



## NEWS ROUNDUP

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By: Hannah Alcoseba Fernandez

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**[CSOs to Philippine delegation: Push back vs 'unacceptable' COP28 draft text](#)**

By: Gaea Katreena Cabico

Climate and clean energy campaigners called on the Philippine delegation at the COP28 climate talks to push back against a draft deal that stopped short of calling for a phase-out of planet-warming fossil fuels.

**Information and Knowledge Management Division**

## ECO BUSINESS

### [‘Hold the line’: Civil society leaders make last push for Philippine COP28 delegation to adopt stronger stance on fossil fuels phase-out](#)

By: Hannah Alcoseba Fernandez

In the remaining hours of COP28 negotiations, Filipino civil society leaders have urged the Philippine delegation to come out with a stronger position on phasing out fossil fuels, as they believe its voice can be instrumental in the final decision that global leaders will take.

The United Nation’s climate body published on Monday its latest draft text on what is known as the global stocktake – a crucial part of this year’s COP talks that assesses where the world is at with its climate goals and how it can reach them.

The watered-down draft, with its latest revision, no longer contains any mention of a “phase-out” of fossil fuels, stating only that all consumption and production of the dirty fuels should be reduced.

“At this critical time, we urge the Philippine delegation to exhaust all means to push back and hold the line. Not doing so falls short of the climate leadership exhibited by the Philippine climate movement [and] is a disgrace to all victims of climate disasters and an abandonment of [the] 1.5°C [goal],” said Gerry Arances, convenor of Power for People Coalition (P4P), a network of civil society organisations, communities and cooperatives that rally against pollutive fuels.

Past experience shows that the Philippines doing so can make a difference. Arances highlighted how the Philippines has been instrumental in asserting loss and damage reparations and the delivery of resources owed to vulnerable peoples at COP19 in Warsaw, Poland in 2013, at the height of Typhoon Haiyan, the deadliest cyclone to hit the Philippines.

It was in that conference where Naderev Saño, the Philippines lead negotiator and the country’s climate change commissioner, said he was embarking on a fast for the duration of the two-week negotiations, until meaningful pledges were made on climate finance, a loss and damage mechanism agreed on and other action taken.

The Philippines also led vulnerable countries in fighting to have the 1.5°C goal in the Paris Agreement in 2015. It was when the head of delegation Emmanuel De Guzman asserted that there would be no accord without a reference to the 1.5°C goal in the draft agreement. Then, there were interventions to have the warming limit set at a higher threshold of 2°C, which the Philippines found unacceptable.

Krishna Ariola, co-founder of Youth for Climate Hope, a grassroots youth-led movement for climate action, said the Philippine voice this time round is not as convincing as it was in past conferences.

“It is crucial for the Philippines to add its voice and continue to build pressure in prioritising putting that language into text because it is very decisive in what could happen,” Ariola said, referring to clearly including the call for a “phase-out” of fossil fuels in the global stocktake agreement. “The Philippines must weigh in [with its views] and take on an instrumental role as it did in Warsaw and in Paris.”

The draft text is currently being discussed by government officials behind closed doors. The deadline for a conclusion is Tuesday morning but COP talks can often overrun.

COP28 President Sultan Al Jaber told the nearly 200 countries at the talks to ramp up efforts to finalise a deal ahead of the scheduled close of the conference on Tuesday: “You know what remains to be agreed. And you know that I want you to deliver the highest ambition on all items, including on fossil fuel language. If I can help, my door remains wide open to all of you. You have already shown what a different mindset and a flexible approach can deliver.”

‘Nothing to lose’

So far, the Philippines has not provided clear wording for its stance on fossil fuels.

In its country intervention delivered at the COP28 plenary meeting last Friday, environment secretary and head of delegation Ma Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga said: “We must take into consideration the historical responsibility on greenhouse gas emissions and the needed deep and rapid cuts towards limiting global warming consistent with the Paris Agreement.”

Unlike emerging economies like China and Saudi Arabia which are opposing a phase-out mention in the text, the Philippines has “nothing to lose” as its economy is not fossil fuels-based, said Arances.

