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BLOOMBERG

[Crumbling Nuclear Plant May Fuel Philippines After 36-Year Delay](#)

By: Andreo Calonzo

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CNN PHILIPPINES

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GMA NEWS

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By: John Leigh Casilao

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By: Raymund Antonio

The government will soon use a green criteria in its procurement process to promote sustainable practices and comply with the United Nation Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) after the House of Representatives on Monday, Dec. 12, passed on the third and final reading House Bill (HB) No. 6468 or the "Green Public Procurement Act."

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This year's major climate summit may have concluded when world leaders and environment advocates departed Sharm El-Sheikh in Egypt with a "call for action." But that 2022 United Nations Climate Change Conference or Conference of Parties (more commonly referred to as COP27) is just the beginning as there is another important COP currently ongoing in Montreal, Canada.

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Marcos arrives in Brussels for Asean-EU Summit

By: Nestor Corrales

BRUSSELS — President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. arrived here on Monday morning to attend the Association of Southeast Asian Nations-European Union (Asean-EU) Commemorative Summit, his seventh official trip abroad since assuming office on June 30.

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DAR holds agrarian cooperatives summit, promotes digital marketing

By: DAR

MANILA -- Around 200 farmer-members from different agrarian reform beneficiaries organizations (ARBOs) in the MIMAROPA region attended the Department of Agrarian Reform's (DAR) face-to-face and virtual ARBOs Summit held over the weekend.

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PBBM to raise PH trade preference scheme in talks with EU leaders

By: Azer Parrocha

MANILA – President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. will raise the status of the Philippines' European Union (EU) Generalized Scheme of Preferences Plus (GSP+) in his meetings with EU leaders.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

SEC fetes sustainability, business, investor champions

MANILA, Philippines — The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) recognized individuals and organizations which have helped the Commission champion the development of the corporate sector and further deepening of the capital markets in its 86th year.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

PANAY NEWS

Lifelong service with excellence: A story of Dr. Ju-im Jimlan

A Filipino teacher who embodies exemplary public service, Dr. Ju-im Jimlan has become an agent of positive change. His nineteen years of sustained teaching professionalism made him worthy of prestigious awards.

THE MANILA TIMES

[Philippines on green building](#)

By: Arch. Kayla Garcia and Arch. Agustin Opay

"I saw that by cleaning one Estero, that life changed. If there's an impact on human life, I get excited, because I feel that that's what we're all about. And that's why I love the environment: because of its massive, direct impact on human life" – Gina Lopez on how even small things for the environment can make a big impact.

Information and Knowledge Management Division

BLOOMBERG

[Crumbling Nuclear Plant May Fuel Philippines After 36-Year Delay](#)

By: Andreo Calonzo

A nuclear power plant on the Philippines' western coast has sat idle for nearly four decades, costing billions of dollars and never producing a watt of electricity. Now, it's at the center of debate over whether the nation should finally adopt atomic energy.

Dictator Ferdinand Marcos ordered construction of the 620-megawatt Bataan facility in response to the oil shock in the 1970s, the first and only one of its kind in Southeast Asia. Beset with safety concerns and corruption allegations, the completed project was ultimately mothballed after Marcos was ousted in 1986. The six presidents who followed all decided against commissioning it, deterred by nuclear disasters, local politics and court cases.

But with the former strongman's son Ferdinand Marcos Jr. winning the presidency earlier this year, the Philippines is taking another look at restarting the plant — and fulfilling his father's nuclear ambitions — as the oil-importing nation looks for ways to shield itself from a global energy supply crunch.

A decision on whether to commission the plant “can be done soon enough,” possibly within Marcos's six-year term, Energy Undersecretary Sharon Garin said in an interview. “We are not discarding the Bataan plant, but we have to make sure that it's safe to revive,” she said. The government plans to hire a third-party evaluator next year to check the viability of the facility.

What's Boosting Nuclear Power? War and Climate Change: QuickTake

A nuclear plant the size of the one in Bataan operating near peak capacity would have generated about 5% of the Philippines' power needs last year, according to calculations based on BloombergNEF data. Coal accounted for 60% of electricity generation while the country's declining gas supplies contributed another 17%.

The revival of the Philippines' nuclear ambitions is part of a broader global push to tap the energy source amid a shortage of gas sparked by the Ukraine war. Concerns about global warming have also renewed interest in the carbon-free technology. Japan and South Korea are removing anti-nuclear policies, China and India are looking to build more reactors, while France and Finland are set to restart some nuclear facilities.

'We Need All We Can Get'

As for the Philippines, Marcos Jr. has said he wants the country to have at least one nuclear power plant. He recently met with South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol to discuss possible cooperation on the Bataan plant. “We're looking at what's the most

attractive source of power generation,” Marcos said during a Bloomberg TV interview in September. “We need all we can get.”

Public opinion polls indicate widespread support for nuclear facilities. A June survey by pollster PUBLiCUS showed 59% of Filipinos in favor of building a nuclear plant. A separate survey by the Energy Department and pollster Social Weather Stations in 2019 showed 79% of respondents approved of reviving the Bataan facility.

Some living around the plant are also in favor of reviving it. Emily Miguel, 54, who runs a store nearby, thinks turning the facility on will boost the local economy. “If anything bad happens with the plant, we can just evacuate then, but we need jobs now,” she said.

