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By: Jasper Arcalas

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MALAYA BUSINESS INSIGHT

Bamboo innovation in action

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MANILA BULLETIN

Makati City declared as over-all Manila Bay Clean-up champion

By: Patrick Garcia

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[Opinion] Masters of fate: Families, companies, and country

By: Jaime Laya

The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) requires directors of listed companies to attend a corporate governance training program on topics selected by the company and conducted by accredited providers. The Governance Commission for Government-

Owned or -Controlled Corporations (GOCCs) also requires newly appointed GOCC directors to attend such programs.

[Opinion] What the ASEAN-EU meet means to Pinoys

By: Anna Mae Lamentillo

Amid a freezing temperature of -3 degrees Celsius, President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. went on to fulfill his duties in promoting the interests of Filipinos and that of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations at the ASEAN-European Union Commemorative Summit held in Brussels, Belgium.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

AIIB criticized for backing gas as transition fuel

By: Ronnel Domingo

Environmentalists hailed the Beijing-based Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) for shunning coal-related projects but lamented the China-led lender's promotion of natural gas as a "transition fuel" along efforts to mitigate climate change.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

UN to convene 'no-nonsense' climate summit in 2023

UNITED NATIONS – UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres announced Monday that he would convene a "Climate Ambition Summit" in September 2023, saying "it will be a no-nonsense summit. No exceptions. No compromises."

Qatar pushes to boost cooperation with Manila

By: Joyce Anne Rocamora

MANILA – Doha is seeing a "bright future" for the Philippines-Qatar relations as it intensifies efforts to boost its cooperation with Manila under the new administration.

RAPPLER

[Opinion] Emissions avoidance: A Philippine game-changer?

By: John Leo Algo

"Prevention is better than cure."

It is a statement that has applications not just on human health, but also on climate and environmental issues. For the Philippines, it serves as the basis for one of its most prominent positions in recent global climate negotiations: emissions avoidance.

THE MANILA TIMES

Climate change threatens local fish species

By: Rhaydz Barcia

Third of a series

WHILE there is no sardine-supply shortage yet, the government and Oceana Philippines are moving to protect and conserve sardines to ensure that they will not go extinct, an official of the Department of Agriculture-Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources said.

Intl shipping stakeholders urge PH to reform 'predatory' claims

IN what could only be described as a gathering of the biggest maritime employers and union groups employing more than half of the 400,000 plus Filipino seafarers in the world, the meeting between President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. and delegates from the International Chamber of Shipping (ICSA), the International Maritime Employers Council (IMEC) and the International Transport Workers Federation (ITF) in Brussels ended on a positive note, with the Chief Executive promising a serious look at the country's problematic seafarers claims industry.

Zero waste advocates call for systems change

INSTEAD of just pausing on environmentally damaging practices, the Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives (GAIA) Asia Pacific is using the strength of the movement to celebrate International Zero Waste Month this January.

CCC IN THE NEWS

DZRJ RADYO AGILA

Panayam kay Sec. Robert Borje kasama ang Kasangga Mo Ang Langit ni Rey Langit

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Information and Knowledge Management Division

BUSINESS MIRROR

[LandBank partially funds Pts2.6-B hydropower plant](#)

By: Jasper Arcalas

The Land Bank of the Philippines (LandBank) will partially finance a P2.6-billion 15-megawatt hydropower plant in Bukidnon that seeks to contribute to the country's climate change mitigation efforts.

In a statement, LandBank said it signed a loan agreement facility with Cabanglasan Hydropower Corp. (CHC), a subsidiary of Repower Energy Development Corp. (REDC), for the latter's hydropower plant project in Bukidnon.

The loan facility was under the bank's Renewable Energy Program, which seeks to finance the development of renewable energy sources in the country.

The run-of-river hydropower plant by CHC will be developed on the Pulangi River in Barangay Lumbayao, Valencia City, "to sustainably improve the quality and reliability of energy supply" in nearby cities and towns in Bukidnon province, according to LandBank.

Once completed by 2025, the hydropower plant is projected to power about 130,000 households across 15 municipalities in Bukidnon.

"Through the years, LandBank has collaborated with REDC and its subsidiaries towards advancing clean, sustainable and reliable sources of renewable energy. We actively support local projects that aim to secure a safe and sustainable future for the country, as part of our broader commitment to help build sustainable and resilient communities," LandBank President and CEO Cecilia C. Borromeo was quoted in a statement as saying.

The loan signing was led by Borromeo and Pure Energy Holdings Corp. and CHC Chairman Dexter Y. Tiu earlier this month at the LandBank Plaza in Manila.

They were joined by REDC President and CHC Director Eric Peter Y. Roxas, CHC President Johnson A. Sanhi Jr. and LandBank Senior Vice Presidents Celeste A. Burgos and Lucila E. Tesorero, among other bank officers, according to LandBank.

"In just six short years of development, our group has brought 10 renewable energy power plants to operations—of which six are run-of-river hydropower, contributing around 50MW of clean energy to the grid. We have several hydropower projects under construction and in the pipeline, which we intend to bring to operations in the near future to help the country transition into a clean renewable energy phase," Roxas said.

LandBank said as of end-October it has approved a total of P20.1 billion in loans to 56 borrowers under its Renewable Energy Program

BUSINESS WORLD

Carbon tax to spur sustainability shift — Diokno

By: Aaron Michael Sy

THE GOVERNMENT intends to use a carbon tax, which is currently under study, to steer large emitters towards more sustainable operations, Finance Secretary Benjamin E. Diokno said.