“The indecisiveness of the Philippines delegation on the issue of a fossil fuel phase-out is reflective of the government’s policy incoherence,” he said at a live press briefing, expressing his disappointment that the Philippines has not taken a clearer line in supporting stronger anti-fossil fuel language. “We are touted as one of the countries in the world with some of the best environmental and climate change laws, but fossil fuels still dominate in our energy plans.

Ian Rivera, national coordinator of the Philippine Movement for Climate Justice, an alliance of 150 national civil society networks, urged Loyzaga not to “leave it all up to” the department of energy to decide on the country’s energy transition especially since the country’s energy plan does not contain mentions of a coal phase-out.

In a television interview on Saturday, Loyzaga was asked if the Philippines was signing the pledge to drive adoption of renewables and energy efficiency initiatives at the COP28 climate summit.

“I think the energy situation for every country is unique and we defer to the position of the department of energy on where we should be taking ourselves in terms of the pace and the trajectory of our renewable energy transition. They understand the big picture, as well as the implications on the ground in terms of our own capability in managing the transition,” Loyzaga said.

The Global Renewables And Energy Efficiency pledge calls for a global effort to triple renewable energy capacity to at least 11 terawatts by 2030, and to double the rate of energy efficiency improvements, without mandating such targets on individual countries. It has been signed by 123 countries, including Southeast Asian economies like Thailand, Brunei, Malaysia and Singapore.

## **GMA NEWS**

### **DOST: 65 provinces could experience drought in 2024**

By: Anna Felicia Bajo

At least 65 provinces in the Philippines could experience drought by next year, Science and Technology Secretary Renato Solidum Jr. said Tuesday.

"Based on recent conditions, moderate to severe drought conditions are likely from February to May 2024. And by end of May, there would be 77% of the provinces of the country will have potential for drought that would be around 65 provinces and 7% potential for dry spell or around six provinces," Solidum said at a press briefing.

"And because of this, we need to further intensify our efforts to make sure that we are ready for this especially on the various fields that were already mentioned like health, water, agriculture, sanitation, and of course, peace and order; and we also need to involve everyone in this effort," he added.

The DOST chief, however, did not name the affected provinces.

Solidum said the DOST-PAGASA issued on December 6 El Niño Advisory No. 6 which states that a strong El Niño is present in the tropical Pacific and this has further intensified, nearing its peak in the coming months as the sea surface temperature anomalies have reached more than 1.5 degrees centigrade.

"Aside from that, majority of global climate model suggests that El Niño likely persists until the second quarter of 2024," he said.

The El Niño phenomenon is characterized by the abnormal warming of sea surface temperature in the central and eastern equatorial Pacific Ocean and below normal rainfall.

Solidum also said the effects of El Niño are currently felt and they have been experienced in some areas in the country, noting that this is characterized by the reduction of rainfall up to 80% which led to dry conditions or dry spells.

He explained that dry spells are episodes where there is 21% to 80% reduction of rainfall compared to the average normal months data.

Fewer storms

Below normal also would be the number of tropical cyclones in the previous months and this has contributed to persistence of dry conditions in some areas, Solidum said.

The Philippines has so far endured fewer storms in 2023 than in any of the past 25 years, PAGASA officials said according to a report on Agence France-Presse.

The Philippines is usually affected by around 20 major storms a year. So far this year, only 10 have made landfall or come close, the lowest number since 1998 when 11 were recorded, said PAGASA chief climatologist Ana Solis.

With less than three weeks of the year left, "it looks like the record will be beaten," Solis told AFP, adding that climate change was "probably" a factor.

The Philippines began keeping weather records in 1948, Solis said.



## JOURNAL

### [Envi group tells CHed, DepEd: 'Solarize our schools'](#)

As the international climate negotiations wrap up tomorrow, climate justice advocates submitted a position paper to the Commission on Higher Education (CHed) and the Department of Education (DepEd) on Monday, asserting the need for the education sector to play a leading role in Philippine efforts to mitigate global climate change.

