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By: Allison Chinchar

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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By: Zeus Legaspi

Filipino climate and fisherfolk activists who addressed the United Nations 28th Conference of Parties (COP28) in Dubai expressed disappointment at the result of the two-week summit on Wednesday.

THE MANILA TIMES

[\[Opinion\] Art and climate change](#)

By: Jan Lundius

A dark cloud is hovering above human existence. It is a fairly illusory cloud haunting our minds and well-being, but also an actual, menacing, mostly invisible cloud that covers the Earth's entire atmosphere. Saturated by greenhouse gases, this global threat increases with every year, threatening all life on Earth, causing increased flooding, extreme heat, drought, wildfires, rising sea levels, food and water scarcity, as well as diseases and mounting economic loss. This misery, caused by human greed, thoughtlessness and self-aggrandizement, triggers human migration and armed conflicts.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

[Groups say COP28 deal a start, but not enough for climate-vulnerable nations](#)

By: Gaea Katreena Cabico

The deal struck at the COP28 climate summit was seen as the beginning of the end of the fossil fuel era, but campaigners from at-risk countries like the Philippines stressed that far more action is needed to avert the worst impacts of climate change.

[Philippines records fewer storms, faces worst drought in decades](#)

The Philippines has so far endured fewer storms in 2023 than in any of the past 25 years and now faces potentially the worst drought in decades, officials said Tuesday.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

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Deforestation continues to be a threat to the country's agricultural sector, water security, and biodiversity, further exacerbated by both man-made activities and climate-induced calamities. Around 10 million hectares of forests in the Philippines have been lost due to both natural and man-made factors in the last 100 years. Data shows that as of 2020, 7.226 million hectares or 24.2% of the country's land area remained forested.

Information and Knowledge Management Division

CNN

[Scientists uncover a surprising phenomenon in the Himalayas that might be slowing the effects of climate change](#)

By: Allison Chinchar

Glaciers in the Himalayas are melting rapidly, but a new report showed an astonishing phenomenon in the world's tallest mountain range could be helping to slow the effects of the global climate crisis.

When warming temperatures hit certain high-altitude ice masses, it sets off a surprising reaction that blows robust cold winds down the slopes, according to the study published December 4 in the journal Nature Geoscience.

The warming climate creates a greater temperature gap between the surrounding air above Himalayan glaciers and the cooler air directly in contact with the ice masses' surface, explained Francesca Pellicciotti, professor of glaciology at the Institute of Science and Technology Austria and lead author of the study.

"This leads to an increase in turbulent heat exchange at the glacier's surface and stronger cooling of the surface air mass," she said in a news release.

As the cool, dry surface air gets cooler and denser, it sinks. The air mass flows down the slopes into the valleys, causing a cooling effect in the glaciers' lower areas and neighboring ecosystems.

With ice and snow from the mountain range feeding into 12 rivers that provide fresh water to nearly 2 billion people in 16 countries, it's important to find out whether the Himalayan glaciers can keep up this self-preserving cooling effect as the region faces a likely rise in temperatures over the next few decades.

Glacier melt

A June report previously covered by CNN showed that glaciers in the Himalayas melted 65% faster in the 2010s compared with the previous decade, which suggests rising temperatures are already having an impact in the area.

"The main impact of rising temperature on glaciers is an increase of ice losses, due to melt increase," said Fanny Brun, a research scientist at the Institut des Géosciences de l'Environnement in Grenoble, France. She was not involved in the study.

“The primary mechanisms are the lengthening and intensification of the melt season. They cause glaciers to thin and retreat, leading to deglaciated landscapes that tend to further increase the air temperature due (to) larger energy absorption by the surface,” Brun said.

That energy absorption at the surface is determined by something called the albedo effect. Light or “white” surfaces such as clean snow and ice will reflect more sunlight (high albedo) compared with “dark” surfaces such as the land that is exposed as glaciers retreat, soil and oceans (low albedo). In general, Brun said this phenomenon is interpreted as a positive feedback loop, or a process that enhances a change, but it is overall poorly studied and difficult to quantify.

At the base of Mount Everest, however, measurements of overall temperature averages appeared curiously stable instead of increasing. A close analysis of the data revealed what was really happening.

“While the minimum temperatures have been steadily on the rise, the surface temperature maxima in summer were consistently dropping,” said Franco Salerno, coauthor of the report and researcher for the National Research Council of Italy, or CNR.