In a speech delivered on Dec. 14, the Department of Finance (DoF) said, Mr. Diokno described the department's position on a carbon tax as "not waiting around for long-overdue commitments to materialize. We are moving ahead with reforms to quicken our shift to more sustainable practices."

The DoF said in a statement that the carbon tax feasibility study is currently underway, with an eye towards deploying the revenue generated to fund sustainability projects.

The DoF added that the study was launched following the passage of House Bill No. 4102, or the proposed Single-Use Plastic (SUP) Bags Tax Act.

"The House of Representatives has approved a proposal to impose an excise tax on plastic bags. This will help regulate the consumption of single-use plastics as part of the Philippines' contribution to reduce plastic pollution," Mr. Diokno said.

According to the Senate website, the bill is currently pending in the Ways and Means committee.

Mr. Diokno announced the carbon tax study at the third plenary session of the Intervention for COP15 Finance Day, a gathering of finance ministers.

"As a developing country, the Philippines recognizes that healthy ecosystems underpin a green, resilient, and inclusive development. This vision requires massive finance flows and investment," Mr. Diokno said in the conference.

In his speech, Mr. Diokno said finance ministers play a vital role in pushing for a green recovery.

Such ministers must "push for reforms that incentivize and finance the integration of biodiversity considerations into economic recovery and development," he said.

COP15 is the 15th conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention on biological diversity. It took place from Dec. 7 to 19 in Montreal.

Championing a brighter, more efficient and sustainable energy system for the Philippines

By: Bjorn Biel Beltran

The milestone of Department of Energy's (DoE) 50th effective year in service to the Filipino people comes with daunting challenges.

For one, as the country moves forward in its ambitious plans for growth, aiming to become recognized as a high-income economy by 2045 at the latest, energy will only become more important. The country needs to build more buildings, create more jobs, and move more people away from poverty — all of which necessitate a flawless, efficient power grid.

Yet, the looming threat of climate change grows ever more urgent, and global pressure to reduce greenhouse gas emissions — which the energy sector contributes the lion's share of — puts the country in a dilemma. The Philippines' energy sector must be prepared to adapt and overcome future challenges, or else be left behind as the rest of the world moves into a cleaner, more sustainable energy future.

This puts the DoE at a central role in the development of the country in the years to come. More than ever, the agency needs to fully commit to its vision of becoming “a globally-competitive agency that powers up Filipino communities through clean, efficient, robust and sustainable energy systems that will create wealth, propel industries and transform the lives of men and women and the generations to come.”

In commitment to this goal, and in celebration of the agency's 50th anniversary, it has announced a month-long observance of the National Energy Consciousness Month (NECM) for 2022 to focus on energy sustainability.

With the theme “DoE @ 50: Spearheading a Sustainable Energy Future,” the NECM's annual observance seeks to call for a sustainable energy future aligned with the United Nation's (UN) Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 7 which targets universal access to energy, increasing renewable energy's share in the energy mix, and doubling the rate of energy efficiency improvement.

The UN's SDGs from the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015, provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future.

At its core, the 17 SDGs are an urgent call for action by all countries, including the Philippines, to recognize that ending poverty and other societal issues must go hand-in-hand with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality, and spur economic growth — all while tackling climate change and working to preserve our oceans and forests.

Particular to NECM, Goal 7 is about ensuring access to clean and affordable energy. Accessible energy is key to the development of agriculture, business, communications, education, healthcare and transportation; and the lack of which poses difficult obstacles to economic and human development.

According to the UN, the latest data suggest that the world continues to advance towards sustainable energy targets. Nevertheless, the current pace of progress is insufficient to achieve Goal 7 by 2030. Huge disparities in access to modern sustainable energy persist.

Renewables push

For its part, the administration of President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. aims to light the way in accelerating and expanding the development of the country's domestic energy sources. Foremost, the country is accelerating the development of renewable energy to increase its share in the power mix from the current 22% to 35% by 2030 and 50% by 2040. Currently, the share of renewable energy (RE) in power generation is 22%.

One of the most recent landmark moves by the agency in pursuant of this target is allowing the RE sector to full foreign ownership. Energy Secretary Raphael P.M. Lotilla last month signed a circular amending the implementing rules and regulations (IRR) of the Renewable Energy Act of 2008 to allow 100% foreign capital in RE projects. Previously, Section 19 of the IRR limited foreign ownership of RE projects to 40%.

"With the impressive amount of interest, the DoE has been receiving both from the local and foreign investors in RE development, particularly in the offshore wind potential, the State can now directly undertake the exploration, development, production and utilization of RE resources or it can enter into RE service or operating contracts with Filipino and/or foreign citizen or Filipino and/or foreign-owned corporations or associations," Mr. Lotilla had said in a statement.

In the case of hydropower, he noted that the "appropriation of waters direct from the source shall continue to be subject to foreign ownership in the Water Code."

"The country has a vast potential in RE development," Mr. Lotilla said, adding that the government expects higher investments in the sector that will create much-needed jobs.

The Marcos administration also opened the topic of reintroducing nuclear energy into the country's power grid in the name of energy security, signing Executive Order No. 164 adopting a national position for a Nuclear Energy Program (NEP).

The DoE noted that the development of the program will establish a clear national policy which would withstand administration changes, and one that will ensure strict adherence to all relevant standards, particularly those from the International Atomic Energy Agency. The agency will also hold strong public consultations and spearhead information campaigns to promote scientific findings on the benefits of nuclear energy use.

Emerging technology

Furthermore, the government plans to make full use of emerging technology to achieve its sustainable energy goals. Alternative fuel sources such as green hydrogen, ammonia, and biowaste are currently being explored to help in the energy transition.

