



NEWS ROUNDUP

19 DECEMBER 2023 [07:30 am]

- Marcos joins Asian leaders in decarbonization pledge
- [Opinion] My country needs climate finance now to face difficult years ahead
- Marcos to Asian Zero Emission Community: Invest in PH renewable energy industry
- PH joins AZEC in decarbonization push vs. climate change
- Marcos calls on ASEAN, Japan to craft 10-year new technology, climate roadmap
- COP28 spotlights key climate battle: Saving Himalayan ice
- Climate change: Asean not doing enough
- Pamalakaya says PH seat in LDF board should help fishers, farmers
- Progress, cop-outs in COP28
- PH joins other Asian countries in pushing for decarbonization
- [Opinion] The end of fossil fuels?

CNN

[Marcos joins Asian leaders in decarbonization pledge](#)

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. joined Asian leaders in promising to work towards decarbonization or reducing greenhouse gas emissions to fight climate change.

ECO BUSINESS

[My country needs climate finance now to face difficult years ahead](#)

By: Sheikh Hasina

Much like the fast-flowing waters of the Padma River, the climate crisis is fluid, fast moving, and often unpredictable. The same cannot be said for talks to tackle the crisis itself. At COP28 right now, we unfortunately see the predictable differences emerging over issues such as mitigation, finance and adaptation.

GMA

[Marcos to Asian Zero Emission Community: Invest in PH renewable energy industry](#)

By: Anna Felicia Bajo

President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. on Monday invited partners of the Asia Zero Emission Community to invest in the renewable energy industry and the emerging technologies in the Philippines.

[PH joins AZEC in decarbonization push vs. climate change](#)

By: Anna Felicia Bajo

President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. on Monday joined other leaders comprising the Asia Zero Emission Community (AZEC) in making a commitment to adopt various measures toward decarbonization to address the negative impacts of climate change.

MANILA BULLETIN

[Marcos calls on ASEAN, Japan to craft 10-year new technology, climate roadmap](#)

By: Betheena Unite

President Marcos called on fellow leaders to come up with a 10-year roadmap on new technologies and climate-resilient plans.

NIKKEI ASIA

[COP28 spotlights key climate battle: Saving Himalayan ice](#)

By: Rhyannon Bartlett-Imadegawa

Filmmaker and environmental activist Jamyang Jamtscho Wangchuk brought a bit of his beloved Himalayas to the COP28 climate summit in Dubai last week. Around 250 milliliters of it, to be precise.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

[Climate change: Asean not doing enough](#)

As one of the most economically dynamic regions in the world, Asean should be at the center of the decarbonization transition, and its primary regional architecture mechanism should be at the forefront of the debate.

[Pamalakaya says PH seat in LDF board should help fishers, farmers](#)

By: Zeus Legaspi

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) should leverage its seat on the board of the Loss and Damage Fund (LDF) to secure a budget to help the agricultural sector in the country, a pro-environment group said on Monday.

[Progress, cop-outs in COP28](#)

By: Cielit F. Habito

This year has been the warmest that planet Earth has seen in the last 125,000 years, scientists tell us. Its harmful impacts are felt worldwide, through melting glaciers in the North and South Poles and mountain ice caps (and the havoc caused by the resulting waters); devastating wildfires in the United States, Australia, and other parts of the globe; droughts induced by El Niño that destroy crops in vast farm areas, especially in the tropics; coral bleaching that ruins fish habitats; and more. This is not to mention its direct effect on humans, where an increased incidence of death from heat strokes is but one manifestation.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

[PH joins other Asian countries in pushing for decarbonization](#)

By: Anna Leah Gonzales

President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. and other leaders comprising the Asia Zero Emission Community (AZEC) vowed to push for decarbonization to address climate change.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

[\[Opinion\] The end of fossil fuels?](#)

By: Toy Lopez

Global warming has a friend. It is two words – fossil fuels. These are crude oil, coal and natural gas.

Information and Knowledge Management Division

CNN

[Marcos joins Asian leaders in decarbonization pledge](#)

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. joined Asian leaders in promising to work towards decarbonization or reducing greenhouse gas emissions to fight climate change.

Australia, Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Japan, Laos, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam signed the joint statement during the Asia Zero Emission Community (AZEC) Leaders Meeting in Tokyo on Monday.

"President Marcos made a separate commitment on Monday to promote and shift to clean energy during the AZEC Leaders' Meeting in Tokyo, as he invited AZEC Partners to invest in the renewable energy industry and emerging technologies in the Philippines, and introduce energy efficiency and conservation measures in the country," the Presidential Communications Office said in a news release.

According to the joint statement, the countries recognized the need to take a "tailored approach" towards decarbonization through the use of various technologies, as well as scaling up renewable energy, using nuclear energy, and decarbonizing the transport sector, among others.

They noted the "important role that natural gas and LNG will play as transition fuels in line with climate goals of the Paris Agreement."