Church officials in the predominantly Catholic nation have long opposed the plant’s revival, however. Academics, including Marcos’s Science Secretary Renato Solidum, have also previously warned that the facility is located in an area prone to earthquakes and close to two volcanoes.

“The stance of Bataan is not to accept 40-year-old technology that has a lot of risks,” Albert Garcia, one of the province’s congressional representatives, said at a recent hearing. The local government has already received proposals to turn the plant into a data center, he said.

Urgent Need for Energy

As officials weigh the opposing views, the Philippines is in urgent need of new sources of energy. A key gas field expected to dry up within five years and power costs among the highest in the region are discouraging investors.

“History has proven the president’s father correct: if we used the nuclear plant, we will not have these problems,” said lawmaker Mark Cojuangco, who heads a congressional committee on nuclear energy. “Now he has to take a stand and finally fight for this.”

Reviving the plant would come with a \$1 billion price tag, based on a 2019 study by Korea Hydro and Nuclear Power Co. While a handful of workers are employed at the site to maintain the structure, four decades of it lying dormant have taken their toll. The facade with streaks of rust and crumbling concrete needs upkeep, and the analog equipment inside has to be updated. Other options include building a new plant, or waiting for small modular reactors to be a viable technology.

Even with the president’s support, nuclear would have to compete with a growing solar sector, with costs in the Philippines already on par with coal power and forecast to halve by the end of the decade. Billionaire Enrique Razon recently announced plans for a massive solar-and-battery facility that would be able to supply electricity for cheaper than current wholesale prices.

CNN PHILIPPINES

Marcos to bring up PH trade perks during talks with EU leaders

Metro Manila (CNN Philippines, December 12) — President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. said he will discuss with the European Union (EU) the Philippines' trade privileges which the EU earlier threatened to suspend over human rights issues that hounded the Duterte administration.

"We'll bring it up with the EU," Marcos told reporters on Sunday, referring to the country's perks under the Generalized Scheme of Preferences Plus (GSP+).

He made the statement while on board his flight to Belgium for the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)-EU summit, and after he was asked to comment on the EU warning.

GSP+ grants zero tariffs for the country's exports to Europe on the condition that the government upholds 27 international conventions on human rights, labor, environment and climate action and good governance.

In the past administration, the EU called on the Philippines to address alleged human rights abuses — including extrajudicial killings — or lose the trade perks.

"I don't think one thing should be related to the other, but we'll see," Marcos said during the short interview.

According to Malacañang, Marcos and his high-level delegation will meet with officials of the European Commission, the European Council and the European Parliament during the summit in Belgium.

The trade perks will expire in December 2023 for the Philippines. Beneficiary countries will have to reapply to continue having preferential access to the EU market.

GMA NEWS

Marcos arrives in Belgium for ASEAN-EU summit

By: John Leigh Casilao

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. arrived in Brussels, Belgium Monday morning (Manila time) to attend the Commemorative Summit between the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and the European Union.

According to Office of the Press Secretary officer-in-charge Cheloy Garafil, Marcos and the Philippine delegation arrived at the Brussels International Airport at 9:55 a.m. or at 2:55 a.m in Brussels time. Meanwhile, during the summit, the President and the country's Agriculture secretary is expected to discuss the administration's priorities, particularly in expanding cooperation in agriculture, trade, and maritime ties.

"This will be the first meeting between ASEAN and EU Member States' Leaders at the EU Headquarters and I am pleased to highlight the Philippines' role as country coordinator for ASEAN in its dialogue relations with the EU," he said in his departure speech Sunday evening.

Marcos is also set to hold bilateral meetings with leaders from Belgium, Estonia, the Czech Republic, Spain, Denmark, Germany, Poland, Finland, the Netherlands, and the European Union.

In an interview with reporters, he said he will bring up the Generalized Scheme of Preferences Plus (GSP+), a mechanism that allows duty-free exports to the European Union, with other world leaders.

In February, the European Parliament mulled the removal of some of the Philippines' trading privileges should the government fail to address the alleged human rights violations in the country.

Marcos also vowed the country's compliance with European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) saying the government is doing everything to address the the latter's observations.

MANILA BULLETIN

[Baguio, QC DRRMOs, Ifugao native bag 'KLIMA-likasan' awards for disaster resiliency](#)

By: Jel Santos

Recognizing their significant actions at times of disasters and calamities, the disaster risk reduction and management offices (DRRMO) of the cities of Baguio and Quezon and an Ifugao native have been awarded as the top winners of this year's "Mga Kwentong KLIMA-likasan: A Climate and Disaster Resiliency Recognition Awards".

Presented by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), through its Climate Change Service (CCS) and Gender and Development Office, in partnership with Globe Telecom, the KLIMA-likasan Awards recognized the stories of individuals, groups, and provincial local government units (LGUs) in addressing climate change and disasters in communities.

"The stories that we received from 16 regions in the country only say one thing: there are already significant actions happening on the ground. We need to take note of them, document them, map them and see how we can scale up the initiatives to expand to other areas in their community," said Undersecretary for Finance, Information Systems and Climate Change Analiza Rebueta-Teh.

The awards are in line with the celebration of the 2022 National Climate Change Consciousness Week, which carries the theme, "Sama-Samang Tumutugon sa Hamon ng Nagbabagong Klima."

"Our recognition scheme aims to feature the long track record and important contributions and initiatives in the environment, climate change, and disaster risk management," DENR CCS Director Elenida Basug noted.