"Sustainable energy planning involves the preparation of short-, medium- and long-term energy policies and plans encompassing the exploration, development and production of indigenous energy resources from conventional and renewable sources, promotion of alternative fuels and technologies, promotion of energy efficiency and conservation and implementation of sector reforms in the downstream oil and power industries," the DoE said in a statement.

"As energy demand is anticipated to grow significantly over the years, it is incumbent for the energy sector to pursue all means to develop the country's indigenous (local) energy resources. The DoE recognizes the fact that the country will remain dependent on conventional fuels for many years to come to address its growing energy requirements. As such, the conduct of energy contracting rounds is seen as an effective strategy to bring in critical investments for the exploration, development and production of conventional energy such as oil, gas and coal."

This year's NECM is only the first of the DoE's series of energy-related campaigns across the country through energy literacy and awareness among Filipinos. These programs aim to highlight the collective role of the government and the Filipino people in achieving a sustainable energy future.

In 2007, Presidential Proclamation No. 1427 was issued declaring December of every year as NECM, to coincide with the DOE's anniversary. The NECM provides venue to create public awareness through information campaign to bring the people toward judicious conservation and efficient utilization of energy.

"Maximizing the use of our indigenous energy resources is imperative for energy security and sustainability. Our country has tremendous potential for renewable energy — such as solar, wind and ocean sources. Steadily, we are enhancing our renewable energy policies that would drive us our path toward energy sustainability," Mr. Lotilla said.

JOURNAL ONLINE

[Loyzaga rallies private sector participation at Climate Sustainability Forum](#)

Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Maria Antonia Yulo Loyzaga encourages private sector-stakeholders to support and collaborate with the Philippine government in its response to challenges brought by climate change and other environmental issues during the United for Climate: Sustainability Forum PH held on November 28 in Pasay City.

Loyzaga discussed the targets and key points in the Philippine climate action strategy that need to be considered by the private sector in their respective climate response strategies.

The forum, organized by SM Investments Corporation and the World Wildlife Fund-Philippines, gathered some 150 representatives from various sectors and industries.

MALAYA BUSINESS INSIGHT

Bamboo innovation in action

The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) through the Design Center of the Philippines, the Industry Cluster Enhancement Program, and the Philippine Bamboo Industry Development Council (PBDIC) recently opened the Sustainability Pavilion in this year's Hybrid National Trade Fair (HNTF) at Megatrade Halls 1-3 in SM Megamall.

Dubbed Bamboo Matters, the Sustainability Pavilion champions the grass species and spotlights its place in the country's material culture and design language. The pavilion housed bamboo-made products from 20 participating local brands and businesses, representing 8 regions. Among the featured products is the Bambino by Bambike Revolution Cycles, a balance bike for 2-6-year-olds with a bolt-together design, adjustable seats, and handlebars that can be built with the family as the child grows older. The bike was a recipient of Japan's Good Design Award, which is a globally recognized accolade for exemplary design.

Another bamboo-based product in the pavilion is the Biscornu Pendant Lamp by Hacienda Crafts Co., Inc., inspired by a small, octagonal, stuffed ornamental pincushion that forms a unique convex polyhedron and hand-crafted by the artisans in rural communities creating livelihood opportunities.

Design Center Executive Director Rhea Matute describes bamboo as "integral" to enrich the ongoing conversation on sustainability, as well as to realize the Philippine Green Economy. "As our new normal continues to take shape, we are seeing this shift in the priorities of consumers, and even of Filipinos at large. There is this heightened conscientiousness when it comes to taking care of our environment. In the market, this translates to them being more particular with what products they buy and services they avail," she shares.

As one of the world's fastest-growing plants and most eco-friendly materials, the country now has 70,000 hectares planted with bamboo, more than half of which are in forestlands. Alongside its renewability, the non-timber plant is also known for its resilience, designed to survive typhoons that are frequent in the country; tensile strength, and overall environmental impact.

According to the Philippine Bamboo Industry Roadmap developed by the DTI Regional Operations Group (ROG), the Board of Investments (BOI), and PBIDC, bamboo exports under a healthy economy can capture a significant share of the world market.

National Industry Cluster Coordinator for Bamboo and DTI-R2 Regional Director Leah Pulido Ocampo states that for the country to effectively push for bamboo as a green architectural and building material, there is also a need to boost supply.

MANILA BULLETIN

[Makati City declared as over-all Manila Bay Clean-up champion](#)

By: Patrick Garcia

Makati City Mayor Abby Binay proudly announced on Monday, Dec. 19, that the city has been awarded by the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) as the over-all champion local government unit (LGU) in the Manila Bay Clean-up Rehabilitation and Preservation Program (MBCRPP).

Representatives from the Department of Environmental Services of Makati received the award and recognition for also being included in the Top 3 most compliant LGUs in the program after recording 98.07 percent compliance.

Binay said that the recognitions are the fruit of the city's labor in promoting environmental awareness and addressing climate change that doesn't just affect the country but the whole world.

She added that all LGUs in the Metro have an obligation to help and be a part of the MBCRPP which aims to restore the former glory of Manila Bay.

She said that in order for it to become a reality, the LGUs must work together to find a solution to its water quality and put a halt on the adverse effects caused by pollution by means of waste management, restoration of ecosystems, habitat conservation, coastal resource management, and community empowerment activities.

Earlier, Makati was hailed in the 2022 Urban Governance Exemplar Awards for its various programs and initiatives aimed at improving the lives of its citizens and increasing awareness of the public about climate change and other social and environmental issues.

The Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG), which spearheaded the awards, lauded the city government for its high audit rating on its Peace and Order Council, Anti-Drug Abuse Council, and Local Committee on Anti-Trafficking and Violence Against Women and Children.

It is also the top performer in the Informal Settler Families Cluster and Liquid Waste Management Cluster.

According to the DILG, the city has an overall compliance rating of 100 percent in its Liquid Waste Management, 96.67 percent in its Solid Waste Management, 100 percent in its Informal Settler Families, and 95.33 percent in its Information, Education, and Communication and Institutional Arrangement Cluster.

[Opinion] Masters of fate: Families, companies, and country

By: Jaime Laya

The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) requires directors of listed companies to attend a corporate governance training program on topics selected by the company and conducted by accredited providers. The Governance Commission for Government-Owned or -Controlled Corporations (GOCCs) also requires newly appointed GOCC directors to attend such programs.

I attended one last week and the selected topics were risks arising from corruption and from global warming and what companies can do about them.

Corruption

The presentation cited a 2021 survey that ranked 180 countries in order of corruption. We were No. 117 in “perceived levels of public sector corruption, according to experts and business people” with No. 180 being the most corrupt. Scored least corrupt were New Zealand, Singapore, and Hong Kong while immediately below us (i.e., supposedly more corrupt) were Papua New Guinea, Laos, and Myanmar. The champ was reportedly North Korea.

Corruption also exists in the private sector, most prevalently in procurement. Some suppliers are not above bribing company purchasing officers.

The thrust of the presentation was risk minimization and the suggestion was to avoid doing business in countries and with companies where corruption and bribery exist. Needless to say, not all investors and companies think that way and indeed, some probably think of risk minimization in the context of finding a way of minimizing the risk of being caught and of how to minimize damage from a disappointed and angry bribee.

Climate Change

Already the effects of global warming are being felt. Glaciers are melting, rainfall is more erratic, typhoons are stronger and hitting new places.

In the Philippines, scientists predict longer warm spells, particularly in coastal areas. This is bound to raise demand for energy and water and lead to lower worker productivity. Some areas will have heavier rain and be subject to flooding while others will be drier, causing reduced harvests. As if that were not enough, power and household water supply will also be affected. Almost all (98 percent) of our coral reefs will be dead by 2050, reducing fish catch. With global warming also affecting Vietnam, Thailand, and our other food suppliers, hunger and food riots could follow.

Everyone will be exposed to climate change risks. Individuals and businesses will be affected and those who identify and seize opportunities will survive. This will be true for businesses, individuals, and countries. The message is that companies have to act now.

The biggest contributors to global warming and climate change are China, the US, India, and Russia but developing countries including us are the most vulnerable. Under the circumstances, everyone has to prepare for the worst, to do what they can to help limit global warming, and definitely to decide on products, investments, location, financing, manufacturing processes, and so on, taking into account what may happen. Not only growth but more importantly survival depends on how well one manages anticipated risks, how one anticipates or responds to:

Acute risks – those that are event-driven, specifically the severity of typhoons and floods;

Chronic risks – longer term shifts in climate patterns that may cause rising sea level rise or heat waves;

Policy action – steps that may be taken by government in the effort to mitigate the adverse effects of climate change;

Shifts in supply and demand for production inputs and company products and services;

Technological changes that support a more energy efficient economic system.

Success will depend on how well a company seizes opportunities such as the use of more efficient processes, development and/or expansion of low emission products, access to new and emerging markets, and response to climate-related initiatives taken by national and international bodies.

On a personal level, super seniors like me, Baby Boomers and Generation X (i.e., people aged 41 or older) will probably not experience the really extreme impact of global warming. Sea level will rise by a few centimeters, typhoons will be more frequent and heat waves longer, gasoline and electricity will be more expensive, and life a bit more difficult but we will manage.

Times will be progressively more difficult, however, for our Millennial children, Generation Z grandchildren, and any unborn Alpha generation great-grandchildren. By then large sections of our populous cities will be submerged. Indeed, one estimate is that between the rising sea and Metro Manila's sinking land (due to pumping of aquifers), only rooftops will be above water in parts of Manila within a few decades.

Knowing all these, whatever people now alive, companies and government decide and do will determine how their respective families and businesses and the Philippines will fare in the coming decades. They are masters of the fate of their families, companies, and country.

[Opinion] What the ASEAN-EU meet means to Pinoys

By: Anna Mae Lamentillo

Amid a freezing temperature of -3 degrees Celsius, President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. went on to fulfill his duties in promoting the interests of Filipinos and that of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations at the ASEAN-European Union Commemorative Summit held in Brussels, Belgium.

As the current country coordinator of the ASEAN, the Philippines is responsible in coordinating and promoting the interests of ASEAN in its relations with dialogue partners, including the EU, as well as regional and international organizations and institutions.

President Marcos pointed out the three priorities of the ASEAN in terms of potential cooperation with EU, and these are closer maritime cooperation; stronger economic cooperation both on bilateral and bloc-to-bloc relations; and getting together to fight the effects of climate change and to ensure sustainable development.

He emphasized the pivotal role of the ASEAN-EU Business Council in advancing ASEAN's regional economic integration and post-pandemic economic recovery. Likewise, he relayed the anticipation of the

ASEAN region on the resumption of negotiations for the establishment of an ASEAN-EU Free Trade Agreement and of the ASEAN-EU Trade and Investment Work Program.

But one might ask, what does these events mean to the ordinary Filipino?

