



NEWS ROUNDUP

23 December 2022 [08:30 am]

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CNN PHILIPPINES

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By Rachel Ramirez

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PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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THE PHILIPPINE STAR

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By Janvic Mateo

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Information and Knowledge Management Division

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By Rachel Ramirez

(CNN) — It was only a matter of time before human-caused climate change and pollution reached even the most isolated continent on the planet. As global temperature rises, Antarctica's pristine landscape is already changing, and new research shows most of the region's plant and animal species – including its iconic penguins – are in trouble.

The study published Thursday in the journal PLOS Biology found that 65% of Antarctica's native species, emperor penguins top among them, will likely disappear by the end of the century if the world continues its business-as-usual ways and fails to rein in planet-warming fossil fuel emissions.

The study also showed that the current conservation efforts in Antarctica are not working on the rapidly changing continent. Researchers concluded implementing an extra layer of cost-effective strategies, which they lay out in the study, could save up to 84% of Antarctica's vulnerable biodiversity.

"Antarctica is not really contributing to climate change; there's not a large-scale number of people living there, so the greatest threat to the continent is coming from outside the continent," Jasmine Lee, lead author of the study, told CNN. "We really need global action on climate change, as well as some more local and regional conservation efforts, to give Antarctic species the best chance of surviving into the future."

Antarctica's geographic isolation has long protected the continent from the worsening impacts of the climate crisis and other environmental disasters that plague the rest of the world, such as wildfires, flooding, and drought. Scientists have already observed significant changes in its northern counterpart, the Arctic, which is warming four times faster than the rest of the planet.

But the impacts of climate change are just starting to emerge in Antarctica. Recent data, for example, suggests Antarctica's sea ice is dropping more rapidly now than decades prior.

Thursday's study shows that disappearing sea ice threatens several species of marine seabirds, like emperor and Adélie penguins, that rely on the ice from April through December to nest their little ones. If the ice melts earlier or freezes later in the season, as a result of rising temperatures, penguins struggle to complete their reproductive cycle.

"These iconic species, like emperor penguins and Adélie penguins, are at risk and it's really sad to think that Antarctica is one of the last great wildernesses on the planet and

human impacts are being seen and felt there,” Lee said. “It’s just incredibly sad to think that we could drive those kinds of species towards extinction.”

Human presence and activity are also increasing in the region. The study shows that scientific expeditions and infrastructure are expanding, while annual tourist numbers have skyrocketed more than eight-fold since the 1990s.

A separate study from earlier this year showed that increasing human presence in the region is causing more snow melt. Scientists found black carbon – the dark, dusty pollution that comes from burning fossil fuels – settling in locations where people spend a lot of time. Even the tiniest amount of this pollutant can have a significant impact on melting.

What can be done?

While the threat to Antarctica’s species and its ecosystem are increasingly well-documented, they aren’t as widely understood among policymakers, Lee said. And finding the funds for conservation can be challenging.

But the study lays out several measures that are actually cost-effective, with an estimated cost of \$1.92 billion over the next 83 years, or around \$23 million per year – a fraction of the global economy.

These strategies include minimizing and managing human activity, transport and new infrastructure, as well as protecting native species while also controlling non-native species and diseases that enter the region.

It also includes a focus on external policies, like achieving the broader international climate goals under the 2015 Paris Agreement, which aim to reduce planet-warming emissions and stave off a dire rise in global temperature.

“The benefits of doing something about climate change is good for human health, livelihood and also the economy,” Lee said. “The incentive is there, but it’s just finding that initial investment, and it just depends on priorities.”

Cassandra Brooks, an assistant professor at the University of Colorado Boulder who has done extensive research on marine animals in Antarctica, said that the study is “timely and important” to draw attention to how critically threatened Antarctic biodiversity is.

“This study builds on previous work showing the urgency with which policymakers need to take action on climate change, if there is any chance of safeguarding Antarctic biodiversity,” Brooks, who is not involved with the study, told CNN. It “makes crystal clear that current conservation strategies are insufficient at doing anything beyond supporting the decline of biodiversity.”

