



## NEWS ROUNDUP

14 December 2022 [ 08:00 am]

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- Benefits of mixed-use developments
- EDC unveils EVs in Leyte plant
- Philippines can't deliver on climate programs without stronger budget, int'l financing commitments — ADB
- Two blue whales, but make it plastic!
- Hotter, rainier, wetter — climate change is dramatically transforming the Arctic, report finds
- Marcos asks EU to help PH, other countries vulnerable to climate change
- Marcos stresses need for concrete plan vs. climate change
- Thousands of tree seedlings of various species set for planting in Caraga region
- [Opinion] Kamala Harris
- Counterintuitive: Large wild herbivores may help slow climate change
- Cordillera eyes more renewable resources to generate power
- [Opinion] Why marine protected areas matter
- PH eyes 'strategic' ties with Belgium
- Nature guardians: Why Indigenous people are vital for saving biodiversity
- UN shipping agency urged to set ambitious emission reduction measures

## BUSINESS MIRROR

### [Benefits of mixed-use developments](#)

By: Joseph Araneta Gamboa

BANGKOK—Changing demographics and an evolving real estate market are creating demand for high-quality, integrated and walkable communities in major urban areas worldwide. The rise of mixed-used developments is most evident in this capital city of Thailand, where its benefits extend far beyond enhancing the social good.

### [EDC unveils EVs in Leyte plant](#)

By: Lenie Lectura

Energy Development Corp. (EDC) is piloting the use of electric vehicles (EV) fueled by steam energy from the charging station that it built at its Tongonan Geothermal Power Plant in Kananga, Leyte.

## [Philippines can't deliver on climate programs without stronger budget, int'l financing commitments — ADB](#)

By: Luisa Maria Jacinta Jocson

THE PHILIPPINES needs to budget more effectively and tap more financing for its climate-change mitigation efforts, given the limited internal resources available to meet its international commitments, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) said.

### **BUSINESS WORLD**

#### [Two blue whales, but make it plastic!](#)

What do two of the heaviest living creatures in the world and Mondelez International's recovered plastic waste have in common? They both weigh more than 240 metric tons!

### **CNN**

#### [Hotter, rainier, wetter — climate change is dramatically transforming the Arctic, report finds](#)

By: Rachel Ramirez

Each year, the Arctic region goes through an annual health checkup — and the results are in: From a rapid decline in snow cover to an unprecedented late season melting event to another year of seabird die-offs, the Arctic has once again shown clear symptoms of an ailing planet.

### **CNN PHILIPPINES**

#### [Marcos asks EU to help PH, other countries vulnerable to climate change](#)

Metro Manila (CNN Philippines, December 14) — President Ferdinand Marcos, Jr. on Tuesday asked European Union (EU) leaders and businessmen to help vulnerable countries like the Philippines cope with the effects of climate change.

### **GMA NEWS ONLINE**

#### [Marcos stresses need for concrete plan vs. climate change](#)

President Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr. reiterated the need for a concrete plan to address climate change at a meeting between Southeast Asian and European leaders in Belgium, the Office of the Press Secretary (OPS) said on Tuesday.

## **MANILA BULLETIN**

### **[Thousands of tree seedlings of various species set for planting in Caraga region](#)**

By: Mike Crismundo

BUTUAN CITY – Heeding the call of President Marcos, Jr. to continue tree planting to combat global warming and climate change, a mining firm that has continued engaging in tree planting for the past several years is now targeting anew to plant thousands trees of various species, including fruit trees and bamboos in several areas in Agusan del Sur and neighboring zones in Northeastern Mindanao (The Caraga Region).

### **[\[Opinion\] Kamala Harris](#)**

By: Anna Mae Lamentillo

Last November, onboard the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) ship Teresa Magbanua, United States Vice President Kamala Harris reaffirmed America's support for the Philippines in many areas of development through strengthened bilateral cooperation.

## **MONGABAY**

### **[Counterintuitive: Large wild herbivores may help slow climate change](#)**

By: Tim Vernimmen

In the battle to combat climate change, there is no single silver bullet, though we will clearly need nature's help to reverse Earth's human-induced overdose of atmospheric greenhouse gases. Trees are often used to exemplify the most promising organisms for this work, as they can absorb lots of CO<sub>2</sub> and store carbon in their woody tissues for decades, or even centuries.

## **PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER**

### **[Cordillera eyes more renewable resources to generate power](#)**

By: Vincent Cabreza

BAGUIO CITY, Benguet, Philippines — The Cordillera region is harnessing more renewable energy projects from its major rivers to spur economic recovery while fighting the impact of climate change.

## **THE MANILA TIMES**

### **[\[Opinion\] Why marine protected areas matter](#)**

By: Daphne Oseña-Paez

WHILE working on my final paper for my environmental management course, I was pleased to share with my class that the Philippines pioneered a community-based approach to marine protected area management.

### [PH eyes 'strategic' ties with Belgium](#)

By: Kristina Maralit

UPDATE: BRUSSELS: President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. will push for a four-year "strategic partnership" with Belgium in various fields of cooperation when he meets with King Philippe, the leader of this country's constitutional monarchy.

### **THE PHILIPPINE STAR**

### [Nature guardians: Why Indigenous people are vital for saving biodiversity](#)

By: Issam Ahmed

WASHINGTON, United States ?— For countless generations prior to European colonization, Canada's Indigenous people relied on caribou both as a source of subsistence and as an integral part of their cultural practices.

### [UN shipping agency urged to set ambitious emission reduction measures](#)

By: Gae Katreena Cabico

LONDON, United Kingdom — The International Maritime Organization should adopt a more ambitious greenhouse gas emission reduction target by 2030, groups said as delegates from across the world gather in London to discuss how the shipping industry—the backbone of global trade—can accelerate its climate mitigation efforts.

**Information and Knowledge Management Division**

## **BUSINESS MIRROR**

### **Benefits of mixed-use developments**

By: Joseph Araneta Gamboa

BANGKOK—Changing demographics and an evolving real estate market are creating demand for high-quality, integrated and walkable communities in major urban areas worldwide. The rise of mixed-used developments is most evident in this capital city of Thailand, where its benefits extend far beyond enhancing the social good.

Two such mega-projects—the “Dusit Central Park” and the “One Bangkok”—are located on Rama IV Road, the city’s landmark artery that has become synonymous with Bangkok’s breakneck evolution.

“Rama IV Road makes the perfect alignment and direct interlink with main avenues in Bangkok,” said Marciano Birjmohun, director of the Singapore-Thai Chamber of Commerce.

