



## NEWS ROUNDUP

25 July 2022 (Tuesday) [as of 10:40am]

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- Enhanced operational efficiency helps avert the carbon crisis
- Marcos to lay down food security plan
- SMC packaging unit to help boost QC LGU trash-to-cashback program
- The EPR Law takes on the Philippines' plastic problem
- UN mounts awareness exhibit to mark sixth month of Typhoon Odette
- US heat wave soars as California wildfire rages
- [OPINION] PBBM's SONA: Roadmap to recovery
- World Bank: Southeast Asia needs stronger rules on plastic value chain

## **AL JAZEERA**

### **How climate change drives heatwaves and wildfires**

Brutal heatwaves are gripping Europe and the United States and are forecast to dump searing heat on much of China into late August. The searing heat is part of a global pattern of rising temperatures, attributed by scientists to human activity.

## **BBC NEWS**

### **Biden could declare climate change – Kerry**

The US climate envoy, John Kerry, says President Joe Biden is considering announcing a climate emergency. The move would give him additional powers to push his renewable energy agenda, which has been held up by lack of support in Congress.

## **BUSINESS MIRROR**

### **Canada's child-care investment needs to advance climate change policy goals**

By: Emis Akbari and Isabelle Vinet

On Oct. 8 last year, the United Nations Human Rights Council recognized that a clean, healthy and sustainable environment is a human right. Further to this, a historical ruling by the United Nations Child Rights Committee decided a country can be held accountable for the negative impacts of its carbon emissions on children both within and beyond its territory

### **DOE bares details of winning green energy auction bidders**

By Lenie Lectura

The Department of Energy (DOE) has released over the weekend the bid details of the winning bidders that participated in the country's first green energy auction (GEA) held last month. LGUs push passage of policy on national single-use plastic Local government units (LGUs), through ordinances, are pushing for a national law that will comprehensively and effectively address single-use plastics, advocates said during a recent joint webcast by Cebu Technological University and The Climate Reality Project Philippines.

### **Major nations lag in acting on climate-fighting goals**

By: Seth Borenstein

For most of the major carbon-polluting nations, promising to fight climate change is a lot easier than actually doing it. In the United States, President Joe Biden has learned that the hard way.

## **CBS NEWS**

### **Heat waves are hitting around the globe. Scientists say climate change is making them more frequent**

By Allison Elyse Gaultieri, Alex Sundby

As much of the nation swelters under temperatures that have canceled outdoor sports, sparked wildfires and taxed the infrastructure keeping people cool, experts warn that heat waves will only get more common.

## CNN

### Supreme Court's climate change ruling complicates the push for sweeping student debt cancellation

By: Katie Lobosco and Tierny Sneed

A recent Supreme Court decision that limits the Environmental Protection Agency's ability to fight the climate crisis could also hamstring President Joe Biden's authority to cancel federal student loan debt.

## DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE

### VOTE: What do you want to hear from President Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos, Jr.’s first State of the Nation Address (SONA)?

President Marcos has invited all Filipinos to watch his Address later today as he unveils the administration's plans and goals for the next six years.

## MALAYA BUSINESS INSIGHT

### Connectivity a priority

By: Myla Iglesias

The Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) will prioritize the implementation of ongoing projects, particularly unfinished bridges and critical infrastructure that will address traffic congestion and promote interregional connection, according to DPWH Secretary Manuel Bonoan.

## MANILA BULLETIN

### Odette, six months on

By: Carol Malasig

The Embassy of Spain, Instituto Cervantes, AECID, and UN-OCHA collaborate on an exhibit that sounds alarm bells on climate change

### Battered by climate change, Latin America must brace for worse: report

By: Agence-France-Presse

Floods, heat waves and the longest drought in 1,000 years: Latin America is grappling with devastating climate change impacts that will only get worse, a World Meteorological Organization report warned Friday.

## MANILA STANDARD

### DOE auction program leads to competitive renewable rates By Alena Mae S. Flores

The Department of Energy said the Green Energy Auction Program generated competitive rates especially for wind capacities that will redound to the benefit of consumers.

## NEW YORK TIMES

## **Climate Change is not negotiable**

The American West has gone bone dry, the Great Salt Lake is vanishing and water levels in Lake Mead and Lake Powell, the two great life-giving reservoirs on the Colorado River basin, are declining with alarming speed. Wildfires are incinerating crops in France, Spain, Portugal and Italy, while parts of Britain suffocated last week in temperatures exceeding 100 degrees Fahrenheit.

## **PHILIPPINE INQUIRER**

### **Marcos faces crucial nature, climate challenges**

By: Catherine Custodio

If the state of the Philippine environment was a movie, we could already see that the ending will be tragic. As President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. has taken the helm, he now2 has the job of driving the government's effort to change that grim ending.

## **PHILIPPINE INQUIRER**

### **Meet the team carrying out Marcos' marching orders**

Grand visions, broad marching orders, major policy shifts — expect these and more as President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. delivers his first State of the Nation Address (SONA) today, Monday July 25

### **New US envoy to PH assures Marcos on defense, clean energy**

By: Marlon Ramos and Nestor Corrales

Newly designated US Ambassador to the Philippines MaryKay Loss Carlson on Friday assured President Marcos of Washington's continued support in safeguarding the country's territory, facilitating fresh investments and developing clean energy.

## **PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY**

### **1.7 K Novo Ecijanos get jobs from DSWD's cash-for-work program**

By: Zorayda Tecson

Over 1,700 indigents in Nueva Ecija have been employed for 10 days under the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) program that helps communities address the effect of climate change.

### **'Build, Build, Build' continues: Building more for better lives**

By Ferdinand Patinio

Early on the presidential campaign, then aspirant Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. vowed to expand the "Build, Build, Build" program, the government's ambitious infrastructure program

### **Solon pushes for rehabilitation of Agus-Pulangi power plants**

By: Filane Mikee Cervantes

A lawmaker on Friday said the rehabilitation of the Agus-Pulangi hydropower complex (APHPC) should be a top priority of the Marcos administration to ensure a clean and reliable energy source in Mindanao while fighting climate change.

## RAPPLER

### **Atin Ang Pilipinas: Panawaqan ng mga sektor sa administrasyong Marcos Hangad ng mahigit sa 150 organisasyon na kabilang sa #CourageON Coalition**

#PHVote Coalition na marinig sa unang State of the Nation Address ni Pangulong Ferdinand Marcos Jr. ang 5 panawagan ng iba't ibang sektor sa ilalim ng kampanyang #AtinAngPilipinas

### **Climate Change makes banana, seaweed farming hard for women in Palawan**

By: Keith Anthony Fabro

In Palawan, women engaged in banana and seaweed farming are struggling to make ends meet for their families

## THE ASAHI SHIMBUN

### **Global warming study: 5-year droughts could become the norm**

By: Rintaro Sakurai

"Unprecedented" droughts lasting for at least five years will hit several regions around the world by mid-century if nothing is done to curb global warming, an international team of scientists warned.

## THE HILL

### **Climate Change: The global jenga game**

By: William Becker

It has been 34 years, an entire generation, since the U.S. government's top climate scientist warned Congress the planet was warming with potentially dire consequences. "It is already happening now," Dr. James Hansen testified in 1988. "It is time to stop waffling." Scientists have struggled ever since to communicate this to the public and government officials.

## THE MANILA TIMES

### **Baguio eyes flood warning system**

By Gaby B. Keith

Baguio City: The Summer Capital's push to establish its own smart flood early warning, information and mitigation system that was initiated in August 2020 is ongoing, said Antonette Anaban, City Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office (CDRRMO) head.

### **DMHC welcomes P600-M DBP funding**

By Eireene Jairee Gomez

Dupinga Mini Hydro Corp. (DMHC) welcomed the P600-million funding support from the Development Bank of the Philippines (DBP) for its 4.6 MW Dupinga Mini Hydropower Project in Gabaldon, Nueva Ecija.

### **Enhanced operational efficiency helps avert the carbon crisis**

By Tony Maghirang

The impacts of climate change include rapidly melting glaciers, global temperature spikes, frequent flash floods, intensifying hurricanes and cyclones are among such events triggered by growing carbon emissions that could reach critical levels.

### **Marcos to lay down food security plan**

By Catherine S. Valente

To head off a looming agriculture and food crisis, President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. has ordered "strategic agriculture measures" implemented immediately. SMC packaging unit to help boost QC LGU trash-to-cashback program

### **SMC packaging unit to help boost QC LGU trash-to-cashback program**

San Miguel Corporation (SMC) packaging unit San Miguel Yamamura Packaging Corp. (SMYPC) has signed on to boost Quezon City's trash-to-cashback program to help divert garbage away from landfills. Together with waste solutions and technology partners, it eyes to expand the program to Metro Manila and nearby provinces.

### **The EPR Law takes on the Philippines' plastic problem**

By Ma. Celina Añonuev and Bonar Laureto

Barring any last-minute hiccups, the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) Act of 2022 should have lapsed into law by now, which means companies are now responsible for the plastic packaging they use to protect, transport and sell their products.

### **UN mounts awareness exhibit to mark sixth month of Typhoon Odette**

Six months after Typhoon Odette left a trail of devastation in 11 of the country's 17 regions, the United Nations (UN) and humanitarian partners in the Philippines, in support of the government-led response, have provided life-saving assistance to over a million people.

### **US heat wave soars as California wildfire rages**

By Agence France-Presse

Los Angeles, California: Tens of millions of Americans already baking in a scorching heat wave braced Saturday (Sunday in Manila) for record-setting temperatures to climb while a major fire ravaged part of California

## **THE PHILIPPINE STAR**

### **[OPINION] PBBM's SONA: Roadmap to recovery**

For more than a week now, President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. has been working on his first State of the Nation Address (SONA) that he will be delivering tomorrow. The President has been getting

inputs from his Cabinet secretaries and from other segments of society, including the private business sector, to elucidate on the roadmap for the next six years, not only for our economic recovery but to bring the Philippines towards a place that is “better than the one we lost before the pandemic,” as he had stressed in his inaugural address.

**World Bank: Southeast Asia needs stronger rules on plastic value chain**

By Louella Desiderio

Southeast Asian countries need to come up with stronger regulatory frameworks and innovative methods in the plastic value chain in order to reduce plastic waste, according to the World Bank.

**Information and Knowledge Management Division**

## **AL JAZEERA**

### **How climate change drives heatwaves and wildfires**

Brutal heatwaves are gripping Europe and the United States and are forecast to dump searing heat on much of China into late August. The searing heat is part of a global pattern of rising temperatures, attributed by scientists to human activity.

Hotter, more frequent heatwaves

Climate change makes heatwaves hotter and more frequent. This is the case for most land regions, and has been confirmed by the United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

Greenhouse gas emissions from human activities have heated the planet by about 1.2 degrees Celsius (2.16 degrees Fahrenheit) since pre-industrial times.

"Every heatwave that we are experiencing today has been made hotter and more frequent because of climate change," said Friederike Otto, a climate scientist at Imperial College London who also co-leads the World Weather Attribution research collaboration.

A study in Nature journal this month found that heatwaves in Europe have increased three-to-four times faster than in other northern mid-latitudes such as the US.

The authors linked this to changes in the jet stream – a fast west-to-east air current in the northern hemisphere.

Fingerprints of climate change

To find out exactly how much climate change affected a specific heatwave, scientists conduct "attribution studies".

Since 2004, more than 400 such studies have been done on extreme weather events, including heat, floods and drought.

This involves simulating the modern climate hundreds of times and comparing it to simulations of a climate without human-caused greenhouse gas emissions.

For example, scientists with World Weather Attribution determined that a record-breaking heatwave in Western Europe in June 2019 was 100 times more likely to occur now in France and the Netherlands than if humans had not changed the climate.

Heatwaves to get worse

"On average on land, heat extremes that would have happened once every 10 years without human influence on the climate are now three times more frequent," said ETH Zurich climate scientist Sonia Seneviratne.

Temperatures will only cease rising if humans stop adding greenhouse gases to the atmosphere. Until then, heatwaves are set to worsen.

A failure to tackle climate change would see heat extremes escalate even more dangerously. Countries agreed under the global 2015 Paris Agreement to cut emissions fast enough to limit global warming to 2C (3.6F) and aim for 1.5C (2.7F), to avoid its most dangerous effects. Current policies would not cut emissions fast enough to meet either goal.

A heatwave that occurred once per decade in the pre-industrial era would happen 4.1 times a decade at 1.5C of warming, and 5.6 times at 2C, the IPCC says.

#### Climate change drives wildfires

Climate change increases hot and dry conditions that help fires spread faster, burn longer and rage more intensely.

In the Mediterranean, that has contributed to the fire season starting earlier and burning more land.

Last year, more than half a million hectares burned in the European Union, making it the bloc's second-worst forest fire season on record after 2017.

Hotter weather also saps moisture from vegetation, turning it into dry fuel that helps fires to spread.

"The hotter, drier conditions right now, it just makes far more dangerous," Copernicus senior scientist Mark Parrington said.

Hotter temperatures are also pushing wildfires into regions not used to them, and thus less prepared to cope.

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## BBC NEWS

### **Biden could declare climate change – Kerry**

The US climate envoy, John Kerry, says President Joe Biden is considering announcing a climate emergency.

The move would give him additional powers to push his renewable energy agenda, which has been held up by lack of support in Congress.

Mr Kerry told the BBC it was "less than ideal" that Congress was not "full-throatedly" in favour.

But he said nobody was more committed than President Biden to replacing carbon-based energy.

Mr Kerry also said recent Supreme Court rulings restricting the government's environmental policies had not helped.

Emergency declared over 'explosive' California fire

California wildfire threatens world's largest trees

Climate change increases the risk of the hot, dry weather that is likely to fuel wildfires.

The world has already warmed by about 1.1C since the industrial era began and temperatures will keep rising unless governments around the world make steep cuts to emissions.

Tens of millions of people in the US, across more than two dozen states, have been living under heat warnings during the past week.