The latest research comes days after negotiators at the UN biodiversity summit in Montreal reached a landmark agreement to better protect the planet's vital ecosystems, including a pledge to protect 30% of land and oceans by 2030.

With the climate crisis now the most pervasive threat to Antarctic biodiversity, Lee said influencing global policy is needed more than ever to save one of Earth's vast, pristine biomes.

"This is just the tip of the iceberg," Lee said. "We're at this huge turning point now not just for Antarctica, but globally, when it comes to climate. We've got the opportunity to stop it and if we don't do something now, then the impacts are going to be much, much worse than what they could be."

This story was first published on CNN.com, "65% of Antarctica's plants and animals could disappear, scientists say. Its iconic penguins are most at risk"

BUSINESS MIRROR

Climate change affects your kids' health

WHEN it comes to climate change, no one is exempt from experiencing its impact on their health—and our children are bearing the most brunt. Burning fossil fuel to operate our vehicles, cutting down trees, clearing vast tracts of land, dumping garbage on landfills and other human activities all contribute to the release of carbon dioxide and methane in the atmosphere. These and other gasses trap the sun's heat, creating what is known as a greenhouse effect, and in turn global warming. Global warming is just one of many consequences of climate change. Note the rising sea waters, warmer oceans, melting glaciers, intense droughts, and more devastating storms.

“While it may not be apparent at first, climate change directly affects our children's health,” says Dr. Romina Gerolaga, MD from the Department of Pediatrics of top hospital in the Philippines, the Makati Medical Center (Makati Med, www.makatimed.net.ph).

“Our kids' immune system and organs are not quite fully developed; children breathe at a faster rate and, therefore, this increases their exposure to toxic air pollutants which can damage their lungs.”

The doctor points out that this was confirmed by a study conducted by Harvard University, in collaboration with the University of Birmingham, the University of Leicester, and University College London. Thousands of kids under age 5 die each year due to respiratory infections attributed to fossil fuel pollution.

“Moreover, the hotter temperature makes it dangerous for kids to play outdoors for a prolonged period of time,” the pediatrician shares. “With limited physical activity though, they set themselves up for obesity, another major health challenge facing our children today. But if they do play outdoors, the poor air quality could trigger allergies or asthma attacks, while prolonged direct sun exposure may cause skin diseases.” Furthermore, natural disasters worsened by climate change can bring flooding and with it, diseases caused by contaminated water, trauma or relocation that impact children's mental health.

The reality is that climate change isn't going anywhere anytime soon. Slowing it down takes a concerted global effort over a significant number of years. Till then, there are some ways parents can still protect their kids from climate change's ill effects.

More plants on your plate. Shifting to a more plant-based diet is good for not just your kids' health but also the environment. "We are already aware of how beneficial a plant-based diet is, and it can help lessen the world's global greenhouse gas emissions since livestock contributes roughly 15 percent to that annually according to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations."

Protect your child's skin from the sun. The sun casts its damaging UV rays from 10 am to 4 pm, expert points out. "If your kids want to be outdoors at those hours, remember to slather them with sunblock and provide them with cold drinks. Playing in the shade also shields them from direct heat and the sun's harmful rays, or schedule their playtime or outdoor walks during the early mornings."

Improve air quality. Though you cannot control air pollution outdoors, you can certainly keep the air in your home clean by purging air and allowing better air flow and, if possible, by investing in a portable air purifier or a high-efficiency air filter. Gerolaga suggests, "Cleaning your house regularly and making sure fans and filters of air conditioning units are regularly checked also improves air quality and prevents dust accumulation."

Prevent diseases. Stop dengue in its tracks by clearing your immediate surroundings of standing water, where mosquitoes typically breed. When going out, you can also apply a mosquito repellent for extra safety. Repellents made from natural ingredients which are safe for children are already available in the market. "Also, do not let your kids wade or play in flood water," the doctor underlines. "This ensures their safety against leptospirosis, cholera and other illnesses from contaminated water."