However, even the presence of these cooling winds is not enough to fully counteract increasing temperatures and glacier melt due to climate change. Thomas Shaw, who is part of the ISTA research group with Pellicciotti, said the reason these glaciers are nevertheless melting rapidly is complex.

“The cooling is local, but perhaps still not sufficient to overcome the larger impact of climatic warming and fully preserve the glaciers,” Shaw said.

Pellicciotti explained that the general scarcity of data in high-elevation areas across the globe is what led to the study team’s focus of using the unique ground observation records at one station in the Himalayas.

“The process we highlighted in the paper is potentially of global relevance and may occur on any glacier worldwide where conditions are met,” she said.

The new study provides a compelling motivation to collect more high-elevation, long-term data that are strongly needed to prove the new findings and their broader impacts, Pellicciotti said.

Treasure trove of data

Located at a glacierized elevation of 5,050 meters (16,568 feet), the Pyramid International Laboratory/Observatory climate station sits along the southern slopes of Mount Everest. The observatory has recorded detailed meteorological data for almost 30 years.

It's those granular meteorological observations that Pellicciotti, Salerno and a team of researchers used to conclude that warming temperatures are triggering what are called katabatic winds.

The cold winds, created by air flowing downhill, usually occur in mountainous regions, including the Himalayas.

"Katabatic winds are a common feature of Himalayan glaciers and their valleys, and have likely always occurred," Pellicciotti said. "What we observe however is a significant increase in intensity and duration of katabatic winds, and this is due to the fact that the surrounding air temperatures have increased in a warming world."

Another thing the team observed was higher ground-level ozone concentrations in connection with lower temperatures. This evidence demonstrates that katabatic winds work as a pump that's able to transport cold air from the higher elevation and the atmospheric layers down to the valley, Pellicciotti explained.

"According to the current state of knowledge, Himalayan glaciers are doing slightly better than average glaciers in terms of mass losses," Brun said.

Glacier loss in Asia vs. Europe

Brun explained that in Central Himalaya, on average, the glaciers have thinned about 9 meters (29.5 feet) over the past two decades.

"This is much lower than glaciers in Europe, which have thinned of about 20 meters (65.6 feet) over the same time span, but this is larger than other regions in Asia (for example in the Karakoram region), or in the Arctic region," Brun said.

Understanding how long these glaciers are capable of locally counteracting global warming's impacts could be crucial in order to effectively address our changing world.

"We believe that the katabatic winds are the response of healthy glaciers to rising global temperatures and that this phenomenon could help preserve the permafrost and surrounding vegetation," said study coauthor Nicolas Guyennon, a researcher at the National Research Council of Italy.

Further analysis is needed, however. The study team next aims to identify the glacial characteristics that favor the cooling effect. Pellicciotti said more long-term ground stations for testing this hypothesis elsewhere are virtually absent.

“Even if the glaciers can’t preserve themselves forever, they might still preserve the environment around them for some time,” she said. “Thus, we call for more multidisciplinary research approaches to converge efforts toward explaining the effects of global warming.”

A separate report in 2019 found that even in the most optimistic case, in which average global warming was limited to only 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) above preindustrial temperatures, the Himalaya region would lose at least one-third of its glaciers.

[World agrees to climate deal that makes unprecedented call to move away from fossil fuels, but 'cavernous' loopholes remain](#)

By: Angela Dewan, Laura Paddison, Ella Nilsen and Rachel Ramirez

The world agreed to a new climate deal in Dubai on Wednesday at the COP28 summit after two weeks of painstaking talks, making an unprecedented call to transition away from fossil fuels, but using vague language that could allow some countries to take minimal action.

The gavel went down on the agreement, known as the Global Stocktake, in the morning after the talks were pushed into overtime by marathon negotiations between countries bitterly divided over the future role for oil, gas and coal.

COP28 President Sultan Al Jaber called the agreement “historic” in his speech before national delegates at the final session approving the agreement. “We have language on fossil fuels in our final agreement for the first time ever,” he said, adding that the deal represented “a paradigm shift that has the potential to redefine our economies.”

Some countries claimed the deal signaled the end of the fossil fuel era, but more ambitious nations and climate advocates said it was still far from sufficient to reflect the growing urgency of the climate crisis.

What the deal asks countries to do

“At long last the loud calls to end fossil fuels have landed on paper in black and white at this COP,” said Jean Su, the energy justice director at the Center for Biological Diversity, “but cavernous loopholes threaten to undermine this breakthrough moment.”

The agreement falls short of requiring the world to “phase-out” oil, coal and gas — which more than 100 countries and many climate groups had been calling for, language which was included in an earlier version of the draft.

