



NEWS ROUNDUP

17 DECEMBER 2024 [08:30 am]

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By: Leocadia Bongben

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SUNSTAR

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Information and Knowledge Management Division

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By: Dennis Gasgonia

The state weather bureau is monitoring the possible formation of a tropical cyclone in the southern portion of the Philippines this coming week.

PAGASA is also expecting three weather systems that will bring rains throughout the country.

Amihan will prevail over Luzon most of the week, with surges on Thursday and Sunday. A Shear Line will be affecting eastern Luzon and may even reach Southern Luzon and Visayas during the surges.

The rains will cover Cagayan Valley, Bicol Region, northern MIMAROPA, and the eastern sections of Cordillera, Central Luzon, and CALABARZON Monday and Tuesday.

An Intertropical Convergence Zone will affect Mindanao during the week where a Low Pressure Area that might develop into a tropical cyclone past midweek.

The disturbance may track generally northwestward and cross Mindanao/Visayas and Palawan, said PAGASA.

The potential disturbance may bring widespread moderate to heavy rains over central and southern Philippines. Scattered to widespread flooding and landslides are likely over Southern Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao.

Metro Manila will experience cloudy skies with short sunny spells. There will be higher chance of rains on Sunday, said the weather bureau.

AL JAZEERA

[ICJ weighs legal responsibility for climate change, 'future of our planet'](#)

By: Lyndal Rowlands

Historic hearings at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in The Hague have drawn to a close after more than 100 countries and international organisations presented arguments over two weeks on who should bear legal responsibility for the worsening climate crisis.

Spearheading the effort was Vanuatu which, alongside other Pacific island nations, says the climate crisis poses a threat to its very existence.

"It is with a profound sense of urgency and responsibility that I stand before you today," Ralph Regenvanu, Vanuatu's special envoy for climate change and environment, said as he opened the hearings on December 2.

"The outcome of these proceedings will reverberate across generations, determining the fate of nations like mine and the future of our planet," he said.

In the two weeks that followed, dozens of countries made similar entreaties, while a handful of major fossil fuel-producing countries argued polluters should not be held responsible.

Sebastien Duyck, a senior lawyer with the Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL), which monitored the hearings, said the countries arguing against legal liability were in the minority.

"Major polluters, including the United States, United Kingdom, Russia, China, Germany, Saudi Arabia, Canada, Australia, Norway, and Kuwait, found themselves isolated in their attempts to play the legal system to serve their self-interests and insulate themselves from accountability," Duyck said in a statement.

"It is time to break this cycle of harm and impunity," he added.

The ICJ's 15 judges from around the world must now consider two questions: what are countries obliged to do under international law to protect the climate and environment from human-caused greenhouse gas emissions?

And what are the legal consequences for governments when their acts, or lack of action, have significantly harmed the climate and environment?

Among countries that provided oral statements during the hearings was the State of Palestine, which joined other developing nations in calling for international law to "take centre stage in protecting humanity from the dangerous path of human-made destruction resulting from climate change".

The Palestinian statement also offered insights into the ways that Israel's illegal occupation is both causing climate change and hurting Palestinians' ability to respond to it.

"There can be no doubt that the ongoing illegal Israeli belligerent occupation of Palestine and its discriminatory policies have clear negative climate effects," Ammar Hijazi, the State of Palestine's ambassador to the Netherlands, said on Monday.

East Timor, also known as Timor-Leste, testified in support of Vanuatu's case.

"The climate crisis that we face today is the result of the historical and ongoing actions of industrialised nations, which have reaped the benefits of rapid economic growth, powered by colonial exploitation and carbon-intensive industries and practices," Elizabeth Exposto, chief of staff to Timor-Leste's prime minister, said on Thursday.

"These nations, representing only a fraction of the global population, are overwhelmingly responsible for the climate crisis," she added, "and yet, the impacts of climate change do not respect borders."

The hearings come after 132 countries at the United Nations General Assembly voted in March 2023 to support Vanuatu's push for an opinion from the ICJ on the legal obligations nations are under to protect current and future generations from climate change.