The upcoming Dusit Central Park is embedded on a 3.7-hectare property overlooking the Lumpini Park, Bangkok’s foremost central green lung. It was where the iconic Dusit Thani Hotel once stood but has since been demolished to give way to the mixed-use venture across Silom Road, Bangkok’s equivalent of New York’s Wall Street.

On the other hand, One Bangkok will be the most expensive real estate project in Thai history upon its completion in 2027. It is envisioned to become the largest integrated development in Bangkok’s central business district, while its 92-floor Signature Tower will be one of the tallest skyscrapers in Southeast Asia.

Over at Muang Thong Thani, a northern suburb of Greater Bangkok situated in Nonthaburi province, lies the Impact commercial complex consisting of an arena, convention center, exhibition halls, hotels and restaurants. The Impact Convention and Exhibition Center itself is eight times the size of SMX Convention Center at the Mall of Asia complex in Pasay City.

Birjmohun believes that mixed-use developments add more value to stakeholders. According to him, “they represent the future of our communities, not just in Bangkok, but everywhere.”

### **Digitizing the property sector**

Back in Manila, the PropTech Consortium of the Philippines (PropTech PH) commemorated its first anniversary with the theme, “Celebrating the Digital Transformation of the Philippine Real Estate Industry.” The event was recently staged at the Manila Marriot Hotel and it highlighted the digitalization partnership project between PropTech PH and the state-run Home Development Mutual (Pag-IBIG) Fund.

Amid the pandemic, the consortium was launched last year by eight member organizations from the property sector to promote a more efficient, advanced and innovative Philippine real estate industry. Among the thought leaders spearheading PropTech PH are Emma M. Imperial, Justo A. Ortiz, Rosemarie Bosch-Ong, Josephine Romero, David L. Rafael, Amor Maclang, Ricardo F. Lagdameo, Catherine S. Saldaña and Sylvester Wong.

These innovative industry veterans aim to digitally transform the sector and eradicate obsolete processes that slow down the growth and progress of property developments. The integration of technology with the industry will positively impact present concerns and future challenges on property planning, construction, financial solutions and swift transaction processing which will mitigate the effects of climate change, poverty, housing backlogs and corruption.

Green technologies in community development and building construction are now being given priority with added incentives from various government agencies. The focus now is on clean and renewable sources of energy to benefit homebuyers and the environment. Modern apps and digital solutions are being adapted by financing institutions so they can fast-track transactions and reduce the number of complaints from stakeholders.

PropTech PH's roadmap to 2023 is focused on achieving a sustainable and transformative real estate industry for the benefit of the greater market. As the country's premier property technology community, it will continue to unite developers, building tech manufacturers, designers, suppliers, brokers, banks, policymakers and digital innovators to create a resilient and smart nation.

## [EDC unveils EVs in Leyte plant](#)

By: Lenie Lectura

Energy Development Corp. (EDC) is piloting the use of electric vehicles (EV) fueled by steam energy from the charging station that it built at its Tongonan Geothermal Power Plant in Kananga, Leyte.

During the launch of the first geo 24/7-powered vehicle, officials unveiled the first of three Rich6EV 4×2 pickup trucks. The two other vehicles will be made available in the first quarter of 2023 through its partner, Hong Equipment and Development (HEAD) Corp.

Geo 24/7 is EDC's brand of geothermal energy that has been providing the country clean, low carbon power. The Tongonan plant, meanwhile, is the company's first ever geothermal facility that also has the biggest wet steamfield in the world.

These three initial EVs are part of EDC's transport fleet from HEAD Corp., its reliable equipment and service vehicle provider for over 30 years, and will be tested in EDC's Leyte project site for six months to determine how many units should be added to its rented fleet not only in Leyte but also in all its facilities across the country.

"This electric vehicle symbolizes our company's over 30-year journey as a partner of EDC. It is the most modern model that can run for 300-400 kilometers when fully charged. More than just an electric vehicle, what makes it special is it is powered by geothermal, which makes it a 100 percent renewable energy-powered vehicle.

Others are powered by electricity that usually comes from carbon-intensive coal. This EV is the vehicle of the future. Thank you, EDC, for making this happen," said William Hong, Vice President for Business Development at HEAD Corp.

EDC said it is thankful to HEAD Corp. for readily committing to make this dream of using EVs a reality and for saying yes to the testing phase that will allow both parties to learn more about the cost savings, avoided carbon emissions, and also the challenges of using them.

"We have been searching for a partner that offers the best deal for our shift to electric vehicles and we found one in HEAD Corp.," said Gloria Amboy, EDC's Supply Chain head for Indirect Category and program manager for the company's EV project.

EDC is also looking at renting electric buses that will shuttle its employees to its project sites and put up EV charging stations in its host city, starting off with Ormoc City in Leyte.

"Our long term goal is to roll out this project in all EDC sites across the country. After all, what we want is to continuously be true and consistent with our mission to have a decarbonized future," added Amboy.

EDC's 711-megawatt Leyte geothermal facility currently supplies more than 30 percent of the country's installed geothermal capacity. It is also responsible for putting the Philippines on the map as the world's 3rd largest geothermal producer and has been providing a reliable supply of clean power to the Luzon and Visayas regions for almost 40 years.



## [Philippines can't deliver on climate programs without stronger budget, int'l financing commitments — ADB](#)

By: Luisa Maria Jacinta Jocson

THE PHILIPPINES needs to budget more effectively and tap more financing for its climate-change mitigation efforts, given the limited internal resources available to meet its international commitments, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) said.

“With only 2.7% of the 75% (emissions reduction) target to be financed through the public budget, turning ambition into delivery will depend on how the country’s climate program is financed,” the ADB said in a blog post on Tuesday.

“Effective government budgeting is key to building institutions, as well as the teams of people needed to convert climate ambition into action... maintaining and increasing budget allocations — from the 6.27% of the annual budget allocated for climate resilience in 2021 — will be critical,” it added.

In 2021, the Philippines committed to reduce 75% of its emissions by 2030, one of the more ambitious targets in Southeast Asia.

“Not surprisingly, addressing climate change is a consistent priority across the country’s leadership, whether in government or management of large companies,” the ADB added.

“Living in one of the world’s most vulnerable countries to climate change, people in the Philippines face an increasing barrage of cyclones, floods, drought and heatwaves. The country is hit with an average of 20 typhoons per year, and over 3 million people are affected by extreme floods,” the ADB said.

On the prospects for tapping international financing, the ADB said: “The Philippines’ climate ambitions will not be met without support from development partners and philanthropies.”

Between 2018 and 2020, donor governments and multilateral institutions provided \$2.4 billion in climate-related development finance.