"We will foster public-private partnerships and cooperation among private sectors to accelerate energy transitions through [the] creation of specific energy transition projects," the statement read.

The countries said they "affirm the importance of adequate financing to support the acceleration of energy transitions in the region," and fostering cooperation beyond AZEC partners. They also welcome the outcome of the recently concluded COP28 summit in Dubai.

Marcos attended the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)-Japan Commemorative Summit Session Two in Tokyo. On Sunday, he called on the ASEAN to develop a 10-year roadmap on climate-resilient plans to ensure food security in the region, particularly requesting Japan's assistance.

ECO BUSINESS

[My country needs climate finance now to face difficult years ahead](#)

By: Sheikh Hasina

Much like the fast-flowing waters of the Padma River, the climate crisis is fluid, fast moving, and often unpredictable. The same cannot be said for talks to tackle the crisis itself. At COP28 right now, we unfortunately see the predictable differences emerging over issues such as mitigation, finance and adaptation.

In the coming days it is essential we make progress in these crucial areas. We must keep the 1.5°C warming limit alive, the Global Stocktake must deliver increased ambition, and finance needs to be mobilised urgently recognising the increasing needs of vulnerable countries such as ours.

In Dubai today we even see some countries continuing to challenge the science. In Bangladesh we have experienced the impact of rising emissions for decades. There is no doubt. This year alone, temperatures in our country soared above 40 degrees. Our people endured punishing heat waves and power cuts; thousands of schools were shut. In August, 55 people were killed in flooding and thousands uprooted from their homes.

Bangladesh is responsible for 0.47 per cent of global emissions - yet we are ranked the seventh most vulnerable country to climate change. For years we have been investing in ways to grow our economy whilst adapting to the seismic effects of climate change.

Through the Mujib Climate Prosperity Plan, we have set out ways to transform our society and set out a path of climate resilience not climate vulnerability. Our energy transition involves boosting renewable energy capacity to 30 per cent by 2030, developing sustainable agriculture and modernising grids.

Today we continue to build flood defences, sea walls and mangrove forests. Satellite warning systems track dangerous weather patterns. All these measures help us save lives. Climate disaster mitigation is woven into the very DNA of every action taken by my government as part of the national adaptation plan. It is integral to our economy and survival.

But adaptation is also about how we grow our interconnected economies, our different sectors from food to textiles, which sector communities rely on, and how we build infrastructure. Our bold strategy needs even bolder investment. Solar technology must be made more affordable, prohibitive taxes on inverters must be reconsidered, and international investment must be forthcoming.

Huge finance gap

Leaders at COP28 have pledged US\$169 billion towards the Adaptation Fund, this is far from the US\$300 billion annual target for this year. The financing gap is at a staggering US\$194–366 billion per year. This falls hugely short of where we need to be. Rich countries must step up.

There are mere days and hours left to reach an ambitious outcome that the world urgently needs. Parties know what they need to achieve at and beyond COP28. The largest carbon-emitting nations must submit ambitious NDCs and set out bold strategies to meet them. The developed countries must deliver the US\$100bn per year and the new post-2025 climate finance goals must be significantly higher than current commitments.

It is vital that climate finance meets three essential criteria: funding must be adequate, routine, and accessible. Countries such as ours face years of difficulty ahead - future funding must reach those who need it most when it most counts.

We require a vision for the future. At COP28, I beseech my international partners to reflect deeply on our common goals, to take decisive action and acknowledge the true costs of any further delays. I applaud the hard work being done and sincere efforts undertaken by all. But equally, I urge my international partners to act in solidarity as the latest available science unequivocally demands.

As the waters rise around our feet, as heat waves continue to break records, we are forced to remember that the biggest challenges we face remain on the horizon. We must effectively confront and address them together on a war footing.

GMA

Marcos to Asian Zero Emission Community: Invest in PH renewable energy industry

By: Anna Felicia Bajo

President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. on Monday invited partners of the Asia Zero Emission Community to invest in the renewable energy industry and the emerging technologies in the Philippines.

Marcos made the call during the AZEC Leaders' Meeting in Tokyo, Japan where he also introduced the country's energy efficiency and conservation measures.

He said the Philippines is joining AZEC Partners in recognizing the need "to accelerate a clean, sustainable, just, affordable, and inclusive energy transition towards carbon neutrality, or net-zero emissions."

"We welcome this timely initiative to tackle climate change as a common global challenge and advance cooperation towards carbon neutrality/net-zero emissions while ensuring energy security," Marcos said in his speech.

"This gathering is very timely given the recent COP28 in Dubai and I am confident that this initiative will contribute to the global acceleration of an inclusive energy transition," he added.

Marcos also mentioned that the first wind farms in Southeast Asia were built during his term as governor of Ilocos Norte.

He noted that the Philippine government has also set in place targets to increase the share of renewable energy in the power generation mix by 35% in 2030 and 50% by 2040, noting that this will result in 3.3 billion tons of avoided GHG emissions over the 2023-2050 planning horizon.