Prep for emergencies. "When preparing an emergency bag for your child, fill it with essentials like clean potable water in bottles and ready-to-eat food, clothes, toiletries, a flashlight, and medicines," Gerolaga says. "You may opt to include comforting things like a blanket or their favorite small toy, a book, and some paper and pencils to keep them busy and pleasantly distracted from unfamiliar surroundings or a stressful time."

Climate change can be such a complicated issue, especially now that it is hitting home and affecting the most vulnerable in your household. That is why Gerolaga reminds you to get help from health experts when it comes to your child's health. "It is best to let your child's pediatrician in on what's going on. They will be able to offer a workable solution for your child's overall well-being despite the challenges," the expert recommends.

BUSINESS WORLD

BSP launches sustainability agenda

By Keisha B. Ta-asan

THE BANGKO Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) on Thursday launched its 11-point sustainable central banking (SCB) agenda as it seeks to mitigate climate risks by advocating green policies and practices.

“Very obviously, climate change would affect food supply and, as we know from our own history of inflation, this could lead to large supply shocks,” BSP Governor Felipe M. Medalla said at the launch event on Thursday, adding that it is important to prevent supply-shock inflation from becoming a more “permanent inflation.”

Headline inflation rose to 8% in November, bringing the full-year average to 5.6%. This is lower than the BSP’s 5.8% full-year forecast but well above its 2-4% target.

Mr. Medalla also said climate change will also affect how the BSP regulates banks, as capitalization requirements should be enough to bear constantly changing climate risks.

The BSP chief also called for action against climate change.

“We are an enabler, we are a mobilizer, we are a doer. We are proud to be so. Climate action is a whole of society undertaking and the BSP could only do so much but it will do what it can do,” Mr. Medalla said. “That’s why we call on everyone’s support to help implement the sustainable central banking program.”

Under its 11-point strategy, the central bank will initiate vulnerability assessment for environment risks in the economy.

It will also improve disclosure requirements on social and environmental risks in annual reports and enhance existing guidelines on stress-testing by adding climate risks and scenarios.

The BSP will align regulations with global standards, particularly in banks’ capital framework. It will also issue guidelines consistent with a sustainable finance taxonomy.

The central bank will also incorporate macroeconomic effects of climate change into monetary policy analysis by developing a model suitable to Philippine context.

The BSP will also explore the green credit window to contribute to the financing of sustainable economic activities.

“Building on ongoing research on incentivizing green lending by banks, the BSP will mobilize enhancements and innovations in its credit operations, as appropriate, to support the financing of sustainable economic activities,” the central bank said.

The BSP is also looking at incorporating sustainability objectives in its reserve management and exploring the expansion of eligible sustainable financial instruments such as green bonds for the BSP's reserves.

In regards to financial inclusion, the BSP will continue to develop policies for the underserved and unserved segments of society, building on existing initiatives on sustainable finance.

"Under the SCB Strategy, the BSP will foster environmentally responsible and sustainable policies and work practices, as well as integrate environmental, social, and governance, or ESG, principles in its key functions and operations," BSP Deputy Governor Chuchi G. Fonacier said.

She urged stakeholders to put sustainability at the core of their services transactions and risk management.

"The country's transition to a sustainable and low-carbon economy is a collective responsibility. Let us strive to make sustainability principles the norm rather than the exception," Ms. Fonacier said.

The Philippines is said to be one of the countries that are most exposed to climate change risks.

Climate-related hazards have caused P506.1 billion in losses and damage to the Philippines over the past decade, the Department of Finance said last year.

The World Bank earlier said the impact of climate change is likely to slash the Philippines' gross domestic product by as much as 13.6% by 2040 if there is no action by the government and private sector.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

[Biodiversity investments needed for adaptive management: DENR](#)

MANILA – Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Antonia Loyzaga highlighted the need to shore up biodiversity investments to establish the adaptive management and capacity of regions and communities, during the high-level segment of the 15th Conference of Parties to the United Nations (UN) Convention on Biological Diversity (COP15) in Montreal, Canada.