“More of these funds are needed, and fast. A pipeline of projects needs to be built, and project sponsors need more capacity to mobilize funds, design projects and engage investors,” it added.

Banks will also play a key role in financing the bulk of climate initiatives within the country, the ADB said.

“The central bank and other financial regulators have put in place a suite of policies to integrate environmental, social and governance issues into banking practice; encourage

green lending; and support banks considering how climate risks affect their lending. Banks and financial institutions need greater capacity to take on this agenda,” it added.

The ADB also cited private investment in clean energy and mobilizing local governments as key to implementing more climate-resilient projects.

“The clock is ticking for the Philippines, and the money needed for climate action cannot be mobilized fast enough,” it added.

## **BUSINESS WORLD**

### **Two blue whales, but make it plastic!**

What do two of the heaviest living creatures in the world and Mondelez International's recovered plastic waste have in common? They both weigh more than 240 metric tons!

The improper waste disposal of plastics is one of the most challenging issues in the world. Though plastic is valuable to protect food products, improper trash segregation and the lack of plastic recycling facilities are the leading cause of polluted lands and bodies of water. As leaders in the future of snacking, Mondelēz International's mission is to deliver packaging that protects its products and does not pollute the environment. Mondelēz Philippines is proud to share its latest sustainability achievement for the full year of 2022: 243,000 kilograms of plastic waste collected, ready for recycling and repurposing. That's the equivalent of two Blue Whales or 20 African Bush Elephants!

### **Snacking Made Right**

Mondelēz International's Snacking Made Right agenda is about empowering people to snack right; by having the right snack, for the right moment, made the right way. "We're on a mission to lead the future of snacking by creating snacks the right way for both people and planet to love," shares Aleli Arcilla, VP and Managing Director of Mondelēz Philippines. "We have specific goals to which we hold ourselves accountable, and we're continuing to make progress and scale our efforts to deliver meaningful change. Sustainable Snacking is our commitment to growing our business and making our snacks the right way, with positive impact on people and the planet."

Mondelēz International's 243,000 kilos of recovered plastic is a product of its long and extensive history of partnering with socially responsible and like-minded organizations that care for the environment. In the previous years, they collected 173,990 kilograms of plastic, which has been transformed to sustainable products and building materials like ecobricks, ecoplanks, ecoboards, and outdoor furniture, among others.

### **Mondelez International's Sustainable Futures**

Through the Sustainable Futures platform, the company seeks to pursue and nurture innovative projects that align with its positive, environmental goals. Mondelez International recently inaugurated its new plastic recycling facility in partnership with Green Antz builders and the Philippine Business for Social Progress (PBSP), to transform plastic waste from the community into sustainable ecobricks. The facility is in Paranaque where the company's plant is based. Additionally, the company celebrated its three-year partnership last August with The Plastic Flamingo (PLAF) by co-partnering with Megaworld Malls for a waste collection activity, that was able to collect 20,000 kilos of plastic that will be transformed into ecoboards, which among other things can be used for store displays. To commemorate Mondelez International's 10th anniversary, the

company also partnered with Geocycle Philippines and took part in the International Coastal Clean-up Drive which collected more than 500 kilos of plastic.

Aleli adds, “Through Sustainable Futures, Mondelez International seeks to co-invest in projects addressing climate change, as well as making seed investments into social ventures that aim to improve livelihoods and build healthy communities.”

EPR (Extended Producer Responsibility) on the future of plastics recovery in the Philippines

This year, Mondelēz International continues to strengthen its commitment to creating more self-sustaining projects for the environment. “We’re partnering with local and national governments, along with different organizations to collect more plastic waste and to build more recycling facilities,” says Atty. Joseph Fabul, Corporate and Government Affairs Country Manager for Mondelēz Philippines. “We want to do business the right way. Plastic packaging is a complex issue. We know it can’t be solved overnight, but we are committed to making a positive impact on the planet.”

If people want to see more blue whales (hopefully, not made of plastic!), it requires continuous support from the consumers, companies, and both national and local governments. Locally, Mondelēz International’s 243,000 kilograms of plastic collected this year alone is a proactive step to support the newly passed Extended Producer Responsibility Act (EPR) of 2022. In September and November, the snacks company partnered with AmCham Philippines and the Makati Business Club to conduct an EPR workshop among different stakeholders.

“EPR has made the importance of recycling facilities realized, highlighting the importance of waste management to prevent plastic waste from entering the environment,” Atty. Fabul concludes.

Primarily focused on recovery, the law ensures that plastic materials and waste produced can be reused, recycled, and repurposed into other value chains. Companies like Mondelēz will need to comply with the collection of 20% of our total post-consumer plastic packaging output by 2023 – up to 80% in the following years. Mondelez International continues to strengthen its relationship with green organizations like The Plastic Flamingo, Geocycle, BEST (Basic Environmental Systems and Technologies Inc.), Green Antz, PBSP, and Invisible Sisters, among others, to create a positive impact where animals, people, and planet thrive.

**CNN**

[Hotter, rainier, wetter — climate change is dramatically transforming the Arctic, report finds](#)

By: Rachel Ramirez

Each year, the Arctic region goes through an annual health checkup — and the results are in: From a rapid decline in snow cover to an unprecedented late season melting event to another year of seabird die-offs, the Arctic has once again shown clear symptoms of an ailing planet.

A report published Tuesday by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration found that this vast and significant northern biome is dramatically shifting, with snow cover declining at an alarming rate of about 20% per decade. It continues to warm four times faster than the rest of Earth, with the last seven years being the warmest on record, according to the report.

Authored by more than 140 scientists around the globe, the Arctic Report Card examined the region's "vital signs" between October 2021 and September 2022, including changes in snow cover, sea ice volume, air and ocean temperatures, as well as a new pulse-check on precipitation events.

The report describes an increase in commercial activities and vessels venturing deeper into the Arctic on sea routes opened up by melting ice. These ships increase noise pollution in the region, altering its soundscape and interfering with the ability of marine mammals to communicate.

Changes in the Arctic also threaten the lives of people living in the region, particularly Indigenous communities who have long relied on the region's typically frozen landscape

The report "demonstrates that we are seeing many of the most intense impacts of climate change first in the Arctic," NOAA Administrator Rick Spinrad told CNN. "I can't overstate this but rapid warming in the Arctic is profoundly affecting more than 400,000 Indigenous people who live there, and in many instances is upending their entire way of life."

While the Arctic might seem remote, what happens in this region is a bellwether for the global climate — and the report makes clear that its impacts are far-reaching.