Six entries bagged the first and second places of KLIMA-likasan Awards under three categories (Individual, Group, and LGU), while another six received special citations—Gender Equality, Women's Empowerment, and Climate Change Award, and Climate Technology for Resilience Award.

The Baguio City DRRMO took home a cash prize of P80,000 for being the KLIMA-likasan Awards first placer and recipient of the Climate Technology for Resilience Special Citation under the LGU category. Its winning entry, "The Baguio City Smart and Gender-inclusive Flood Early Warning Information and Mitigation System", took a holistic, nature-based, gender-sensitive, and socially inclusive approach to address the city's challenges.

Meanwhile, the Quezon City DRRMO bagged the first place and the Climate Technology for Resilience Special Citation under the group category for their entry "iRISE UP" (Intelligent, Resilient, and Integrated Systems for the Urban Population),

receiving a total cash prize of P60,000. iRISE UP is an early warning system that organizes and streamlines the DRRM information system of Quezon City so that advisories are quickly disseminated to communities.

For the individual category, Moises Butic won first place with a cash prize of P30,000 for his entry “The Ifugao Muyong: Perpetuating a Forest Legacy.” Proudly nominated by Ifugao Governor Jerry Dalipog, Butic’s story is about the indigenous practice inherited by the Ifugaos from their ancestors called “Muyong System,” which is a forest management system that supports biodiversity conservation and climate change adaptation.

Other major prize winners and special citation awardees and their corresponding cash prizes are Cagayan LGU for “Restoring Cagayan River: A H.O.P.E. to Build Back Life Better” (second place for LGU category with a prize of P40,000); Kabasalan National High School’s Youth for Environment in Schools Organization of Balintawak, Pagadian City for “Adopt-a-watershed program” (second place for group category winning P30,000); Mayor Leopoldo Bataoil of Lingayen, Pangasinan for “The Rebirth of our Philippine Ylang-ylang” and (second place for individual category taking home P20,000).

For the Gender Equality, Women’s Empowerment, and Climate Change Award, the winners are Baliwag, Bulacan LGU for “Baliwag Environmental Convergence Program” (LGU category, winning P30,000); Bayawon Lucday Lungayan Pendonay Tandacol Tribal Association, Inc. (BLLuPenTTrAs, Inc.) for “The Glimpse of P.O BLLuPenTTrAs Initiatives and Best Practices in Fighting Climate Change” (group category, winning P20,000); and Grachelle Andrea B. Guevarra for “I CAN make a difference” (individual category, winning P10,000). For the Climate Technology and Resilience Award, Reheemah Hafsah Pangarungan won for “BioPhil” (individual category, winning P10,000).

The DENR received 60 entries from 16 regions all over the country. All entries were evaluated based on the following criteria: climate and disaster resiliency content, 60 percent; visual appeal of the photographs and video, 20 percent; gender fair text and media, 10 percent; and geographical reach of the initiative, 10 percent.

The winning stories will be submitted to the Good Stories Movement, a global initiative led by people who aim to recognize the “good stories of good people who are caring for the Land, Air, and Water (LAW) of Life.”

Green Public Procurement Act OK'd by House

By: Raymund Antonio

The government will soon use a green criteria in its procurement process to promote sustainable practices and comply with the United Nation Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) after the House of Representatives on Monday, Dec. 12, passed on the third and final reading House Bill (HB) No. 6468 or the “Green Public Procurement Act.”

With 232 House members voting to pass the bill, the lawmakers sought “to promote the culture of making green, sustainable, and informed decisions in government, especially in government procurement.”

“The measure seeks to make the government assume the leading role in the promotion of sustainable practices by incorporating environmental, economic, and social factors in its decisions and processes, particularly in the matter of procurement,” a statement from House Speaker Martin Romualdez said.

The bill’s authors noted that the country is a party to the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and remains committed to achieving the 17 SDGs by 2030.

Several items in the SDGs refer to sustainable environment. These are clean water and sanitation, affordable and clean energy, sustainable cities and communities, responsible consumption and production, and climate action.

HB 6468 was authored by Reps. Manuel Jose Dalipe, Luis Raymund Villafuerte Jr., Miguel Luis Villafuerte, Tsuyoshi Anthony Horibata, Nicolas Enciso VIII, Eduardo Villanueva, Jose Manuel Alba, Charisse Anne Hernandez, Jose Alvarez, Gabriel Bordado Jr., France Castro, Anna Victoria Veloso-Tuazon, Maria Angela Garcia, Christian Tell Yap, Julienne Baronda, Stephen James Tan, Ramon Nolasco Jr., Jose Teves Jr., Rosanna Vergara, Faustino Michael Carlos Dy III, and Raoul Manuel.

Under the bill, all the branches of government including constitutional commissions, state colleges and universities, government-owned and controlled corporations, government financial institutions, and local government units are required to “implement a Green Public Procurement (GPP) program to achieve sustainable consumption and production in government procurement.”

The bill requires that the GPP program be made in accordance with the GPP Roadmap established by the Government Procurement Policy Board (GPPB), consistent with the Government Procurement Reform Act or R.A. 9184.

The program aims not only to promote green-based decisions in government procurement, but will also require the Philippine Government Electronic Procurement System (PHILGEPS) to identify all government agencies procuring common-use supplies and equipment (CSE) and non-common use supplies and equipment (non-CSE) identified by GPPB as part of the Green Procurement Roadmap.