Aside from the activities of the ASEAN-EU Commemorative Summit, the President had many other meetings and side events to promote the Philippine interests. As he met with business leaders from different European companies, President Marcos secured ₱9.8 billion worth of investment pledges, particularly in the sectors of fast-moving consumer goods, shipbuilding, renewable energy, and green metals. This means more jobs, better opportunities, pump priming the economy.

Moreover, as the President met with various leading ship owners all over Europe, he was able to obtain their commitment to help the country hurdle some of the challenges in Filipino seafarers' European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) accreditation through the creation of an advisory council composed of concerned Philippine government agencies, international and local ship owners and other stakeholders.

This will prevent massive loss of jobs among Filipino seafarers.

The chief executive also met with the King of Belgium, and held bilateral meetings with his counterparts from the European Council, the European Commission, Estonia, Sweden, Czech Republic, the Netherlands, and Spain, discussing with them many possible areas of further development and future partnerships.

For instance, during President Marcos' bilateral meeting with Estonia's Prime Minister Kaja Kallas, they agreed to strengthen cooperation in digitalization, e-governance, and cybersecurity. Estonia is one of the most digitally advanced nations and the President would want to learn how they were able to pursue digital transformation while effectively addressing cyber threats.

From the onset, President Marcos has been emphasizing digitalization as one of the priorities of his administration because he believes that this is vital in the overall development of the country. This is why Department of Information and Communications

Technology (DICT) Secretary Ivan John Uy, who was part of the Philippine delegation, is aligning the Department's programs with the vision of the President. He also stressed that through information and communications technology, the country would be able to have a more efficient government.

Overall, the President's visit to Belgium for the ASEAN-EU Summit would generate opportunities for the benefit of the Filipino people. This is also aligned with what the President has been emphasizing from the start — the Filipino people harnessing opportunities and recovering together towards a stronger, more resilient, and more productive Philippines.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

[AIIB criticized for backing gas as transition fuel](#)

By: Ronnel Domingo

Environmentalists hailed the Beijing-based Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) for shunning coal-related projects but lamented the China-led lender's promotion of natural gas as a "transition fuel" along efforts to mitigate climate change.

The AIIB's updated Energy Sector Strategy (ESS), which the bank's board had approved on Nov. 22 and was unveiled on Dec. 12, came after a series of consultations. However, it was heavily criticized "for glaring shortcomings in transparency and conduciveness," according to Quezon City-based Center for Energy, Ecology and Development (CEED).

In a statement, CEED said the resulting update had shown the AIIB's failure to sufficiently take into account the energy development needs of its stakeholders in Asia.

"By promoting gas as a transition fuel, the ESS proves itself blind to realities faced by households and businesses across the region of increasingly unaffordable energy from gas, as exacerbated" by Russia's invasion of Ukraine," the think tank said.

The group cited the experience of Bangladesh where the gas industry was also backed by AIIB.

CEED said consumers in Bangladesh were now paying the price of having an electricity generation mix of 44.53 percent gas, with rising power rates as well as frequent and prolonged outages.

"In aggrandizing the role of gas in the global energy transition we need today, AIIB emboldens companies, governments, and entire regions ambitiously pursuing large new capacities for fossil gas, like Southeast Asia, to tie their populations to volatile power rates and energy insecurity," CEED said.

Further, the group noted that AIIB's updated ESS provided no commitment to help limit global temperature rise to no more than a threshold of 1.5 degrees Celsius above preindustrial levels.

'Long overdue'

"We welcome the AIIB's affirmation that it "will not finance thermal coal mining, coal-fired power and heating plants, or projects that are functionally related to coal" —a direction that is already long-overdue for all development banks," CEED said.

CEED, along with allied groups abroad, have similarly called out the Japan-led, Philippines-based Asian Development Bank for supporting natural gas and not making enough commitment to a definite stop in supporting coal projects.

Instead, the ADB is pushing for ways to mobilize funds that would help in the early retirement of coal-fired power plants through the Energy Transition Mechanism (ETM). The Philippines, Indonesia and Vietnam are the pilot countries where the ETM is being promoted.

The Philippines is a member of both ADB and AIIB.

In September 2021, the AIIB lauded then Finance Secretary Carlos Dominguez III for his proposal for multilateral development banks to work together in incentivizing private capital flows to the climate projects of developing countries.

At the same time, the AIIB expressed commitment to vigorously support its members, including the Philippines, in achieving their respective low-carbon energy transition commitments.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

[UN to convene 'no-nonsense' climate summit in 2023](#)

UNITED NATIONS – UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres announced Monday that he would convene a "Climate Ambition Summit" in September 2023, saying "it will be a no-nonsense summit. No exceptions. No compromises."

Speaking at his year-end news conference, he warned that the world is still moving in the wrong direction to fight climate change.

"The 1.5-degree goal is gasping for breath. National climate plans are falling woefully short," he said, referring to the goal of limiting the Earth's warming to 1.5°C (2.7°F).

Guterres said he would keep pushing for a climate solidarity pact in which all big emitters make an extra effort to reduce emissions this decade in line with the 1.5°C goal and ensure support for those who need it.

"I have pulled no punches on the imperative for all of us to confront this existential threat, and I will not relent," he added.

He called on governments, businesses, cities, and civil society to step up their efforts.

"The invitation (to the summit) is open. But there is a price of entry, and the price of entry is non-negotiable – credible, serious, and new climate action and nature-based solutions that will move the needle forward and respond to the urgency of the climate crisis must be presented," he added.