Stewards and Volunteers for the Earth Philippines (SAVE PH), a youth ecological organization advocating for drastic action to limit anthropogenic climate change, called on education agencies to issue a directive to all school owners and administrators to install solar panels in their campuses.

“As the youth, we will inherit a world ravaged by extreme weather and rising temperatures from previous generations,” Zyoen Garcia, SAVE PH lead convenor, stated.

“We thus have the biggest responsibility to act, and advocate action, against climate change, and we need to work with our educational institutions to win this fight,” she added.

In its position paper, SAVE PH advocated to “solarize our schools,” or to transition all schools from relying on fossil fuels to shift to solar energy and other renewable forms.

The group emphasized the urgency for government agencies and educational institutions to lead in mitigating the impacts of climate change as national emission targets fall short of what is needed to avert climate change.

SAVE PH cited the successful efforts of the local government of Makati City and Catanduanes State University that have installed solar panels in their campuses.

“With the amount of sunlight that the Philippines receives, it is a no-brainer for us to start ramping up our reliance on solar energy in particular,” Garcia asserted.

“Besides building awareness and educating the general public, schools in particular could benefit immensely from being powered by the sun that they are constantly exposed to, especially during the summer months,” she added.

The group claimed that, apart from decreasing the reliance on fossil fuels, the shift would lessen the exorbitant fees paid by students upon enrollment.

“Schools’ energy costs tend to be passed along to students through tuition and other fees (TOFIs), and as energy costs rise, so does tuition,” Garcia stressed.

“Renewables have been proven to be cheaper than fossil fuels time and time again, so this shift would secure our futures not only in terms of the climate, but in terms of our own financial prospects,” she added.

SAVE PH vowed to continue to fight for a greater role for the youth in addressing the climate emergency, noting that the Philippines remains to be among the most vulnerable to climate change.

“This climate emergency is literally going to kill us all if we do not act now, and solarizing our schools is only the first step to educating the youth, increasing our role in reducing emissions to stay under the 1.5°C threshold before the impacts of climate change become irreversible,” she concluded.

## NIKKEI ASIA

### [COP28 draft text drops 'phaseout' of fossil fuels to outcry](#)

By: Rhyannon Bartlett-Imadegawa and Sayumi Take

A draft text released by the United Nations climate conference in Dubai on Monday failed to include a "phaseout" of fossil fuels that U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres had urged and that many countries wanted.

Nations now might fail to unanimously endorse a gradual end to fossil fuel use, an action key to limiting global warming below the tipping point of 1.5 degrees C above preindustrial levels, the latest draft text indicates. The COP28 climate summit is due to conclude on Tuesday, though it has run over in the past.

The draft text outlining the state of play in negotiations called for "reducing both consumption and production of fossil fuels ... so as to achieve net zero by, before, or around 2050 in keeping with the science."

On coal, the dirtiest of fossil fuels, parties are urged to "rapidly phas[e] down unabated coal" and limit "new and unabated coal power generation."

The level of intensity and ambition with which the world should address use of fossil fuels, a major source of carbon, has been a key sticking point in the dayslong debate. Guterres said earlier on Monday that COP28's success hinges on whether nations can reach agreement on the need to "phase out" fossil fuels, even if it means moving at different paces.

"If we do not have strong mitigation outcomes at this cop ... then this will be the COP where 1.5 would've died," said Toeolesulusulu Cedric Schuster, a Samoan minister, in reaction to the draft text.

"We will not sign our death certificates. We cannot sign on to text that does not have strong commitments on phasing out fossil fuels," said Schuster, who is also chair of the Alliance of Small Island States, one of the groups most vulnerable to climate change. "The current decision is not going to keep us alive."

The European Union also was quick to express disappointment at the "clearly insufficient" text.

"Overall, it is clearly insufficient, and not adequate to addressing the problem," Wopke Hoekstra, European commissioner for climate action, told a press briefing. "Scientists

are crystal clear about what is needed. And on the top of that list is phasing out fossil fuel."