"To achieve this, we have eased foreign ownership restrictions for renewable energy projects. The development of renewable energy sources in the Philippines is now open to 100% foreign ownership," Marcos said.

"We have also set in place a regulatory framework which sets the groundwork for building a robust Offshore Wind Industry, encompassing a long-term vision for infrastructure development, for investments, and sound policies," he added.

Marcos guaranteed that investors in the Philippines can also avail of the simplified rules for building Renewable Energy facilities and additional incentives such as income tax holiday and duty-free importation of capital equipment.

He also thanked the government of Japan for its interest in partnering with the Philippines to formulate a roadmap for energy transition as he expressed optimism that the collaboration will pave the way for the creation of the AZEC center.

“In addition, I would also like to speak of the added interest in partnerships with the Philippines and we need the partnerships that we have, and to add to them as well,” Marcos said.

“So, I would like to invite our AZEC Partners, including Japan, to invest not only in the Philippine renewable energy industry, but also in other emerging technologies and introduce energy efficiency and conservation measures,” he added.

The AZEC is a platform consisting of Asian countries that promotes the reduction of greenhouse gas emission in the region while supporting a sound economic growth in Asia.

[PH joins AZEC in decarbonization push vs. climate change](#)

By: Anna Felicia Bajo

President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. on Monday joined other leaders comprising the Asia Zero Emission Community (AZEC) in making a commitment to adopt various measures toward decarbonization to address the negative impacts of climate change.

In the AZEC Leaders' Joint Statement released in Tokyo, Japan, leaders from various Asian countries vowed to advance cooperation toward carbon neutrality and net zero emission with the end goal of maintaining the increase in the global average temperature to well below two degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.

They agreed to promote decarbonization towards carbon neutrality while also achieving economic growth.

"We welcome the outcome of the first Asia Zero Emission Community (AZEC) Ministerial Meeting held in March 2023 in Tokyo, which set up these common understanding among partners countries," the joint statement said.

Further, the leaders agreed to promote policy support and collaboration in tangible projects through tailored approach towards decarbonization with the use of various technologies such as heat pumps, scaling up renewable energy, energy storage, regional interconnectivity and improving grid flexibility.

They also affirmed the importance of adequate financing to support the acceleration of energy transitions in the region as they highlight the necessity for transition finance as a financial instrument to achieve whole-of-economy transition in the energy sector.

The leaders also recognized the importance of promotion and implementation of high integrity carbon markets and crediting schemes such as through collaboration models, but not limited to the Joint Crediting Mechanism.

MANILA BULLETIN

[Marcos calls on ASEAN, Japan to craft 10-year new technology, climate roadmap](#)

By: Betheena Unite

President Marcos called on fellow leaders to come up with a 10-year roadmap on new technologies and climate-resilient plans.

Marcos made the call during his intervention at one of the sessions of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)-Japan Commemorative Summit on Sunday, Dec. 17, as he sees Japan as a major player in the economic development of Southeast Asia.

He also views Japan as a major player in addressing climate change and the region's adoption of new technologies.

"As one of the countries most vulnerable to the negative impacts of climate change, the Philippines realizes that agriculture is intrinsically linked with climate," Marcos said.

"Inasmuch as food security is one of my administration's top priorities, I encourage new agricultural technologies and the crafting of a climate change-resilient, sustainable, inclusive, and people-centered ASEAN-Japan Strategic Economic Cooperation Roadmap beyond 2025 for the next 10 years," he added.

The President also urged ASEAN Member States and Japan to undertake novel joint ventures to reduce carbon emissions, promote renewable energy, and enhance environmental sustainability.

"I am confident that this partnership will continue to grow and expand with the AJCEP Agreement [ASEAN-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement] and RCEP [Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement] in place," Marcos said

"Furthermore, with the recent addition of the "ASEAN-Japan Economic Co-Creation Vision" that recommends the future direction of ASEAN-Japan cooperation, we anticipate an even more vigorous economic relation," he said.

Marcos said the Philippines is keen to collaborate with Japan to bring about the initiatives set out in the Future Design and Action Plan for Innovative and Sustainable ASEAN-Japan Economic Co-Creation 2023 – 2033, noting the country's young, dynamic, and skilled people are certain to play a vital role in shaping this vision in the path towards Industry 4.0 Economy.

He also indicated the Philippines' willingness to host the headquarters of the Loss and Damage Fund Board.

“As the world becomes more interconnected, ASEAN must develop its physical connectivity and digital infrastructure as foundations for sustainable and inclusive economic growth, economic integration, competitiveness, and resilience,” Marcos said, adding ASEAN and Japan must also expand digital literacy to foster innovation and inclusivity and facilitate the digital transformation of their economies.

“We would appreciate, in this regard, the continued exchange of technological know-how and best practices between ASEAN Member States and Japan and investment in human capital and upskilling through various scholarship programs for ASEAN Member States,” he said.