**A wetter Arctic**

Global scientists have detected a significant increase in Arctic precipitation since the 1950s, according to the report. Of the past 72 years, this year marked the third wettest on record in the Arctic.

The NOAA report shows that the central part of the Arctic exhibited more consecutive wet days than dry ones, as well as a notable rise in heavy precipitation in the North Atlantic. September in Greenland, for instance, is typically snowy. This year, it was rainy.

The Greenland ice sheet saw two unprecedented late season melting events. The first was in early September after high pressure drove temperatures well above average early in the month, with 36% of the ice sheet showing surface melting. Then later in the month, the remnants of Hurricane Fiona, tracking north after devastating Puerto Rico and slamming into Canada's Atlantic coast, pushed a wave of warm, moist air over the ice sheet, triggering the largest late-September melting event on the southern ice sheet.

"Setting two records in one month is always unexpected," Ted Scambos, a glaciologist at the University of Colorado Boulder and lead scientist at the National Snow and Ice Data Center (NSIDC), told CNN. "It's rare but not unheard of for a hurricane remnant to affect southern Greenland or even Iceland or the UK, but very unusual for it to have this large an impact."

Jason Box, a climate scientist with the Geological Survey of Denmark and Greenland, told CNN it was "reminiscent of August 2021," when rain fell on the summit of Greenland instead of snow for the first time on record, a phenomenon climate modeling suggests will likely be the norm in the coming decades.

Also in September, Typhoon Merbok formed in the northern Pacific, bringing hurricane-force winds and massive waves and storm surges to the Bering Sea region. Coastal and river communities, particularly Alaskan natives, faced flooding, erosion and power outages. The storm disrupted the communities' hunting and harvesting season ahead of the winter months.

Additionally, the report shows that although the Arctic was wetter than usual, some areas such as Alaska and northeastern Siberia saw a gripping drought over the summer months, which triggered severe wildfires.

Seabirds, ships, and Indigenous peoples

The NOAA report card shows another year of seabirds dying in the Bering and Chukchi seas. Bird carcasses have been found along the coast for the sixth year in a row, researchers say.

Before 2015, seabird die-offs in Alaskan waters had been rare but ocean temperature increases — which cause the fish seabirds prey on to die or migrate — have been accompanied by significant seabird declines.

Seabirds die-offs threaten food security for many remote native Alaskan communities who depend on the birds and their eggs for subsistence foods. Indigenous people also see the birds as a critical part of their cultural heritage.

“The peoples of the Arctic experience change as a result of multiple disturbances accumulated over the years and, increasingly, over generations,” Matthew Druckenmiller, a research scientist with NSIDC and the lead editor of the 2022 Arctic Report Card, told CNN. “That, to me, is a human story — and that same thing can be said for ecosystems. It can be said for individual species.”

It also affects the economy. The dwindling sea ice and shifting marine habitats are together bringing a surge in shipping traffic to the Arctic, bringing more emissions and pollution to the region.

“You’re going to see an increase in ships and it’s happening across all seasons in all regions of the Arctic,” Druckenmiller said. “And so that is really pointing towards a whole new era of impacts both on people living in the Arctic, but also on ecosystems.”

Druckenmiller said climate scientists have long feared that a wetter, less icy and warmer Arctic would become reality. The Arctic Report Card suggests that the region has fundamentally changed over the past decades.

As humans continue to pump planet-heating gases, accelerating the climate crisis, researchers say the Arctic will continue to lose its ability to help regulate the world’s climate.

“The time is now — the Arctic really is an example for the rest of the world on the pace of change and how far reaching implications can be,” Druckenmiller said. “The world really needs to understand that that the Arctic is key to the global climate system.”

## **CNN PHILIPPINES**

### **[Marcos asks EU to help PH, other countries vulnerable to climate change](#)**

Metro Manila (CNN Philippines, December 14) — President Ferdinand Marcos, Jr. on Tuesday asked European Union (EU) leaders and businessmen to help vulnerable countries like the Philippines cope with the effects of climate change.

Marcos stressed that the Philippines is "regarded as probably one of the most, if not the most, vulnerable countries in the world to the effects of climate change."

"Since that seems to be the case and that is what we are facing in the Philippines, we are very much in need of the assistance of Europe, of all the first world countries, and to be able to adjust our economy, our communities to the onset of the effects of climate change," he said during the Association of Southeast Asian Nations-European Union (ASEAN-EU) working luncheon in Belgium.

The chief executive pushed for more concrete funding guidelines on mitigating the effects of climate change.

Marcos noted that even if countries are capable of quantifying the damage and loss caused by climate change, some are still clueless on what to do.

"And so we really would like to see much more progress in terms of that, the financing, with the mitigation and the adjustment of our countries who are at great risk to the effects of climate change," he said.

In his speech during the United Nations General Assembly last September, Marcos also underscored that developing nations are bearing the brunt of climate change.



## **GMA NEWS ONLINE**

### **Marcos stresses need for concrete plan vs. climate change**

President Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr. reiterated the need for a concrete plan to address climate change at a meeting between Southeast Asian and European leaders in Belgium, the Office of the Press Secretary (OPS) said on Tuesday.

In his speech at the working lunch held for the 10th ASEAN-EU Business Summit, Marcos encouraged his fellow leaders to create a more concrete plan to mitigate the impact of climate change in the world.

He also said that the summit may serve as an instrument for a “stronger and more prosperous” trade and investment between countries.

Marcos is in Brussels to attend the Commemorative Summit between the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and the European Union.

The President 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.

He earlier called for improved economic cooperation in the Asia Pacific region, as he warned of the “dark clouds” such as food security and climate change during his speech delivered at the APEC CEO Summit last November.

Marcos called for collaboration and cooperation in the region to address structural and policy issues and avoid headwinds moving forward

## MANILA BULLETIN

### Thousands of tree seedlings of various species set for planting in Caraga region

By: Mike Crismundo

BUTUAN CITY – Heeding the call of President Marcos, Jr. to continue tree planting to combat global warming and climate change, a mining firm that has continued engaging in tree planting for the past several years is now targeting anew to plant thousands trees of various species, including fruit trees and bamboos in several areas in Agusan del Sur and neighboring zones in Northeastern Mindanao (The Caraga Region).

Since the start of their tree planting program in 2001 up to the present, the company has planted 1,254,334 tree seedlings of various species, including fruit trees and giant bamboos in their 2,081.27 hectares plantations in this province and neighboring areas.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) is so appreciative of the continuous tree planting program of this company.