The Paris Climate Agreement reached in 2015 aims to limit global warming to well below 2°C, preferably to 1.5°C, by the end of the century to combat climate change and calls on nations to cut their emissions by half by 2030 and down to net zero by 2050.

Qatar pushes to boost cooperation with Manila

By: Joyce Anne Rocamora

MANILA – Doha is seeing a "bright future" for the Philippines-Qatar relations as it intensifies efforts to boost its cooperation with Manila under the new administration.

Qatar Embassy in Manila Chargé d'Affaires a.i Abdullah bin Salem Al-Khawar said the directive to further strengthen bilateral ties was issued by no less than Qatar's Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani.

"The cooperation between the State of Qatar and the Republic of the Philippines has opened investment opportunities between the two countries, thus, resulting in the expansion of trade exchange and frequent mutual visits of in both countries, both in government and in private sectors," he said at the recent Qatar National Day reception in Taguig City.

"In response to the directives of His Highness Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, the Amir of the State of Qatar, the State of Qatar is exerting great efforts to further intensify its ties with the Republic of the Philippines, especially under the current Philippine Government headed by His Excellency Ferdinand 'Bongbong' Romualdez Marcos Jr.," he added.

Marcos, the envoy said, had already expressed his interest to enhance cooperation in investment and trade exchange, health, energy, education and culture.

In the same event, the envoy hailed the more than 300,000 overseas Filipinos in Qatar for their contribution to the country's development.

He then highlighted Qatar's initiatives to protect workers' rights, including easing the process for migrant workers to change employers.

Since August 2020, the envoy said the Qatar Ministry of Interior had approved nearly 340,000 requests from overseas workers to change jobs.

The Philippines and Qatar established formal diplomatic ties in May 1981.

Aside from health, trade, and investment, the two nations are seeing opportunities to enhance partnerships on climate change mitigation, as well as regional and international issues.

RAPPLER

[\[Opinion\] Emissions avoidance: A Philippine game-changer?](#)

By: John Leo Algo

"Prevention is better than cure."

It is a statement that has applications not just on human health, but also on climate and environmental issues. For the Philippines, it serves as the basis for one of its most prominent positions in recent global climate negotiations: emissions avoidance.

The country first introduced emissions avoidance as a concept during the 2019 climate talks in Madrid, Spain. Since then, it has been championing for this to be adopted within the policymaking sphere under the Paris Agreement.

The ‘heart’ of mitigation

Mitigation refers to solutions that address the root of the climate crisis: excessive greenhouse gases (GHGs) such as carbon dioxide and methane produced from human activities that lead to higher global temperatures and rapid changes in the climate. Much of the focus on climate change mitigation goes to reducing our dependence on fossil fuels such as coal and natural gas, the burning of which is responsible for the vast majority of GHGs emitted in the past 150 years.

While the just transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy is an inevitability and a necessity that should no longer be delayed through false solutions and political excuses, it is only one part of the whole picture of mitigation. These actions would contribute to the reduction of GHGs that would prevent future climate-related threats (e.g., typhoons, droughts, sea level rise) from becoming more extreme and inflicting even more loss and damage to communities and ecosystems.

Yet what is causing the past and recent climate-related disasters, the culprit for the 1.09 degrees Celsius of current global warming is GHGs that have already been emitted. This pollution needs to be subjected to removal from our atmosphere, oceans, and other parts of the environment through natural carbon sinks such as forests, mangroves, and other ecosystems capable of absorbing carbon dioxide.

However, if taken on its own, the current fast rise in GHG emissions could also be too much for said sinks, which are also living systems, as they would become more vulnerable to higher temperatures and the resulting changes in their environment. Many of the proposed artificial systems built for capturing and storing GHGs also lack consensus approval by scientists regarding their safety and costs and could even cause large-scale damages to nearby areas.

It should be noted that a diversity of solutions must be implemented together to maximize their economic, environmental, and social benefits, and reduce costs. For instance, phasing out a coal-fired power plant in a given area is not enough; it should come with plans for replacing it with a solar power plant and restoring nearby forests.

Yet there is a third piece of the mitigation picture that should be considered: emissions avoidance. To put this in perspective, why do we have to recycle plastic bags when we can avoid using them and go for eco-bags instead? Why should some government officials keep focusing on improving response to calamities when they should be prioritizing solutions to prevent disasters from happening in the first place?

As it stands, emissions avoidance is defined as “the full displacement or prevention of GHG emissions expected to be generated by planned GHG emitting actions in energy, transport, manufacturing, agriculture, human induced deforestation, and other GHG emitting development activities.”

In the details

Article 6 of the Paris Agreement establishes a global market where mitigation solutions by countries can earn them carbon credits that they can trade for them to achieve their respective targets for addressing the climate crisis. It is a market built on voluntary cooperation among nations that, if implemented properly, can result in the removal of 50% more emissions without any additional cost.

If adopted, emissions avoidance would largely fall under this category. This brings up an interesting question: how can a country be credited for addressing emissions that never happened?

Under the Philippines's current proposal, emissions avoidance can be credited if a developing country prevents the implementation of a planned project that would have otherwise led to significant GHG emissions. Examples of this include a planned gas-fired power plant or a project that would have turned forests into agricultural lands or residential subdivisions.

As one of the most vulnerable countries to the climate crisis, the Philippines has a right to pursue development, especially considering that so-called “first world” nations benefited from the pollutive development pathways that led to the climate crisis to begin with. Yet many of the current available modes of development are GHG-intensive.