But Mr Biden's efforts to pass a climate change bill were dealt a blow earlier this month when West Virginia Senator Joe Manchin - a conservative Democrat - said he would not vote for the legislation.

On Wednesday, Mr Biden announced \$2.3bn (£1.9bn) to help build infrastructure that can withstand extreme weather and natural disasters.

However, he stopped short of formally declaring a climate emergency, despite mounting pressure to do so from fellow Democrats and environmental groups.

Mr Kerry said the world was learning that green energy reduced inflation, lowered energy costs, created jobs and improved health and security.

He said Mr Biden was prepared to use "every tool available to him" to tackle climate change, including executive orders.

## CANADIAN INQUIRER

### **Canada's child-care investment needs to advance climate change policy goals**

By: Emis Akbari and Isabelle Vinet

On Oct. 8 last year, the United Nations Human Rights Council recognized that a clean, healthy and sustainable environment is a human right.

Further to this, a historical ruling by the United Nations Child Rights Committee decided a country can be held accountable for the negative impacts of its carbon emissions on children both within and beyond its territory.

Canada is investing \$27 billion in early learning and child care. All 13 provinces and territories signed onto the agreement with a promise of reducing parent fees and increasing access for children zero to five years of age.

Canada's federal early learning and child-care investment is an opportunity to think green within the early learning and child-care sector and re-evaluate the status quo. It's a chance to ensure sustainability and climate goals are incorporated both in short- and long-term policies, and in current programs and classrooms.

#### Canada is a laggard

As legislation is being developed, where new early learning and child-care programs are located, how they are designed, constructed and resourced, can either add to the problem of climate change or help mitigate it.

Right now, the nexus of early childhood education and sustainability requires a lot more funding, scholarship and action.

The May 2022 release of UNICEF's Report Card 17 specifically addressed environmental stressors on the well-being of children. Overall, it ranks Canada 28 out of 39 rich countries. We stand alongside the worst of our peers in municipal waste and resource consumption, and 38 of 39 for physical and policy environments that surround the child.

Children are the least responsible for, but bear the greatest impact of, the climate crisis. Yet, the impact is not evenly distributed. Climate change adds to another crisis — that of inequality.

Poor individual, societal and policy decisions effect certain communities of children more than others: those living in poverty, in Indigenous and northern communities and those who are racialized.

#### Sustainability education and action

Early years curriculum must include sustainability education and action, and these must be reflected in what happens in the classroom. Climate experts agree that one critical way to address the climate crisis is to empower Indigenous communities, and to support meaningful dialogues with Indigenous knowledge holders to determine sustainable and co-operative steps forward.

The environmental challenge is greater than any one single stakeholder. For every Greta Thunberg, there are millions of children that are collateral damage from policy decisions, naïve contributors to the problem, or both.

Pro-environmental attitudes and behaviours are critical and foundational for effectively addressing climate change. Children develop these by age seven. Transformations in systems and policies, environmental awareness education and the knowledge, attitudes, behaviours, practices and beliefs that young children hold about the environment in their early years are now matters of survival.

Governments must approach climate action in a concerted manner. This is an interconnected problem requiring intersectional approaches. The complexity of the challenge necessitates the mobilization of every sector.

In Canada's early learning and care sector, parallel with well-established quality criteria within early childhood education programs, principles and standards of practice should incorporate aspects of the built environment that include green spaces, climate sustainability and Indigenous partnerships and collaboration.

#### More than sustainable buildings

Some researchers based in the United States are looking at examples in Canada as positive models for both our investments in child care and approaching expansion in a sustainable way.

For example, British Columbia is making steps forward. A recent report by the Coalition of Child Care Advocates of B.C. demonstrates five ways the early learning sector and climate change policy can intersect:

Protect children's environmental health: pay attention to where programs are built as much as how they are built.

Improve buildings: new builds should be sustainable, net-zero and climate resilient; child care capital plans should include funds for Indigenous-led program facilities.

Reduce transportation emissions: when child care is embedded in schools, parents spend less time in cars travelling to pick up their children in various places.

Power the clean economy: embed climate goals in all public investments, including child care.

Help families engage: adding sustainability and climate responsibility to curriculum and engaging families not only helps the next generation, but supports behaviour change today.

These issues should have our anxious concern. Whether we are parents, scholars, educators, members of governments or the community large, if we are all not champions for climate change, we are hindering progress and part of the problem. Canada's \$27-billion child-care investment should not be another missed opportunity.*The Conversation*

Emis Akbari, Adjunct Professor, Department of Applied Psychology and Human Development at Ontario Institute for the Study of Education (OISE) and Senior Policy Fellow at the Atkinson Centre, University of Toronto and Isabelle Vinet, Lecturer, Early Childhood Development, Université du Québec à Montréal.

## BUSINESS MIRROR

### **DOE bares details of winning green energy auction bidders**

By: Lenie Lectura

THE Department of Energy (DOE) has released over the weekend the bid details of the winning bidders that participated in the country's first green energy auction (GEA) held last month.

"The advisory is being issued to reflect other details of the winning bids which are the offered price, committed delivery rate and timestamp when the bid was submitted electronically," DOE Officer-in-Charge Donato Marcos said in an advisory posted on the agency's website over the weekend.

The GEA Reserve (GEAR) prices for the first round of auction should not go beyond P3.6779 per kilowatt-hour for solar, P6.0584 per kWh for wind, P5.0797 per kWh for biomass, and P5.4913 per kWh for run-of-river. The price cap for each renewable energy (RE) technology was determined by the Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC).

"In the determination of a representative project and the computation of the GEAR prices, the commission was guided by the principal of efficiency and international benchmarks to ensure that only the cost of efficient plants will be passed on to consumers," the ERC said.

The offer price of Amihan Renewable Energy Corp., for 70megawatts (MW) of capacity turned out to be the lowest among the wind power projects at P3.8583 per kilowatt hour (kWh). Amihan is 80 percent owned by ACEN Corp. of the Ayala Group.

Solar Philippines Calatagan Corp.'s price offer of P4.1998 per kWh is the second lowest. It will offer 30MW.

Another ACEN subsidiary, Bayog Wind Power Corp., offered 160MW for P4.4386 per kWh.

CleanTech Global Renewables, Inc., meanwhile, offered 100.8MW for P4.6368 per kWh.

Petrowind Energy, Inc.'s 13.2MW offered capacity has a corresponding offer price of P5.755 per kWh.

#### Solar

For solar, PAVI Green Renewable Energy Inc., the wholly-owned subsidiary of Prime Asset Ventures, Inc. (PAVI), the investment holding company founded by Paolo Villar, offered the lowest at P3.4 per kWh.

Greenergy Solutions Inc.'s offer price of P3.41 per kWh is the second lowest, followed by the P3.67 per kWh offer prices of Solar Philippines Commercial Rooftop Projects, Inc. and Solar Philippines Nueva Ecija Corp. in Luzon.

Solar Philippines Visayas Corp. offered P3.6779 per kWh for its 300MW capacity in Visayas. The same price was offered by Solar Philippines Commercial Rooftop Projects, Inc. for its 120MW project in Mindanao.

The lowest price offer for hydro came from Cordillera Hydroelectric Power Corp. at P5.3876 per kWh, followed by Hedcor, Inc. at P5.4717 per kWh.

Philnewriver Power Corp. offered P5.49 per kWh for its four projects in Mindanao.

Cotabato Sugar Central Company, Inc. offered P5.07 per kWh for its biomass project in Mindanao.

The DOE said that the success of this competitive process will set the benchmark for the future auction rounds, as the resulting Green Energy Tariff (GET) will reflect the value of electricity.

The GEA Program will also provide substantial support to the Mandated Participants of the Renewable Portfolio Standards (RPS) Program to ensure compliance with their minimum RPS requirements, since the GEAP is perceived to trigger the increase of RE capacity in the country, which will help the government attain its energy transition goals.

RE developers who were not able to participate in the auction may still join the succeeding rounds.

## **Major nations lag in acting on climate-fighting goals**

By: Seth Borenstein

Washington—For most of the major carbon-polluting nations, promising to fight climate change is a lot easier than actually doing it. In the United States, President Joe Biden has learned that the hard way.

Among the 10 biggest carbon emitters, only the European Union has enacted policies close to or consistent with international goals of limiting warming to just a few more tenths of a degrees, according to scientists and experts who track climate action in countries.

But Europe, which is broiling through a record-smashing heat wave and hosting climate talks this week, also faces a short-term winter energy crunch, which could cause the continent to backtrack a tad and push other nations into longer, dirtier energy deals, experts said.

"Even if Europe meets all of its climate goals and the rest of us don't, we all lose," said Kate Larsen, head of international energy and climate for the research firm Rhodium Group. Emissions of heat-trapping gases don't stop at national borders, nor does the extreme weather that's being felt throughout the Northern Hemisphere.

"It's a grim outlook. There's no getting away from it, I'm afraid," said climate scientist Bill Hare, CEO of Climate Analytics. His group joined with the New Climate Institute to create the Climate Action Tracker, which analyzes nations' climate targets and policies compared to the goals of the 2015 Paris Agreement.

The tracker describes as "insufficient" the policies and actions of the world's top two carbon polluters, China and the US, as well as Japan, Saudi Arabia and Indonesia. It calls Russia and South Korea's policies "highly insufficient," and Iran comes in as "critically insufficient." Hare says No. 3 emitter India "remains an enigma."

"We are losing ground against ambitious goals" such as keeping global warming to less than 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit) or 1.5 Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) since pre-industrial times, said veteran international climate negotiator Nigel Purvis of Climate Advisers. The world has already warmed 1.1 degrees (2 degrees Fahrenheit) since pre-industrial times.

Seven years ago, when almost all the nations of the world were preparing for what would become the Paris climate agreement, "it was all about ambition and setting ambitious targets," Larsen said. "Now we are transitioning into a new phase that's really about implementation...I don't think the international community knows how to do implementation."

Other nations and the United Nations can pressure countries to set goals, but enacting laws and rules is a tougher sell. While Europe has been successful with "a long history of implementing and ratcheting up existing policies," Larsen said, that's not the case in the United States. The US is on path to cut emissions by 24 percent to 35 percent below 2005 levels by 2030, far shy of the nation's pledge to reduce emissions by 50 percent to 52 percent in that time, according to a new analysis by Rhodium Group.

Biden is running low on options, said Larsen, a report co-author. Congress—specifically key Sen. Joe Manchin of West Virginia—is balking on the president's climate-fighting legislation, and the Supreme Court curbed power plant regulations.

Congressional action “was a big window of opportunity that would have allowed us to be on track to our goal,” Larsen said. A second window is available in “the suite of federal regulations that the Biden administration plans to release.”

“These are the two big deciders of whether the US will meet its target, and one we have largely failed on. So in that sense, it is a big miss because these opportunities don’t come along very often,” she said.

“The US can get close” to reaching its goal, but it’s not close yet, Larsen said. Whether that happens “depends on the next three to 18 months of what the administration does.”

Other nations, particularly China, look at what the US is doing to fight climate change and are reluctant to ratchet up their efforts if America isn’t doing much, Purvis and Hare said.

At the urging of activists and some Democrats, the Biden administration is considering declaring a national emergency because of climate change and using special powers to cut carbon pollution from power plants and vehicles. Calling it an emergency is not enough; what matters is the actions that follow, Purvis said.

Biden could put a moratorium on federal lands and water. He could reinstate a ban on US oil exports. He could move up spending on wind and solar. But all are subject to a conservative Supreme Court.

“The big question is where can Biden go with executive orders and how convincing is that going to be to other leaders?” Hare said.

Elsewhere in the world, “the Russian energy crisis has definitely been a major setback,” Hare said. It’s a short-term problem for Europe, and it’s even loosened some of their rules, but “their long-term policy framework is very robust, and this might help them double down on alternative energy,” Larsen said.

But the panic over natural gas has other countries, specifically in Africa, jumping onto the bandwagon of liquefied natural gas, which still emits carbon. The pivot to LNG has added 15 percent to 20 percent to the amount that the world uses, Hare said.

While there is a risk Europe might add infrastructure for natural gas that will be hard to abandon, it looks like the Russian invasion of Ukraine strengthened Europe’s resolve to reduce Russia’s energy influence and get off fossil fuels, Purvis said.

There are other places where weaning the world off carbon looks more possible. A new report from the International Renewable Energy Agency found the cost of electricity last year from onshore wind fell by 15 percent, offshore wind by 13 percent and solar panels by 13 percent compared to 2020.

Meanwhile, electric vehicle sales in America are rising, and the time when they could hit “escape velocity” and really make a difference is on the horizon, Larsen said.

## CBS NEWS

### **Heat waves are hitting around the globe. Scientists say climate change is making them more frequent**

By Allison Elyse Gualtieri, Alex Sundby

As much of the nation swelters under temperatures that have canceled outdoor sports, sparked wildfires and taxed the infrastructure keeping people cool, experts warn that heat waves will only get more common. Heat waves are just one of the types of extreme weather climate change becoming more frequent — but it's already led to deaths both in the U.S. and around the world this year.

"This is the climate change that we've been promised by scientists," Michal Nachmany, founder of Climate Policy Radar, told CBS News foreign correspondent Ramy Inocencio about record-breaking temperatures in the U.K. this week. "This level of extreme weather is life-threatening, and we really want to make sure that people are not under any illusion, that this is serious and this is here to stay for the foreseeable future," Nachmany said. In Phoenix, for example, heat kills as many people as homicides, David Hondula, the city's director of heat response and mitigation, told CBS News' Ben Tracy.

Climate scientist Daniel Swain, who writes about weather in the Western U.S. on his website, pointed out last week that what he called "a prolonged and locally intense heatwave across all of western North America in the coming weeks" is "the least extreme such event currently ongoing across multiple continents," including Europe and China.