Instead, the agreement “calls on” countries to “contribute” to global efforts to reduce carbon pollution in ways they see fit, offering several options, one of which is “transitioning away from fossil fuels in energy systems ... accelerating action in this critical decade, so as to achieve net zero by 2050.”

Key takeaways: What does the COP28 deal say?

COP28 has taken place at the end of a year defined by unprecedented global heat, which has driven deadly extreme weather, including record wildfires, deadly heat waves and catastrophic floods. This year is officially the hottest on record, due to a

combination of human-caused global warming and El Niño, and next year is set to be hotter still.

The conference in Dubai has been marred by controversy and criticism that oil interests were influencing the talks.

The conference also saw deep divisions, with Saudi Arabia leading a group of oil-producing nations rejecting language on phasing out fossil fuels. On the other side, more ambitious parties, including the European Union and a group of island states, expressed anger over a previous draft with watered-down language on fossil fuels.

US climate envoy John Kerry said divisions nearly derailed the conference, as oil- and gas-producing nations pushed back on fossil fuel language.

“I think there were times in the last 48 hours where some of us thought this could fail,” Kerry told reporters Wednesday. But ultimately they “stepped up and said, ‘we want this to succeed.’”

Kerry called the deal a success and a vindication of multilateralism.

“All of us can find a paragraph or sentences, or sections, where we would have said it differently,” he said in an earlier speech after the deal was agreed. But, he added, “to have as strong a document as has been put together, I find is cause for optimism, cause for gratitude and cause for some significant congratulations to everybody here.”

He said that the agreement was “much stronger and clearer as a call on 1.5 than we have ever heard,” referring to the internally-agreed ambition to restrict global heating to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, a threshold beyond which scientists say humans and ecosystems will struggle to adapt.

“The message coming out of this COP is we are moving away from fossil fuels,” Kerry said. “We’re not turning back.”

Deal gives fossil fuel industry ‘escape routes’

Several parties expressed disappointment and concerns over how quickly Al Jaber struck his gavel and adopted the draft deal. Typically countries voice their support or objections and agreement follows a debate.

“It seems that you gavelled the decisions and the small island developing states were not in the room,” Anne Rasmussen, the lead negotiator for the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), said to Al Jaber once they entered the room.

AOSIS, an intergovernmental organization of countries disproportionately at risk from the climate crisis, is one of the most powerful voices at the annual climate talks.

AOSIS was “exceptionally concerned” about the agreement, Rasmussen added. While the text contains “many good elements,” she said, “the course correction that is needed has not yet been secured” and “we see a litany of loopholes.”

“It is not enough for us to reference the science and then make agreements that ignore what the science is telling us we need to do,” she said in her speech which was met with a standing ovation from delegates.

Many climate experts, while cautiously welcoming the reference to fossil fuels in the agreement, point to serious weaknesses, including leaving the door open for fossil fuel expansion to continue.

Harjeet Singh, the head of global political strategy at nonprofit Climate Action Network International, said “after decades of evasion, COP28 finally cast a glaring spotlight on the real culprits of the climate crisis: fossil fuels. A long-overdue direction to move away from coal, oil, and gas has been set.”

But, he added, “the resolution is marred by loopholes that offer the fossil fuel industry numerous escape routes, relying on unproven, unsafe technologies.”

His reference is to the controversial technology known as carbon capture and storage — a set of techniques being developed to pull carbon pollution from polluting facilities such as power plants and from the air, and store it underground. The agreement calls for an acceleration of the technology.

Many scientists have expressed concern that carbon capture is unproven at scale, a distraction from policies to cut fossil fuel use and too expensive.

Some countries and experts were alarmed by the agreement’s recognition of a role for “transitional fuels” in the energy transition — largely interpreted to mean natural gas, a planet-heating fossil fuel.

“We want to raise the alarm that transition fuel will become permanent especially in developing countries,” said an Antigua and Barbuda delegate.

There was also criticism over a failure to ensure enough funding will flow to the poorest, most climate-vulnerable countries to help them adapt to the escalating impacts of the climate crisis and move their economies toward renewable energy.

COP28 started with an early success on finance. On the first day, countries formally adopted a loss and damage fund decades in the making, and have since made pledges of more than \$700 billion to help nations on the front lines of climate change.

But the summit agreement — while acknowledging developing countries need up to \$387 billion a year to adapt to the impacts of the climate crisis and around \$4.3 trillion is required each year up to 2030 to scale up renewable energy — includes no requirements for developed countries to give more.