This forms part of the basis of the nation's call for climate justice: for developed countries to recognize and act on their responsibility to aid developing countries who unjustly suffer climate-related loss and damage. While receiving compensation and restitution through loss and damage finance, which was officially agreed at the most recent climate negotiations in Egypt, is vital for this call, it is not enough. As previously mentioned, the diversity of solutions matters.

Emissions avoidance serves as a way for the Philippines to secure capacity-building mechanisms and technologies to fuel its transformation towards a sustainably-developed economy and society. Technological advancements helped drive the development of Asian countries like Japan and South Korea, which it hopes to follow.

The science is clear: we must limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius, a level scientists consider as a tipping point when the impacts of the climate crisis may start becoming irreversible. To even have a chance to achieve this, our world for the rest of this century can only emit GHGs equivalent to one-eighth of the pollution released in the past 150 years. Avoiding emissions is a necessity.

There is still so much that needs to be debated about this concept, especially on the technical details and procedures. Yet the Philippines has repeatedly been an influential role in global climate negotiations and policymaking. Emissions avoidance represents an opportunity for the nation to once more be a game-changer.

THE MANILA TIMES

[Climate change threatens local fish species](#)

By: Rhaydz Barcia

Third of a series

WHILE there is no sardine-supply shortage yet, the government and Oceana Philippines are moving to protect and conserve sardines to ensure that they will not go extinct, an official of the Department of Agriculture-Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources said.

According to the international advocacy group, there is a need to enhance existing policies to prevent overfishing, allow fish stocks to repopulate, and replenish the country's fishing grounds.

Chemical engineer Dominic Careo, health and safety officer of Office of the City Environment and Natural Resources and Healthy Oceans and Clean Cities Initiative project coordinator of Legazpi City, explained that small fish species are affected by the rising sea temperature following anthropogenic activity.

Anthropogenic refers to changes in the environment caused directly or indirectly by human activity. Careo, also a professor at Bicol University College of Sciences in Legazpi, affirmed fisherman Romeo de Luna's claim that the sea is warming due to climate change.

He said that greenhouse gases (GHGs) are the primary contributor to rising temperatures as they trap the heat in the atmosphere.

Greenhouse gases are naturally occurring gases found in the earth's atmosphere that have the ability to absorb heat and bounce back heat to Earth to keep the planet warm. But too much GHG in the atmosphere can cause temperature rise which results in global warming. The greenhouse effect and the gases responsible for trapping heat at the surface of the earth are the greenhouse gases, he explained.

When asked how climate change and warming oceans contributed to the depletion of fish species, Careo explained that the ocean is the biggest carbon sink as it absorbs and sequesters GHGs like carbon dioxide from human activities.

"This carbon dioxide when dissolved in the seas causes lower pH (hydrogen ion concentration) that causes acidity. If climate change and rising sea temperatures continue, it will negatively affect the reproduction of up to 60 percent of all fish species in the future because of the so-called GHGs, as the surface of the earth including oceans, absorbs the heat in large quantities. This will affect the fish species sensitive to temperature rise, specifically the small fish," Careo said.

The warming ocean, according to Careo, will also affect the coral reefs through coral bleaching. When the coral reefs are destroyed, the spawning ground of the fish to reproduce is affected. That's why their population is depleting in the long run, he said.

"Since sardines are one of the species vulnerable to changes in sea temperature, chances are they will no longer grow. One of the indicators of the warming seas is the migration of fishes into the deeper portion of the ocean with cooler temperatures," Careo said.

He added that the fish and aquatic organisms need the so-called dissolved oxygen in the water to survive and to grow to full size. When the sea surface temperature is hotter, the dissolved oxygen is thinner as this escapes to the atmosphere.

"Thinner or lesser dissolved oxygen means it threatens the survival of the smaller fish like sardines as they could no longer reach the fuller size due to lack of oxygen. This is the effect of climate change. Our ocean is getting warmer as it absorbs a large percentage of heat and the excessive heat and energy warms the ocean that leads to ocean acidification. As the ocean becomes more acidic, it will be impacted by small fishes and even go extinct," he explained.

He said saving small fish species under the warming ocean is critical for the future of protein and nutritional requirements of the Filipino people.

"Sea-surface temperature and thermal stress in the Coral Triangle over the past two decades" study in 2009 by scientists E.L. Peñaflor, W.J. Skirving, A.E. Strong, S.F. Heron, and L.T. David said that the Indo-Pacific includes countries such as the Philippines, Indonesia and Papua New Guinea are home to more than 500 species of corals.

Studies have also shown that the waters around Indonesia and the Philippines possess the highest reef fish endemic species and that the Philippines is also considered the global center of marine fish biodiversity.

Reports have shown, however, that species diversity and abundance in many parts of this region have been greatly threatened by both man-made and natural stresses.

The "IndoMalay-Philippines Archipelago" (Carpenter and Springer 2005) has become one of the most important target areas in marine biodiversity research. Studies highlighted the alarming decline in coral cover in this region, including the effect of increasing sea surface temperature (SST) over recent years.

The effect of SST increase has a wide range of effects on the marine ecosystem. Studies have shown that warm temperature anomalies have led to a reduction in primary production and a decrease in fish catch.

Higher levels of thermal stress were observed in 1996-2006 as compared to 1985-1995. The dramatic increase in the levels of thermal stress during the 1996-2006 period may have been linked to the Pacific decadal oscillation (PDO) reversal in the late 1990s.

The PDO refers to the interdecadal (*2-3 decades) oscillation of Pacific Ocean temperatures between warm and cold phases. Further analysis was performed on the data from the five years with the highest percentages of reef pixels with DHW C 4: 1996, 1998, 1999, 2000 and 2005.