NIKKEI ASIA

[COP28 spotlights key climate battle: Saving Himalayan ice](#)

By: Rhyannon Bartlett-Imadegawa

Filmmaker and environmental activist Jamyang Jamtscho Wangchuk brought a bit of his beloved Himalayas to the COP28 climate summit in Dubai last week. Around 250 milliliters of it, to be precise.

In a plastic Coca-Cola bottle he had found discarded in the mountains, Wangchuk collected water from three glacial lakes: Jichu Drake and Thorthormi in his home country of Bhutan and the highest glacial lake in the world, on Mount Everest's South Col. These form part of a landscape better known for its beautiful peaks than as a key Asian battleground in the fight against global warming.

Nearly 2 billion people -- a quarter of the world's population -- in countries from Afghanistan to India, Myanmar and China depend on the Hindu Kush Himalaya region as a water source. Its glaciers feed giant waterways like the Brahmaputra, Ganges, Indus, Irrawaddy, Mekong, Yangtze, Yellow River and many more.

The water in Wangchuk's bottle represented the "dying glaciers due to climate change," he said. Glaciers in the region are melting at an alarming rate -- 65% faster between 2011 and 2020 than in the previous decade, according to the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), an intergovernmental research institution based in Kathmandu.

Nepal's mountains have already lost a third of their ice over the last 30 years. Floods linked to glacial melting are increasingly common, and the melting was a factor in deadly floods that devastated Pakistan last year.

In a breakthrough reflecting the urgency of the situation, risks to mountainous countries were officially recognized for the first time at COP28, during which U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres called for action.

"Unless we change course, we will unleash catastrophe," he said. "The glaciers could disappear altogether. That means massively reduced flows for major Himalayan rivers like the Indus, the Ganges and the Brahmaputra. Deltas decimated by saltwater. Low-lying communities wiped out."

COP28 reaffirmed the aim of keeping the global average temperature rise to within 1.5 C, but data shows the world is wildly off the mark. In the best-case scenario, glaciers in the Hindu Kush Himalayas will lose a third of their volume in 80 years. Current emission

trends suggest the loss could be close to 80%. An "overshoot" scenario of briefly topping 1.5 C also points to catastrophe.

Filmmaker Wangchuk cycles to glaciers in the Hindu Kush Himalaya region to see for himself what is happening and raise awareness through his documentaries. He has spoken to everyone from Mount Everest sherpas to Pakistan flood survivors. Many do not know about climate change as such, he said, but "the impact is very clear."

"Everybody I've met, one way or the other, they're living it, they're living the [climate] crisis."

The Hindu Kush Himalaya area stretches 3,500 kilometers and includes Earth's highest mountain range. It is warming at a rate of 0.3 C per decade, faster than the global average, according to the U.N.'s science body for climate change.

Arun Bhakta Shrestha, a senior climate change specialist at ICIMOD, said such impacts are "very, very far-reaching."

Of high concern are outburst floods that are triggered when meltwater causes glacial lakes to overflow and cascade down the mountains at high speed. This has become "quite common," he said.

In one example in October, a glacial Himalayan lake burst its banks following heavy rain, causing the Teesta River in northeastern India to flood, which washed away a 60-meter-tall dam that was part of a 1.2-gigawatt hydropower project in Sikkim state and devastated villages all the way to Bangladesh. Over 100 were reported to have died in that disaster.

More than 200 of the over 2,000 glacial lakes in the Hindu Kush Himalayas are considered by ICIMOD to be dangerous due to the risk of glacial lake outburst floods -- a number set to rise as glaciers melt, creating more and larger lakes.

"Our livelihood, lifestyle is in danger," said Yasso Kanti Bhattachan, an activist who attended COP28 and belongs to the Thakali people of the Thasang area in Nepal's Mustang region bordering Tibet.

"The mountain herbs are dying, and [there is] disease. ... The weather is changing, there is excessive rainfall also," she said. Mosquitoes have become a new problem for mountain villages as temperatures rise, and traditionally constructed homes cannot withstand the new pounding rain.

After floods come droughts. If Himalayan glaciers melt away, the main rivers of Asia will dry up, causing intractable problems in countries small and large.

India, for one, will not only face flooding -- its energy security and transition to clean energy will also suffer. India buys about 70% of the hydropower produced by Bhutan. The landlocked, mountainous nation makes a living off the installed capacity of 2.3 GW of hydropower it can produce each year, and has the potential for an estimated 33 GW. Hydropower generation brought in about a quarter of the government's total revenue, according to state-owned Druk Green Power Corp., which operates the power plants.

Dawa Chhoedron, chief engineer at Bhutan's Department of Energy, said at COP28 that climate change makes rain less predictable and causes more damage from debris after intense downpours. These, in turn, make hydropower more erratic as an energy source. Because hydropower is the most vulnerable to climate threats, there is a need to design and operate generators that are more resilient to fluctuations, she said.