Developing countries “still dependent on fossil fuels for energy, income, and jobs, are left without robust guarantees for adequate financial support,” Singh said.

Mohamed Adow, the director of Power Shift Africa, said in a statement the “transition” in this agreement “is not funded or fair.”

“We’re still missing enough finance to help developing countries decarbonise and there needs to be greater expectation on rich fossil fuel producers to phase out first,” Adow said.

NIKKEI ASIA

[COP28 talks end with landmark deal to shift from fossil fuels](#)

By: Rhyannon Bartlett-Imadegawa and Sayumi Take

Global climate talks wrapped up Wednesday with a first-ever deal to transition away from fossil fuels, but parties stopped short of calling for an end to using oil, gas and other carbon-emitting energy sources.

The agreement was reached after the United Nations climate talks (COP28) in Dubai stretched into the early hours as negotiators from nearly 200 countries worked to reach a consensus on a deal aimed at reducing the greenhouse gas emissions responsible for climate change.

The conference's final text calls for a "transitioning away from fossil fuels in energy systems, in a just, orderly and equitable manner, accelerating action in this critical decade, so as to achieve net zero by 2050 in keeping with the science."

When COP28 President Sultan Ahmed al-Jaber brought down the gavel and the key text was adopted, applause broke out in the room as delegates celebrated the breakthrough.

"The world needed to find a new way. By following our north star, we have found that new path," Jaber said. But "an agreement is only as good as its implementation," he warned. "We are what we do, not what we say. We must take the steps necessary to turn this agreement into tangible actions."

Nearly two weeks of talks were scheduled to wrap up on Tuesday but the divisive topic of fossil fuels -- crucial to the economies of many oil-producing nations but at the root of devastating climate-change damage in developing countries -- proved a sticking point.

Countries had to draw up a response to the first-ever assessment of global climate action so far, which found the world to be well off track. The agreed text will be central to guiding future climate action aimed at limiting global warming.

Delegates and some environmental groups welcomed the "historic" final deal. It was the first time in decades of climate conferences that countries agreed to move away from fossil fuels, which still account for a large majority of the global energy mix despite the increasing use of wind, solar and other renewable sources.

"Humanity has finally done what is long, long, long overdue. Thirty years we've spent to arrive at the beginning of the end of fossil fuels," said European Commissioner for Climate Action Wopke Hoekstra.

But the decision was made when "the small island developing states were not in the room," said a representative of Samoa, who spoke as chair of the Alliance of Small Island States that comprises 39 developing coastal countries facing some of the worst climate impacts.

The group noted "major concern" as the text contained "a litany of loopholes" that hampered the world from taking stronger climate action.

Tom Evans of U.K.-based think tank E3G said the final decision "will stand" and that Samoa had "made clear their unhappiness with this deal on the basis that it is not ambitious enough."

A representative from the Marshall Islands, a low-lying Pacific island country, said the decision was akin to being given a "canoe with a weak, leaky hull full of holes, yet we have to put it in the water because we have no other options."

A Chinese delegate called for developed countries to take their "unshakable historical responsibility" and lead by achieving net zero as soon as possible. The delegate said that while "many important concerns of developing countries" were not resolved, the signs were positive.

The agreed text includes plans to triple renewable energy capacity globally by 2030. It also reiterated a call for phasing down unabated coal power and ending "inefficient fossil fuel subsidies that do not address energy poverty or just transitions, as soon as possible," in a nod to concerns among developing countries about the cost of transitioning to cleaner energy for their development and economies.

For the first time, it also calls for "accelerating and substantially reducing" greenhouse gases other than carbon dioxide, such as methane, by 2030.

While the deal did not go as far as some countries had demanded, "it's definitely a signal for rapid decline [in the use of fossil fuels] in the next decades," said Jean Su, co-executive director of the Center for Biological Diversity.

Melanie Pill, research fellow for climate change at Australia's Lowy Institute, said the agreement's language is "still not strong enough." Pill added that a "clear signal" that rapid decline and phaseout of fossil fuels is "inescapable and essential" to avoiding catastrophic climate change is needed.

Agreements reached at climate talks are passed by consensus, with individual countries left to come up with relevant policies and investment to meet targets.

Over 100 countries in Europe, Africa and the Pacific had declared support for the phaseout of unabated fossil fuels at the opening of COP28, but some oil- and gas-producing countries were strongly opposed. Others were concerned about the level of support that would be available for an energy transition.