It would also “promote the preferential use of green criteria in government procurement whenever possible and practicable and ask relevant government agencies to develop technical specifications for CSE and non-CSE products.

“The measure mandates the GPPB to protect the national interest in all matters affecting public procurement, giving due regard to the country’s regional and international obligations and to ensure the incorporation of the concept of sustainability in the procurement activities of the government, among others,” Romualdez’s statement said.

“It is likewise given the task to develop incentive schemes to increase motivation and catalyze action for better performance and environmental stewardship and to establish standard monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to measure the compliance of procuring entities to the criteria,” it added.

Under the law, government agencies would be required to submit their respective GPP Programs to the GPPB, which will be tasked to submit an annual report to the Committee on Sustainable Development Goals of the House of Representatives and to the Committee on Sustainable Development Goals, Innovation and Futures Thinking of the Senate on the compliance of the different agencies with the provisions the law.

The GPPB “has the duty to regularly implement capacity building and information, education, and communication programs to develop capacities and enhance awareness and understanding of the implementation of the GPP Program.”

[\[Opinion\] We must feel the urgency to protect biodiversity](#)

This year's major climate summit may have concluded when world leaders and environment advocates departed Sharm El-Sheikh in Egypt with a "call for action." But that 2022 United Nations Climate Change Conference or Conference of Parties (more commonly referred to as COP27) is just the beginning as there is another important COP currently ongoing in Montreal, Canada.

Opened last Dec. 7, 2022, the United Nations Biodiversity Conference, dubbed as COP15, is underway and representatives from various nations are now focusing on the "living world" – the biological diversity. This event will run until Dec. 19.

The UN defines biodiversity as the "result of 4.5 billion years of evolution and, increasingly, of human influence as well. It forms the web of life, of which humans are integral and upon which people and the planet so fully depend." More than defining it, the UN is raising its loudest alarm yet, noting how species are now disappearing hundreds, or even thousands, of times faster than the natural background rate of extinction.

"The scientific community has repeatedly sounded the alarm on the triple planetary crisis of climate change, nature and biodiversity loss, and pollution and waste. Around the world, from forests to oceans, animal species, and tropical plants are currently threatened by an unprecedented loss caused by human activity," the UN said.

Hearing this alarm, the COP15 aims to achieve a "historic agreement to halt and reverse nature loss by 2030, on par with the 2015 Paris Climate Agreement." This year's conference also aims to adopt a new landmark global biodiversity framework that safeguards nature, the first of its kind since the Aichi Biodiversity Targets were introduced in 2010.

"We have but a few days to act decisively and with principle. Action must be bold, not bracketed – so we have to get the deal done," said Inger Andersen, executive director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

In his opening statement for the COP15, Andersen stressed that "nature and biodiversity are dying the death of a billion cuts." And humanity is "paying the price for betraying its closest friend."

"This Conference of the Parties must secure the future of our planetary life support system," he said. "We cannot live without nature and biodiversity. Nature provides the very essence of life. Technology cannot replace the trees, the soil, the water, and the species that teem in them. We have no other world to flee to. When the web of life falls, we fall with it. In the coming days, you have a unique responsibility to deliver: to agree on the plan to make peace with nature. This responsibility is not a choice between something or nothing. It is a choice between everything or nothing."

One does not have to look around the world to witness the loss of crucial ecosystems. In the Philippines, there are tons of evidence of how forests and mountains are destroyed in the name of progress and greed, or how rivers and waterways are polluted for the sake of convenience and apathy. All these realities should make one stand up and feel the urgency to call on our government and our leaders to protect biodiversity.

If you think there is still time, Andersen has this to say: "We cannot make the mistake of thinking time is on our side. We must shore up and strengthen the web of life, so it can carry the full weight of humanity for centuries to come."

So, is it time's up? Or time for action?

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

[10 environmental defenders killed in 2022](#)

MANILA, Philippines — At least 10 land and environmental defenders were killed this year, based on the preliminary report of the nongovernmental organization Kalikasan People's Network for the Environment (PNE).

“This is not yet the final number as we still need to look at the cases of peasant killings ... so the tally might increase,” Jon Bonifacio, national coordinator of Kalikasan PNE, said in a press briefing on Monday.

Based on their data, at least nine incidents of attacks affected 30,000 people but Bonifacio noted that “there was no assessment on the environmental impact and damage in the ecosystem.”

Kalikasan PNE sought an immediate and independent investigation of the continued attacks against land and environment defenders.

Marcos arrives in Brussels for Asean-EU Summit

By: Nestor Corrales

BRUSSELS — President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. arrived here on Monday morning to attend the Association of Southeast Asian Nations-European Union (Asean-EU) Commemorative Summit, his seventh official trip abroad since assuming office on June 30.

The president and his official delegation aboard PR001 arrived at the Abelag Aviation Private Hangar at 9:53 a.m. (Philippine time).

Joining Marcos on his trip are former President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, Undersecretary Cheloy Velicaria-Garafil of the Office of the Press Secretary, Information and Communications Technology Secretary Ivan John Uy, Foreign Affairs Secretary Enrique Manalo, Trade Secretary Alfredo Pascual, Finance Secretary Benjamin Diokno, and Sen. Mark Villar.