The Associated Press reports that heat waves in China earlier this month — specifically in the Zhejiang province, east of Shanghai — saw temperatures exceeding 42 degrees Celsius (up to 107 degrees Fahrenheit). The heat also hospitalized people in the Henan, Sichuan and Heilongjiang provinces. The human toll of heat this year is rising both around the world and closer to home. In North Texas, where firefighters battled 780% more blazes in July compared with last year — and officials said a 66-year-old woman died from heat-related causes this week — La Niña is helping drive drought conditions and high heat.

"We have a pretty significant drought all across north and central Texas. This drought caused us to go into summer much earlier than we normally see," Sarah Barnes, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service office in Fort Worth, Texas, told CBS News' Kris Van Cleave. Those drought conditions prompt more hot temperatures, the NWS said. "We're certainly seeing more extreme weather due to climate change," Barnes added. While air conditioning is one of the best ways to stay cool, it isn't common everywhere. And when the power goes out, air conditioning goes out with it.

"There's been a doubling in the number of blackouts per year in the last five years, and the majority of the blackouts are happening in the summer, in warm weather," Brian Stone, a professor at the Georgia Institute of Technology who studies urban climate change, told CBS Moneywatch earlier this year. In Texas, the electrical grid has already been taxed by extreme temperatures this summer — and officials in other states warn their power infrastructure could be as well.

"Most summers these days are the hottest summer ever. What overlays that is just a creeping risk of antiquated infrastructure ... and those trends are converging at the wrong time," Stone said. This week the U.K. saw a record 40 degrees Celsius, or about 104 Fahrenheit — 30 degrees hotter than typical summer temperatures in a country where less than 5% of homes were

estimated to have air conditioning, CBS News foreign correspondent Roxana Saberi reports. "Climate change has everything to do with the extreme weather that we're seeing at the moment, and it's human-induced climate change. It's not a natural variation," Kirsty McCabe, a meteorologist at the U.K.'s Royal Meteorological Society, told CBS News correspondent Roxana Saberi. The extreme heat has contributed to wildfires in the U.K. and across Europe – including in France, Spain, Italy, Greece and Portugal. "We used to look at polar bears, and then we used to say, 'This is about our children and our grandchildren.'" Nachmany said. "This isn't. This is us. This is here. This is now."

CNN

**Supreme Court's climate change ruling complicates the push for sweeping student debt cancellation**

By: Katie Lobosco and Tierny Sneed

Washington (CNN) A recent Supreme Court decision that limits the Environmental Protection Agency's ability to fight the climate crisis could also hamstring President Joe Biden's authority to cancel federal student loan debt.

Facing political pressure from the left, Biden has been weighing whether to take executive action to broadly forgive a portion of the balances for 43 million people with outstanding federal student loan debt.

His decision is widely expected to come soon as student loan payments are set to resume in September after a yearslong pandemic-related pause. Biden told reporters on Wednesday that "the end of August" remains his timeline for making a decision on whether to take action.

But the Supreme Court's June ruling in *West Virginia v. Environmental Protection Agency*, which curbed the agency's authority to set certain climate change regulations, could now add another factor to the Biden administration's decision-making process.

The court's decision in the EPA case, along with other recent rulings that limited the federal government's power to implement an eviction moratorium and mandate Covid-19 vaccinations, signal that the current Supreme Court may be inclined to constrain the Department of Education's authority to make significant policy changes if its power to do so is not explicitly laid out by Congress.

"Really what the Supreme Court is limiting here is creative, broad interpretations of statute," said Nathan Arnold, a senior policy advisor at EducationCounsel, a consulting firm in Washington, DC. He previously worked for eight years at the Department of Education under both the Obama and Trump administrations, serving as chief of staff to the acting under secretary and senior policy advisor in the Office of Postsecondary Education.

Arnold said he thinks the recent Supreme Court decision in the EPA case makes clear that federal agencies "have a new hurdle to clear" before taking certain actions.

"I would not be surprised if this decision is impacting their calculus on the question of loan forgiveness," Arnold added, referring to the Biden administration's lawyers.

The White House referred CNN to the Department of Education for comment. A spokesperson there issued a statement that said the department's review of broad-based debt cancellation is ongoing, noting that under Biden the department has approved more than \$26 billion in targeted cancellation for more than 1.3 million borrowers -- many of whom were defrauded by for-profit colleges.

Recent Supreme Court decisions rule against aggressive agency actions

In the recent EPA case, the Supreme Court was considering an Obama-era climate rule (never adopted by the Biden administration) that relied on a 1970 provision of the Clean Air Act. The conservative majority said the rule exceeded the authority given to the EPA under the law, with the court explicitly citing what's known as the "major questions doctrine."

In previous cases this term, the Supreme Court's conservative majority rejected agency claims of regulatory authority because, in the court's view, it concerned an issue of vast economic and

political significance -- and the justices concluded that Congress had not clearly empowered the agency with that sweeping authority over the issue.

Never had the Supreme Court so forthrightly wielded the major questions doctrine as it did in this year's climate change case, citing it by name for the first time in a formal majority opinion.

Writing for the 6-3 majority, Chief Justice John Roberts described the doctrine as having "developed over a series of significant cases all addressing a particular and recurring problem: agencies asserting highly consequential power beyond what Congress could reasonably be understood to have granted."

Previously, in a case where the court blocked the administration's eviction moratorium, the court wrote in August: "We expect Congress to speak clearly when authorizing an agency to exercise powers of vast 'economic and political significance.'" (The three liberal justices dissented from the unsigned order.)

The court used similar language in January, when the conservative bloc ruled against the Biden administration's vaccine mandate for large employers.

#### What the law says about canceling student loan debt

An executive action directing the education secretary to broadly cancel federal student loan debt would be unprecedented -- and therefore, questions about whether Congress has clearly given the executive branch authority to do so has yet to be tested in court.

Biden initially urged Congress to take action to cancel student debt, rather than wade into a murky legal area himself. But Democrats likely don't have the votes to pass a bill canceling student debt in the Senate despite support from key party members including Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer and Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren.

Last year, Biden directed lawyers at the Departments of Education and Justice to evaluate whether he does, in fact, have the power to broadly cancel federal student loan debt. The administration has not disclosed those findings.

Some lawyers argue that the power was given to the Department of Education by Congress in a law known as the Higher Education Act. A memo sent to Warren in September 2020 from lawyers at Harvard University's Legal Services Center and its Project on Predatory Student Lending argued that the law gives the education secretary the authority to cancel debt owed under federal student loan programs.

The law mentions that the secretary of education has the power to "compromise," "waive" and "modif(y)" federal student loan debt.

But if the major questions doctrine comes into play, courts may find that if Congress had intended for the authority to be used in such a sweeping manner as to broadly cancel student loan debt, it would have said so more clearly in the statute.

Two of the authors of the memo sent to Warren were not available for comment for this story. The third author, Toby Merrill, has since joined the Department of Education as deputy general counsel and referred CNN to the department's spokesperson.

Luke Herrine, an assistant law professor at the University of Alabama who previously worked on legal strategy pushing for student debt cancellation, also said he believes that Congress has given the Department of Education "multiple powers to cancel student debt."

But given the recent Supreme Court decisions, Herrine could see the current justices striking down an executive action to broadly do so. Traditionally the courts have deferred to the federal agency when issues arise concerning an ambiguous statute. But there has been a shift.

"To me, the courts are basically saying, 'We're going to have the first say,'" Herrine said. Another factor that may come into play is that the Department of Education has only very narrowly used the power to cancel student debt to date. It almost never used the power until the Obama administration faced pressure from activists like the Debt Collective -- where Herrine previously worked -- to cancel the debt of borrowers who were defrauded by for-profit colleges, under a rule known as borrower defense to repayment.

The number of claims filed under the borrower defense rule grew after big for-profit chains like Corinthian Colleges and ITT Tech collapsed -- though many of those borrowers are still waiting for the Department of Education to process their claims after a backlog built up during the Trump administration.

Biden has accelerated processing those claims and, as of earlier this month, has canceled about \$8 billion for those borrowers.

#### A long road to the Supreme Court

Even if Biden decides to broadly cancel federal student debt, that doesn't mean a lawsuit would be filed or that the case would eventually make it to the Supreme Court.

First, it's unclear who would have standing to bring a case, a procedural threshold requiring that an injury had been inflicted on a plaintiff justifying the lawsuit. It's unlikely to be a borrower who didn't qualify for forgiveness, but could potentially be a student loan servicer or collection agency, according to Arnold, who also said that typically anyone who would lose money as a direct result of the cancellation could have standing.

If the standing hurdle is cleared, the case would be heard by a district court first -- which may or may not issue a preliminary injunction to prevent the cancellation from occurring before a final ruling is issued on the merits of the hypothetical case.

The proceedings would likely then travel to an appeals court, which might give the ultimate word, given the small portion of cases the Supreme Court takes up.

But if the Biden administration cancels student debt with an executive action and that move is challenged, lower court judges will be looking at what the Supreme Court has said in its prior cases touching on agency power when assessing the Department of Education's authority.

## **DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE**

### **VOTE: What do you want to hear from President Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos, Jr.’s first State of the Nation Address (SONA)?**

President Marcos has invited all Filipinos to watch his Address later today as he unveils the administration’s plans and goals for the next six years.

“Samahan niyo po ako at pakinggan ang estado ng ating bansa at ang mga plano at mithiin natin bilang isang sambayanan para sa mga susunod na taon” the President said. #DidYouKnow? According to the Official Gazette, the SONA is a constitutional obligation, required under Article VII, Section 23 of the 1987 Constitution:

“[T]he President shall address the Congress at the opening of its regular session.” To receive on-the-go updates on the Philippine economy, JOIN the DOF Viber community:

<https://vb.me/dofcommunity> #DOFUpdates #SONA

## MALAYA BUSINESS INSIGHT

### **Connectivity a priority**

By: Myla Iglesias

The Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) will prioritize the implementation of ongoing projects, particularly unfinished bridges and critical infrastructure that will address traffic congestion and promote interregional connection, according to DPWH Secretary Manuel Bonoan.

In his speech at the District Engineers League of the Philippines national midyear convention last Friday, Bonoan highlighted orders from President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. and identified some of the policies that he will be implementing in DPWH for the next six years.

"We will put priority on projects that would contribute to the immediate turnaround of our economic recovery, and this means focusing on ongoing projects that are very vital in transportation continuity," said Bonoan.

Bonoan added he does not intend to micromanage the agency but expects every official and employee to work in unity and ensure that projects are implemented prudently and at the earliest possible time.

He said he also wants improvements in yearly disbursement, as he urged district engineers to be realistic in putting up budget that is doable within a year.

Among the major bridge projects of the previous administration that will continue to be implemented by the new administration are the Panguil Bay Bridge, Samal Island-Davao City Connector Bridge and three Metro Manila bridge projects.

Other projects include the Arterial Road Bypass Phase III, Surallah-T'Boli-San Jose Road, Samar Pacific Coastal Road, Cagayan de Oro Coastal Road and Integrated Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change adaptation measures in the low-lying areas of Pampanga Bay.

DPWH will also pursue the Pasig-Marikina River channel improvement project, Phase V; Flood Risk Improvement and Management Project-Cagayan De Oro River; Bacolod-Negros Occidental Economic Highway; Improving Growth Corridors in Mindanao road sector project; emergency assistance for reconstruction and recovery of Marawi; Davao City Bypass construction, Davao City Coastal Road, including Bucana Bridge; and road network development projects in conflict affected areas in Mindanao.

## **MANILA BULLETIN**

### **Odette, six months on**

By: Carol Malasig

The embassy of Spain, Instituto Cervantes, AECID, and UN-OCHA collaborate on an exhibit that sounds alarm bells on climate change

As most of Western Europe grapples with a heatwave, the Philippines remembers yet another typhoon that ravaged our islands. While they are not really identical phenomena, as one brings extreme warmth while the other one carries an excess of rain and destructive winds, both are symptoms of a planet that just keeps getting warmer and warmer. Living in a tropical country, Filipinos are used to typhoons but that doesn't mean we're ready for them to get stronger, more damaging, especially as an average of 20 typhoons visit the Philippines every year.

A photo exhibition opened this week at the Instituto Cervantes in Manila, showing the devastation and the response to Typhoon Odette (international name: Rai) after it ravaged 11 of the country's 17 regions close to Christmas in 2021. Siargao, one of the country's best surfing spots, whose inhabitants are known to lead an eco-friendly way of life, was flattened. Fifteen people died on the island alone, leaving families in a state of sadness and shock. Their island, after all, wasn't normally in the path of strong typhoons.

The exhibit features a lump of typhoon debris on the gallery floor, a mix of destroyed vegetation and human possessions one can easily lose during such a calamity. A sleeping mat, thick tree branches, and someone's personal belongings are strewn on the floor. It gives the uncomfortable feeling of guilt and worry over who will have to clean up after such damage. How does one rebuild?

Yet rebuild, Filipinos must. Every single time. This, despite being a country that has one of the lowest carbon emissions per capita.

Hosted by the embassy of Spain, Instituto Cervantes, and Spain's international development arm (AECID) and coordinated by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) on behalf of the humanitarian community, the exhibit runs until Aug. 20, a day after World Humanitarian Day.

UN resident and humanitarian coordinator in the Philippines Gustavo Gonzalez gave an assurance that efforts in the affected areas would continue "to ensure that progress made in the last six months is not rolled back."

So far, shelter assistance has been provided to over 210,000 typhoon-affected households and 66,000 families have received kitchen items, sleeping kits, and lighting items. Over 1.2 million people have also received livelihood support, particularly for agriculture. There's been progress but there's more to be done. More shelter repair kits are needed. Citing a recent UN-OCHA report, Gonzalez shared that damaged homes are still at 2.1 million and 3,000 people are still displaced in five regions.

The exhibit shows photos of disaster response during various stages of relief operations. The photos, arranged like waves on the walls of the gallery, also seem to depict the ebb and flow of the world's attention and the intensity of the response to a ravaged community's needs. Gonzales added that while long-term and sustained recovery will be the focus of support to the government

until the end of the year, the humanitarian community will reinforce measures to strengthen preparedness and build resilience against future calamities.