U. N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, who had been pushing countries to embrace the phaseout of fossil fuels, wrote Wednesday on X, formally Twitter: "Whether you like it or not, fossil fuel phase out is inevitable. Let's hope it doesn't come too late."

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

[Filipino pro-environment groups in Dubai 'disappointed' with COP28](#)

By: Zeus Legaspi

Filipino climate and fisherfolk activists who addressed the United Nations 28th Conference of Parties (COP28) in Dubai expressed disappointment at the result of the two-week summit on Wednesday.

A day after COP28's closing on December 12, the groups aired their dismay over the incompleteness of mechanisms on climate finance.

"Aside from the meager amount pledged by polluting countries to climate finance, the more pressing concern is how it is gonna reach the most vulnerable and most affected communities," Peoples Rising for Climate Justice (PRCJ) said in a statement.

"We haven't seen any mechanisms in regards to how the LDF [Loss and Damage Fund] will be operationalized and allocated," the group added.

PRCJ is pertaining to the climate fund that is set up to help vulnerable countries cope with the costly and damaging impact of climate disasters. It was launched on the first day of COP28 on November 30.

The group said that at the end of the summit, developed countries have only contributed a total of \$700 million to the LDF – a far cry from the United Nations' estimate of \$387 billion needed annually for the climate change adaptation measures of developing countries, including the Philippines.

PRCJ also assailed the Philippine government's repeated show of intent to host the board of the LDF, calling it "hypocritical" to boast about the country's climate actions while Filipino environmentalists continue to face difficult human rights situations at home.

On Saturday, Environment Secretary Maria Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga told delegates at the climate summit that the Philippines is "most qualified" to host the LDF board for "being a living testament to the effects of climate change."

Some Filipino pro-environment groups welcomed the country's proposition while others, including fishers' group Pamalakaya, said that the Philippine government has no "moral ascendancy" to host the board due to its unclear stance on "destructive" reclamation projects in Manila Bay.

For Ivan Enrile of Ibon International, the fight to end the era of fossil fuels is “far from over.”

Enrile also lamented the shifting of negotiations from a “clear language on fossil fuel phaseout” to “settling for vague promises of reducing the consumption and production of fossil fuels.”

“We come here in Dubai with a clear demand: fast, fair, and funded fossil fuel phaseout. Anything less is simply playing to the gallery and greenwashing,” he said in a separate statement.

Data from the United Nations show that fossil fuels still account for more than 80 percent of global energy production – meaning that the burning of coal, oil, and gas still fuels many nations’ economies.

THE MANILA TIMES

[\[Opinion\] Art and climate change](#)

By: Jan Lundius

A dark cloud is hovering above human existence. It is a fairly illusory cloud haunting our minds and well-being, but also an actual, menacing, mostly invisible cloud that covers the Earth's entire atmosphere. Saturated by greenhouse gases, this global threat increases with every year, threatening all life on Earth, causing increased flooding, extreme heat, drought, wildfires, rising sea levels, food and water scarcity, as well as diseases and mounting economic loss. This misery, caused by human greed, thoughtlessness and self-aggrandizement, triggers human migration and armed conflicts.

If global temperatures keep rising and reach 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit) above pre-industrial levels, people will, worldwide and simultaneously, face the fatal and multiple impacts of climate change. A 2-degree rise in global temperatures is considered to be a critical threshold. In 2023, the average global temperature was on a third of all days at least 1.5 Celsius higher than pre-industrial levels, and the year is ending up as the hottest on record and — the year 2024 is expected to be even hotter.

Climate change poses a particular threat to children and youth and may potentially derail their normal development, affecting physiological systems, cognitive abilities and emotional skills in ways that may be irreversible. The emerging problems are manifold, and the effects of these looming calamities make children and young people increasingly frustrated. Many youngsters feel threatened and betrayed by the behavior of ruthless entrepreneurs and financiers, as well as poor and often corrupt governmental response to a disastrous climate change. Rampant climate anxiety motivates some young people to take action, not only through a recent surge in marches and the emergence of various environmental movements but also in the form of violent and occasionally misdirected protests.

One of several means to draw attention to the threat of climate change are activists' attacks on famous artworks. Since early 2022, artworks have been attacked all over Europe and the US. Mashed potatoes have been thrown on a Manet painting, chocolate cake smeared on statues, tomato soup on Van Gogh's magnificent depiction of sunflowers, and oil-like substances thrown on several other paintings, like Klimt's "Death and Life." That painting is found in the Leopold Museum in Vienna, which presents some works from the dispersed Lederer art collection. The Lederer was a Jewish art-collecting family who among others financially supported the now-renowned artists Klimt and Schiele. In 1938, the Gestapo expropriated all of Lederer's possessions. Some of the confiscated Klimt paintings were found by Nazi authorities stored in a

castle, burned down by a German army unit just before the Soviet Red Army appeared. Seventeen Klimt paintings and frescoes perished in the fire; one of the few salvaged artworks was Klimt's "Death and Life," now smeared with a black substance.