On his first day here, the President will meet with the Filipino community. Belgium is home to 5,647 overseas Filipino workers, who are mostly domestic helpers.

On his second day, Marcos is scheduled to have a meeting with European businessmen where he is expected to secure at least P6.2 billion in investment pledges.

The biggest investment will come from British multinational company Unilever, which will establish a new state-of-the-art manufacturing facility for personal care products in Cavite worth P4.7 billion.

Marcos will also have a meeting with OCEA, a shipbuilding, navigation, and logistics company, which intends to develop a shipyard in the Philippines with an investment of P1.5 billion.

On his third day here, the president will deliver a speech at the opening ceremony of the Asean-EU Commemorative Summit.

Daniel Espiritu, foreign assistant secretary for Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) Affairs, said in a press briefing on Friday that Marcos would discuss post-pandemic and economic recovery during the summit.

On the sidelines of the summit, the chief executive will also hold about 10 bilateral meetings with other countries, including Spain, Denmark, Germany, and the Czech Republic.

Marcos will also meet with the King Philippe of Belgium as Manila and Brussels mark their 76th year of diplomatic relations this year.

Espiritu said Marcos would also raise regional and international issues, which include the maritime row in the South China Sea, Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and climate change, among others.

The DFA official said the president would also discuss with EU leaders the issue of Filipino seafarers who are at risk of losing their jobs after the EU flagged the Philippines for deficiencies in local seafarer training and education.

PHILIPPINE INFORMATION AGENCY

DAR holds agrarian cooperatives summit, promotes digital marketing

By: DAR

MANILA -- Around 200 farmer-members from different agrarian reform beneficiaries organizations (ARBOs) in the MIMAROPA region attended the Department of Agrarian Reform's (DAR) face-to-face and virtual ARBOs Summit held over the weekend.

With the theme "Breaking Barriers Towards Digital Marketing," the summit was organized to impart to the farmers' new trends in agri-business and digital marketing.

"With the boom of online selling, it is time for farmers' products to be available for purchase online. This summit intends to inform them of the advantages of online selling so they can expand their market reach," said Atty. Marvin Bernal, DAR Regional Director for MIMAROPA.

Bernal said the summit supports the advocacy of DAR Secretary Conrado Estrella III to provide farmers with opportunities for learning and to promote unity and cooperation among different cooperatives and organizations.

A forum was held where topics on online selling, product development, business management, and access to digital markets were discussed and imparted to farmers.

Bernal said the event was also an opportunity for the farmers and farmer-leaders to reconnect, expand their knowledge, and share their experiences in enhancing the implementation of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program.

The summit widened the participants' information about the different programs and services offered by the DAR and other partner agencies of the ARBOs.

The participants of the ARBO summit also received updates on land tenure, farm mechanization, solar irrigation projects, livelihood programs, climate change mitigation, and adaptation activities, enterprise development, and credit and microfinance programs, all of which are relevant to the management and operation of their coop enterprises towards poverty alleviation in the countryside.

Invited guest speakers were Joel Valera and Jerica Dalisay, Regional Director of the Department of Information, Communication and Technology-MIMAROPA and CALABARZON respectively; Maria Isabel Pagayona of Department of Trade and Industry; Elmer Relente, owner, Anpilo Agrifarm; Marden de Guzman, owner, Forever Mom Business TV; Heidi Ballesfin, owner, Homegrown organics; and Ace Estrada, co-founder and head, Rural Rising PH.

ARBO members who attended came from the provinces of Mindoro, Marinduque, Romblon, and Palawan.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

[PBBM to raise PH trade preference scheme in talks with EU leaders](#)

By: Azer Parrocha

MANILA – President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. will raise the status of the Philippines' European Union (EU) Generalized Scheme of Preferences Plus (GSP+) in his meetings with EU leaders.

Marcos' meeting with EU leaders will take place on the sidelines of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)-European Union (EU) Commemorative Summit from Dec. 12 to 14.

"We'll bring it up with the EU. I don't think one thing should be related to the other but we'll see," he told reporters onboard a flight to Brussels, Belgium to attend the ASEAN-EU Summit.

Marcos and his delegation will be meeting concerned officials of the European Commission, the European Council and the European Parliament to discuss the country's EU GSP+ privileges.

Last February, the country's GSP+ status faced hurdles following threats from the EU Parliament to temporarily hold trade privileges for the country amid allegations of human rights abuses and lack of press freedom.

In October, the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) said the Philippines will seek to renew its participation in the EU GSP+ and will continue to pursue a free trade agreement (FTA) with the trade bloc.

Trade Secretary Alfredo Pascual said the Philippines has undergone "significant" developments such as a change in government leadership, a shift to a preventive and rehabilitative approach to illegal drugs and a new commitment to work against climate change.

Last month, EU Ambassador Luc Veron said the EU remains interested for an FTA with the Philippines, but the EU has to assess the prospect of resuming the negotiations.

"We look forward to movements by the Philippines implementing its commitments in the GSP+ convention. It is clear that it will make it easier for the EU and the Philippines further assess the prospect of a resumption of the negotiations," Veron said.

The two parties started exploratory talks for a bilateral free trade pact in 2013.

The negotiations for the EU-Philippines FTA started in 2016. The last round of negotiation was held in Cebu City in 2017. Since then, negotiations have been on hiatus.

Under the EU GSP+, the Philippines enjoys a free tariff for 6,274 products entering the EU market.