"As nations continue to address the different impacts of the global pandemic, the reality is several hazards may strike at once," Gonzales said. "The Philippines has already experienced responding to catastrophes in a Covid-19 crisis scenario, amid difficult access to resources due to the war in Ukraine. This is forcing all of us to change the way operations are being conducted."

Instituto Cervantes director Javier Galvan and Ambassador Jorge Moragas of Spain also spoke at the exhibit opening. The event might just be the Spanish ambassador's last official engagement as he ends his tour of duty in the Philippines. He expressed admiration for the collective efforts of the humanitarian community and his hopes for the continued improvement of the situation.

It's been reported that only 100 companies are responsible for 71 percent of global emissions. Some scientists even argue that it's already too late. While systemic change is now the only way we can make a dent in the situation and, with hope, stop a catastrophe, subtle changes in our own lifestyles wouldn't hurt. We must walk the talk by keeping companies and governments accountable while contributing to the efforts ourselves.

## **Battered by climate change, Latin America must brace for worse: report**

By: Agence-France-Presse

Montevideo, Uruguay — Floods, heat waves and the longest drought in 1,000 years: Latin America is grappling with devastating climate change impacts that will only get worse, a World Meteorological Organization report warned Friday.

In its State of the Climate report for Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) for 2021, the WMO said ecosystems, food and water, human health and welfare were all taking a battering.

Glaciers in the tropical Andes have lost more than 30 percent of their area in less than 50 years, increasing the risk of water scarcity in many regions, it said.

Sea levels continued to rise at a faster rate than globally, and the so-called Central Chile Mega Drought — 13 years and running — is the longest in at least 1,000 years.

Meanwhile, deforestation rates “were the highest since 2009, a blow for both the environment and climate change mitigation,” said the report.

Brazilian Amazon deforestation doubled from the 2009-2018 average, with 22 percent more forest area lost in 2021 than the previous year.

The Amazon provides oxygen-producing and carbon-trapping functions that are crucial not only for the region but for the world.

— ‘Decades of progress’ stalled —

The report also documented the third-highest number — 21 — of named storms on record for the 2021 Atlantic hurricane season, and extreme rainfall that caused hundreds of fatalities and destroyed or damaged tens of thousands of homes.

“Increasing sea-level rise and ocean warming are expected to continue to affect coastal livelihoods, tourism, health, food, energy, and water security, particularly in small islands and Central American countries,” said WMO Secretary General Petteri Taalas.

“For many Andean cities, melting glaciers represent the loss of a significant source of freshwater... for domestic use, irrigation and hydroelectric power.”

Worsening climate change, compounded by the impacts of the coronavirus pandemic, have “stalled decades of progress against poverty, food insecurity and the reduction of inequality in the region,” added Mario Cimoli of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean.

In Guatemala, El Salvador and Nicaragua, 7.7 million people experienced high levels of food insecurity in 2021.

The LAC region had registered an average rate of temperature increase of about 0.2 degrees Celsius per decade between 1991 and 2021, said the report — double the 1961-1990 rate.

“Unfortunately, greater impact is in store for the region as both the atmosphere and ocean continue to rapidly change,” said a WMO press release.

"Food and water supplies will be disrupted. Towns and cities and the infrastructure required to sustain them will be increasingly at risk."

The region was in urgent need of early warning systems to help it adapt to climate extremes, said the WMO.

## **MANILA STANDARD**

### **DOE auction program leads to competitive renewable rates**

By Alena Mae S. Flores

The Department of Energy said the Green Energy Auction Program generated competitive rates especially for wind capacities that will redound to the benefit of consumers. Amihan Renewable Energy Corp.'s 70-megawatts Caparispisan II wind project in Pagudpud, Ilocos Norte offered the lowest bid of P3.8583 per kilowatt-hour during the auction held in June.

Its offer was 36 percent lower than the ceiling imposed by the Energy Regulatory Commission at P6.0584 per kWh for wind capacities. Amihan is one of the five winning bidders for wind capacities offered under GEAP. Other winning bidders are Solar Philippines Calatagan Corp. which offered P4.1998 per kWh for its 30-MW Calatagan wind project, Bayog Wind Corp.'s 160-MW wind project in Pagudpud, Ilocos Norte which offered P4.4386 per kWh and CleanTech Global Renewables Inc.'s 100-8 MW Kalayaan 2 wind project with P4.6368 per kWh offer.

Petrowind Energy Inc. offered P5.755 per kWh for its 13.2-MW wind project in Aklan. The wind projects are expected to be completed by 2025. PAVI Green Renewable Energy Inc.'s 40.4-MW PAVI Green Naga solar project in Camarines Sur offered the lowest bid for solar at P3.40 per kWh. Green Energy Solutions Inc.'s 99.98-MW Talugtug solar project in Nueva Ejica followed with P3.41 per kWh.

Solar Philippines Commercial Rooftop Projects Inc. offered P3.67 per kWh for three projects including the 200-MW Concepcion Tarlac 2 solar project, 280-MW Santa Rosa Nueva Ecija 2 solar project and 450-MW Tayabas solar project. Solar Philippines offered P3.6779 per kWh for two other projects including the 300- MW Kananga-Ormoc Solar Power project in the Visayas and the 120-MW General Santos Solar project in Mindanao.

The regulator approved a GEAR rate of P3.6779 per kWh for solar capacities offered under GEAP. Cordillera Hydro Power Corp. offered the lowest bid among the hydro developers with P5.3876 per kWh for its 60-MW Kapangan hydro project. Other winning bidders for hydro projects are Hedcor Inc.'s 20-MW Sablan hydro project in Benguet at P5.4714 per kWh and Philnewriver Power Corp. which offered P5.49 per kWh for its hydro projects in Mindanao including the 3.7-MW Malitbog, 3.7- MW Silo-O, 4.85-MW Mat-I hydro and 6.9-MW Clarin hydro projects.

The ERC set the GEAR rate for run-of-river hydro projects at P5.4913 per kWh. Cotabato Sugar Central Company Inc. offered P5.07 per kWh for its 3.4-MW of biomass capacity in Mindanao, slightly lower than the GEAR rate for biomass of P5.0797 per kWh. 44

## NEW YORK TIMES

### **Climate Change Is Not Negotiable**

The American West has gone bone dry, the Great Salt Lake is vanishing and water levels in Lake Mead and Lake Powell, the two great life-giving reservoirs on the Colorado River basin, are declining with alarming speed. Wildfires are incinerating crops in France, Spain, Portugal and Italy, while parts of Britain suffocated last week in temperatures exceeding 100 degrees Fahrenheit.

Yet the news from Washington was all about the ability of a single United States senator, Joe Manchin, to destroy the centerpiece of President Biden's plans to confront these very problems — roughly \$300 billion in tax credits and subsidies aimed at greatly expanding wind, solar, electric car batteries and other clean energy technologies over the next decade. Had it survived, this would have been the single biggest investment Washington had ever made to combat the ravages of a warming climate.

This was more than another setback for Mr. Biden, who had already seen his climate ambitions threatened by the Supreme Court and rising oil and gas prices.

It undercut American competitiveness in the global race for cleaner fuels and cars, and made a mockery of Mr. Biden's efforts to reclaim the leadership role on climate change that Donald Trump squandered. Mr. Biden made bold promises to America and the world in his early months in office, designed to honor, at long last, America's commitment at the Paris climate summit in 2015 to keep global temperatures from rising 1.5 degrees Celsius above preindustrial levels.

That is the threshold, scientists believe, beyond which wildfires, floods, biodiversity loss, rising seas and human dislocation become significantly more devastating — and just a few tenths of a degree hotter than the world is today.

Reaching that 1.5 number or even staying below two degrees would require a radical transformation of the world's energy systems, replacing fossil fuels with low carbon and ultimately carbon-free energy sources, and doing so not on a leisurely glide path but quickly, cutting greenhouse gas emissions in half by 2030 and effectively zeroing them out by midcentury.

Mr. Biden matched his ambitions to these goals: a 50 to 52 percent cut in American emissions from 2005 levels by 2030, and net zero emissions by 2050. Along the way, he said, he would eliminate fossil fuel emissions from power plants by 2035.

This was anathema to Mr. Manchin, who has strong ties to West Virginia's coal industry and has received generous campaign contributions over the years from oil and gas interests. It must be said that Mr. Manchin was hardly alone in his opposition to Mr. Biden's plans.

His recent prominence owes much to Mitch McConnell and other Senate Republicans, not one of whom stepped forward to support the president or offer a plausible alternative. Had enough Republicans joined with the Democrats to construct a bipartisan climate bill, Mr. Manchin's longstanding, entrenched opposition to necessary action on climate change would have been irrelevant.

Instead, it was decisive. He became a necessary swing vote to get Mr. Biden's program approved in an evenly divided Senate under a process known as budget reconciliation. Without

congressional backing, Mr. Biden has fewer tools to achieve his goals, which now seem out of reach.

His best course is to take the same regulatory path President Barack Obama was forced to follow after the Senate's last colossal climate failure — a cap and trade bill that passed the House in 2009 but died in the Senate the following year. Using his executive authority, Mr. Obama secured big improvements in automobile efficiency and ordered reductions in power plant emissions, which didn't take effect, although the power companies managed to achieve them on their own by burning cleaner natural gas and closing inefficient coal-fired plants.

Major new improvements in the power sector, which still account for about one-quarter of America's greenhouse gas emissions, may be constrained by the recent Supreme Court decision limiting the Environmental Protection Agency's regulatory flexibility, but Mr. Biden could devise a more modest and legally acceptable rule.

He can and must push forward with new rules he has already ordered up to control emissions of methane, a potent greenhouse gas, as well as a suite of new mileage standards for cars and light trucks that would compel automakers to double down on their efforts to sell all-electric vehicles. The Interior Department can also continue its efforts to promote wind and solar power, which were jump-started under Mr. Obama's interior secretary, Sally Jewell.

Mr. Biden embraced this course in a speech on Wednesday in Massachusetts. The president and his interior secretary, Deb Haaland, could help further by bringing clarity to the administration's policies on oil and gas drilling, which right now are confusing. Mr. Biden pledged in his campaign to halt new oil and gas leasing on federal lands, which is a significant cause of greenhouse gas emissions.

That promise seems long ago and far away. Interior's recent five-year offshore drilling plan opens the possibility of leasing in parts of the Gulf of Mexico, while a recent environmental impact statement does not foreclose, as environmentalists had hoped, the Willow Project, ConocoPhillips's proposed development of oil and gas resources in the fragile Western Arctic.

## PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

### **Marcos faces crucial nature, climate challenges**

By: Catherine Custodio

If the state of the Philippine environment was a movie, we could already see that the ending will be tragic. As President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. has taken the helm, he now has the job of driving the government's effort to change that grim ending.

The challenge of this decade is in addressing the “twin missiles” of nature loss and climate change that has our country in its crosshairs. This matters to us because our country is extraordinarily vulnerable. Our geography and demography make it so.

Our country is an archipelago on the typhoon belt with many people living along the coasts. We are one of the top 17 most mega-diverse countries and the center of the Coral Triangle. We also have a large and young population and a high incidence of poverty and inequality.

The signs of nature loss and climate change are all around, but it seems more and more people are no longer alarmed about species going extinct, deforestation, decreasing fish catch, water scarcity, plastics in the food chain, and all the effects these have on us.

Even the increasing number of intense typhoons that hit us every year is becoming unsurprising. Instead of becoming callous to these tragedies, we need to fight any growing indifference or distraction, and we must not accept defeat because our shared future is at stake.

There are a few opportunities I would like to share from the perspective of the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)-Philippines, having worked in partnership with the government, the business and nongovernment organization sectors, and ordinary Filipinos concerned about our shared future.

During former president Rodrigo Duterte’s term, our country made an ambitious pledge to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 75 percent by 2030 to meet the target of keeping the rise in global temperatures to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

Other government commitments made at the United Nations Climate Change Conference in 2021 were about ending deforestation by 2030, engaging farmers and fishers in sustainable production action projects, and implementing policies for a circular economy.

The Philippine government was a strong voice at the UN Environment Assembly earlier in 2022, supporting the call for a global treaty to end plastic pollution. Our government supports the 30x30 Campaign for Nature, pledging to protect 30 percent of our land and sea by 2030 under the UN Convention on Biological Diversity.

These are all laudable commitments that have the potential for a huge positive impact for generations to come, but only if the Marcos administration sees these through to implementation.

Mr. Marcos heading the Department of Agriculture (DA) is an opportunity for him to work with the best technical experts, the business sector, and the farmers and fishers themselves. Our food systems are where issues of environment, finance and economy, health, innovation, social justice, and local governance all play out.

We hope his handling of the DA will open the doors to more holistic solutions that will make our agriculture and fisheries systems more productive, sustainable, inclusive, just, and able to deliver Mr. Marcos' campaign promise of providing the food our population needs.

We urgently call for better integration across government agencies in addressing these issues so that resources will go a long way and initiatives will not undermine each other.

Lastly, we strongly hope that Mr. Marcos will demonstrate courage in working with all sectors, prioritizing the most marginalized, and adopting the view that nature in the Philippines is a source of pride and national identity, and is what sustains present and future generations of Filipinos.

We have already learned hard lessons of the past: causing nature to fail ends in disaster and not development. We all want the Philippines to succeed. Together we must #ChangeTheEnding.

## **Meet the team carrying out Marcos' marching orders**

Grand visions, broad marching orders, major policy shifts — expect these and more as President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. delivers his first State of the Nation Address (SONA) today, Monday July 25

But after the applause has died down and the president's pronouncements have been parsed, praised, or panned, it's up to the select men and women in the new Cabinet to implement the promised reforms and pursue the new targets, and ultimately ensure that the people taste the benefits.

Everyone will have his or her own share of the mammoth challenges faced by the new administration — a pandemic now well past its second year, rising fuel and food prices, the ravages of climate change, the aftershocks of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the perennial gut issues concerning jobs, education, healthcare, etc.