The spokesman for Just Stop Oil, one of several climate activist groups that attacks works of art, has declared: "If things need to escalate, then we're going to take inspiration from past successful movements, and we're going to do everything we can." What he meant by "successful movements" was among other incidents when a lady in 1914 slashed a Velasquez painting with a meat cleaver, protesting the arrest of the defender of women's rights, Emeline Pankhurst. The enraged woman explained: "I have tried to destroy the picture of the most beautiful woman in mythological history as a protest against the government for destroying Mrs. Pankhurst, who is the most beautiful character in modern history."

Art or life

Angry members of Just Stop Oil shouted, as they were hindered from attacking paintings at the National Gallery in London: "What is worth more, art or life?" A member of the group stated after throwing soup on a van Gogh painting: "The cost-of-living crisis is part of the cost of oil crisis. Fuel is unaffordable to millions of cold, hungry families. They can't even afford to heat a tin of soup." A somewhat awkward statement by someone who demonstrated disrespect for food by throwing it on a masterpiece of world art. Another declared: "We're not killing anyone; climate change will."

Supporters of "climate action groups" have defended them by saying that so far, no piece of art has been "permanently destroyed." However, it is at best a half-truth. In May last year, a self-declared "environment activist" tried at the Louvre to smash the glass protecting the "Mona Lisa." When he was hindered from concluding his deed, he succeeded in smearing cake on the painting. Last month, two women did with hammers smash the glass protecting the same Velasquez painting that was slashed in 1914, screaming that they were intending to rip it to pieces once more.

Another member of Just Stop Oil defended the various actions of the group and warned that they could worsen: "The function of art is for people to be able to understand the world that they live in and reflect on the human condition, but big art isn't fulfilling that function. That's the reason for us to be in museums: to tell people that we are in the middle of an emergency, and it is the time now for you to face that emergency."

She was right in stating one of art's essential functions. Artistic works have existed for almost as long as humankind and are an expression of humans' creative and imaginative abilities, involving technical proficiency, beauty, emotional power and conceptual ideas. Art helps us to perceive the beauty of the world we live in, the

happiness we find among other human beings, in nature and animals, in all creation. It inspires reflection, willingness to act, imagination and innovative thinking. How can defenders of the preservation of nature and human rights imagine that the destruction and profanation of art may amend climate change? I assume that the enclosed mind of such activists, like IS fanatics, believe that their specific message and destructive actions take precedence over everything else, not the least other people's feelings and intention to defend the very same values those fanatics, in their twisted minds, declare they are supporting.

I understand the frustration, but not the means. Like spokesmen for Just Stop Oil, leaders of IS could declare that their destruction of World Heritage was to grab the world's attention by assuring extensive media coverage and international condemnation from those they considered to be their opponents and antagonists.

Instead of destroying art, "climate activists" would probably benefit from supporting and using it as a means to overcome humans' tendency to value personal experience over scientific facts, assuming that everything will be all right by not acting in time. Art can be a persuasive means to popularize and make understandable data-based representations, making them vivid and accessible. Art can engage viewers and hopefully stimulate them to make an effort to hinder the world's sloping down toward Armageddon.

Artistic endeavors to depict, present and make us aware of the dangers of climate change are increasingly becoming more common and engaging. This "Climate Change Art" assumes a wide array of forms and expressions. Often with an engaging, awareness-raising component of personal commitment.

Crochet Reef

The Institute for Figuring (IFF), which in 2003 was founded in Los Angeles by Margaret Wertheim and her twin sister Christin, is a nonprofit organization generating projects at the intersection of art, science and mathematics. One IFF project is the so-called Crochet Reef, which all around the world engages professional artists, scientists and groups of amateurs. The Crochet Reef has become one of the largest participatory art and science endeavors in the world. By creating giant installations mimicking living coral reefs crocheted out of yarn and re-used plastic harvested from debris in the Pacific Ocean, the project engages associations which members are learning and applying mathematics, science, handicraft, environmentalism, and community art practice while promoting awareness of the effects of global warming. Project creations have all around the world been successfully displayed in galleries and museums.