In return, the Philippines has to adhere to the 27 international conventions on human rights, labor rights, environmental protection and good governance to continue enjoying the trade perks.

The Philippines' participation in the GSP+ will expire in December 2023.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

[SEC fetes sustainability, business, investor champions](#)

MANILA, Philippines — The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) recognized individuals and organizations which have helped the Commission champion the development of the corporate sector and further deepening of the capital markets in its 86th year.

The SEC capped its 86th year with an anniversary celebration and recognition ceremony graced by Finance Secretary Benjamin E. Diokno last November 29 at its new headquarters at 7907 Makati Avenue, Salcedo Village, Bel-Air, Makati City.

In its first face-to-face celebration since the pandemic, the SEC recognized 65 individuals and organizations, both from the public and private sectors, for their contributions in five areas, namely capital market development, sustainability and good corporate governance, investor protection, ease of doing business and organizational development.

The roster of awardees included Secretary Diokno for pushing for and supporting the development of the Philippine capital market through digitalization and strengthened corporate governance.

Other awardees from the government include the Department of Information and Communications Technology, Professional Regulation Commission, Anti-Red Tape Authority, Office of the Solicitor General, Landbank of the Philippines, Government Service Insurance System, Bureau of the Treasury, Civil Service Commission, Commission on Audit, Insurance Commission and Home Mutual Development Fund.

Further, the Commission welcomed seven new partners into the SEC Capital Markets Promotion and Awareness Inter-Agency Network (SEC CAMPAIGN Network). The SEC CAMPAIGN partners help spread the Commission's message of investor education and financial literacy by assisting in its information and education campaigns.

The newest SEC CAMPAIGN Network partners are Alliance of Philippine Partners in Enterprise Development Inc., Microinsurance MBA Association of the Philippines Inc., CFA Society Philippines, Philippine Economic Zone Authority, Department of Interior and Local Government, Philippine Statistics Authority and Cooperative Development Authority.

"We offer our overwhelming victory to the investing Filipinos worldwide, whom we commit to educate and protect in pursuit of the eight-point socio-economic agenda of His Excellency, President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr.," SEC Chairperson Emilio B. Aquino said in his opening remarks during the event.

“Through this ceremony, we share our victory with our stakeholders and partners in the Commission’s successful journey from good to great. Our journey was fueled by our shared passion to create an enabling and secure environment for investing Filipinos. We honor you as our co-champions,” he added.

In its 86th year, the SEC turned more milestones under its SuperVision 2025, a roadmap for the transformation of the Philippine capital market and the broader corporate sector into one of the best in Southeast Asia with the Commission’s driven, highly-trained, agile and customer-centric team of professionals, equipped with digital technology and adaptive registration and data management systems.

Among others, the SEC continued to advance its digital transformation to support and promote sustainability, ease of doing business, capital market development and investor protection.

The SEC has received recognition globally for its initiatives. For one, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development conferred to the Commission its second ISAR Honours for promoting sustainability reporting among Philippine corporations. International Data Corp. also named Mr. Aquino CEO of the Year in the Future of Enterprise Awards 2022 Philippines for steering the Commission toward a digital-first world.

“Over the next few years, the Marcos administration envisions a robust and resilient economy characterized by investment-led growth. To achieve this, we must enhance the local business climate, expand financial inclusion initiatives and ensure that small businesses have better access to financial services in the capital markets,” Sec. Diokno said in his keynote speech during the celebration.

“As we embark on this task, I trust that the SEC will continue to be a strict and responsible regulator and a bold enabler of enterprises. I am confident that the SEC will continue to secure the public’s trust and inspire confidence in our markets,” he concluded.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

PANAY NEWS

[Lifelong service with excellence: A story of Dr. Ju-im Jimlan](#)

A Filipino teacher who embodies exemplary public service, Dr. Ju-im Jimlan has become an agent of positive change. His nineteen years of sustained teaching professionalism made him worthy of prestigious awards.

Equipped with courage, he helped and saved victims of terrorist attacks in Marawi City at a young age. He became a voice for the “bakwit,” or displaced members of society as a result of armed conflicts. Bombs and bullets did not stop his passion to serve the nation, so he became a teacher in Aklan.

When a certain private firm wanted to publish his study under their own authorship in exchange for money, he defended his morals. He was not even spared from near-death experiences that taught him to sanctify his noble profession and convert work into prayers. His integrity as a teacher is par excellence since he has received strong spiritual and personal formation from the prelate of Opus Dei.

Dr. Ju-im Jimlan is an Earth warrior who advocates for an “Education for Sustainable Development” which encourages changes in knowledge, skills, values and attitudes to enable a more sustainable and just society.

He innovated a teaching approach called “TUKLAS-ARAL” that integrated “sciencetoons”, or scientific concepts presented in cartoons, and served as instructional materials incorporating the foundations of environmental protection. TUKLAS-ARAL’s outstanding efforts utilizing “sciencetoons” are in collaboration with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

Learners also do scientific investigatory projects that have won in national and international competitions for five consecutive school years and achieved a “Hall of Fame in Scientific Research” by DepEd Region VI (Western Visayas). Moreover, this accolade made him the 2014 Most Outstanding Coach in Science (National Level) by the Association of Science and Mathematics Coaches (ASMAC) of the Philippines.