Marcos' selection of department secretaries, bureau chiefs and advisers has so far been dominated by familiar names in government — many of them seasoned veterans of past administrations — including one from that of his own late father. But also in the lineup are achievers crossing over from the corporate world and called to serve in the public sector for the first time.

In no particular order, here's a rundown on the top-tier members of the Marcos team.

### **SARA DUTERTE-CARPIO, Vice President / Education Secretary**

Vice President Sara Duterte, daughter of former President Rodrigo Duterte, was the first woman and the youngest to serve as mayor of Davao City, from 2010 to 2013, and was reelected in 2016 and 2019. She also served as the city's vice mayor from 2007 to 2010.

During her mayoralty from 2016 to 2022, according to her office, more than 3,000 infrastructure projects were completed in Davao City, including 1,424 roads, 51 bridges, 180 school buildings, 63 office buildings, 44 barangay halls, 84 health centers, nine police stations, 748 irrigation and drainage projects, 172 water systems, 11 electrification projects, and 669 other structures.

In June, the Vice President, speaking as concurrent education secretary, said she was "targeting" the resumption of in-person classes nationwide by August. This target was later moved to Nov. 2, although the Department of Education set the opening of the new school year on Aug. 22.

Duterte obtained her Bachelor of Science degree in Respiratory Therapy from San Pedro College – Davao in 1999 and her Bachelor of Laws degree from San Sebastian College – Recoletos in 2005. She is also a reserve military officer with the rank of colonel.

### **MARIA ROSARIO VERGEIRE, officer in charge of the Department of Health (DOH)**

At the early stages of the pandemic, she became the calm and steady voice of the government response. With over two decades of experience in public health, Vergeire became a familiar face on TV as she presided over the regular online briefings on the unprecedented health crisis, at a time when the DOH came under increasing pressure from an anxious public.

Vergeire, who is concurrently the undersecretary for public health services, joined the agency in 2007 after working for over a decade in the Marikina City health office.

She was appointed assistant secretary in 2015 and held top positions in the attached agencies and bureaus, such as the Field Regulatory Operation unit of the Food and Drug Administration, the Health Facilities and Services Regulatory Bureau, and the Health Research Division under the Health Policy Development and Planning Bureau.

Vergeire remains a member of the faculty at the Development Academy of the Philippines and at the Ateneo School of Government.

She earned her undergraduate degree in Zoology from the University of Santo Tomas (UST) and obtained her medical degree from De La Salle University College of Medicine. She has a master's degree in Public Health from the University of the Philippines (UP) – Manila.

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. STORY: Meet the team carrying out Marcos' marching orders President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. held his first press conference after presiding over his first Cabinet meeting during which his economic team gave a briefing about the country's economic outlook at the Malacanang Palace. (File photo by MARIANNE BERMUDEZ / Philippine Daily Inquirer)

MANILA, Philippines — Grand visions, broad marching orders, major policy shifts — expect these and more as President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. delivers his first State of the Nation Address (SONA) today, Monday July 25.

But after the applause has died down and the president's pronouncements have been parsed, praised, or panned, it's up to the select men and women in the new Cabinet to implement the promised reforms and pursue the new targets, and ultimately ensure that the people taste the benefits.

Everyone will have his or her own share of the mammoth challenges faced by the new administration — a pandemic now well past its second year, rising fuel and food prices, the ravages of climate change, the aftershocks of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the perennial gut issues concerning jobs, education, healthcare, etc.

Marcos' selection of department secretaries, bureau chiefs and advisers has so far been dominated by familiar names in government — many of them seasoned veterans of past administrations — including one from that of his own late father. But also in the lineup are achievers crossing over from the corporate world and called to serve in the public sector for the first time.

In no particular order, here's a rundown on the top-tier members of the Marcos team.

SARA DUTERTE-CARPIO, Vice President / Education Secretary

Vice President Sara Duterte, daughter of former President Rodrigo Duterte, was the first woman and the youngest to serve as mayor of Davao City, from 2010 to 2013, and was reelected in 2016 and 2019. She also served as the city's vice mayor from 2007 to 2010.

During her mayoralty from 2016 to 2022, according to her office, more than 3,000 infrastructure projects were completed in Davao City, including 1,424 roads, 51 bridges, 180 school buildings,

63 office buildings, 44 barangay halls, 84 health centers, nine police stations, 748 irrigation and drainage projects, 172 water systems, 11 electrification projects, and 669 other structures.

In June, the Vice President, speaking as concurrent education secretary, said she was “targeting” the resumption of in-person classes nationwide by August. This target was later moved to Nov. 2, although the Department of Education set the opening of the new school year on Aug. 22.

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She earned her undergraduate degree in Zoology from the University of Santo Tomas (UST) and obtained her medical degree from De La Salle University College of Medicine. She has a master's degree in Public Health from the University of the Philippines (UP) – Manila.

#### BENHUR ABALOS, Interior Secretary

Abalos chaired the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) before resigning in February 2022 to become national campaign manager of then presidential candidate Ferdinand Marcos Jr. He was mayor of Mandaluyong City from 1998 to 2004 and from 2007 to 2016, and its congressman from 2004 to 2007. He served as president of the Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines and League of Cities of the Philippines from 2007 to 2010.

Abalos earned his Bachelor of Arts degree in History and Political Science from De La Salle University and his Bachelor of Laws degree from Ateneo de Manila University. He is the son of former Commission on Elections (Comelec) chair and now Mandaluyong Mayor Benjamin Abalos, who also chaired the MMDA from January 2001 to June 2002. Benhur is married to former Mandaluyong mayor and now Vice Mayor Carmelita Aguilar-Abalos.

#### VICTOR RODRIGUEZ, Executive Secretary

A longtime chief of staff and spokesperson for Mr. Marcos, Rodriguez served as managing lawyer of Rodriguez & Partners and was president of the Quezon City Trial Lawyers League. He is also a former deputy general counsel of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines.

Rodriguez obtained his Bachelor of Laws degree from UST, and took up Executive Education under the National University of Singapore's Negotiation and Influence Program.

#### JESUS CRISPIN REMULLA, Justice Secretary

Remulla, who comes from a political clan that has long dominated Cavite, served as the representative of the province's seventh district from 2010 to 2013 and from 2019 to 2022. He was reelected to the House in the May 9 elections but accepted the position to head the Department of Justice.

He was the Cavite governor from 2016 to 2019, succeeding brother Jonvic when he became the spokesperson for former Vice President Jejomar Binay.

He served in the Presidential Management Staff during the short-lived Estrada presidency.

Remulla finished law at UP.

#### ARSENIO BALISACAN, Socioeconomic Planning Secretary

Balisacan was the first chair of the Philippine Competition Commission. Prior to this, he served as socioeconomic planning secretary under the Benigno Aquino III administration from 2012 to 2016. In his capacity as director general of the National Economic and Development Authority (Neda), he served as board chair of the Philippine Institute for Development Studies and as the first board chair of the Philippine Statistics Authority and the Public-Private Partnership Center of the Philippines. He is also a former undersecretary of the Department of Agriculture.

Prior to his Cabinet appointments, Balisacan reported to the World Bank in Washington, DC as an economist, and taught at the UP School of Economics, where he rose to become its dean.

Balisacan obtained his Bachelor of Science degree in Agriculture from the Mariano Marcos State University; his Master of Science degree in Agricultural Economics from UP Los Baños; and his doctorate in Economics from the University of Hawaii at Manoa. He was also a research fellow at East West Center in Honolulu, Hawaii.

#### BIENVENIDO LAGUESMA, Labor Secretary

Laguesma served as labor secretary during the Estrada administration and earlier as presidential assistant to then President Fidel Ramos from 1996 to 1998. He was appointed chair of the Social Security System's audit committee in 2011 and a board member in 2013.

He was also a director and secretary of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines – Quezon City Chapter from 2005 to 2009 and president of the Rotary Club of Manila from 2007 to 2008.

Laguesma obtained his Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science from the Lyceum of the Philippines University and his law degree from Ateneo de Manila University. He also finished an administration course at the Royal Institute of Public Administration in London.

#### SUSAN "TOOTS" OPLE, Migrant Workers Affairs Secretary

A known advocate of migrant workers' rights, she is the daughter of the late Sen. Blas Ople, a longtime labor minister of the late former President Ferdinand Marcos Sr.

Susan Ople was the founder and president of the nonprofit Blas Ople Policy Center and the national coordinator on women workers' education for the International Labor Organization. She served as a labor undersecretary from 2004 to 2009, under the Arroyo administration, and was also named a trustee of the UN Trust Fund for Human Trafficking victims.

Ople took up Communication Arts at the University Santo Tomas and received a master's degree in Public Administration from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.

#### TRIXIE ANGELES, chief of the Presidential Communications Operations Office

Aside from being a vlogger with some 85,000 subscribers on her YouTube channel, lawyer and radio commentator Angeles was also a host of the Karambola program on radio station dwIZ. She was also a former commissioner for cultural heritage at the National Commission for Culture and the Arts and a former spokesperson of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines.

No stranger to the PCOO, she was its "social media strategist" from 2017 to 2018 under the Duterte presidency.

Angeles obtained her Bachelor of Arts degree in Linguistics and law degree from UP.

#### BENJAMIN DIOKNO, Finance Secretary

Under the Duterte presidency, Diokno was appointed Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas governor in March 2019, after three years serving as budget secretary and one of the architects of the "Build, Build, Build" infrastructure program.

In January 2022, he was named the world's Best Central Banker, a first for a Filipino, by the London-based The Banker, an international business, banking, and finance magazine owned by The Financial Times.

A professor emeritus at the UP School of Economics, Diokno was also the budget secretary during the Estrada administration.

Diokno obtained his bachelor's degree in Public Administration and master's degree in Public Administration and Economics from UP, and his Master of Arts degree in Political Economy from Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland. He also holds a doctorate degree in Economics from the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs in Syracuse University, New York.

#### ALFREDO PASCUAL, Trade Secretary

Pascual is an international development banker and a finance expert. He served as president and cochair of the UP system between 2011 and 2017.

In December 2021, he was appointed president of the Management Association of the Philippines. At that time, he also served as the lead independent director at SM Investments Corp. and other publicly listed companies such as Megawide Construction and Concepcion Industrial.

His board memberships also include those in nonprofits and other organizations like the Institute of Corporate Directors (ICD), Institute for Solidarity in Asia, Finex Academy, UP Foundation,

Philippine Council for Foreign Relations and the US-Philippines Society. He was also ICD's president and CEO from 2018 to 2019.

Pascual obtained his bachelor's degree in Chemistry from UP and his master's degree in Business Administration and Doctor of Humanities from the Partido State University. He also has a doctorate of pedagogy from the Angeles University Foundation and an honorary degree as Doctor of Sciences from the Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Maynila.

#### FELIPE MEDALLA, Governor of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas

An economist and educator, Medalla has served under four presidents. He was a member of the Monetary Board under then President Benigno Aquino III, and was appointed to a second term in 2017 by then President Rodrigo Duterte. Earlier Medalla was the socioeconomic planning secretary and director general of the National Economic and Development Authority (Neda) from 1998 to 2001 during the Estrada administration. During the Ramos years, he became a member of the Presidential Task Force on Tax and Tariff Reform.

Medalla was a professor at the UP School of Economics, where he was also the dean from 1994 to 1998.

He became president of the Philippine Economic Society in 1996 and also chaired the Foundation for Economic Freedom, a nongovernmental organization engaged in public advocacy for fiscal reforms and market-friendly government policies.

Medalla obtained his Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science degrees in Commerce (Economics-Accounting) from De La Salle University and his masters degree in Economics also from UP. He holds a doctorate in Economics from Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois.

#### MANUEL BONOAN, Public Works Secretary

SMC Tollways president and chief executive officer Bonoan served as undersecretary for the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) during the Estrada and Arroyo administrations and was briefly the DPWH officer in charge in 2007. An engineer by profession, he also served as president of Skyway O&M Corp.

#### ANTON LAGDAMEO JR., Special Assistant to the President

Former Davao del Norte Lagdameo Jr. comes from one of the wealthiest families in Mindanao — the Floirendos. He had worked as a credit analyst for Manufacturers Hanover Trust bank in Manhattan, New York, from 1989 to 1992 and later for National Westminster Bank also in New York for a year.

He became a director at Cambrick Trading Ltd. in London from 1993 to 1996. After these professional stints abroad, he returned to the Philippines and became vice president at Anflo Management & Investment Corp. in Davao, a position he held from 1996 to 2007.

Entering politics, he served as congressman of Davao del Norte's second district from 2007 to 2016. He became a member of the House committees on agrarian reform, ecology, legislative franchises, Mindanao affairs, accounts; and of the joint congressional oversight committee on the Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines.

He obtained his bachelor's degree in Business Administration from Wharton School in the University of Pennsylvania and his master's degree in Business Economics from the University of Asia and the Pacific.

#### MARIA ZENAIDA ANGPING, head of the Presidential Management Staff

Angping was elected as representative of Manila's third district for nine years and served as technical assistant at the Office of the Governor of Leyte and executive assistant to Ambassador Benjamin Romualdez. She was also a member of the transition team assembled by then President-elect Marcos to help oversee the smooth transfer of power from the Duterte administration.

Angping is married to former Manila congressman and Philippine Sports Commission chair Harry Angping.

#### IVAN JOHN ENRILE UY, Information and Communications Secretary

Uy was the former chair of the Commission on Information and Communications Technology during the Benigno Aquino III administration. A lawyer, he also served as chief information officer and director of the Management Information Systems Office of the Supreme Court.

Uy obtained his Bachelor of Laws degree from UP, his baccalaureate degree from Ateneo de Manila University, and took up advanced studies at the University of Minnesota.

#### ENRIQUE MANALO, Foreign Secretary

Manalo, who comes from a family of diplomats, has built a career in the foreign service spanning more than 40 years.

Prior to his latest appointment as head of the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Manalo served as the country's Permanent Representative to the United Nations beginning July 2020. Before assuming that post in New York, he was the foreign undersecretary for policy, a position he held from 2007 to 2010, under the Aquino administration.