The turn to courts to spur action on climate change also reflects a growing degree of dissatisfaction among some governments at the lack of progress in UN climate negotiations, where decisions are based on consensus.

The most recent COP29 summit in Baku, Azerbaijan, concluded with rich countries pledging to contribute \$300bn a year by 2035 to help poorer nations combat the effects of climate change.

But the Climate Action Network International, a network of 1,900 civil society groups in more than 130 countries, described the deal as a "joke", when compared with the costs developing countries are facing as climate change worsens.

As Regenvanu noted in his statement for Vanuatu, "it is unconscionable that the COP failed to reach any agreement on cutting emissions".

"There is an urgent need for a collective response to climate change grounded not in political convenience but in international law."

MANILA BULLETIN

['Green' goods face market hurdles in Philippines—World Bank](#)

By: Ben Arnold De Vera

The entry of products deemed environment-friendly to the Philippines—a net goods importer—faces challenges due to expensive non-tariff barriers, according to the World Bank.

"The Philippines' share of green goods trade is relatively low, partly due to the high incidence of non-tariff measures (NTMs) on imports of green goods," said the World Bank report titled "Trade Policy, Green Goods and the Labor Market: Evidence from the Philippines" published on Dec. 13.

This assessment is based on a comparison made by the Washington-based multilateral lender with the Philippines' peer-countries as well as leading green industries.

In particular, the World Bank cited "costly" NTMs impacting imported energy transition-related technologies, among other green products.

For the World Bank, this is a missed opportunity for the Philippines, given its vulnerability to climate change challenges, citing that "bolding the green trade can support the country's transition towards a more sustainable area, enhance resilience, and alleviate environmental risks."

"As the Philippines heavily relies on fossil fuel imports, investing in green energy such as hydropower, wind, or solar can reduce the dependence on fossil fuel imports," the World Bank pointed out.

Also, the report noted that the Philippines' participation in green trade aligns with its global climate commitments, including as part of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations' (ASEAN) agreement.

"More importantly, promoting green goods imports and exports can drive job creation, increase wages for people, and support economic growth," it added.

According to the World Bank, out of the around 90 "burdensome" NTMs, there are five specific measures that, if reformed, may increase trade in green goods, as there is a direct link between higher exports and imports.

But the report warned that this may also lead to fewer high-skilled labor involved in export industries, even as it could jack up the proportion of females working in import sectors.

While importing green products is associated with bigger overall industry earnings, the report cautioned that reforming trade policies to become more climate- and environment

-friendly could cause shifts in the labor market, hence requiring additional measures supporting impacted workers.

In all, "green goods trade will matter for the transition to a low-carbon global economy as well as for its adaptive capacity to climate events," the World Bank said.

MONGABAY

[Young people in Africa call for a fair increase in funding for climate adaptation](#)

By: Leocadia Bongben

Yaounde – African youths have adopted “The Yaounde African call on more than doubling Adaptation Finance for a Resilient Africa,” calling for a large raise in the share of adaptation finance in the overall climate finance portfolio to match the needs and costs of adaptation for African nations. They argue that doubling adaptation finance to approximately \$40 billion per year would still remain inadequate relative to the identified needs.

The call, at the end of the three-day second Youth Forum on Adaptation Finance in Africa, YOFAFA, held in the city of seven hills—Yaounde in Cameroon—comes as climate impacts rise in Africa, as the continent faces widening financial gaps for adaptation.

“We call on developed countries to increase and prioritize climate financing for energy access projects in Africa, recognizing that energy access is essential to climate resilience,” the youths also declared.

Idris Adoum from Chad, advocacy and awareness expert for the Youth for Adaptation Finance and Youth for Climate in Africa network, says, “We made the call last year; it had an appreciable impact, but it was not adopted. We have reiterated the call and added access to the energy campaign.”

Given that many youths were unable to attend COP 29 in Azerbaijan, Adoum says, “The strategy is for delegates at the Yaounde forum to approach focal points of adaptation, climate, and the country negotiators to hand them the declaration. In Chad, I will hand it to the Secretary-General of the Governor, the country’s negotiator who will participate in the delegation meetings.”

The youth’s demands were presented during COP 29.