“This is really a big help in our campaign to mitigate other man-made and natural calamities, aside from our climate change mitigation,” stressed DENR 13 Regional Executive Director (RED) Nonito M. Tamayo in an interview with The Manila Bulletin.

The region’s top DENR official commended the Philsaga Mining Corporation and Mindanao Mineral Processing and Refining Company (PMC/MMPRC) for their continuing tree planting program in the progressing towns of Rosario and Bunawan, both in Agusan del Sur province and in other areas in Caraga region.

As recorded, the company had already planted and maintained Lauan, Bagtikan, Toog, Narra, Bangkal, Lanipao, Molave, Dao, Rain Shower and Agoho and giant bamboo trees, and Rambutan, Durian, Lanzones, Mangosteen, Langka and Pomelo fruit trees.

For the past 21 years, PMC/MMPRC stepped up its tree planting program, and is now targeting anew to plant about 80,000 trees of various species next year.

“Our continuing tree planting is really a big plus factor in our climate change mitigation program and disaster preparedness and prevention program,” said RED Tamayo, adding ‘this must be sustained.’

The PMC/MMPRC is also aiming to sustain ecological balance for the next generation, said the company’s President Atty. Raul C. Villanueva.

The continuing success of the company’s tree planting program was also based on Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) to the surface rights owner and its respective local government units and tribal group, he said.

Recently, President Marcos, Jr. made his strong appeal to continue ‘without let up’ the tree planting after seeing the devastation brought about by the series of calamities that struck the country last month, particularly in Central Mindanao where many fatalities and missing persons were reported, while millions of pesos of agricultural crops and properties were damaged.

During the recent Climate Investment Forum, Environment Secretary Maria Antonia Yulo Loyzaga has also urged the private sector to take up a greater role in the fight against climate change amid growing climate uncertainties and mounting financial requirements for climate change adaptation and mitigation.

“Our greening program will not stop; this is not only for our generation today but also for the next generation as well,” said Atty. Villanueva and company’s Vice-President for Operations Ferdinand A. Cortes in unison.

### **Reforestation beneficiaries as planters**

The success of PMC/MMPRC’s tree planting program could also be attributed to its hiring of the reforestation beneficiaries as planters, especially natives and paying them for activities like site clearing, planting, replacing dead seedlings and maintenance with new ones, they said.

Fruits produced from fruit-bearing tree plantation by the company are benefiting farmers, especially the 90% population of the highland people (natives) in the municipalities of Rosario and Bunawan, who are enjoying the fruits of the livelihood project, as host communities of the company.

Part of the company’s environmental advocacy is also focused on bringing back to life the waterways in the villages through the ‘Adopt-A-Creek’ program.

The Agsao Creek, which is crisscrossing the mountainous areas at Upper Coo (Bunawan town), was restored with a concrete rip-rap, thus, preventing siltation and keeping the creek garbage-free.

### **Mangrove planting**

The PMC/MMPRC’s commitment to massive tree planting is not only confined within its mining areas, but also in the villages and towns of nearby provinces.

The company ventured into marine-habitat-protection programs by planting 12,500 mangrove propagules along the fish-rich coastal town of Barobo in Surigao del Sur province. Members of the communities are paid to ensure that the propagules grow and replace dead ones.

The Barobo project was the company's corporate initiative through the 'Adopt-A-Mangrove' plantation program in support of the local marine-conservation effort to address the condition of the 5-hectare coastal area.

"Our reforestation projects and other endeavors are ways to show the company's resolve to really become a true advocate of environmental causes, notwithstanding that it is our contribution in mitigating the effects of climate change," Atty. Villanueva pointed out.

### **Bamboo plantation**

Ahead of all other companies in Mindanao, the company has also embarked on a giant bamboo-plantation project within its mine site and mill site. About 16,115 giant bamboo plants have been planted in the company's 17.35 hectares. The giant bamboos, like the mangrove propagules, are excellent in carbon sequestration.

Atty. Villanueva estimates that the company has sequestered almost 1 million tons of carbon with all its reforestation projects, while the company's annual carbon footprint is estimated to be below 50,000 tons.

PMC/MMPRC is certified by the International Standard Organization, giving it the serious tasks to strictly adopt the environment management system in its work places. An environmental management system helps this company identify, manage, monitor and control their issues in a 'holistic' manner.

The PMC/MMPRC is also responding to a call of the national government for assistance.

The company, in close coordination with DENR, facilitated the recent delivery of 12,237 grafted Durian, 11,331 grafted Rambutan, 11,255 grafted Lanzones and 15,681 Mangosteen seedlings, followed by 10,223 seedlings of grafted Giant Bamboo donated to the Province of Dinagat Islands (PDI) for their greening program. PDI was devastated by super Typhoon Odette late last year.

PMC/MMPRC also donated 11,273 grafted Durian, 11,746 grafted Rambutan, 11,655 grafted Lanzones, 4,130 Mangosteen, and 10,233 Molave seedlings to Siargao Islands, in Surigao del Norte province. These seedlings were distributed to various recipients from different people's organizations in the island on June 30, 2022.

"Although the donations were insufficient compared to the devastation that the typhoon had caused these two provinces, the bayanihan spirit and resiliency of the Filipinos will surely help them get through this crisis," Atty. Villanueva said, adding 'PMC/MMPRC wishes all the best for the people of the Dinagat Islands and Siargao Islands-You are survivors, and you can rise again! Be fighters like Tigers!'"

## [\[Opinion\] Kamala Harris](#)

By: Anna Mae Lamentillo

Last November, onboard the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) ship Teresa Magbanua, United States Vice President Kamala Harris reaffirmed America's support for the Philippines in many areas of development through strengthened bilateral cooperation.

On that ship in Puerto Princesa, Palawan, I had the opportunity to see up close the highest-ranking female official in the history of the United States. While she was highlighting how the US is proud of our two nations' longstanding ties, I could not help but admire this lady who broke the glass ceiling.

Prior to being the first female vice president of the US, she was a District Attorney of San Francisco, Attorney General of California, and a United States Senator. She is known for being a fearless advocate and champion for women and girls. She uses her global leadership to empower and inspire women and girls across the world.

During her visit to the Philippines, she also met with Filipino women leaders, youth, and civil society organizations. She underscored the importance of fighting for what we believe in, of knowing our purpose, and of knowing that we can make a difference in other people's lives and in our society.

One of the things she emphasized was the importance of uplifting the economic status of women. She shared that, over the years when she was a prosecutor specializing in crimes of violence against women and children, she realized that women will endure abuse if that equates to being able to ensure food and shelter for her children.

She noted the correlation between gender violence and the economic status of women, stressing that, when a woman has an opportunity to achieve economic wellbeing, she is less likely to remain in an environment that causes her harm.