Manalo was designated acting secretary of the DFA in March 2017 after the Commission on Appointments rejected the nomination of Perfecto Yasay as secretary.

Before he was named undersecretary for policy in early 2016, he was the ambassador to the United Kingdom and nonresident ambassador to Ireland, Belgium, and Luxembourg.

He was also the head of mission to the European Union and permanent representative to the Philippine mission to the UN and Other International Organizations in Geneva.

Manalo is the son of the late writer-diplomat Armando Manalo and former ambassador Rosario Manalo, the first Filipino woman to pass the country's career foreign service examinations.

#### MA. ESPERANZA CHRISTINA FRASCO, Tourism Secretary

Frasco won a third term as mayor of Liloan town, Cebu, in the May 9 elections. During the last campaign season, she also served as spokesperson for then vice presidential candidate Sara Duterte.

From 2019 to 2022, she held the post of vice president for the Visayas cluster of the League of Municipalities of the Philippines.

A lawyer, professor and businesswoman, she holds a Juris Doctor degree and Bachelor of Science degree in Management, Major in Legal Management, from Ateneo de Manila University.

Frasco is the daughter of Cebu Gov. Gwendolyn Garcia and the wife of the province's fifth district representative, Vincent Franco Frasco.

#### AMENAH PANGANDAMAN, Budget Secretary

Pangandaman served as BSP assistant governor and chief of staff from 2021 to 2022. From being Technical Advisor III, she rose through the BSP ranks and became managing director of the Office of the Governor and Executive Offices in 2019.

Earlier in her career, she worked in the Senate as a researcher and later headed the Policy Research Group of the office of Sen. Edgardo Angara. She later became Angara's chief of staff in 2007.

She joined the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) under the Office of the Secretary, and was one of its assistant secretaries from 2016 to 2018. She was appointed undersecretary and concurrent director of the Budget Technical Bureau in 2018.

Pangandaman was one of the prime movers in the preparation, implementation, and monitoring of the General Appropriations Act and oversaw the implementation of the "Green, Green, Green" initiative during the Duterte presidency.

She holds a bachelor's degree in Economics from Far Eastern University and a Master of Arts degree in Development Economics from UP.

#### ERWIN TULFO, Social Welfare and Development Secretary

Tulfo is a well-known journalist, broadcaster, and TV and radio host. He was a broadcaster for the government media channel People's Television Network and previously worked as a news anchor for TV5 and ABS-CBN.

He also hosted shows created by his brother, Ben, who owned Bitag Media Unlimited Inc., a company known for producing hard-hitting public service programs.

Tulfo also supported the Anti-Crime and Terrorism Community Involvement and Support Inc. (ACT-CIS), one of the front-running party list groups in the May 9 elections.

He earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration (Special Degree Program) from the University of the East.

#### CLARITA CARLOS, National Security Adviser

Carlos is a retired UP political science professor and the recognized pioneer of political psychology in the Philippines.

Outside teaching, she has authored books and papers on political parties, elections, defense and security, and foreign policy.

Carlos was also the first female civilian president of the National Defense College of the Philippines, serving from 1998 to 2001.

She became a consultant to various government departments, including the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process, and both chambers of Congress. She also concurrently served as head of the Office of Strategic and Special Concerns of the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) and director at the Philippine National Red Cross from 2001 to 2006.

Carlos has a doctorate in Political Science from UP, a postdoctoral degree in Political Psychology from Cornell University, and a postdoctoral degree in Comparative Foreign Policy Analysis from the University of California.

#### **CONRADO ESTRELLA III, Agrarian Reform Secretary**

Estrella was one of the House Deputy Speakers of the recently adjourned 18th Congress.

He was first elected to Congress as representative of Pangasinan's sixth district from 1987 to 1995, and was reelected to serve successive terms from 2001 to 2010. In 2013, he returned to the House as Abono party list representative.

As a lawmaker, Estrella authored several bills that eventually led to the passage of the Organic Agriculture Act of 2010 and the National Internal Revenue Code of 1997.

Estrella also served as chief of the National Electrification Administration.

He is the grandson of Conrado Estrella Sr., the first agrarian reform secretary to serve for a decade and a half, and a brother to Robert Raymond, a former representative of Abono party list.

#### **RICARDO DE LEON, Director General of the National Intelligence Coordinating Agency (Nica)**

De Leon was a former Philippine National Police deputy director and former president of the Philippine Public Safety College's board of trustees.

He was a member of the "Matatag" Class of 1971 at the Philippine Military Academy.

#### **LILIA GUILLERMO, Internal Revenue Commissioner**

Guillermo was a former budget undersecretary and former deputy commissioner of the Bureau of Internal Revenue before she was appointed chief information officer of the BSP, where she oversaw most of the steps toward the modernization of the central bank's infotech systems under a roadmap set for completion in 2023.

She served three terms as president of the Chief Information Officers (CIO) Forum, an organization of all CIOs in government.

She was also part of the Automated Election System team for the 2010 elections and was cited for the successful implementation of the Philippines Tax Computerization Project, which upgraded the collection systems of the BIR and the Bureau of Customs.

Among the honors she has received is the 2019 Presidential Gawad Career Executive Service Award and the BSP Gawad Gantimpala Award. In 2003, she was named by Enterprise Magazine as one of the 11 “most powerful women in information technology in the Philippines.”

Guillermo earned a Bachelor of Science degree, Major in Statistics, in 1977 and a master's degree in Industrial Engineering in 1981, both from UP.

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. STORY: Meet the team carrying out Marcos' marching orders  
President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. held his first press conference after presiding over his first Cabinet meeting during which his economic team gave a briefing about the country's economic outlook at the Malacanang Palace

## **New US envoy to PH assures Marcos on defense, clean energy**

By: Marlon Ramos and Nestor Corrales

Newly designated US Ambassador to the Philippines MaryKay Loss Carlson on Friday assured President Marcos of Washington's continued support in safeguarding the country's territory, facilitating fresh investments and developing clean energy.

"Our alliance is a bedrock of our bond, and our Mutual Defense Treaty (MDT) and other agreements are at the heart of our commitment to help defend the Philippines' sovereignty and independence," Carlson said in remarks following her presentation of credentials to Marcos in Malacañang.

"The United States is committed to partnering with you and your team as you move ahead," the diplomat added. "As you act to ensure the security, prosperity and freedoms of the (Filipinos), we are here to help and invested in your success."

She recalled that US President Joe Biden also reiterated Washington's "deep and enduring" support "as friend, ally and partner" when the American leader phoned Marcos a day after the May 9 elections.

Philippine Ambassador to the United States Jose Manuel Romualdez said Marcos and Carlson had a 45-minute meeting at the Palace after the presentation. 'More trade, not aid' In a Viber message, Romualdez said the President thanked Carlson for the COVID-19 vaccines donated by the United States.

The donations stood at 29.3 million doses as of end-February. "The President expressed his appreciation to the United States in helping the Philippines with the vaccines and that our long historical ties will take us to the future of our strong relationship," Romualdez said.

Marcos, he noted, also wanted to have "more trade, not aid, from the US." Carlson's designation came at a crucial time in Philippine-American relations amid China's increasingly aggressive actions in the West Philippine Sea in continuing disregard of Manila's historic arbitral victory in 2016 that invalidated Beijing's sweeping maritime claims.

**Reliable partner** In her speech at the Palace, the US ambassador said her country would cooperate with the Philippines also to forge new trade deals, protect its marine resources, develop clean energy and address climate change.

## **PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY**

### **1.7 K Novo Ecijanos get jobs from DSWD's cash-for-work program**

By: Zorayda Tecson

City of San Fernando, Pampanga – Over 1,700 indigents in Nueva Ecija have been employed for 10 days under the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) program that helps communities address the effect of climate change.

Under the DSWD's Risk Resiliency Program-Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Disaster Risk Reduction (RRP-CCAM DRR), the beneficiaries were given temporary employment through the cash-for-work scheme.

DSWD-Region 3 (Central Luzon) director Marites Maristela said on Friday the RRP- CCAM DRR program focuses on empowering communities to become disaster-resilient by combating the effects of climate change.

Maristela said the program is implemented through projects anchored on the climate change action plan of the local government units. Among the projects being supported by the DSWD anchored on the climate change action plan of the LGUs include plastic bottle recycling, mangrove reforestation, communal gardening, river banks rehabilitation, among others.

A total of 1,717 individuals from the towns of Jaen, Lupao, Nampicuan, Zaragoza, Llanera, Gen. Mamerto Natividad, and Pantabangan received PHP4,200 each as compensation for their 10-day work for a total of over PHP7.2 million.

"Ang kanilang natanggap ay mula sa mga proyektong communal and backyard gardening ( What they received is from the communal and backyard gardening projects)," she said in social media post.

Aside from the payout, Maristela said the knowledge and skills of the beneficiaries on how to deal with the threats of climate change were also enhanced. "The main goal of the program is to enhance the capabilities of each individual and encourage the community to unite to effectively combat climate change," she added.

## **'Build, Build, Build' continues: Building more for better lives**

By Ferdinand Patinio

MANILA – Early on the presidential campaign, then aspirant Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr. vowed to expand the “Build, Build, Build” program, the government’s ambitious infrastructure program

“Palalawakin natin ang ‘Build, Build, Build’ para kahit saan ay may trabahong maaasahan. Kasama dyan ang digital towers, railways, mga tulay at skyways. Mas magkakalapit tayo at bibilis ang sama-sama nating pagbangon (We will expand the “Build, Build, Build” program so we can generate jobs anywhere. This includes digital towers, railways, bridges and skyways. Through this, we will be closer together and we will achieve faster recovery,”) Marcos said in a video campaign posted on his YouTube channel on March 30.

Fast forward to winning the elections and becoming the country’s 17th President, Marcos remains adamant about fulfilling his promise -- embarking on new infrastructure projects while continuing key programs that started under the term of his predecessor Rodrigo Duterte.

“We will continue to build. I will complete on schedule the projects that have been started. I am not interested in taking credit. I want to build on the success that’s already happening. We will be presenting the public with a comprehensive infrastructure plan, six years could be just about enough time,” Marcos said in his inaugural speech on June 30.

He vowed that no part of the country will be neglected.

“Progress will be made wherever there are Filipinos so, no investment is wasted,” he added.

The “Build, Build, Build” program is aimed at achieving a golden age of infrastructure in the Philippines to enhance mobility and connectivity, as well as spurring economic growth.

The Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) earlier said the fundamental objective of the program is to invest adequately in infrastructure to support and sustain the country’s growing economic activities represented by its gross domestic product (GDP).

What has been done

Based on DPWH data as of May this year, “Build, Build, Build” projects provided 6.5 million jobs to Filipinos from 2016 to 2020.

Some completed “Build, Build, Build” projects include the final section of the Tarlac–Pangasinan–La Union Expressway (TPLEX), Plaridel By-Pass Road Phase II, North Luzon Expressway (NLEX) Harbor Link Segment 10 and C3-R10 Section, Skyway Stage 3, and Alabang-Sucat Skyway Extension.

Notable accomplishments for the road sector are the completed road sections of the Central Luzon Link Expressway (CLLEX), Cavite Laguna Expressway, and Manila Cavite Toll Expressway.

The DPWH said the country’s highways and expressways were expanded to pave the way for regional development and eventually decongest highly-urbanized areas.

Three major projects under the Metro Manila Logistics Improvement program were completed -- the Estrella-Pantaleon Bridge, Bonifacio Global City-Ortigas Center Link Road Project, and the Binondo-Intramuros Bridge which opened last April.

The Inter-Island Linkage/Mega Bridge Program will provide linkages among the various islands of the country through the construction of short and long-span bridges.

Under the past administration, 40,080 kilometers (km) of roads were constructed, maintained, widened, upgraded, and rehabilitated, among them 3,101 km of tourism roads; 999 km of completed roads leading to industries and trade corridors; 573 km of access roads that will enhance linkages toward seaports, airports, and railway stations to further augment the logistics, transport, and economic activities in these key transport hubs; and 2,712 km of completed farm-to-market roads (FMRs).

There were 6,854 bridges constructed, widened, upgraded, rehabilitated and strengthened.

#### What lies ahead

To ensure stable food supply amid a global crisis and soaring inflation, Marcos has ordered the prioritization of building FMRs for the easier transport of produce, thus, increasing local trade and productivity while lowering transportation costs.

Marcos, who concurrently sits as Agriculture Secretary, said he wants to come up with an FMR master plan to promote food security and power up rural communities.

In this undertaking, he said the government must prioritize areas with active agricultural production to address supply chain concerns.

He also stressed that agricultural infrastructure projects should be resistant to the adverse effects of climate change which means these should not be easily destroyed by floods, landslides, and other calamities.

The master plan should include regional maps that will identify the exact locations of the farm-to-market roads to be constructed, as well as its funding source, payment terms, and a time frame for project completion.

He also tasked the Department of Agriculture (DA) and DPWH to take charge of the implementation of state-funded FMR projects.

Last July 9, the DPWH announced the construction of a 1.4-km FMR for the farming community of Barangay Balite in Cabanatuan City, Nueva Ecija.

The construction work for the FMR is currently in full swing to meet its target completion date this July.

Once completed, the road will provide a faster and safer route for farmers to transport their fresh produce and farm goods to Nueva Ecija's major markets.

The road project, which is under the implementation of the DPWH Nueva Ecija 2nd District Engineering Office, has a total budget of PHP11.64 million sourced from the General Appropriations Act of 2022.

Last July 22, the DPWH also reported that the 30-km CLLEX is now 96 percent completed.

The DPWH's Unified Project Management Office (UPMO) Operations said the first 18 kilometers of CLLEX from Tarlac Interchange at the connection of Subic-Clark-Tarlac Expressway (SCTEX) and Tarlac-Pangasinan-La Union Expressway (TPLEX) in Balingcanaway, Tarlac City to Guimba-Aliaga Road in Aliaga, Nueva Ecija will be extended with an additional 11 km by March 2023.