Loyzaga was designated by President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. as his representative and Head of the Philippine delegation which is composed of officials from the Philippine Embassy in Ottawa, Permanent Mission to the UN, Department of Science and Technology, Department of Tourism, Department of Agriculture, National Commission on Indigenous Peoples and experts from civil society.

In a press release posted on DENR website on Wednesday, Loyzaga reported the steps being undertaken by the Philippine government to address biodiversity and climate change challenges when she participated in the High-Level Panel on Financing Delivery of the Global Biodiversity Framework upon the invitation of the United Kingdom.

“More investments in science informed mainstreaming are needed to build adaptive management at the subnational down to the community level,” she said.

She added biodiversity finance will contribute to achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) on reducing inequality, poverty, hunger, health, clean water and energy, decent work and economic growth, sustainable cities and responsible consumption and production, among others.

This is in addition to the goal of the DENR to attain SDGs 14 and 15 or life below water and life on land, respectively.

Loyzaga said the Philippines has already begun to align its official development assistance with “strategic goals” such as extending support to the 10-Point Agenda for Financing Biodiversity and the High Ambition Coalition.

These aim to address the complex and interrelated linkages between biodiversity, climate change, and inclusive, equitable, and resilient development.

In addition to the Philippines’ international environmental commitments, she said the Philippine government has partnered with the One Planet Initiative to explore the potential development of a biodiversity credits market in the country.

As part of its local initiatives, she said the Philippines, through the Department of Finance (DOF), has built a Sustainable Finance Ecosystem, which has garnered strong support from the UK.

Loyzaga said the framework has enabled collaboration among the DOF, the Securities and Exchange Commission, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, and the private sector in investing in enterprise risk management, ESG reporting, and the issuance of government and private green bonds.

She announced the Philippines has started the establishment of a national natural resource geospatial database and a natural capital accounting system which will aid in the prioritization of investments and actions.

Loyzaga said the Philippines has also instituted a climate change tagging system in its national budget and crafted legislation on the protection of millions of hectares of forests, wetlands, caves, mangroves, and reefs.

“We have adopted a whole of society and systemic risk-based approach where multilateral development banks and the private sector have a key role in achieving sustainable development, nature-based solutions and climate action, and the valuation of ecosystem services,” she said.

Loyzaga also stressed that cultures, livelihoods, and the resilience of the Philippines’ developing economy relies on the integrity of its ecosystems and the services they provide.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

[Ifugao Rice Terraces land on another 'protection' list](#)

By: Ronnel W. Domingo

MANILA, Philippines — Communities that depend on the Ifugao Rice Terraces for their livelihood will receive support from Canada-based Manulife Financial Corp. and National Geographic (NatGeo) Society, which have included the famous Cordillera landmark in a list of 10 heritage sites that must be protected from the impact of climate change.

Eight others on the list, drawn up under the “Preserving Legacies: A Future for Our Past” initiative, are also on the World Heritage List of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (Unesco).

These are Petra (Jordan); Angkor Archeological Park (Cambodia); Historical Mosque City of Bagerhat (Bangladesh); Nan Madol (ruins in Micronesia); Levuka (port town in Fiji); Koutammakou, the Land of the Batammariba (Togo and Benin); Sceilg Mhichil Island (Ireland); and the Port, Fortress and Group of Monuments at Cartagena (Colombia).

The 10th entry is the Border Field natural beach and coastal habitat which straddles the border between the United States and Mexico.

Local threats, responses

In a joint statement, Manulife and NatGeo said the project could help safeguard these historic and culturally significant sites from the impact of climate change and protect the physical and financial well-being of the communities that rely on them for livelihood.

Under the project, it is hoped that the communities can better visualize climate threats on a local scale and be trained in scientific mitigation efforts.