"Lift up the economic status of women, and all of society benefits," Vice President Harris said, adding that women should be given equal access to capital, financial literacy, and other opportunities that will improve her economic wellbeing.

### **PH-US enduring ties**

US Vice President Harris' visit to the Philippines reaffirms the strong and enduring relationship between the Philippines and the United States.

In Palawan, she visited local coastal communities and learned of the work that they do to adapt to the changing climate and in sustainably managing natural resources. Here, she emphasized the importance of the two nations' partnership in creating economic opportunities, protecting coastal ecosystems, and maintaining peace and stability.

In her courtesy call on President Ferdinand Marcos Jr., she discussed with him a number of global issues and highlighted mutual concerns on the climate crisis, and how investments in renewable energy and clean power can strengthen economic prosperity

through the creation of jobs and industries. She underscored the United States' commitment to work closely with the Philippines to strengthen economic partnership.

She also met with Vice President Sara Duterte to discuss education policy and the United States' support for ensuring all children in the Philippines have access to quality education. The two lady vice presidents also discussed efforts to advance skills training and internet connectivity.

While her visit to the Philippines was aimed at reaffirming the partnership between our nations, Vice President Harris left another important message—the affirmation that, like her, women and girls can lead and succeed; that in our own way, we can make a difference in the lives of others and our community.

## **MONGABAY**

### **[Counterintuitive: Large wild herbivores may help slow climate change](#)**

By: Tim Vernimmen

In the battle to combat climate change, there is no single silver bullet, though we will clearly need nature's help to reverse Earth's human-induced overdose of atmospheric greenhouse gases. Trees are often used to exemplify the most promising organisms for this work, as they can absorb lots of CO<sub>2</sub> and store carbon in their woody tissues for decades, or even centuries.

In contrast, large herbivores like elephants — ambling about, stripping branches, chomping on tree seedlings or even uprooting full-grown trees — appear to be the enemy.

But in a 2022 paper published in the journal *Current Biology*, a team of ecologists begs to differ.

The total amount of carbon stored in all the bodies of all the mammals and birds on Earth is negligible, they admit, totaling only about 9 million metric tons, the carbon storage equivalent of just eight hours of human fossil fuel emissions. But, the researchers note, the big wild herbivores roaming natural areas have often been shown to do things that may reduce global warming, through a variety of mechanisms.

“They help prevent fires, decrease the amount of solar heat absorbed by the Earth's surface, and contribute a lot to the long-term storage of carbon in soil,” explains University of Oxford ecosystem scientist Yadvinder Malhi, the paper's lead author. That means elephants, wildebeests and other big plant eaters may be helping, not hindering, our carbon storage efforts.

#### **Helping move carbon underground**

At first glance, forest trees look like a robust place to store carbon. But as heat waves and droughts become more common, that vegetation is increasingly vulnerable to fires that quickly release plant-sequestered carbon back into the atmosphere.

Large herbivores can blunt that danger by suppressing fires. “By consuming plant material that might otherwise serve as fuel, large animals make fires less likely and less severe, even in places like savannas where fire occurs naturally,” says ecologist and study co-author Jens-Christian Svenning of Denmark's Aarhus University.

In addition, much of the carbon stored in vegetation eaten by large wild herbivores is quickly returned to the soil as dung, which will soon decay. Stored safely below ground, that carbon stays put even in the face of fires that sweep the vegetation away.

“In addition, this carbon may increase the productivity of the soil, allowing many new plants to grow and absorb more CO<sub>2</sub>,” notes Svenning. “Recent research also suggests that grazing [by wild herbivores] may stimulate the release of substances from roots that stabilize soil carbon.”

This process can be observed in East Africa’s Serengeti. Scientists calculated that when wildebeest populations bounced back there after a 1960s virus epidemic, the avoided emissions from fire, along with extra carbon stored underground, allowed the vast grassland to absorb more carbon than it emitted — enough, in fact, to just about equal East Africa’s annual carbon emissions from the use of fossil fuels.

Unfortunately, duplicating this Serengeti carbon storage success story across Africa may prove challenging, as many areas have lost their large wild animals. They’re estimated to have declined by 59% in protected areas across Africa between 1970 and 2005, and are unlikely to have recovered much since. Most African savanna elephant populations, for example, currently exist at estimated densities of less than a quarter of what their ecosystems could sustain. The situation in Asian grasslands, where epidemics have decimated hundreds of thousands of saiga antelopes, is likely more dire.



## PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

### [Cordillera eyes more renewable resources to generate power](#)

By: Vincent Cabreza

BAGUIO CITY, Benguet, Philippines — The Cordillera region is harnessing more renewable energy projects from its major rivers to spur economic recovery while fighting the impact of climate change.

“The Department of Energy says the Cordillera has the potential to supply 3,600 megawatts of electricity from hydroelectric sources, but only 5 percent is being generated,” Apayao Gov. Elias Bulut Jr. said.

During the Regional Development Council (RDC) assembly held here last week, Bulut said he took his cue from President Marcos, who advocated the shift from fossil fuels to renewable and other alternate sources of power.

Bulut, who chairs the RDC, said the more focused drive for hydropower would bring direct foreign investments to the region, which gets the smallest annual budget because of its relatively small population.

#### **Oldest plants**

“It is a shame we are not harnessing these God-given resources,” Bulut said, referring to the region’s status as Luzon’s watershed cradle, where the headwaters of the island’s 13 major rivers are located.

Between 2008 and 2018, at least 193.63 million cubic meters of surface river water were utilized for electric generation in the Cordillera, which was lower than the 1.743 million cubic meters used for irrigation, according to the region’s latest physical flow accounts for water resources, which the Philippine Statistics Authority released in November.

The oldest hydropower plants that continue to operate in the region are Ambuklao and Binga in Benguet province, but Cordillera rivers have powered up neighboring power plants like the San Roque Multipurpose Dam in Pangasinan province and Magat Dam, which straddles the provinces of Ifugao and Isabela.

Apayao is benefiting from a hydropower project at the Apayao-Abulug river system, which courses through the towns of Pudtol and Kabugao. A service contract was awarded as early as 2011 to Pan Pacific Renewable Power Philippines Corp., which is building a 150-MW facility that was scaled down from the original 600-MW venture.

#### **Employment opportunities**

“The development of renewables takes time. The President even conceded that power plants could go online after his term,” Bulut said as he urged the region’s local governments to formulate ordinances that would speed up renewable energy projects, which are entitled to incentives.