These years are concurrent with the La Niña events except 2005, which is an ENSO-neutral year. 2005 is currently the warmest year on record based on global temperature

averages. Similarly, the level of thermal stress has been observed to indicate significant bleaching in corals.

The year 1998, when a very strong La Niña occurred, again stands out with the highest number of clusters showing bleaching-level stress. This further supports the occurrence of widespread bleaching in many parts of the CT in 1998. Noticeably, clusters 5 and 6 in the northernmost Philippines are the most impacted during the very strong La Niñas. Bicol lawmakers, for their part, filed a bill for the protection of Ticao-Burias Pass seascapes in the region.

Intl shipping stakeholders urge PH to reform 'predatory' claims

IN what could only be described as a gathering of the biggest maritime employers and union groups employing more than half of the 400,000 plus Filipino seafarers in the world, the meeting between President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. and delegates from the International Chamber of Shipping (ICS), the International Maritime Employers Council (IMEC) and the International Transport Workers Federation (ITF) in Brussels ended on a positive note, with the Chief Executive promising a serious look at the country's problematic seafarers claims industry.

Earlier, the President assured the same group of the country's compliance with the standards set by the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) for Filipino seafarers.

The delegation from the international shipping community obviously thinks the problem with ambulance chasing is also a serious problem that the country should look into as they pointed out that "while intended to secure speedy resolution and compensation for the injured and aggrieved crew, the injury claims industry system today sees seafarers' hardship and goodwill exploited by ambulance-chasing lawyers."

"The victimization of Filipino seafarers by people or groups to make fraudulent and costly injury claims against their employers has resulted in companies looking elsewhere for their seafarer workforce," the delegation added.

In 2000, Filipino crew made up 28.5 percent of the global seafarer population. However by 2020, that figure had dropped to just 14 percent. Any further decline would jeopardize the \$6.54 billion in wages Filipino seafarers send home each year to their families — money critical to the Philippines economy.

Seafarers' unions, including Philippines-based Associated Marine Officers and Seamen's Union of the Philippines (Amosup), an affiliate of the ITF, have supported employers' calls for a crackdown on the unethical practices of the claims industry, who, they say, "capitalize on the hardships and even the demise of seafarers." Amosup was one of the first groups to launch an information campaign in the country regarding the problem.

ITF, ICS and IMEC were called upon to form Marcos' new maritime advisory committee.

Marcos told delegates that he had ordered his Department of Migrant Workers secretary Susan "Toots" Ople, to establish a maritime advisory committee to address the training issue and consider reforms to the broken seafarers' claims system.

The International Advisory Committee on Global Maritime Affairs will draw on experts from both industry and the workforce to support the Philippines' government. IMEC, ICS, ITF and the International Labor Organization will all be invited to share their expertise.

The committee's advice could be key as the Philippines, like other global maritime leaders, looked to navigate its way through the challenges of the future, such as climate change.

A recent Maritime Just Transition report revealed that as many as 800,000 seafarers will need some form of training or familiarization by the mid-2030s to handle the fuels, technology and vessels of the future. Understanding what is needed for the Philippines to make the most of the opportunity decarbonization provides would be critical to securing an equitable and sustainable future for its seafarers and the industry.

The meeting with the President in Belgium represents the first official engagement of IMEC, ICS and ITF with a national leader since the bodies recently signed an MoU to maximize the impact of their advocacy efforts on behalf of crew and industry.

Chief Executive Officer of IMEC Francesco Gargiulo said in a statement: "It was refreshing to meet a leader that is so in tune with the needs of his citizens today. I was impressed with the President's grasp of the complex picture of the maritime industry in the Philippines and comforted by his stern determination to tackle our common challenges head-on."

Zero waste advocates call for systems change

INSTEAD of just pausing on environmentally damaging practices, the Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives (GAIA) Asia Pacific is using the strength of the movement to celebrate International Zero Waste Month this January.

Leveraging its wide international network, GAIA boldly takes the lead to put genuine zero waste work into action despite the many false narratives, fed by corporations, international financing institutions and other governing bodies. Through science-based and proven solutions to waste, the alliance works on the premise that zero waste opens

opportunities to address bigger climate challenges. Zero waste is climate action, and the Zero Waste Month with its theme, "Zero Waste for Zero Emission," hopes to show just that.

GAIA and its members line up initiatives to educate and spark conversations about waste management solutions from gatherings and forging alliances to film festivals and more. Through a showcase of results-backed learning from experts and experienced individuals from around the world, the alliance aims to send the message that zero waste is one of the critical ways to achieve zero emissions, waste-to-energy incineration is a false solution and a step backward, and that zero waste systems ensure just transition for all.

International Zero Waste Month is made possible through the generous support of the Plastic Solutions Fund in partnership with the following media outlets: Advocates (Philippines), Bandung Bergerak (Indonesia), Business Ecology (China), The Business Post (Bangladesh), The Manila Times (Philippines), Pressenza (Global), Sunrise Today (Pakistan), The Recombobulator Lab (Global) and Republic Asia.

Zero Waste Month celebrations have originated in the Philippines since 2012 when youth leaders issued a Zero Waste Youth Manifesto.

CCC IN THE NEWS

DZRJ RADYO AGILA

[Panayam kay Sec. Robert Borje kasama ang Kasangga Mo Ang Langit ni Rey Langit](#)
Time stamp: 21:57

Kasangga mo ang Langit



HOST: REY LANGIT

GUEST: Sec. ROBERT BORJE
Commissioner
Philippine's Climate Change Commission

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