The initiative is led by National Geographic explorer Victoria Herrmann and is connected to Manulife’s Impact Agenda, which was launched in the Philippines earlier this year with Gawad Kalinga, Corazon Sanchez Atayde Memorial Foundation and Haribon Foundation as partners.

“[O]ur ambitious approach to addressing this critical issue will not only lead to tangible protection of cultural heritage sites; it will be the game changers needed to increase access to heritage adaptation and transform conservation as a field to meet the challenges of a climate-changed world,” Herrmann said.

Rahul Hora, Manulife Philippines president and chief executive, said the company wants to contribute to efforts mitigating climate change risks to people’s lives and livelihood.

Through mentoring programs and educational materials, the project hopes to teach communities how to turn scientific knowledge into actionable management plans for the protection of heritage sites.

Using local weather data, for example, climate models can be developed to assess how much flooding, heat, sea level rise and changing seasonality could threaten the communities in different scenarios. This would enable their leaders or site managers to know what climate impacts to anticipate and plan for.

‘Unparalleled beauty’

The Ifugao Rice Terraces have five terrace clusters within the province that were included on the World Heritage List in 1995.

Unesco described the terraces in Batad and Bangaan in Banaue, Hungduan, Kiangan, and in Mayoyao as “a living cultural landscape of unparalleled beauty.”

Built more than 2,000 years ago and preserved through generations, the terraces, Unesco said, can be considered an example of how an ancient civilization can survive the various challenges of modernization.

Marijuana plantation?

In 2001, the terraces also landed on the World Heritage Committee’s list of endangered heritage sites. They were removed from the list in 2012 after the government gave assurances that the threatened sections would be repaired.

Earlier this month, Ifugao Gov. Jerry Dalipog said abandoned and worn-down terraces may be suitable for growing medical marijuana should cannabis cultivation be legalized in the country.

Dalipog was then reacting to the idea of using the terraces for growing “weed,” a proposal that cropped up during a Senate hearing on a medical marijuana bill.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

[Climate change lags in urgent concerns of Pinoys – study](#)

By Janvic Mateo

MANILA, Philippines — Despite living in one of the most vulnerable countries in the world, most Filipinos still do not identify climate change as the most urgent concern that governments, companies and

The 2022 Climate Reality Barometer, conducted by Japanese multinational electronics company Epson, found that only 10.7 percent of the 1,005 Filipino respondents identified climate change as the most urgent issue.

Most Filipino respondents identified fixing the economy with 27.7 percent, followed by rising prices with 24.4 percent, tackling poverty (15.5 percent) and safeguarding against a future pandemic (12.7 percent) as among the most urgent issues.

Following climate change were improving equality of life with 4.3 percent, and the war in Europe, 2.6 percent.

The results of the study are somewhat similar to local surveys that showed inflation and unemployment as the most urgent concern of most Filipinos.

Epson noted that more respondents from other countries – such as France with 38 percent and Mexico with 34.1 percent – see climate change as the most pressing issue that needs to be addressed worldwide.

Despite this, the study found that Filipinos are among the most optimistic that a “climate disaster” would be averted in their lifetime.

Some 71.9 percent said they were optimistic (35.2 percent very optimistic, 36.7 percent somewhat optimistic) while 13.6 percent were pessimistic (10.8 percent somewhat pessimistic and 2.8 percent very pessimistic).

Meanwhile, 12.7 percent of Filipino respondents said they were neither optimistic nor pessimistic, while 1.7 percent said they do not believe that there is any risk of a climate disaster.

Epson said respondents in other countries were more pessimistic, particularly in Canada and Italy with 36.6 percent and 25.2 percent, respectively.

“The 2022 Epson Climate Reality Barometer shows progress, but also how short-term economic demands are in danger of distracting governments, businesses and individuals from imperative environmental action,” said Masako Kusama, president and director of Epson Philippines.