That includes easing the process of securing the free, prior and informed consent of communities that live in areas suited for hydropower, Bulut said.

“Once renewable energy businesses are set up, employment opportunities arise, and economic activities will be revitalized,” he said.

The region suffered a 10.2-percent growth contraction in 2020 when the COVID-19 pandemic broke out.

“[But] as mobility restrictions eased and economic activities gradually opened, the [Cordillera] region’s gross domestic product rebounded from P288.88 billion in 2020 to P310.59 billion in 2021 [which was] a 7.5-percent improvement,” according to the 2021 Cordillera Regional Development Report of the National Economic and Development Authority.

## THE MANILA TIMES

### [\[Opinion\] Why marine protected areas matter](#)

By: Daphne Oseña-Paez

WHILE working on my final paper for my environmental management course, I was pleased to share with my class that the Philippines pioneered a community-based approach to marine protected area management.

I spent a whole season with Canadian classmates and a few others, like me, who were overseas. During this time, I represented real-life examples of climate change issues like Typhoon "Paeng" wreaking havoc on Luzon. The module on agroforestry, allowed me to share examples from my little farm where we got yields from cacao trees we planted five years ago between coconut and other native trees.

Learning that we had a head start in marine protected areas management gave me a little sense of pride. We're not so bad, and we aren't always climate victims.

As early as 1974, the Philippines set a framework for coral reef management in Sumilon and Apo islands where a "no take zone" was established. This resulted in protecting the coral reef habitats, enhancing biodiversity, and increasing fish yields for traditional fishermen in the community.

Not all countries with marine protected areas (MPAs) commit to strict no "take zone" declarations. In the Philippines, we do. And what we lack in monitoring resources, we make up for in community management and involvement.

The jewel of our MPAs is Tubbataha Reefs Natural Park, 150 kilometers southeast of Puerto Princesa City, Palawan. It was declared a World Heritage Site by Unesco in 1993. For perspective, Canada did not establish its first MPA until 2003. However it had other legal frameworks for environmental protection through its Parks departments. In terms of a pure objective to protect habitats and biodiversity, the Philippines was a pioneer. Examples are Apo, Sumilon and Tubbataha.

Tubbataha protects an area of almost 100,000 hectares of high quality marine habitats with two big coral atolls and a reef. It is a rare example of a diverse and almost pristine coral reef with a 100 meter perpendicular wall and lagoon. Over 360 species of coral and almost 700 species of fish are found here. The presence of apex predators such as the hammerhead shark is an indicator of good ecological balance. Tubbataha is an important natural habitat for in-situ conservation of biological diversity.

National policies helped strengthen the protection of marine resources. In 1988, Tubbataha was established by Presidential Proclamation 306 as the first marine national park by President Corazon Aquino. In 1995, President Fidel V. Ramos established the Presidential Task Force on Tubbataha Reefs through Memorandum 128 composed of government agencies, private sector and civil society. In 2009, after

almost 20 years of managing the site as a no-take zone, Tubbataha was declared a Protected Area under the Nipas Law through Republic Act 10067. This prohibited exploration, exploitation, or use of non-renewable resources, conducting of bioprospecting without a permit, introduction of exotic species, to hunt, catch, fish, kill, take resources.

Despite the laws and policies protecting Tubbataha, a US Navy warship, USS Guardian, ran aground on the northern tip of the southern atoll in 2013. It damaged over 2,300 square meters of reef and took 72 days for the ship to be extracted. Also in 2013, an illegal Chinese fishing vessel, Min Ping Yu, ran aground on Tubbataha's northern atoll. Only one somewhat good thing came out of this incident. It allowed the International Maritime Organization's declaration in 2017 of Tubbataha as a sensitive area to be avoided by maritime routes, giving the area an extra layer of protection. This designation is a big breakthrough because it protects Tubbataha from the impact of noise, pollution and further potential shipping accidents.

According to a International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) report in 2020, Tubbataha is "excellent and effective at planning, outreach, enforcement, and implementation of conservation and regeneration efforts." Tubbataha addressed ecological issues early by declaring it a no-take reserve in 1988, and continued to support it by legislation and international declarations. There are still some threats that persist from local anthropogenic activity, which are minimized by resident ranger patrol and global impacts of climate change.

While the establishment of MPAs had the initial objectives of protecting and restoring biodiversity within the specific area for a long-term period, it is now found to be an effective climate change mitigation and adaptation principle as well. When non-climate stressors are reduced in an MPA, such as prohibiting fishing, exploration and bottom-trawling, there is an added benefit of storing carbon within, therefore reducing impacts on climate. Blue carbon is carbon that is stored within marine and coastal ecosystems. Oceans store more blue carbon per unit area than terrestrial forests. Protected mangroves, marshes, seagrass beds also provide climate change adaptation benefits like protecting coastal communities and providing food security. When coastal areas are protected under MPAs, they continue to play their role as carbon sinks. MPAs with complex, intact ecosystems resist and recover better from climate disturbances compared to unprotected areas.

## PH eyes 'strategic' ties with Belgium

By: Kristina Maralit

UPDATE: BRUSSELS: President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. will push for a four-year "strategic partnership" with Belgium in various fields of cooperation when he meets with King Philippe, the leader of this country's constitutional monarchy.

Marcos' royal audience with the king on Tuesday night (Manila time) is scheduled ahead of his participation in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations-European Union (Asean-EU) Commemorative Summit.

He said the Philippines' 76 years of bilateral relationship with Belgium "continue to flourish," and he would like for both countries' ties to remain "strong and vibrant."

"It will also be an opportunity to convey to the King that the Philippines intends to pursue a strategic partnership in various fields, and to this end, forward to signing a Philippines-Belgium Joint Plan of Action for 2023 to 2027 that could further enhance bilateral cooperation, allow our two countries to discuss regional and global issues of mutual concern," the Chief Executive said during his meeting with the Filipino community at the Event Lounge here.

The gathering was also attended by Filipinos based in other European countries such as Germany, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and Austria.

"Our relations remain strong and vibrant based on shared values, common interests and the good reputation that Filipinos have built, not only here in Europe but all over the world," President Marcos said.

He lauded migrant workers in Europe, especially frontline health care workers, for being "heroes" at the height of the coronavirus pandemic.

Marcos' meeting with King Philippe happens on the same day of his attendance at the Asean-EU Business Council Summit, where he is expected to again put on his "best salesman" hat for the country and "certainly push for Philippine priorities within the context of the Asean-EU cooperation, particularly in post-pandemic economic recovery and trade, maritime cooperation and of course climate action."