African youths have equally adopted the energy campaign dubbed the ‘six30 campaign’, which seeks to mobilize public and private donors to substantially increase funding and investments in renewable energy projects across the continent by investing \$630 billion by 2030 with a goal of providing energy to 630 million people in Sub-Saharan Africa.

The African Coalition for Sustainable Energy and Access, ACSEA, and the Pan-African Climate Justice Alliance, PACJA, are pushing the African private sector to invest in climate change adaptation, Adoum says. They are also tapping into Africa’s philanthropy, according to Adoum, who says several foundations, such as the Mo Ibrahim and the Tony Olumelu Foundations in Nigeria, have shown interest in investing in energy access.

State of Climate Adaptation Finance in Africa

Young people make their demand for an increase in the fair share of climate adaptation finance based on the commitments taken during the Paris Agreement.

The Paris Agreement is a legally binding international convention on climate change adopted by in Paris, France, on December 12, 2015. The accord contains a global target for addressing the impacts of climate change. At COP26, new financial pledges were made to help developing nations achieve this target. Furthermore, new rules for international carbon trading mechanisms (“Article 6”) were established at COP26 to promote adaptation finance.

However, according to young activists and many experts, Africa faces a severe and urgent shortfall in funding for climate change adaptation, even as the costs of delayed action rise.

The United Nations Environment Program Finance Initiative indicates that financing is a major barrier to climate adaptation. UNEP’s 2022 Adaptation Gap Report estimates that the annual cost of adaptation in developing countries alone will be between \$160-340 billion by 2030, suggesting public budgets will be unable to address the financing challenge alone.

The Paris agreement established the world’s largest climate fund, the Green Climate Fund (GCF), to assist developing nations in achieving their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) goals toward low-emission, climate-resilient pathways.

The fund was capitalized with an initial \$10 billion in 2015, and every four years since there’s been a \$10 billion replenishment four years afterward. The GCF has funded 133 in developing countries to date.

Seyni Nafo, Co-Chair of the Green Climate Fund and Coordinator of the African Adaptation Initiative, says, “Africa receives about one-third of the funds but needs five times the amount, stressing that whatever Africa receives seems minimal because the demands and needs are enormous.” Nafo regrets that most resources flow through non-African entities.

Charles Mwangi, Programs and Researcher at the Pan-African Climate Justice Alliance PACJA in Kenya, says his country has received grants from GCF. However, he regrets that other needy countries are unable to access the funds. He cites the complicated procedures to access funding as one of the drawbacks.

“Only accredited entities can access GCF funding, Central Africa and many countries do not have such institutions,” Nafo regrets.

Mwangi says the Africa Adaptation Initiative strives to match countries and entities that have successfully mobilized funding with those struggling to do the same.

Nforngwa Eugene, the African Coalition for Sustainable Energy and Access ACSEA Program Manager, says Africa receives only about 14% of global climate adaptation finance, amounting to over \$20 billion annually, which is insufficient. The continent requires approximately \$1.1 trillion annually between 2021 and 2030 to address its needs. He says this estimate is based on national adaptation plans, project budgets, and the investments needed to develop adaptation capacity on the continent.

Renewable energy as a resilience multiplier

Experts say energy can enhance adaptive capacity and resilience in agriculture, health, education, and other sectors. That is why the Yaounde forum focused on energy.

“Renewable energy should also be considered a priority sector,” says Nforngwa. “Investments here are meant to reduce emissions, not to provide adaptive capacities to communities. With the lowest emissions from the sector, it doesn’t make sense to invest in reducing emissions in Africa when 630 million people are without access to electricity and are therefore vulnerable to the impact of climate change.”

Wind turbines, developed at the University of Dchang and installed in the Northwest and West regions of Cameroon, are an example of energy as a sparkplug for resilience.

Julius Kewir Tangka, Professor of Agricultural Engineering expert in renewable energy and coordinator of the Dschang Renewable Energy Laboratory, says people who once trekked 10 kilometers from their village to charge phones, now have the energy to light their homes, pump water and shave without worsening climate change.

“I displayed 30 to 40 prototypes to youths, encouraging them to delve into renewable energy,” Tangka says.