“As a global technology leader, our duty is to refocus our efforts on developing solutions which will help reduce the environmental impact of our products. By working together, we at Epson believe that we can all inspire action and build a better future,” she added.

Addressing climate change

The online survey, conducted from July 29 to Aug. 8, also asked Filipino respondents about various actions that they do or plan on doing to tackle climate change.

Some 76.5 percent of the respondents said they already reduce plastic use followed by improving recycling habits with 70.1 percent, using more reusable goods (69.2 percent), walking or cycling more often (67.1 percent), travel to the office less (47.3 percent), switch to more sustainable products (45.9 percent) and less international travel for business and leisure (37.6 percent).

Fewer Filipinos said they adopted a plant-based diet with 39.1 percent, encouraged workplace to commit or further its net zero strategy (27.3 percent), switched to renewable energy (25.1 percent), installed solar panels (22.3 percent), boycotted an unsustainable brand (20.5 percent) and switched to an electric vehicle (17 percent).

More than half of respondents said they plan to do the following in the future: install solar panels with 67.4 percent, switch to renewable energy (58.8 percent), switch to an electric vehicle (55.6 percent) and encourage workplace to commit or further its net zero strategy (50.9 percent).

[Philippines inks \\$3B loan agreement with South Korea for infrastructure projects](#)

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippines has signed an agreement with the Republic of Korea that allows Manila to borrow up to \$3 billion from 2022 to 2026 for infrastructure and road projects.

According to the Department of Foreign Affairs, the newly signed deal is worth three times more than the 2017 to 2022 term agreement.

“As we welcome commitments in infrastructure and road network developments, the Philippines also welcomes the ROK’s intention to significantly increase its ODA (Official Development Assistance) on climate and green-related areas by 2025,” Foreign Affairs Secretary Enrique Manalo said during the signing ceremony held Wednesday.

“This runs along our country’s trajectory for green projects that will provide more focused support to climate change response for economic development.”

The agreement will help fund the Panay-Guimaras-Negros Island bridges project, which would connect the three islands via two bridges spanning 32.47 kilometers in total. It will also be used to build the road along the coastal areas of Mandaue, Consolacion, and Liloan in Cebu province.

The loan will also finance the Ilocos Norte and Abra Irrigation Project.

South Korea was the Philippines 6th largest ODA partner in 2021. With Seoul’s help, the country was able to fund projects such as the P11.2-billion Jalaur River Multipurpose Dam, the P9.2-billion construction project in the Cebu International Port to help with congestion, and the two-lane bridge across the Panguil Bay worth P7.4-billion that helped connect Misamis Oriental and Lanao del Norte.

SUNSTAR

DA tackles climate change issues through radio school

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO The Department of Agriculture DA is now using radios to reach more farmers in far-flung areas to teach farmers about innovative agricultural practices amid global warming and climate change issues.

Dubbed School-on-the-Air on Smart Rice Agriculture (SOA-SRA), the program was first launched in the town of San Ramon in Dinalupihan town in Bataan. The program taps into local rice farmers using rechargeable radios distributed by the DA through its Regional Agriculture and Fisheries Information Section.

SOA-SRA aims to increase the Palay Performance of the Farmers in Bataan. The purpose of this program is to prevent the threat of climate change and global warming through sustainable education of their fields of smallholder farmers and to identify Smart Rice Agriculture Technologies and Practices.

The topics to be discussed include prospects of the rice production industry in the Philippines, different techniques in rice crop management, palay check systems, rice diseases management, and various marketing technologies.

The DA broadcasts School-on-the-Air programs every Mondays to Friday through its radio partner RW 95.1 FM

The DA believes that the radio remains the most accessible and widely used medium in disseminating information specifically to rural communities even to the far-flung areas in the locality.

The School-on-the-Air (SOA) Program is among the training modalities used by the DA's Agricultural Training Institute in the delivery of agricultural extension services and access to knowledge and information on technological developments, particularly agricultural production technologies for farmers in far-flung communities.

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