These include 7 km up to the San Juan Interchange and 4 km to Umangan-Julo Road at the boundary of Aliaga and Cabanatuan City before Felipe Vergara Road and Daang Maharlika Highway.

"The CLLEX Project will support the country's new vision for improving agricultural productivity under the administration of President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. Using this toll-free high standard highway, palay crops and other products from Nueva Ecija -- the Philippines' rice granary, including those coming from Region 2 can reach the market centers in Metro Manila much faster and cheaper," DPWH Undersecretary for UPMO Emil Sadain said in a press release.

The CLLEX forms an important east-west link for Luzon's expressway network to ensure a continuous seamless traffic flow for motorists from Metro Manila and vice versa who ply the North Luzon Expressway (NLEX), SCTEX, and TPLEX.

Once fully operational, the PHP11.811-billion expressway is expected to shorten the usual travel time of 70 minutes between Tarlac City and Cabanatuan City to just 20 minutes.

The "Build, Build, Build" program also includes a traffic decongestion plan that seeks to build high-standard highways/ expressways, by-passes/diversion roads, flyovers, interchanges, and underpasses, and widen national roads and bridges.

Key projects include the Metro Manila Logistics Improvement Program, Philippine High Standard Highway Network Program, and the Luzon SPINE Expressway Network (LSEN) Program.

The LSEN is comprised of 905 km of high-standard highways in Luzon which will reduce travel time between Ilocos and Bicol from 20 hours to just eight hours.

It also covers the construction or upgrade of access roads to designated tourism destinations, industrial trade corridors, roll-on-roll off ports/seaports, railway stations, airports, and the building of classrooms under the Basic Education Facilities Fund of the Department of Education.

The program also aims to provide livable, sustainable, and resilient communities with an integrated water resources management program, disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation program, infrastructure support for marginalized sectors and build bike lanes/facilities and pedestrian infrastructure.

## **Solon pushes for rehabilitation of Agus-Pulangi power plants**

By: Filane Mikee Cervantes

A lawmaker on Friday said the rehabilitation of the Agus-Pulangi hydropower complex (APHPC) should be a top priority of the Marcos administration to ensure a clean and reliable energy source in Mindanao while fighting climate change.

Davao City First District Representative Paolo Duterte said the rehabilitation project would initiate the transition process to low-emission energy sources and will contribute to the country's commitment toward climate change adaptation and mitigation.

"If we want to be a global leader in climate action, we can start with rehabilitating the Agus-Pulangi power plants in Mindanao. This long-term measure will eventually reduce Mindanao's reliance on coal, and accelerate our shift to clean energy sources," Rep. Duterte said in a statement.

He made the remark in response to Finance Secretary Benjamin Diokno's recent pronouncement before a high-level Group of Twenty (G20) forum that the Marcos administration will continue to pursue a "whole-of-nation" approach in mitigating climate risks and become a world leader in the fight against the climate crisis.

The rehabilitation project, he said, would also help fulfill President Marcos's goal of developing more renewable energy (RE) sources to meet the country's power generation requirements.

Under the government's National Renewable Energy Program (NREP) 2020-2040, the Department of Energy (DOE) is targeting to increase the share of RE sources in the power generation mix to at least 35 percent by 2030 and to more than 50 percent by 2040.

He said the repair and rehabilitation of the Agus-Pulangi would ensure the reliability of the power supply in Mindanao "now and in the years to come."

Composed of seven hydropower plants, the Agus-Pulangi complex has an installed capacity of 1,001 megawatts, but only 600 to 700 MW is available because of the limitations of its old facilities.

The APHC consists of seven mostly run-of-river hydropower plants with a total installed capacity of 1,001 MW. Six of the seven hydropower plants are located along the Agus River which flows for 36.5 kilometers (km) from Lanao Lake to Iligan Bay. The seventh hydropower plant is the Pulangi 4, located on the Pulangi River in Bukidnon.

In June, the Department of Finance (DOF) said it has been finetuning a proposed arrangement with the Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corporation 8 (PSALM) and National Power Corp. (NPC) on the funding rollout and implementation of the estimated PHP16.71-billion rehabilitation projects for the decades-old facilities in the complex. Under the proposed memorandum of agreement (MOA), the DOF will be the main implementing agency, loan borrower and budget holder, and loan borrower for the rehabilitation projects. The PSALM and NPC, as owner and operator, respectively, of the APHPC will both serve as the implementing units.

Divided into two projects, the first series will involve the rehabilitation of the Agus IV, V, VI, and VII plants in the APHPC, which is expected to generate a total rated capacity of 417.1 megawatts. The second series will rehabilitate Agus I, II, and the Pulangi IV plants, which will generate a total

rated capacity of 515 MW. The Series of Project (SOP) 1 is estimated to cost PHP10.19 billion, while SOP 2 is about PHP6.52 billion, based on a study done by the World Bank (WB).

## RAPPLER

### **Atin Ang Pilipinas: Panawagan ng mga sektor sa administrasyong Marcos**

Hangad ng mahigit sa 150 organisasyon na kabilang sa #CourageON Coalition at #PHVote Coalition na marinig sa unang State of the Nation Address ni Pangulong Ferdinand Marcos Jr. ang 5 panawagan ng iba't ibang sektor sa ilalim ng kampanyang #AtinAngPilipinas:

Kalusugan at pagtugon sa pandemya  
Kabuhayan at ekonomiya  
Edukasyon  
Kalikasan at pagbabago ng klima  
Kapayapaan, kaayusan, paggalang sa karapatang pantao

**KALUSUGAN AT PAGTUGON SA PANDEMYA:** Malinaw at epektibong plano para sa kalusugan ng bawat Pilipino at sa pagtugon sa pandemya.

**NARARAPAT NA TUGON SA PANDEMYA.** Mga plano na nakabase sa siyensiya at datos, napapanahon, malinaw, at binubuo matapos ang konsultasyon sa mga ekspero at mga maaapektuhan sektor. Mas epektibong pagpapakalat ng impormasyon tungkol sa pandemya, at paninigurong pantay-pantay ang pamamahagi ng mga bakuna sa bansa.

**ISANG EPISYENTENG SISTEMANG PANGKALUSUGAN.** Libreng serbisyo pangkalusugan, sapat na gamot, at pinalakas na pamamahala ng mga sistemang pangkalusugan ng komunidad, mula sa pambarangay hanggang pambansang antas. Pinalawak na access sa HIV/AIDS testing, pagpapagamot at pag-aaruga, at mga serbisyo at gabay para sa reproductive health.

**PANGANGALAGA SA HEALTHCARE WORKERS.** Pagdaragdag sa bilang ng healthcare workers at paniniguro na maibibigay ang karampatang special risk allowance at sapat na sahog sa tamang oras.

**MALINAW NA PAGPAPARATING NG MGA POLISIYA.** Batas na nakabase sa lohika at siyensiya, at mapagkakatiwalaang impormasyong tungkol sa pandemya at iba pang isyung pangkalusugan na maipamamahagi sa lahat.

**PAGPAPANAGOT SA MGA OPISYAL.** Panagutin ang mga opisyal na responsable sa maling pagtugon sa pandemya, korupsiyon, at pagwawaldas ng pandemic resources.

**KABUHAYAN AT EKONOMIYA:** Konkretoong plano para sa milyon-milyong Pilipinong nawalan ng trabaho, mga negosyong nagsara, at mga sektor na napadapa dahil sa palpak na naging pagtugon ng pamahalaan sa pandemya.

**MALAWAK NA PROTEKSIYON SA KARAPATAN NG MGA MANGGAGAWA.**

Pagwawakas sa kontraktuwalisasyon at pagpapatibay ng mga batas na nagbibigay ng suporta at proteksyon sa mga manggagawang kontraktuwal, gig workers, platform-based workers, creatives, informal workers, katutubo, kababaihan, at mga indibiduwal na kabilang sa LGBTQ+ na naapektuhan ng pandemya.

Pagpapatupad ng national minimum wage system na sapat at akma sa presyo ng mga bilihin

## Proteksyon at pagpapalakas sa mga unyon

Pagbibigay ng proteksyon sa mga OFW na bumalik sa bansa, kabilang ang tulong na makapagsimula sila ng sariling negosyo

**SAPAT NA SUPORTA SA MSME.** Malinaw at agarang maipatutupad na programa para medium, small, and micro enterprises (MSME) na naapektuhan ng pandemya. Magbigay ng pagkakataon sa kababaihang nananatili sa tahanan na magkaroon ng puhunan, maiugnay sa mga interesado sa kanilang produkto o serbisyo, at maging maalam sa digital na pamamaraan ng pagnenegosyo.

**KOMPREHENSIVO AT DETALYADONG PLANO PARA SA PAGBANGON NG EKONOMIYA.** Pagpapatupad ng nararapat na economic stimulus, at pagbubukas ng credit facilities at saganang cash assistance sa mga apektado ng krisis pang-ekonomiya.

**TUGON SA TUMATAAS NA PRESYO NG MGA BILIHIN.** Polisiya ng pagbabantay sa mga presyo ng bilihin at iba pang serbisyo.

**SAPAT NA PUHUNAN PARA SA INDUSTRIYANG PANG-AGRIKULTURA.** Palawakin ang kaalaman ng mga mangingisda at magsasaka at isulong ang kanilang karapatang mangisda sa sarili nating karagatan at ariin ang mga lupang kanilang sinasaka.

**EDUKASYON:** Kilalanin ang edukasyon bilang isang karapatan — ligtas para sa kabataan at ligtas mula sa red-tagging.

**LIGTAS NA PAGBUBUKAS NG MGA PAARALAN.** Malinaw na roadmap para sa ligtas na pagbubukas ng mga paaralan at polisiya ukol sa academic ease, pagbibigay ng subsidiya sa mga guro, at paglalaan ng mga kaukulang serbisyo para sa pagbabalik ng face-to-face classes.

**PAGPAPAHALAGA SA ACADEMIC FREEDOM.** Magpatupad ng mga batas na tutugon sa pagprotekta sa academic freedom at pagtiyak sa kaligtasan ng mga estudyante sa lahat ng antas sa paaralan.

**PAGBIBIGAY-PANSIN SA KALUSUGAN AT KAPAKANAN NG MGA MAG-AARAL.** Pagbibigay ng mental health services para sa mga mag-aaral, guro, at staff ng mga paaralan, at pagpapasa ng Students Rights and Welfare (STRAW) Act.

**PAGLALAAN NG PONDO PARA SA SEKTOR NG EDUCATION.** Pagbibigay ng badyet na hindi bababa sa 6% ng Gross National Product para sa edukasyon. Ibigay sa edukasyon ang pondo ng ibang sangay ng pamahalaan, kagaya ng pondo sa debt servicing at ng militar.

**KURIKULUM NA MAY MGA ARALIN TUNGKOL SA KARAPATANG PANTAO, MEDIA, DEMOKRASYA, AT ANG SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS, KASAMA ANG:**

Digital literacy and digital rights, reproductive rights education  
Good manners and right conduct (GMRC) at values education  
Irebiyu ang K-12 program para maihanda nito ang mga mag-aaral sa pagtugon sa national emergency

**KALIKASAN AT PAGBABAGONG KLIMA:** Pamahalaang tutugon sa mga epekto ng pagbabagong klima at poprotekta sa mga tagapagtanggol ng kalikasan.

**MAAGAP NA TUGON LABAN SA PAGBABAGO NG KLIMA.** Isang komprehensibong planong mula at para sa mga bulverableng sektor para sa pagbawas ng polusyon ng fossil fuel at pagangkop sa pagbabagong klima alinsunod sa mga commitment ng bansa sa Paris Agreement. Paramihin ang mga commitment na walang kondisyon at isaprayoridad ang mga solusyong nakabatay sa komunidad.

**TRANSISYON PATUNGO SA RENEWABLE ENERGY.** Pabilisin ang paglawak ng malinis at renewable energy tungo sa pagging pinakamalaking prosyento ng pinagkukunan ng kuryente kumpara sa fossil fuel, sa pamamagitan ng pagsuporta sa mga proyektong renewable energy sa antas komunidad, at sa paglimita ng pagpopondo para sa coal.

**LIKAS-KAYANG PAMAMARAAN NG TRANSPORTASYON.** Promosyon at pagpapaunlad ng mas likas-kayang pamamaraan ng pampublikong transportasyon, at hikayatin ang pagbibisikleta, paglalakad, at iba pang active mobility options para sa mga mamamayan.

**PAGTATAGUYOD NG KILUSANG ZERO-WASTE.** Pagpapasa ng mga batas na magbabawal sa mga Single-Use Plastic Products, magpapataw ng extended producer's responsibility (EPR) o pananagutan sa pribadong sektor gumagamit ng plastics, magtutulak ng pagsasaliksik ng sistema ng mga alternatibong produksyon at materyales (circular economy). Maglaan ng pondo sa mga zero waste na inisyatiba sa antas ng komunidad para sa sostenibleng pagkonsumo at produksyon para sa pangangailangan ng tao.

**SAPAT NA PONDO PARA SA PANGANGALAGA NG BIODIVERSITY AT KALIKASAN.** Pagpapalakas ng mga inisyatibang mangangalaga sa natural na espasyo sa bansa, palawigin ang climate education, at triplehin ang bilang at protektahan ang karapatan ng ng mga forest rangers, sea wardens, defenders, at iba pang environmental workers.

**PAGPAPASA NG ALTERNATIVE MINERAL MANAGEMENT BILL.** Pansamantalang ipatigil ang pagmimina, dredging, reclamation, plantations, infrastructure, incinerators, fossil fuel power plants, at iba pang proyektong nakakasira at sumasaid sa kalikasan na sinasabing parte ng pagtugon sa pandemya at estratehiya sa pagbangon ng ekonomiya.

**KAPAYAPAAN, KAAYUSAN, PAGGALANG SA KARAPATANG PANTAO:** Pamahalaang hindi yumuyurak sa karapatang pantao at may tapang na ipagtanggol ang ating soberanya.