Diversification is another imperative. Last year, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) announced it would support the construction of Bhutan's first utility-scale solar power plant.

Nepal is similarly dependent. Nestled between China and India, it has the potential to generate 42 GW of economically viable hydropower. It already has purchase agreements with India and plans to sell to Bangladesh as it expands its installed capacity.

Yet one study found that 210 existing and planned dams in Nepal are in basins that face "medium to very high" risks of water scarcity and flooding by 2050, raising questions about such projects' viability. India has 184, according to the analysis.

Those experiencing the worst effects of climate change in the Hindu Kush Himalayas are not the culprits. Around 70% of Bhutan is covered in forests that sequester roughly 9.5 million metric tonnes of carbon annually compared with the country's carbon emissions output of around 2.7 million tonnes, according to government data.

Nepal's carbon emissions accounted for 0.11% of the world's total in 2022, while India and China were responsible for 7.3% and 29.2%, respectively.

Nepal's Joint Secretary for the Ministry of Forests and Environment Maheshwar Dhakal has called on industrialized countries to help protect mountains. Nepal estimates that adapting to climate change would cost it \$47 billion.

With the U.N. Environment Programme, it is adding forestry and water management practices to boost terraced farming to prevent the worst landslides. But whatever it does will have little impact if neighboring large emitters do not act. "Nepal alone can do nothing," Dhakal said.

Dhakal also called for contributions to the newly established loss and damage fund for climate or pay directly for regional programs. He suggested that a mechanism that adds the calculated cost of environmental services to the price of hydropower generated by the country could be another option.

Meanwhile, ICIMOD's Shreshtha said a cross-border system for early flood warnings is crucial -- but hard to implement because water resources are considered a national security issue.

"Sharing even water-related data is very, very sensitive in those areas," he said. "Because it is related to water, they are not collaborating even in reducing the disaster risks."

Nonetheless, ICIMOD has developed a community-based early warning system for floods, with pilot programs in Afghanistan, India, Nepal and Pakistan.

Sensors transmit information about water levels upstream to trained personnel who can interpret the data and warn downstream communities and government agencies through texts or telephone calls, or by raising flags and signs.

During COP28, the ADB launched an initiative to assess and manage climate and disaster risks in the region. This could include measures such as early warning systems for small glacial lakes or building more resilient infrastructure, with a focus on Bhutan and Nepal.

Whether these actions will be enough is questionable. While official recognition of the risks to the region does indicate progress, Thasang activist Bhattachan sounded a warning to those in power: "No one can sell Mother Nature. We are taking, and she is a giver. We are not taking care of her."

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Climate change: Asean not doing enough

As one of the most economically dynamic regions in the world, Asean should be at the center of the decarbonization transition, and its primary regional architecture mechanism should be at the forefront of the debate.

Asean released a common position, the so-called Asean Joint Statement to COP28, about three months ago. As usual, however, it is pretty much devoid of substance and it certainly lacks bold statements and targets to ensure that the region will leapfrog in the upcoming decarbonization era: “Considering national circumstances, through achieving the aspirational target of 32 percent energy intensity reduction [based on 2005 level] and achieving 23 percent renewable energy share in Asean’s energy mix, with a 35 percent renewable energy share in installed power capacity by 2025.”

What do you make of these targets? Not much, right?

The problem is that, as per all projects of regional cooperation and integration, national governments want to have full strategic autonomy to leverage and maximize their interests.

That’s why, the three words, “Considering national circumstances” of the Asean Joint Statement are so heavy, burdensome, and troublesome but also normal all at once.

The statement also refers to the Asean Plan of Action for Energy Cooperation and the Asean Working Group on Climate Change Action Plan.

Have you ever heard of them?

There might be reasons why international media covering the United Nations climate conference, COP28, in Dubai do not pay much attention to Asean. It lacks depth, boldness, a real vision, and a narrative.

No wonder the world is not concerned about Asean and its plans for a just and equal transition.

I feel a lot for all the folks working at the Asean Secretariat. They should be rewarded for their endurance and resilience, a continuous test amid daily frustrations.

Even if I was hoping to find some interesting news about Asean at COP28, it is not surprising that Asean is basically silent on COP28.

Yet even if the COP28 Joint Statement is the lowest common denominator that was ever possible to agree upon, the Asean Secretariat could have played a more ambitious, though symbolic, role in Dubai.

Why not have an Asean pavilion or an Asean house that would have contained all the national pavilions? It could have been a great idea to locate all of these under a big “Asean tent” that, at least, would have reminded the international community that Southeast Asia has a regional mechanism, that, as slow as it is, tries to forge common policies.

Admittedly, it would have been mostly an exercise in PR. Still, it would have helped channel a sense of unity and an idea that, while dealing with the most intricate issue of our times, climate change, Asean had a common vision.