Catherine Abreu, founder and executive director of Destination Zero, a group of nonprofit organizations focused on climate issues, agreed the text did not go far enough.

"The science of 1.5 degrees tells us that we need to significantly reduce supply and demand of fossil fuels in this decade," she said. Mentioning fossil fuels in the text is "an incremental step forward. But the historic result that we're looking for here is the agreement to phase out fossil fuels."

But COP28 President Sultan Ahmed al-Jaber called the text "a huge step forward." Some experts cautiously agreed that the inclusion of fossil fuel in the text at all is welcome.

Glada Lahn, senior research fellow of the Environment and Society Centre at U.K. think tank Chatham House, said: "It was 26 [COP climate summits] before 'coal' got its first mention -- in 2021 in Glasgow. Oil and gas have until now remained absent."

Yet Lahn also said she expected resistance on the text as many countries had explicitly called for a phaseout of fossil fuels to be included.

David Waskow, director of the International Climate Initiative, part of nonprofit organization World Resources Institute, said the summit was "unprecedented" because discussion had centered around fossil fuels for the first time, but he added that "clear signals" needed to avert the climate crisis were missing.

The draft text will continue to be negotiated through the night, but so far it offers only one option -- unlike previous versions at this summit -- with no inclusion of "phasing out" as a possibility. The text also encouraged rapid deployment of abatement and removal technologies such as carbon capture and utilization and storage.

The climate summit started on Nov. 30, and negotiators seek an agreement ahead of its conclusion on Tuesday. Some participants expect a new version of the text to be produced by Tuesday morning, although the event appears likely to continue beyond its scheduled end.

Hoekstra vowed the EU will "talk as long as necessary."

"We will do everything we can to continue the conversation and make sure we do get in there what is right," he said.

More than 800 leaders in business, academia, philanthropy and politics had signed an open letter to Jaber, who also heads United Arab Emirates national oil company Abu Dhabi National Oil Co. (ADNOC), calling for "the strongest possible outcome," including an "orderly phase-out of all fossil fuels in a just and equitable way."

## [\[Opinion\] Japan's 'green' aid for ASEAN is more about money than climate](#)

By: Raoul Manuel

This week, the leaders of Japan and ASEAN member states will celebrate 50 years of "golden friendship" together in Tokyo.

This year also has its share of sad anniversaries to mark. For one, it is the 10th anniversary of Typhoon Haiyan. The storm, known in the Philippines as Typhoon Yolanda, killed over 6,000 Filipinos.

Extreme events like Haiyan are becoming common in Southeast Asia due to the climate crisis. Scientists say they will become even more catastrophic if the world does not limit the rise in global temperatures to below 1.5 C and cut emissions to net zero by 2050.

Through its close relationship with ASEAN countries, Japan is promoting what it labels as climate technologies in Southeast Asia under the guise of decarbonization. However, while Japan says it wants to help ASEAN countries reach net zero, its money has not been walking the talk.

Between 2016 and 2022, Japan was the second-biggest financier of gas expansion in Southeast Asia, spending approximately \$15 billion, according to research by the Center for Energy, Ecology, and Development in Manila.

In February, Japan's cabinet approved the Green Transformation Policy under which Tokyo will seek to mobilize 150 trillion yen (\$1 trillion) in public and private financing for, ostensibly, decarbonization and supporting Asia's energy transition.

However, the plan relies heavily on gas and fossil fuel-based technologies, such as carbon capture, usage and storage (CCUS), ammonia and hydrogen. The adoption of these technologies could make the 1.5 C target unattainable for Asia.

Yet even though the exploitation of existing oil and gas fields could already push the world beyond 1.5 C, Japan is actively supporting the building of infrastructure to support additional gas demand around Asia. This will support the interests of Japanese companies like Mitsubishi Heavy Industries, a major producer of gas turbines.

In a similar way, Japan's support for CCUS is also questionable. Even as the technology's effectiveness remains unproven, its adoption is facilitating the expansion of oil and gas extraction rather than reducing carbon emissions. Mitsui & Co. is among the Japanese companies involved with bringing this technology to places like Malaysia.