He will be delivering the closing keynote address during the plenary as the country starts its role as lead coordinator for the Asean regarding trade deals with the EU for the next two years.

## THE PHILIPPINE STAR

### [Nature guardians: Why Indigenous people are vital for saving biodiversity](#)

By: Issam Ahmed

WASHINGTON, United States ?— For countless generations prior to European colonization, Canada's Indigenous people relied on caribou both as a source of subsistence and as an integral part of their cultural practices.

Hunting and butchering the animal in frigid temperatures was long seen as a rite of passage, and members of the First Nations were the first to detect their serious decline.

"Fundamentally we are people of caribou," Valerie Courtois, director of Canada's Indigenous Leadership Initiative and a member of the Innu nation, told AFP.

"Caribou is what has really enabled us to survive, and to be who we are."

Today the species, which is known as reindeer outside North America, is endangered across much of Canada as a result of widespread habitat destruction from logging, roadbuilding, construction of transmission lines and more.

But an innovative pilot program led by Indigenous people might show a path to wider recovery.

As delegates from across the world meet in COP15 in Montreal this week to hammer out a new deal for nature, the case highlights the value of Indigenous stewardship in protecting ecosystems that benefit all humanity.

As detailed in a March 2022 paper in "Ecological Applications," the Klinse-Za subpopulation of caribou in British Columbia were once so plentiful they were described as "bugs on the landscape" but by 2013 had dwindled to just 38 animals.

That year, the First Nations of West Moberly and Sauteau devised a plan that saw them first cull wolves to reduce caribou predation, then added a maternal pen-fenced enclosures for females to birth and raise calves.

Their efforts saw the number of caribou of the herd triple in the area from 38 to 114.

With the threat of localized extinction averted, the two nations signed an agreement in 2020 with the governments of British Columbia and Canada to secure 7,900 square kilometers (3,050 square miles) of land for caribou, hoping to eventually revive their traditional hunt.

"When you protect caribou, a lot of animals come along for the ride," Ronnie Drever, a conservation scientist with nonprofit Nature United, told AFP.

"Good caribou conservation is also climate action," he added, because the old-growth forests and peatlands they live on are invaluable carbon sinks.

### **Science catching up**

Globally, Indigenous people own or use a quarter of the world's land, but safeguard 80 percent of remaining biodiversity?—testament to centuries of sustainable practices that modern science is only just starting to understand.

A paper published this October in *Current Biology* looked at tropical forests across Asia, Africa, and the Americas, finding those located on protected Indigenous lands were the "healthiest, highest functioning, most diverse, and most ecologically resilient."

A 2019 paper in *Environmental Science & Policy* analyzed more than 15,000 areas in Canada, Brazil and Australia.

It found that the total number of birds, mammals, amphibians and reptiles were highest on lands managed or co-managed by Indigenous communities.

Protected areas like parks and wildlife reserves had the second highest levels of biodiversity, followed by areas that were not protected.

"This suggests that it's the land-management practices of many Indigenous communities that are keeping species numbers high," said lead author Richard Schuster, in a statement.

### **Partnership crucial**

Jennifer Tauli Corpuz, of the Kankana-ey Igorot people of the Philippines, who is a lawyer and biodiversity expert with the International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity, stressed that collaborative efforts were crucial.

"Conservation does not have a good history with Indigenous peoples, it's resulted in displacement," she told AFP.

National parks established on Euro-American notions that the land was once pristine "wilderness" typically prohibited Indigenous peoples from exercising their customary land uses, and forcibly displaced many from their ancestral homes.

Instead, she says, the rights of Indigenous groups need to be woven into the fabric of the new global biodiversity deal—including a cornerstone pledge to protect 30 percent of land and water by 2030.

Indigenous groups say they should have greater autonomy to take the lead as managers of protected areas, arguing their successful record demonstrates they can pursue economic activity sustainably.

"The current biodiversity crisis is often depicted as a struggle to preserve untouched habitats," said a study published last year in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, which found that areas untouched by people were almost as rare 12,000 years ago as they are today.

"Current biodiversity losses are caused not by human conversion or degradation of untouched ecosystems, but rather by the appropriation, colonization, and intensification of use in lands inhabited and used by prior societies," it concluded.



## [UN shipping agency urged to set ambitious emission reduction measures](#)

By: Gae Katreena Cabico

LONDON, United Kingdom — The International Maritime Organization should adopt a more ambitious greenhouse gas emission reduction target by 2030, groups said as delegates from across the world gather in London to discuss how the shipping industry—the backbone of global trade—can accelerate its climate mitigation efforts.

For the first time since May 2019, IMO member states meet in the agency's London headquarters to attend the 79th session of the agency's Marine Environment Protection Committee. The session will run until Friday.

IMO is currently in the process of revisiting its existing climate strategy of halving emissions from ships by 2050.

“The science is clear: shipping's climate impacts have to halve by 2030 to ensure warming stays below the Paris Agreement's 1.5°C limit,” said John Maggs, president of the Clean Shipping Coalition.

“But a strong absolute emission reduction target for 2030 is essential to send an unambiguous signal to industry and investors that the race to decarbonize shipping has well and truly started,” he added.

Activists with Ocean Rebellion held a demonstration outside IMO's headquarters in London, urging the agency to halve shipping emissions before 2030 and start taxing shipping fuel.

Ships are responsible for roughly 3% of global emissions, releasing around one billion tons of greenhouse gas emission every year.

### **Path for decarbonization**

At the opening of MEPC 79, IMO Secretary General Kitack Lim welcomed the commitment of member states to finalize the revision of the initial strategy at MEPC 80 in July 2023.

“Essential work must be completed to set the path for the decarbonization of the shipping industry, in line with the objectives of the Paris Agreement,” Lim said.

“I believe MEPC 80, in July 2023, will be a historic moment for IMO to showcase to the world its determined maritime decarbonization strategy,” he added.

Other issues on the agenda include ballast water management, marine plastic litter from ships, and proposal to establish a Particularly Sensitive Sea Area in the North-Western Mediterranean Sea.

Delegates are also tackling a basket of medium-term measures to slash emissions from ships, including a carbon levy.

“Now more than ever, enhanced cooperation is needed at all levels to support the fight against the challenges facing us on climate change, biodiversity loss and marine pollution,” Lim said.

So why does MEPC 79 matter to Filipinos?

“It is important for the Philippines, for example, because it’s the largest country supplying the labor force that they are part of the solution as well,” Arsenio Dominguez, secretary general of the MEPC, told reporters.

“We’re looking into what’s going to be the needed training required for the seafarers, what safety aspects are necessary for these new fuels?”

**=END=**