Dr. Godwin Oji Ojo, a political ecologist and activist for environmental justice and energy transition with ACSEA, introduced solar electricity to a Calaba town in Nigeria. This hamlet, which has been severely affected by oil pollution, now uses solar energy for homes and healthcare and to power their water pumping system, which distributes the water to key locations across the community. Ojo says this has improved local agriculture, education, and livelihoods.

“Our message to young people is that it’s time to use renewable energy technologies and develop creative business abilities. Bringing these materials into Africa is insufficient,” says Ojo.

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By: Stephanie Sevellano

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This came after the FrLD's 4th Board Meeting at the Philippine International Convention Center on Dec. 2-5, shortly after the 29th session of the Conference of Parties (COP) in Baku, Azerbaijan in November.

"We are inspired by his (Marcos) vision, his dedication, and his commitment to climate action," FrLD Board inaugural Executive Director Ibrahima Cheikh Diong said in a statement.

Earlier, Marcos underscored the need to fortify a whole-of-government and a whole-of-society approach to ensure climate resilience and disaster risk reduction.

"Being on the Board obviously is an opportunity for the country to voice its concerns from the perspective of the Philippines. The other countries can learn from the Philippine example, and it can learn from other countries," Diong said.

He, likewise, lauded the DENR for its work at the recent Board meeting and for mobilizing the government.

"We are moving slowly but surely on the pledges. We can do two things at the same time: converting the pledges and mobilizing additional resources so we can meet the demands of the vulnerable countries," he said.

To date, 26 developed and developing countries comprise the FrLD Board, which aims to manage and supervise the global fund for the welfare of climate-risk vulnerable countries.

More than USD700 million has been pledged from developed countries thus far, with a target to raise about USD1.3 trillion annually by 2035.

Greening program increases W. Visayas' forest cover by 10.4%

By: Perla Lena

The National Greening Program (NGP) of the government, with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) as the lead implementer, has increased the forest cover of Western Visayas region by 10.4 percent between 2010 and 2020.

Since its launch in 2011, the program has planted trees across 121,257.58 hectares of land in the region, significantly contributing to environmental stability and biodiversity conservation, the DENR bared when it presented its accomplishment report during a media forum on Monday.

The program has also been a source of livelihood, creating jobs for 8,844 individuals who were involved in seedling production, plantation establishment, maintenance, protection, and serving as forest extension officers.

As of November 2024, the DENR regional office under Regional Executive Director Raul Lorilla has established an additional 2,274.9 hectares of plantations in Western Visayas, furthering the program's impact in the region.

The NGP is a flagship initiative of the DENR aimed at addressing poverty, promoting food security, enhancing climate change adaptation, and increasing forest cover.

It initially aimed to plant 1.5 billion trees across 1.5 million hectares of public lands between 2011 and 2016. In 2015, the program was expanded through Executive Order No. 193, extending its scope to rehabilitate 7.1 million hectares of unproductive, denuded, and degraded forest lands nationwide from 2016 to 2028.

SUNSTAR

[NCCA to highlight Pinoy resilience in 2025 plans](#)

By: Jovi De Leon

The National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA) said over the weekend that it will highlight the resilience of Filipino identity in its priority plans for 2025.

The Commission said that this will be done through culture and arts as tools for resilience and sustainability in the face of modern challenges.

The three main pillars of the 2025 plan include celebrating Filipino ingenuity; utilizing culture, arts, history, and heritage across various sectors and agencies; and strengthening internationalization programs.

“We want to highlight the relevance of culture and arts in addressing issues like climate change, technological advancements such as artificial intelligence, globalization, migration, tourism, and other development pressures. By positioning culture and arts as tools for innovation and survival, the NCCA aims to ensure the resilience of Filipino identity amidst these challenges,” the NCCA said.

Projects include curriculum development, values formation, tourism product development, and support for cultural industries and infrastructure conservation, plus empowering artists by providing opportunities to create, innovate, and practice their crafts.

The NCCA called on the public to support its initiatives.

The agency stressed that collective action is essential to preserving and promoting Filipino culture and ensuring that it remains a cornerstone of national identity and a driving force for sustainable development.

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