Japan's promotion of technologies to allow coal-fired power plants to be partly fueled with ammonia bears scrutiny too. Ammonia co-firing is more expensive than solar or wind power and less helpful in eliminating emissions. Yet companies like JERA are pushing forward with introducing ammonia in plants in Thailand, the Philippines and Malaysia.

To survive the climate crisis, Asia desperately needs to move from its existing energy systems, which are largely fossil fuel-based, to solar and wind. Some experts here in the Philippines believe we can phase out fossil fuels by 2040 and shift to 100% renewable-based energy by 2050.

At the current U.N. Climate Change Conference in Dubai, participants have joined to pledge to seek to triple renewable energy globally by 2030 to keep the 1.5 C target in reach. But solar and wind currently comprise only 5% of total power generation in ASEAN countries. To meet the 1.5 C target, the figure needs to rise to 23% by 2030.

The good news is that over 99% of solar and wind potential in ASEAN remains untapped. The bad news is that spending to tap this capacity is lagging far behind, with less than \$8 billion invested annually between 2016 and 2021.

If Japan wants to show true friendship to ASEAN, it should redirect its investment in fossil fuels, which amounts to around \$6.9 billion a year on average worldwide, toward renewable energy in Southeast Asia.

If this does not happen and the temperature rise in Asia exceeds 1.5 C, the consequences will be dire. Heat waves, wildfires, floods and droughts will become more frequent and intense and irreparable damage to our ecosystems and lives will inevitably ensue.

In the Philippines, rampant gas development in the Verde Island Passage south of Luzon Island already threatens the habitat of over 1,700 shore fish species and the livelihoods of over 2 million Filipinos. We cannot afford to continue consuming fossil fuels and delay pursuing renewables.

As one of the world's top economies, Japan bears a historical responsibility for the climate devastation experienced by local communities around Asia. This responsibility includes providing financial support for developing countries in their energy transition without burdening them with debt.

However, most of the money that Japan and other advanced nations involved in the Just Energy Transition Partnerships for Indonesia and Vietnam are planning to provide is set to be in the form of loans.

Such lending will create a repayment and interest burden that these developing countries will have to shoulder for years to come. The aid should really be provided in the form of grants in acknowledgment of the responsibility of developed countries, which historically produced the most emissions.

At this week's summit, ASEAN politicians should not fall for Japan's guise of friendship. They should reject Japan's fossil fuel-based technologies and ask Tokyo to step up and show climate leadership by pushing its money toward renewable energy. This is a strategy that would actually align with the 1.5 C target and give Southeast Asia its best shot at avoiding further climate disasters.



## PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

### Winning the war vs climate change

The battle against climate change will be won or lost in Asia and the Pacific and nowhere is this more evident than in the Philippines.”

Thus said Asian Development Bank (ADB) president Masatsugu Asakawa last week upon unveiling a six-year, \$10-billion climate financing program which the country will be able to access to support programs that will help it meet its climate action commitments made a few years ago.

No truer words have been spoken. The Philippines is at the forefront of the fight against climate change in a region where its effects are most pronounced and where millions of lives are affected daily, and thousands lost every so often to the devastating upheavals in weather patterns.

#### Expensive undertaking

In theory, ADB’s program will support low-carbon transport, renewable energy, the development of carbon markets, flood management, resilient coastal development, food security and adaptive health, and social protection. The lender will also help mobilize additional climate finance from the private sector, cofinancing partners, and other sources.

In practice, the challenge is much more intractable, as Philippine policymakers face a multitude of obstacles in their fight against climate change, not least of which is the fact that doing the right thing in this arena is often an expensive undertaking.

Take the case of the local power sector which is still dominated by coal as the primary fuel for the country’s largest producers of electricity.

It is easy to call for all power generation companies to shift to coal, and issuing statements to this effect even more so. But shifting to renewable energy costs money—money that will ultimately be charged to consumers directly or indirectly via taxes if the preferred mode of support is government subsidies.