Yes, the member states are devising their new national determined contributions and their new long-term low emissions development strategies, both essential and extremely complex mitigation-focused tools, but, ultimately, they are in this existential fight together. The latest relevant publication by Asean on climate was the Asean State of Climate Change Report, which was published in 2021 when Lim Jock Hoi was the Asean secretary general. Why not come up with a partial update of the report, a document that would have reflected the latest scientific findings and the evolution of policies that many nations in Asean are undertaking? Why not at least highlight what each capital is “plotting” in terms of their energy transition plans?

The Asean Centre for Climate Change was slated to open in September in Brunei. What happened to this undertaking? It is not that we should expect that this new institution would do the “heavy lifting” when the leaders and their ministers are not visionary and bold enough to enable a closer common position on climate change. Still, it could be a significant development, a fresh initiative that could play as important a role as the Asean Centre for Biodiversity, which is based in the Philippines and has been punching above its own weight. Even the Asean Foundation came short. Its latest Asean Young Climate Leaders Program was organized in September 2021.

Perhaps at COP29 next year, there will be a real Asean pavilion and the grouping’s leaders will have decided to reach far more ambitious common targets in the matter of climate action.

Let us get rid, at least for once, of the “Asean way” and push for doable, achievable actions, starting with climate education. Let us also hope to hear good news from Brunei about the Asean Centre for Climate Change.

[Pamalakaya says PH seat in LDF board should help fishers, farmers](#)

By: Zeus Legaspi

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) should leverage its seat on the board of the Loss and Damage Fund (LDF) to secure a budget to help the agricultural sector in the country, a pro-environment group said on Monday.

According to Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (Pamalakaya), the DENR's success in securing a seat on the LDF board should be a springboard to help Filipino fisherfolks and farmers whose livelihoods have been upended by the effects of climate change.

"The climate fund should directly benefit the vulnerable fishing and farming communities," the group told Inquirer.net in a text interview.

"This should come in the form of direct compensation to farmers and fishers whose livelihood has deteriorated over the years due to the climate crisis," it added.

In previous statements, Pamalakaya said that fisherfolks in the country are suffering from the effects of ocean acidification and sea-level rise which are some of the effects of climate change.

Past natural calamities, including the recent low-pressure area (LPA) and shear line, which inundated areas of Visayas and Mindanao in November, have severely impacted farmers and fisherfolks.

Estimates from the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council put agricultural loss due to the shear line and LPA at P119,897,021.

Moreover, the group said that a portion of the fund should be used to rehabilitate natural features in the country.

"The LDF should be allotted for the restoration and rehabilitation of degraded natural resources such as mangrove forests, seabeds and coral reefs, and agricultural areas," the group continued.

Pamalakaya's call comes a few days after DENR Secretary Maria Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga's announcement that the Philippines has secured a seat on the LDF board.

Yulo-Loyzaga said that this allows the country to "continue to represent the vulnerable countries" in matters regarding the allocation of funds.

However, in past statements, Pamalakaya and other environmental groups said that the Philippine government has no “moral ascendancy” in batting to host the LDF board in Manila due to its unclear stance on reclamation projects in Manila Bay and the human rights issues environmental defenders face in the country.

The LDF is a climate fund set up to help vulnerable and developing countries address the costs of the climate crisis. It was launched on the first day of the United Nations 28th Conference of Parties in Dubai on November 30.

Progress, cop-outs in COP28

By: Cielit F. Habito

This year has been the warmest that planet Earth has seen in the last 125,000 years, scientists tell us. Its harmful impacts are felt worldwide, through melting glaciers in the North and South Poles and mountain ice caps (and the havoc caused by the resulting waters); devastating wildfires in the United States, Australia, and other parts of the globe; droughts induced by El Niño that destroy crops in vast farm areas, especially in the tropics; coral bleaching that ruins fish habitats; and more. This is not to mention its direct effect on humans, where an increased incidence of death from heat strokes is but one manifestation.

The earth is getting warmer, and climate patterns are changing all around the globe because of it. Hardly anyone now disputes that, and all of us have felt it. But it took 28 years from the time nearly 200 states began negotiating the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 1995 for them to finally reach a consensus that humans are indeed causing it, especially through their excessive use of fossil fuels. The recent COP28, or the 28th annual Conference of Parties (i.e., states) that signed the UNFCCC, reached what is described by its president as a “historical” agreement that for the first time explicitly recognizes the need to “transition away from fossil fuels in energy systems.” Before that, there had been endless debates on whether human beings were to blame for climate change, or natural factors are behind it. But the scientific community has unmistakably tracked an unprecedented and striking rate of temperature rise in recent decades, lending credence to the human explanation for global warming and the climate crisis, thus finally leading to the historic consensus.