He also facilitated the creation of a teaching material called “EARTHAN, The Guardian of Nature”. This made him one of the regional qualifiers for the 2021 Global Leader Awards.

It is a three-part comic book that talks about the challenges of saving the environment from further destruction. The comic book is a convergence of creative arts, culture, social studies, value formation, and issues of global warming and climate change. It was recognized by Climate Change Commission Secretary Emmanuel M. De Guzman, Secretary Leonor Magtolis Briones, and former President Rodrigo Roa Duterte.

The comic book was published for national circulation by LIFE Inc. (Lifelong Initiatives in the Formation of Ecosystems), where Dr. Ju-im Jimlan also served as Program Director. The Universidad de Manila and Filamer Christian University also collaborated with LIFE, Inc. in promoting environmental awareness.

To add to his endeavors, he conceptualized an Eco-School Toolkit that strengthens the establishment of eco-schools and intensifies the core value of “maka-kalikasan“. DepEd Aklan has considered the beneficial effects of implementing the eco-school toolkit in the schools in terms of environmental leadership, ecological resiliency and literacy, and in inculcating a green and sustainable community.

This contribution to service made him a 2021 Global Educator Awardee. This Eco-School Toolkit was also presented at the following: the 24th National Social Welfare and Development Forum and General Assembly; the 18th Annual Green Forum by Green Architecture Advocacy of the Philippines; the 2021 Sustainability Summit Philippines by ACG Human Capital Solutions Inc.; and the 2021 International Conference on Governance and Development by the University of the Philippines Los Baños.

For his belief that education must continue in this global pandemic, he formulated “Modyul Mo, Hatod Ko” in collaboration with DepEd Tangalan, the Local Government Unit (LGU) of Tangalan, and the Tangalan Association of Tricycle Operators and Drivers (TATODA). For this initiative, he was named a Civil Service Commission (CSC) 2021 Dangal ng Bayan Awardee (Regional Qualifier).

It became a recovery program for tricycle drivers who were affected by the pandemic, and at the same time, it encouraged students to stay at home because learning materials were delivered at their doorstep. This also gave birth to Municipal Ordinance No. 147, Series of 2020.

Dr. Ju-im Jimlan also sustained “Innovashare 6.0 – School Supplies Drive from the Heart”.

Meanwhile, as a member of Toastmasters International, it became his duty to share technical expertise in effective communication, confidence building, and leadership. The “I speak, I share, I care project” is a trifocalized initiative conceptualized as a major achievement of the Tangalan Teachers’ League, with him being the president of the organization. Before the pandemic, actress Wilma Dassent also volunteered to lecture on power dressing and collaborated with him in unleashing the inner confidence among teachers, which culminated with a fashion show.

He also spearheaded PUSO (P-provide environmental literacy, U-universal understanding, S- sustained commitment to serve, and O-outreach initiatives) para sa Katutubo, a community project for the Indigenous Peoples in Brgy. Vivo Tangalan, Aklan. For him, this is the most challenging endeavor since he needs to take a long walk in the mountains and cross rivers just to be with the beneficiaries. The community

services he provided made him one of Aklans' Ten Outstanding Mentors (ATOM) Awardees in 2017.

To add to his list of public service efforts, he crafted the "Self-Learning Resiliency Kit for Parents" which promotes flexibility, involvement, and resiliency among parents as partners in promoting education in the new normal. One of the outstanding outgrowths of the kit was the organization of a medical mission with doctors, nurses, and dentists from South Korea.

Meanwhile, he is also the brains behind the creation of "COVID ka lang, Tangalanon Kami Project". Even prior to COVID-19, parents participate in capability seminars and workshops because Dr. Ju-im Jimlan believes that parents are the primary educators of their children and there should be sustainable home-school collaboration.

This community project got him the 2021 Most Outstanding COVID-19 Resiliency Award at the International Level. Furthermore, the action research was recognized as the best research paper and presenter at the 2021 Singapore Royal Institution, as well as the best abstract and presenter at the 2021 International Research Colloquium.

With all these remarkable contributions to service and the community, he demonstrated transformational leadership and translated visions into action.

For Dr. Ju-im Jimlan, excellence is never an accident; it is the result of pure intention, persevering effort, intelligent direction, skillful execution, spiritual discernment, and the vision to see obstacles as opportunities.

THE MANILA TIMES

[Philippines on green building](#)

By: Arch. Kayla Garcia and Arch. Agustin Opay

"I saw that by cleaning one Estero, that life changed. If there's an impact on human life, I get excited, because I feel that that's what we're all about. And that's why I love the environment: because of its massive, direct impact on human life" – Gina Lopez on how even small things for the environment can make a big impact.

CITIES continue to grow as civilization progresses and whether directly or indirectly, this has a tremendous impact on the welfare of the planet. From a research by the construction blog Bimhow, on a global scale, "the construction sector contributes to 23 percent of air pollution, 50 percent of the climatic change, 40 percent of drinking water pollution and 50 percent of landfill wastes."

Construction is inevitable as building and infrastructure development concurs with economic progress, which emphasizes a viable tradeoff to the planet's welfare. Rapid urbanization in the Philippines has created opportunities in the economic sector, which has led to a demand for building constructions to cater to the needs of various industries, including commercial, industrial, infrastructure and even residential for employees. The construction industry in the Philippines grew with the highest growth rate among the other industries for the second quarter of 2021 at 25.7 percent. Sustainability was already a thing in the Philippines in the early part of the century. However, environmental sustainability and user health were not as prioritized as economic sustainability but with the current Covid-19 pandemic, the demand for healthier buildings has increased in support of the "new normal." In fact, 7 in 10 businesses across the Asia Pacific are willing to pay more rent for green buildings.