#### Shift away from cheap coal

Even the Department of Energy which recently called for power firms to “voluntarily” shift away from cheap coal as a fuel for power plants conceded that it is wary of further burdening consumers—still struggling with the after-effects of the COVID-19 pandemic

and high inflation—with the “transition costs” associated with renewable energy, whether it be solar, wind, or other forms of power.

Another example is the Philippines’ transportation sector where thousands of jeepney drivers and operators have been opposing government plans to modernize their vehicles from current diesel-burning units that spew black smoke into the atmosphere into more efficient models that run on cleaner fuel, including vehicles powered by electric motors.

Their complaint is primarily one of cost, and yes, their complaint is valid. But equally valid (if not more so) is the need to protect the environment by shifting to greener modes of transportation and lessening dependence on fossil fuels. The private sector must work in this direction.

### Saving the planet

Power and transportation are but two of many examples where this debate is being played out in full force, with both sides having compelling arguments.

But perhaps the better way of framing the debate is identifying which valid arguments are oriented toward short-term concerns and which are meant to address long-term ones. And in all cases, arguments in favor of short-term benefits to be derived from the status quo must give way to long-term gains that can be won by committing to climate-oriented reforms.

The challenge is for all leaders in the public and private sectors to sell the idea to the broader public—all the way to the individual consumer—that saving the planet and securing our collective future is an expensive undertaking whose tab we must all pick up.

In this regard, policymakers must take their cue from Environment Secretary Ma. Antonio Yulo-Loyzaga—who led the Philippine delegation to the COP28—for her science- and evidence-based approach to the country’s environmental challenges, and eschewing the dogmatic mindset used in the past.

### Time is of the essence

If this war against climate change is to be won, it will be won by level-headed leaders who speak in measured voices to bring all stakeholders to a point of consensus, instead of ideologues who embrace tightly the truths of only one side to the exclusion of other equally important truths of all other stakeholders.

Now that funds are being made available to finance climate change action and mitigation, the government must focus these resources on clear programs that will have the most short- or long-term impacts and which would make a difference in the lives of the most vulnerable.

No less than the ADB has noted that the Philippines was ranked fourth in the Global Climate Risk Index in terms of vulnerability to extreme weather from 2000 to 2019. In all likelihood, it will only get worse in the future. Thus, time is of the essence.

To protect the Philippines from climate change and to save our planet from catastrophe, total buy-in from everyone is needed. Selling this idea to the people is the goal that our leaders—from President Marcos, all the way down to the humblest barangay captain—must commit to.

The best time to start was yesterday. The second best time is now.

## THE MANILA TIMES

### [SEC launches blue bonds in the Philippines](#)

By: Kelvin Lester Lee

The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) on Dec. 5, 2023 hosted with the Asian Development Bank (ADB), in partnership with the British Embassy Manila and the Asean Catalytic Green Finance Facility, an event to officially launch blue bonds in the Philippines following the issuance on Sept. 21, 2023 of SEC Memorandum Circular 15, Series of 2023, providing for guidelines on eligible blue projects and activities for the issuance of blue bonds in the Philippines.

Asean is the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

The event titled "Advancing the Role of Capital Markets in Financing the Philippines' Blue Economy" aimed to encourage companies to raise funds through capital market channels through various presentations and panel sessions on topics relating to the potential of blue bonds in the Philippines. The event also became an opportunity for participants to discuss among peers the opportunities and challenges to financing investments into the blue economy.

The launch was opened by SEC Chairman Emilio Aquino, British Embassy Economic and Climate Counselor Lloyd Cameron, and ADB Director for the Finance Sector Office Emma Fan. This was followed by presentations from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and the Bureau of Treasury on the Philippines' strategies and priorities in harnessing blue economy potential and sovereign blue financing, among others.

I, on the other hand, shared about the primary motivation for the SEC to issue the guidelines, its interoperability with existing international frameworks and guidance, and the salient points of the guidelines. I also called upon the participants of the event to work together in order to meet our climate targets by directing or redirecting finance into ocean-based climate change mitigation efforts.