COP28 was in itself historic in being the most highly attended so far, with reportedly over 100,000 registered delegates, about twice what had been usual in past gatherings. But observers also noted much stronger participation by the “climate change villains,” with 2,000 of the registered delegates officially representing fossil fuel companies. There was a seeming irony itself in the choice of host city for the meeting, being in a country (the United Arab Emirates) whose economy heavily relies on revenues from petroleum. And critics regarded with suspicion the host country’s appointment of Sultan Al Jaber, head of the Abu Dhabi National Oil Company, as president of the conference.

It was no surprise, then, that many remain dissatisfied with the outcomes of COP28, notwithstanding the historic reference to transitioning away from fossil fuels. For one thing, the use of the word “transitioning” was a letdown for most of the participating countries, who wanted phasing out or even phasing down, rather than the lamer language that emerged. Furthermore, the agreed transition away from fossil fuels was limited to energy systems and does not cover their use in plastics, transport, and agriculture. In many countries including the Philippines, the greater part of carbon

dioxide (CO₂) emissions into the atmosphere actually comes from motor vehicles, and less from energy facilities and power plants. We also have the dubious distinction of being one of the world's top sources of plastic waste polluting the waterways and oceans. Our high level of dependence on petroleum-based chemical fertilizers is likewise seen to make our agriculture and food systems unsustainable.

Analysts point to other areas of positive movement in the COP28 outcomes, including firmer finance to address loss and damage from climate change in vulnerable nations; higher climate finance commitments from developed nations for mitigation and adaptation initiatives in developing nations; explicit timeline goals for water security, ecosystem restoration and health; and greater alignment around reductions in CO₂ and non-CO₂ emissions to keep within the target maximum of 1.5 degrees Celsius rise in global temperatures above pre-industrial levels, and net zero emissions by 2050.

On the other hand, there was disappointment over the watered-down language on fossil fuels, particularly on coal, where earlier proposed language to “rapidly phase down unabated coal” and put “limitations on permitting” coal ended up just referring to “efforts towards the phasedown of unabated coal power.” There was also no progress in defining clearer mechanisms for trading carbon credits, which the Philippines can potentially benefit from by earning export revenues from carbon sequestration opportunities that abound in the country. All told, COP28 has been described as another exercise in incrementalism, when what the world needs are big leaps forward, while key discussions have been kicked down the road to COP29, to be held next year in Baku, Azerbaijan—yet another country propped up by oil and gas exports.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

[PH joins other Asian countries in pushing for decarbonization](#)

By: Anna Leah Gonzales

President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. and other leaders comprising the Asia Zero Emission Community (AZEC) vowed to push for decarbonization to address climate change.

The AZEC is a platform consisting of Asian countries that promotes the reduction of greenhouse gas (GHG) emission in Asia while supporting a sound economic growth in the region.

In a joint statement released in Tokyo on Monday, AZEC leaders vowed to advance cooperation toward carbon neutrality and net zero emission with the end goal of maintaining the increase in the global average temperature to well below two degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.

“We welcome the outcome of the first Asia Zero Emission Community (AZEC) Ministerial Meeting held in March 2023 in Tokyo, which set up these common understanding among partners countries,” the joint statement said.

The leaders also agreed to promote policy support and collaboration in tangible projects through tailored approach toward decarbonization with the use of heat pumps, scaling up renewable energy, energy storage, regional interconnectivity and improving grid flexibility, as well as the use of nuclear energy, including small modular and other advanced reactors.

Other means include the use of hydrogen and its derivatives, electrolyzer technology, biomass and carbon capture utilization and storage across sectors and industry, recycling of common minerals while promoting electrification and fueling switching, and the use of liquified natural gas.

Reliable renewable-based micro-grids will also be deployed to remote islands and perovskite solar cells, and offshore wind power will also part of the mix, in addition to the adoption of technologies such as electric vehicles, biofuels and hydrogen and its derivatives.

The leaders also agreed to foster public-private partnerships and cooperation among private sectors to accelerate energy transitions through the creation of specific energy transition projects.

“In this regard, we welcome activities to promote public-private cooperation in partner countries such as those in AZEC Advocacy Group, AZEC/GX Promotion Working Team in Vietnam, AZEC Japan-Indonesia Joint Task Force in Indonesia and Cleaner Energy Future Initiative for ASEAN,” the leaders said.

The AZEC leaders cited the importance of adequate financing to support the energy transition in the region and also recognized the importance of promotion and implementation of high integrity carbon markets and crediting schemes such as through collaboration models, but not limited to the Joint Crediting Mechanism.

The leaders welcomed collaboration with all other countries within and beyond Asia that wish to support the region’s energy transition and energy security.

PH commitment

President Marcos committed to promote and shift to clean energy.

He also invited AZEC partners to invest in the renewable energy industry and emerging technologies in the Philippines, and introduce energy efficiency and conservation measures in the country.

Marcos said the Philippines is joining its AZEC partners in recognizing the need to accelerate a clean, sustainable, just, affordable and inclusive energy transition towards carbon neutrality, or net-zero emissions.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

[\[Opinion\] The end of fossil fuels?](#)

By: Toy Lopez

Global warming has a friend. It is two words – fossil fuels. These are crude oil, coal and natural gas.