More modest activities, but nevertheless quite extensive, are various happenings, like those of Eve Mosher, who drew a blue "high-water" line around Manhattan and Brooklyn, indicating areas that would be underwater if climate change predictions are realized. She has since drawn high-water lines around Bristol, Philadelphia and coastal cities in Florida. In 2018, Xavier Cortada placed signs in front yards throughout Miami, indicating each property's height above sea level to illustrate how sea level rise would flood the owner's land.

A sophisticated, renowned and multifaceted artist is the Danish-Icelandic Olafur Eliasson, who creates large-scale installations employing elemental materials such as light, water and air temperature to enhance the viewer's experience and create an awareness of humans' intimate connection with nature, how its changes are influencing us, both in a positive and negative manner. Eliasson has founded a "laboratory for spatial research" that engages a large team of architects, engineers, craftsmen and assistants, working together to conceive and construct large-scale sculptures, installations and other artwork, highlighting what happens to and on our living planet.

Awareness of the dangers faced by our planet, its ecosystem and organic lifeforms, including humans, is on the rise. At all levels of human existence, an ever-increasing creative power is making itself evident — in art, literature, religion and science. To vanquish the threats to our planet, we have to leave destruction behind us and become more creative, more willing to cooperate with one another, more tolerant and more respectful. Destroying art, our common human cultural heritage, is an entirely wrong way toward a brighter future, and just like the emissions of greenhouse gases, it must immediately come to an end.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

Groups say COP28 deal a start, but not enough for climate-vulnerable nations

By: Gaea Katreena Cabico

The deal struck at the COP28 climate summit was seen as the beginning of the end of the fossil fuel era, but campaigners from at-risk countries like the Philippines stressed that far more action is needed to avert the worst impacts of climate change.

After two weeks of intense negotiations, nearly 200 nations meeting in Dubai approved Wednesday an agreement that, for the first time, calls for a “transitioning away from fossil fuels in energy systems, in a just, orderly and equitable manner.”

COP28 President Sultan Al Jaber hailed the deal as bringing “transformational change” on climate.

The agreement also called for expanding action “in this critical decade” and recommits to no net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 in hopes of meeting the goal of limiting global warming at 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.

The planet has already warmed by 1.2 degrees, leading to record-breaking temperatures, and intensifying storms and heatwaves.

“The silver lining from COP28 is that it’s sent an unprecedented signal to the world that the curtain has been raised for the end of the fossil fuel era,” Greenpeace Philippines senior campaigner Virginia Benosa-Llorin said.

“But communities in the Philippines and around the world on the frontline of the climate catastrophe need more than this,” she added.

‘Energy transition can’t be delayed’

While there were improvements in the agreement from a widely-criticized draft, the text did not call for a phase-out of planet-warming fossil fuels that many, including Filipino campaigners, were pushing for.

“The new text still falls short of what is the only acceptable action—a rapid, full, and equitable fossil fuel phaseout in line with 1.5°C,” Center for Energy, Ecology, and Development executive director Gerry Arances said.

“The energy transition required by science cannot be put off. The world’s most vulnerable peoples do not have the luxury to let go of a fast-closing window to keep our future livable. We already have one foot in the grave,” he added.

Over 100 member states supported the call for a phase-out of oil, gas and coal, but faced strong opposition from oil producers led by Saudi Arabia.

Filipino campaigners had repeatedly called on the Philippine delegation at COP28 to actively advocate for a swift and equitable fossil fuel phase-out.

Mitzi Jonelle Tan, convenor of Youth Advocates for Climate Action, challenged the Philippine government to support the push of small island states—whose very existence is threatened by climate change—for a “fossil fuel phase-out that’s fair, funded, and led by the Global North.”

The Dubai text also called for tripling the world’s renewable energy capacity and doubling energy capacity by 2030. More than 130 countries, including the Philippines, signed on to a voluntary pledge to do just this, a move that campaigners said should translate to ditching coal and gas.

Loopholes, lack of finance

Campaigners cautioned the agreement is full of loopholes, “false solutions” such as nuclear energy, and unproven technologies like carbon capture and storage.

Observers also raised concerns that the call to move away from fossil fuels is limited to the energy sector, leaving out reference to polluting plastics and fertilizers.

“There are signals towards fossil fuels needing to be replaced by clean energy by 2050, the need to be in line with science and to be equitable, and to ensure adaptation is there, but [the deal] does not even invite countries to peak emissions by 2025 or to ensure that finance flows in,” Tan said.