In 2015, the United Nations adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), also known as the Global Goals, "a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the environment and ensure that by 2030, all people enjoy peace and prosperity." The rise of green building development in the Philippines demonstrates the country's dedication and commitment to supporting the UN SDGs.

Green building in the Philippines

One of the most notable examples of the Philippines' advancement in green building is the Green Building Code of the Philippines (GBCP), which was enacted in 2015. The GBCP requires all new buildings to meet standards for energy efficiency, water conservation and materials selection. The code is a powerful tool in successfully reducing emissions and conserving resources.

The Philippine government's commitment to green building would have a positive impact on the country's economy and the environment with their objective to reduce 70 percent of greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 through the approved National

Determined Contribution, or the NDC, over the 2020-2023 period. Then-Finance secretary Carlos Dominguez 3rd, chairman-designate to the Climate Change Commission, also stated that this would be a tool to upgrade the country's economy by adopting modern and low-carbon technologies and approaches that would help mitigate the climate crisis and make the economy more resilient and our growth sustainable. The government has also established some incentives for builders to construct green structures, such as tax reductions and expedited approvals.

As the country strives to achieve its objective of becoming a more sustainable nation, this commitment is anticipated to keep increasing in the years to come. The Philippines now showcases innovative and sustainable LEED (Leadership in Environmental Engineering and Design) buildings. From the first LEED-certified project in the Philippines, Texas Instruments Philippines-Baguio, achieving Silver Certification under the rating system LEED BD+C: New Construction in 2006, building owners and project developers carry on the value of a championing sustainable environment. Various rating systems have been adopted as a result of its exponential growth over the years, including 278 LEED BD+C (Building Design and Construction), 65 LEED ID+C (Interior Design and Construction) and some LEED homes, operations and maintenance, neighborhood development and even the new cities. These developments range to different project types such as new construction, core and shell, schools, retail, data centers, warehouse and distribution centers, hospitality, homes and more.

In 2015, the Philippines had the second highest number of LEED-certified projects in Asia, with a total of 36 projects. Today, with a total of 182 LEED-certified projects and 185 registered projects over the course of 13 years, green buildings in the Philippines are exponentially growing.

One exemplary project in the Philippines is the Zuellig Building, which is the first office tower in the country to be certified as Platinum under LEED BD+C: Core and Shell v2.0. The country also achieved, in April 2020, the first LEED Platinum-certified single-detached family home (YY) house, which is also the first award in Southeast Asia.

An industry leader in the local banking sector, UnionBank Philippines demonstrated its commitment to sustainability by pursuing LEED certifications. It currently has 32 branches with LEED certification awards, making them the largest portfolio in Southeast Asia for LEED ID+C Retail projects.

2022 building certifications

International and local green building certifications in the Philippines remain on the rise. Project owners have a variety of options for rating systems that will demonstrate their leadership in the market. While there have been newly developed local rating systems, LEED still dominates taking up 53.3 percent of total green building projects following Berde (Building for Ecologically Responsive Design Excellence) with 14.7 percent.

LEED projects account for most of the green building projects in the Philippines, at 53.3 percent. It is followed by Berde with 14.7 percent, then Green (Geared for Resiliency and Energy Efficiency for the Environment) with 12.1 percent, WELL (Health and Wellness Rating System) shares 11.8 percent and EDGE with 8.1 percent.

Berde of the Philippine Green Building Council has 101 registered projects. Laguna Lake Development Authority Building is one of the first certified Berde buildings in 2016, certified with a Berde 3-Star rating.

Philippine green building initiative's Green has 83 registered projects with the National Museum of Natural History as one of the Green-certified buildings.

Only one project has achieved WELL certification to date, but there are currently 67 WELL Health-Safety Rated projects.

The IFC of the World Bank Group introduced the EDGE (Excellence in Design for Greater Efficiency), and there are now 56 projects with EDGE certification, the majority of them being residential and office buildings.

Sustainability professionals

With the demand for sustainable building developments, professionals also engage in getting their accreditation to ride the market trend. For international accreditations in the Philippines, there are currently 91 LEED green associates, 117 LEED-accredited professionals with specialty — under different rating systems, and 15 LEED consultants, 25 WELL-accredited professionals and 31 EDGE experts, while Berde also records 994 certified Berde professionals, 75 certified Berde assessors and 120 fellowships.

Sustainability has now been transitioning to become a standard practice in our construction industry even leading to the transformation of the local markets and manufacturers to cater to the demand for compliant materials. The surge of people having their credentials on different green building certifications, and the recognition from USGBC this 2022, for the first LEED fellow from the Philippines, Arch. Alvin P Tejada of APTCS Group has been a breakthrough for our country.

In its most basic form, green building is the method of creating buildings and using methodologies that are environmentally responsible and resource-efficient throughout the life cycle of a building — from design to operation, maintenance, repair and demolition. This means that we must always be mindful of how our actions affect the environment. There are several strategies for making buildings more sustainable, and we can only hope that as green building becomes more prominent in the Philippines, more individuals will begin to follow these practices.

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