Oil, coal and natural gas account for up to 80 percent of the world's energy and 85 percent of Philippine energy.

Sadly, fossil fuels also account for more than 75 percent of greenhouse gases (GHGs). Carbon dioxide accounts for 76 percent of total GHGs, methane 16 percent and nitrous oxide 6 percent. Since 1970, GHG emissions have increased 70 percent.

On Dec. 13, 2023, at the end of two weeks of raucous meetings during the world's warmest year on record, 200 countries agreed, in writing, to put an end to the use of fossil fuels.

It is the first time in 28 annual meetings on climate change that the two words – fossil fuels – are mentioned in any agreement.

Agreement came at end of the latest or 28th Conference of Parties (COP28) called the United Nations Climate Change Conference, held in Dubai, the United Arab Emirates, a major oil producing country.

COP28 president, UAE's Sultan Ahmed Al Jaber, summed up the COP28's achievements:

“A global goal to triple renewables and double energy efficiency. Declarations on agriculture, food and health. Many more oil and gas companies stepping up for the first time on methane and emissions. We have language on fossil fuels in our final agreement. All of these are world firsts. And all of these are crucial actions that will help shape a better, cleaner world with greater, more equitable prosperity. And then we became the first COP to host a change-makers Majlis. And I felt that that was the turning point in our negotiations.”

The agreement to end the use of fossil fuels is in Article 28-d) of the 11,000-word First Global Stockade Proposal of the COP28: “Transitioning away from fossil fuels, in a just, orderly and equitable manner, accelerating action on this critical decade, so as to achieve net zero by 2050 in keeping with the science.”

The operative word is “transitioning,” which experts say could mean anything (there is no fixed timetable): a phase-down (for instance, 28-b) called for accelerating the phase-down of unabated coal power), a phaseout, a stoppage, an end.

But transitioning implies one thing – as long as there is continuing demand for fossil fuels, you cannot phase out or stop using fossil fuels.

The demand for fossil fuels must be curbed. That can be achieved mainly by 28-a), “tripling renewable energy capacity globally and doubling the global average annual rate of energy efficiency improvements by 2030;” 28-g), “accelerating the reduction of emissions from road transport” and 28-h) “phasing out of inefficient fuel subsidies that do not address energy poverty or just transitions, as soon as possible.”

The Dubai global stockade took inventory of where the world has been since the 2015 Paris Agreement where 196 countries agreed to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius or the world risks adverse consequences such as rising sea levels, loss of coastal lands, more frequent and more severe droughts and floods and threats to biodiversity. The COP28’s consensus was grim: 1.5 cannot be achieved.

To limit warming to 1.5, COP28 requires countries to reduce global gas emissions by 43 percent by 2030 and by 60 percent by 2035, from 2019 levels.

To do that, poor or developing countries hurt by global warming need a total \$5.8 trillion to \$5.9 trillion on or before 2030. To adapt to global warming, these countries need \$215 billion to \$387 billion annually for six years until 2030.

Moreover, \$4.3 trillion a year must be invested in clean energy until 2030, and thereafter, until 2050, another \$5 trillion to hit net zero emissions by 2050. Net zero means GHGs produced must not exceed GHGs removed from the atmosphere – through a combination of emission reduction and emission removal.

Many governments subsidize electricity that comes from oil, coal and natural gas, making that electricity unusually cheap.

Fossil fuels are dead plants that did not decompose and turned into layers of oil, coal and other sediments millions of years ago. If the oil, coal and natural gas are burned, they release the carbon dioxide or greenhouse gases (GHGs) they had earlier stored.

“Humans have been digging up these layers and burning them at a rate the planet has never seen before, releasing vast amounts of CO₂ in a geological blink of an eye. By burning these fossil fuels, humans have essentially taken millions of years of carbon

uptake by plants and returned it to the atmosphere in less than 300 years,” relates the British Museum of Natural History.

Says Wisevoter, “the presence of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere is natural and is part of a regulating system known as the carbon cycle. However, with excessive emissions from the burning of fossil fuels, the carbon cycle would be disrupted, thereby accelerating global warming. The emission of each country is measured through their carbon footprint.”

The UN says “fossil fuels – coal, oil and gas – are the largest contributor to global climate change, accounting for over 75 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions and nearly 90 percent of all carbon dioxide emissions. As greenhouse gas emissions blanket the Earth, they trap the sun’s heat. This leads to global warming and climate change. The world is now warming faster than at any point in recorded history. Warmer temperatures over time are changing weather patterns and disrupting the usual balance of nature. This poses many risks to human beings and all other forms of life on Earth.”

The Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) warns that “to prevent worsening and potentially irreversible effects of climate change, the world’s average temperature should not exceed that of preindustrial times (1850-1900) by more than 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit).”

=END=