Greenpeace’s Benosa-Llorin stressed that many rich countries need to significantly step up financial support for poorer countries bearing the brunt of climate impacts.

“The Philippine government should rally around this demand to ensure that there is money for communities and local government units that are reeling from climate impacts, and that climate polluters are held accountable for the harms they’ve caused,” she said.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

Philippines records fewer storms, faces worst drought in decades

The Philippines has so far endured fewer storms in 2023 than in any of the past 25 years and now faces potentially the worst drought in decades, officials said Tuesday.

The tropical archipelago nation -- which is ranked among the most vulnerable countries to the impacts of climate change -- 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 Ana Solis, chief climatologist at the state weather forecaster.

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.

As a consequence of the weather phenomenon known as El Niño, the Philippines was also likely to experience "moderate to severe drought conditions" from February to May 2024, the government's Science and Technology Department Secretary Renato Solidum told reporters.

That would be comparable to the drought during the 1997-1998 El Niño, which was the country's worst-ever dry spell.

El Niño was already underway, bringing drier conditions to some areas of the country where there had been up to an 80% reduction in rainfall, Solidum said.

Solidum said 77% of the country's provinces were expected to be in drought by the end of May.

He urged government agencies to begin preparing to ensure enough water, food and electricity would be available.

"We need to plan ahead and make it fast," Solidum said.

Temperatures in the capital Manila could reach up to 38.3 degrees Celsius (100.9 degrees Fahrenheit) in April and May -- comparable to 1998 figures, he said.

Northern areas of the main island of Luzon could hit 41C.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

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[Nestlé PH Initiates Tree Growing, Launching Kasambuhay Forest At La Mesa Watershed](#)

Deforestation continues to be a threat to the country's agricultural sector, water security, and biodiversity, further exacerbated by both man-made activities and climate-induced calamities. Around 10 million hectares of forests in the Philippines have been lost due to both natural and man-made factors in the last 100 years. Data shows that as of 2020, 7.226 million hectares or 24.2% of the country's land area remained forested.

The government is driving progress to revitalize Philippine forests through the Department of Environment and Natural Resources' (DENR) Enhanced National Greening Program and the Climate Change Commission's (CCC) National Climate Change Action Plan, among others. As a leader in environmental sustainability among the private sector, Nestlé Philippines recognizes the value of multi-sectoral collaboration in pursuing impactful actions that can contribute to the conservation and restoration of forests and natural ecosystems as well as achieving Nestlé's net zero target by 2050.

In line with this, Nestlé PH formally launched the Kasambuhay Forest in partnership with Million Trees Foundation. The 6.2-hectare land located at the La Mesa Watershed and Ecopark in Quezon City will house 7,500 native trees by the end of 2025, contributing to the conservation of the watershed and carbon sequestration.

Alongside a MOA signing ceremony, Nestlé PH conducted a tree growing activity at the La Mesa Watershed and Ecopark last November 24, 2023 to commemorate this collaboration.

"Project Kasambuhay Forest is part of Nestlé Philippines' initiatives to support Nestlé's Global Reforestation Program that has the goal to grow 200 million trees worldwide by 2030. It is also in line with the Company's push to utilize nature-based solutions in reducing emissions and tackling climate change," said Senior Vice President and Corporate Affairs Head of Nestlé Philippines Jose Uy III. "Through this, we also want to actively educate employees and business partners on climate change awareness and to mobilize action to contribute to the Company's sustainability goals."

"In its unwavering commitment to achieve its goals, Million Trees Foundation has partnered with various organizations that share its vision and objectives. Reforestation requires huge investment not only financial but manpower and technical know-how as

well. A new partner like Nestlé PH is always welcome,” said BGen. Reynaldo V. Velasco, former MWSS Chairman and Administrator and the founder of the annual Million Trees Challenge.

A total of 375 Nestlé volunteer employees and partners from the DENR, CCC, and GMA Network planted an estimated 5000 saplings of Narra, Bignay, Bitao, and Lipote.

GMA Sparkle artist Shuvee Etrata shared the importance of participating in these kinds of activities both as a content creator and as a youth: “I learned that the urgency of climate demands not just attention but also active participation. It’s not just about raising awareness but the palpable sense of responsibility that we are shouldering, especially for us as content creators and Kapuso actors. The youth is not just merely the inheritors of the earth but its stewards.”

In addressing deforestation and other environmental challenges, Nestle PH emphasizes the need to embrace our shared responsibility to the planet even in our own little ways. Through collective action, a lot more can be done to ensure a livable and greener future not just for our children but also for the future generations to come.

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