The panel sessions were moderated by the ADB and engaged in discussions on the opportunities, best practices and frontline experiences of experts in their respective fields in relation to financing the sustainable blue economy. One panel session was moderated by Fan. Under her moderation, the panel discussed the firsthand experience of investors in relation to their key considerations for investing in the sustainable blue economy and the way forward for blue bond investment in the Philippines.

Scott Roberts, ADB head of the Green Finance Hub Unit of its Southeast Asia Department, presented the Blue SEA (Southeast Asia) Finance Hub and the GSS+ Bonds Initiative in Southeast Asia of the ADB as a possible means of scaling up blue finance in the Philippines.

The rest of the event gave the opportunity for over 100 government officials, financial market regulators and private sector representatives to share with each other opportunities for collaboration and how to move forward in the sustainable finance space.

The event was part of the SEC's commitment to fostering dialogue with international and local stakeholders as part of the dedication to the global movement toward a more sustainable and responsible business landscape in the Philippines.

## THE PHILIPPINE STAR

### [CSOs to Philippine delegation: Push back vs 'unacceptable' COP28 draft text](#)

By: Gaea Katreena Cabico

Climate and clean energy campaigners called on the Philippine delegation at the COP28 climate talks to push back against a draft deal that stopped short of calling for a phase-out of planet-warming fossil fuels.

A draft of the potential COP28 climate deal released Monday included options countries could take to reduce emissions, but did not include a phase-out of fossil fuels, disappointing climate campaigners, the United States, the European Union, and low-lying islands most vulnerable to climate change.

The groups said the Philippines, which has traditionally played a vital role in United Nations climate negotiations, should actively advocate for a swift and equitable fossil fuel phase-out as COP28 heads into the final stretch.

“At this critical time, we urge the Philippine delegation to exhaust all means to push back and hold the line,” Center for Energy, Ecology, and Development executive director Gerry Arances said.

He noted the Philippines “bravely battled and emerged victorious” in advocating for the global goal of limiting warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius in the Paris Agreement, and in asserting loss and damage reparations and the delivery of resources owed to climate-vulnerable countries.

“Its failure to assert greater ambition in the outcome of the global stocktake is a regression on that. Not doing so falls short of the climate leadership exhibited by the Philippine climate movement, is a disgrace to all victims of climate disasters, and is an abandonment of 1.5°C,” Arances added.

In a briefing organized by civil society groups present at the COP28 talks in Dubai, Philippine Movement for Climate Justice national coordinator Ian Rivera expressed concern that there seems to be a lack of clarity from the Philippine delegation on fossil fuel phase-out.

“It’s important for the Philippine government to be clear and put pressure,” Rivera said.

‘Death sentence’

COP28 president Sultan Al Jaber released a text aimed at bringing consensus between nearly 200 countries, which include Saudi Arabia and other oil and gas producers seeking to preserve their economic lifeblood.

But for John Silk, Marshall Islands' minister of natural resources and commerce, the draft deal is "unacceptable." Climate change threatens the very existence of residents of small-island states like the Marshall Islands.

"We will not go silently to our watery graves. We will not accept an outcome that will lead to devastation for our country, and for millions if not billions of the most vulnerable people and communities," Silk said.

Krishna Ariola, lead convenor of Negros-based Youth for Climate Hope, called the text a "death sentence to vulnerable peoples."

"But movements won across the globe have shown that the fight for survival will continue to intensify. There is no road to take for those most affected by this crisis, except toward a victory that includes real solutions, with no one left behind."

According to the draft agreement, actions that countries can take include "reducing both consumption and production of fossil fuels, in a just, orderly and equitable manner so as to achieve net zero by, before, or around 2050 in keeping with the science."

The COP28 text also called for accelerating the deployment of zero- and low-emission technologies, including renewables, nuclear power and carbon capture and storage "so as to enhance efforts towards substitution of unabated fossil fuels in energy systems."

**=END=**