutions to produce research work on a range of subjects, such as higher military education, climate change, maritime security, political warfare and information warfare.

Dr. Marjorie Vanbaelinghem, the acting director of government-funded Institute for Strategic Research (IRSEM), was in Manila last week on a “fact-finding mission” in hopes to identify institutions to work with for future projects.

“The idea was to try and forge relations with similar Filipino research centers and also with the National Defense College and see how we could work together to have joint activities, maybe joint publications later on, and also benefit from Philippines’ expertise on issues that we tackle on a daily basis in our research,” Vanbaelinghem told reporters at the French ambassador’s residence on Wednesday last week.

While in the country, she met with representatives from the National Defense College of the Philippines and Ateneo School of Government, and other research centers.

IRSEM, which has 30 researchers all with doctorate degrees, provides publications which the French government and its military can use for its perusal. France released its Indo-Pacific strategy in 2017 and Vanbaelinghem said the institute is looking to collaborate with scholars in the Philippines for added perspective.

“We need to pay attention to the viewpoints and realities, not just of the biggest countries like the US, China, or Japan, but also pay attention to very important players in the same arena,” she said.

She added that IRSEM also hopes to produce literature on the Philippines in French.

[Law for carbon credit systems in Philippines pushed](#)

By: Danessa Rivera

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) is pushing for the creation of a law that will institutionalize carbon credit systems to streamline the country's climate change thrust.

Environment Secretary Ma. Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga said there may be a need to craft a legislation for carbon credits.

“Carbon credit systems still needs to be adequately developed in the country. This is part of the overall commitment toward mitigation, reduction of greenhouse gases, and of course adaptation because of the ecosystem services our forests can actually provide,” she said.

This will be part of the department's push to review existing laws affecting the environment, including the Climate Change Act of 2009.

Climate Change Act, or Republic Act 9729, aims to integrate disaster risk reduction measures into climate change adaptation plans, development and poverty reduction programs.

Last month during COP 27, the Philippine delegation headed by Loyzaga pushed for the adoption of a precise definition of “loss and damage.”

This, as the country pressed for urgent and bolder climate action through financing and technical assistance from richer countries, asserting the country's rights amid the impact of climate change.

Meanwhile, the DENR is urging potential partners to consider a wider scale implementation of climate change programs.

This is after DMCI Mining Corp., the mining arm of Consunji-led DMCI Holdings Inc., proposed to help create the country's carbon credits system.

Loyzaga said DMCI made the offer with its global partner, Marubeni Corp., which is involved in large scale forestation projects globally in countries like New Zealand and Indonesia.

“So, there is a proposal put forward that they be involved in some large-scale forestation project, specifically for mitigation. And we are urging them not just mitigation values but certainly also the adaptation, disaster risk reduction values that forestation can actually provide in terms of carbon credits,” she said.

Apart from the private sector, the DENR is partnering with bilateral and multilateral organizations to include Philippine forests as part of the global thrust to reduce greenhouse gases.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

DAILY TRIBUNE

Climate Change Commission, UP Resilience Institute partner on disaster risk assessments

By TDT

The Climate Change Commission and the University of the Philippines Resilience Institute recently signed an agreement that is seen to further strengthen their partnership to develop a support mechanism for climate and disaster risk assessments and to build the capacities of institutional stakeholders at the grassroots, particularly for LGUs.

The Letter of Agreement was signed by CCC Vice Chairperson and Executive Director Robert E.A. Borje, UP President Atty. Danilo L. Concepcion and UPRI Executive Director and Professor Alfredo Mahar Francisco A. Lagmay on 25 November 2022 at the UPRI Building in UP Diliman, Quezon City.

The LOA between CCC and UPRI aims to intensify collaboration on the development of science-based tools and instruments that will boost the resiliency of LGUs, enhance the vulnerability and risk assessment capabilities of target municipalities for climate hazards, and promote climate risk assessment in line with the National Climate Risk Management Framework.

The two parties' cooperation also aims to generate vulnerability and risk assessments of target municipalities using appropriate hazard maps as reference for climate change mainstreaming, and Local Climate Change Action Plan development and/or enhancement.

The agreement likewise targets providing support for capacity-building activities on climate change mainstreaming and resiliency building for LGUs and higher education institutions, including state colleges and universities.

It aims to further strengthen the generation of risk-policy interventions and recommendations as inputs in the formulation/enhancement of development plans of target LGUs, and the development of a repository of vulnerability and risk data and other climate change and disaster risk reduction management information, including the establishment of Geographic Information System in partner LGUs and HEIs.

The LOA reinforces and reiterates support to the existing MoA between the CCC and the UP System signed on 13 June 2013.

The ceremonial signing of the LOA was part of the commemoration of the 15th Global Warming and Climate Change Consciousness Week on 19 to 25 November 2022 with the theme, "Sama-samang Tumutugon sa Hamon ng Nagbabagong Klima."

The Climate Change Commission is the lead policy-making body of the government tasked to coordinate, monitor and evaluate government programs and ensure

mainstreaming of climate change in national, local, and sectoral development plans toward a climate-resilient and climate-smart Philippines.

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