**PAGTIGIL NG GIYERA KONTRA DROGA.** Ibatay sa pagpapahalaga sa karapatang pantao ang pagsugpo sa ilegal na droga, at bawiin ang memorandum circular na nagbigay-buhay sa Oplan Tokhang.

**HUSTISYA AT PAGPAPANAGOT SA MGA UMABUSO.** Pagsasagawa o pagpapatuloy ng mga imbestigasyon ng Kongreso, International Criminal Court, UNHRC, at truth commission sa ilegal na paggamit ng mga pondo at malawakang paglabag ng karapatang pantao.

**MAKATAONG TUGON SA INSUREKSIYON.** Pagbuwag sa NTF-ELCAC, isang counterinsurgency program na ang tinatarget ay ang advocates, human rights defenders, at mga kritiko ng gobyerno. Bigyang pansin ang ugat ng himagsikan sa bansa, at magkaroon ng tunay na prosesong pangkapayapaan kasama ang mga grupo ng rebelde sa Pilipinas.

**RIGHTS-BASED NA MGA BATAS UKOL SA ICT.** Pagbabalik at pagbabago ng Magna Carta for Philippine Internet Freedom bilang halimbawa ng digital rights na nakaangkla sa Philippine

Declaration sa Internet Rights and Principles. Baguhin o alisin ang mga mapaniil na probisyon ng Cybercrime Prevention Act of 2021, kagaya ng criminal offense para sa libel.

PAGPAPALAKAS SA KABABAIHAN, AT MGA MINORYANG PANGKASARIAN AT PANG SEKSUWAL. Pagpapasa ng batas at pagpapatupad ng mga polisiya na magtitiyak sa pagkakapantay-pantay ng mga kasarian upang mawakasan ang gender-based violence at diskriminasyon sa kababaihan at mga minoryang pangkasarian at pang-seksuwal. Isama sa education curriculum at sa mga ahensiya ng gobyerno ang pagkilala at pagrespeto sa kalakasan at kagalingan ng kababaihan at LGBTQ+

PAGTATANGGOL SA KASARINLAN NG BANSA. Pagtibayin ang Hague ruling upang protektahan ang West Philippine Sea.

PAGPROTEKTA SA MGA DEMOKRATIKONG INSTITUSYON. Protektahan at palakasin ang kalayaan sa pamamahayag, kasama ang pagprotekta sa civic spaces at pagbibigay ng ligtas at accessible na mga paraan sa mga mamamayan upang makipag-usap sa pamahalaan tungkol sa mga programa at polisiya. Palayain ang mga bilanggong politikal, kritiko, at miyembro ng oposisyon.

Patuloy na magmamatyag ang #CourageON Coalition at #PHVote Coalition upang bantayan ang pamamahala ng bagong administrasyon. Kung ikaw ay bahagi ng isang organisasyon na hangad na ipagtanggol ang ating mga karapatang pantao, sumali sa #CourageON: No Lockdown on Rights Coalition

## **Climate change makes banana, seaweed farming hard for women in Palawan**

By: Keith Anthony Fabro

In Palawan, women engaged in banana and seaweed farming are struggling to make ends meet for their families

PALAWAN, Philippines — For 30 years, Melinda Gimotea has been farming seaweeds off the coast of Sitio Balintang in Palawan province's southern town of Quezon.

Along the coast, a pungent fishy smell mixes with sea breeze as women like her in their village are commonly seen under their houses, tying the cuttings of this bright green plant to lines. She has witnessed how seaweeds have transformed her village: they're able to build sturdy houses, connect to power and water lines, buy home appliances, and send children to college.

Gimotea is among 6,500 seaweed farmers in the province who grow this high value crop every 45 days. Prized for its carrageenan, an emulsifier for many food and cosmetic products, seaweed was among the country's top aquaculture commodities, with an estimated production volume of 1.5 million metric tons valued at P10.61 billion (\$188 million) in 2020, government data showed.

Back then, she earned between P25,000 to P30,000 (\$444 to \$534) from her 2,500-square-meter farm. But in 2021, she noticed that the warming temperature caused her seaweed production to decline.

"In the past three decades that I have engaged in seaweed farming, all was well with our climate and our seaweeds were sizable," said Gimotea, 55. "Starting last year, our income has halved because of the extreme heat that makes our seaweeds become sick."

Like Gimotea, small-scale banana farmers in Aborlan town in southern Palawan are also experiencing changes in weather conditions that affect their produce.

"Now is supposed to be rainy season, but it's usually sunny and dry, it's not normal," said Analiza Asuple, 33.

Cultivating bananas in a 2-hectare farmland for almost a decade, she observed that banana thrives with rains.

"Bananas don't like extreme heat, so the size of the fruit is diminishing and so is our income," Asuple added.

In the 2022 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report, scientists warned that without deep and immediate cuts in carbon emissions, agriculture will continue to be among the sectors bearing the most climate crisis impacts.

Climate advocates say this needs urgent action as it affects women's rights to work, food, education and other social services.

"The latest assessment report of the IPCC has zeroed in on the impact of climate change on agricultural systems globally. The Philippine agriculture sector, including the many women engaged in it, is not an exemption," said Nazrin Castro, branch manager of nonprofit The Climate Reality Project.

### Unfavorable farming conditions

With the climate crisis intensifying tropical storms, farmers' right to work under favorable conditions is compromised.

In the Philippines where the occurrence of six super typhoons a year is a new normal, 5.56 million farmers, including women, are at risk of being deprived of this right.

"Women have additional challenges with respect to their livelihood and daily household responsibilities.... Moreso, working women have a hard time going back to work whenever disaster strikes and their homes were destroyed," said Jade Marquez, the Right to Resilience Regional Program manager at international nonprofit American Bar Association Rule of Law Initiative.

Last December 2021, Typhoon Odette (Rai) ravaged Palawan, leaving widespread damage to its agriculture industry amounting to P3 billion (\$54 million).

"The majority of high value crops reportedly damaged included seaweeds and bananas," said Provincial Agriculturist Romeo Cabungcal.

The provincial government is considering declaring a state of calamity in its agriculture sector to allocate public funds to support rehabilitation efforts.

In Quezon town, Odette destroyed their communal solar driers and boats, dealing a hard blow to women seaweed farmers, said Mardy Montaño, president of the Sitio Balintang's Cherish Fisherfolk Association.

"Before, the weather was predictable. When it's wet season, it's raining; when it's dry season, it's sunny. For each season, we're prepared. We're all forced to face this new reality. Our income dropped, especially in Odette's aftermath," Montaño said.

The holidays were gloomy in the village as the typhoon washed out their seaweeds.

"We're supposed to earn P15,000 (\$268) from [those] seaweeds but it's all gone, except for the ropes," Gimotea recounted with teary eyes.

Living right at the coast, the big waves also took away her planting tools and lumber for her supposed house repair.

After Odette, concerns emerged about the lack of seedlings to restart seaweed farming. Given this, the provincial government plans to invest in the establishment of community-managed seaweed nurseries across the province.

"There will be a partnership between the provincial government and an association that will look into the operation of seaweed nurseries in order to supply the seedling requirement of an area," Cabungcal said.

In Palawan's banana capital town of Aborlan, farmers like Asuple lamented how Odette flattened their plantations.

"Most of my bananas were due for harvest, but it wasn't spared during the typhoon, which also flooded our house," she said.

But typhoons are not the only concern of farmers. Pests and diseases attacks are also constant threats aggravated by a changing climate.

A few weeks after Odette's onslaught, Gimotea resumed growing seaweeds. In February, however, it was damaged by ice-ice disease (IID).

"It fell into the sea, it didn't survive," she said.

IID is common among seaweeds found in the Philippines, particularly in Palawan, a top seaweed-producing province. IID-infected seaweed tissues, in turn, whiten, disintegrate, and decay, reducing farmers' carrageenan yield.

Another concern in Philippine seaweed farms is the presence of epiphytic filamentous algae (EFA) or algae that attach to seaweeds and penetrate their inner layers, causing damage to the host plant, noted a 2021 study published by scientists at the Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDEC) and its partner research institutions.

IID and EFA are linked to unfavorable changes in environmental conditions, such as an increase in seawater temperature and a decrease in salinity, said SEAFDEC seaweed scientist Joseph Faisan Jr.

"It's expected to be more pronounced in the coming years due to the impacts of climate change such as warming of oceans and extreme climatic events, including the El Niño and La Niña phenomena," he added.

Meanwhile, banana farmers complain about the soil-borne fungus Fusarium wilt, which causes the stunting of banana plant and yellowing of its leaves.

"It destroys banana leaves, so you need to salvage the entire plant to prevent it from spreading throughout the plantation," Asuple said.

In a 2019 study published in Spatial Information Research, scientists at the University of the Philippines Los Baños and University of Southern Mindanao warned that "the projected changes in rainfall in the future can increase the areas that are favorable for Fusarium wilt occurrence."

"From 21% under baseline climate condition, favorable areas for Fusarium wilt in the Philippines is estimated to increase to 27%, covering 91.2% and 28.5% of the country's highly and moderately suitable areas for banana, respectively. Such coverage accounts for approximately 67% of the country's total harvested area for banana," the study read.

Cabungcal said they are eyeing the possibility of removing the infected variety of banana and changing it with the ones that are less susceptible to the said disease.

Limited access to food, education

With IID impacting their yield, women engaged in seaweed farming are struggling to make ends meet for their families. It's another wave of difficulty at a time when the rough seas already affect the fishing livelihood of their husbands.

"It's so hard because you're forced to be frugal with your spending. Sometimes, we're not able to buy food as we're cash-strapped," said Gimotea.

She worries a lot nowadays as she has four more mouths to feed – her eldest daughter, separated from an abusive husband, has returned home with her three children.

"Aside from feeding them, you'll send the kids to school and that adds up to my piling concerns," she said. "I'm just blessed with my daughter because she helps a lot in household chores to lighten my load."

The impact is mostly felt by women laborers in seaweed farms like Erly Daguia. The 38-year-old mother of four children works for seaweed farm owners like Gimotea. Daguia ties propagules to seaweed lines, each spanning 25 meters and weighing 100 kilograms.

"Unlike nowadays, I can have my children indulging in food when I started tying seaweed propagules a decade ago," said Daguia, who once earned P13,000 (\$232) every after harvest.

"As the changes in climate bring extreme heat and stronger typhoons, I worry for its impact on our seaweeds. If it continues, where will I get money to feed my children and support their schooling? Without people engaging in seaweed farming, I have no income," she added.

Taking climate change into consideration, the provincial government is updating its seaweed roadmap to identify suitable sites, species, and peak months for seaweed farming for each participating town to guide communities in farm planning, thus reducing losses.

"In the roadmap, we'll look into the presence of local government unit zoning for aquaculture intended for seaweeds, as well as leasing and permitting system for seaweed farmers.... It should be in place for us to implement a good management strategy, which will be incorporated in their respective comprehensive municipal fisheries ordinances," said Cabungcal.

SEAFDEC, meanwhile, recommends the relocation of seaweed sites from shallow to deeper waters, "wherein environmental conditions are moderate and stable," allowing seaweeds to "cope up with the challenges of climate change effects," said Faisan.

The center is also promoting the use of seaweed tissue culture, which is free from disease and pest and available whole year round for farmers.

"We make sure it's free from pests and diseases prior to farming, so there's no worry that it harbors such that could spread to other farms," the scientist said.

Back in Aborlan, Asuple's family only earns P30 (\$0.53) pesos from selling 100 banana pieces to a wholesaler. It's almost half the selling price before the pandemic, when schools were open and bananas were in high demand as snacks.

"We can't ask higher than that because most of our bananas are small, so somehow we're fine to sell it at a lower price instead of having it rotten and earning nothing at all."

On average, she harvests 300 banana pieces, giving her family a weekly income of P90 (\$1.60). It could double if she would sell it at the town proper, but the roundtrip tricycle fare would cost her the same amount as her earnings.

"If I would sell it during market day, my earnings would only go to my fare," she said.

As a non-member of the government's cash assistance 4Ps program, Asuple's family makes do with their meager income, which is just enough to buy one kilo of rice and salt so they can subsist on porridge for a few days and then return to eating boiled bananas when it runs out. With the reopening of schools, she is worried about not having money to buy uniforms and supplies for her three children.

"We don't know how we can continue sending our children to school," she said. At home, her three children study their modules and take turns using two pencils – a gift from a relative two years ago. Their crayons are three years old and have crumbled.

Cabungcal said the provincial government is working with a cooperative in Puerto Princesa City to consolidate the bananas in towns to ensure farmers like Asuple are earning well from their produce.

"We want to give fair value to the crops being produced by farmers, so along the whole segment of the value chain, the highest share goes to them, not to traders and retailers," he said.

#### Exacerbating gender inequalities

Globally, studies show that women are more at risk of climate change than men. In Palawan's farming sector, climate change is taking a toll on women's mental health as they feel pressured to provide for their families amid the dwindling harvest.

"Whatever we don't have at home, the pressure is on me," said Gimotea. "I feel that my husband doesn't care; for as long as he eats, watches television, and sleeps, he's fine."

The same sentiment was echoed by Dagua: "Women are more stressed because we're expected to budget our small household income. If our husbands don't have money, we're the ones who find ways to provide for our family."

Asuple's husband from the Tagbanua indigenous group, meanwhile, managed to get a rural development degree by pawning the land he inherited from his deceased parents. He was employed at a local government-managed water district, but when the pandemic hit, the office downsized its employees, making him jobless.

Now, he relies on backyard labor jobs like grass weeding that comes once in a while, leaving Asuple distressed.

"We don't have livelihood sources other than banana," she said. "It's hard to be a mother because you're always home, unlike men, and your kids ask their needs from you."

Diana Tica, a Tagbanua indigenous member, had been coughing and losing consciousness for weeks, but she was afraid to go to the doctor because of the medical expenses and the chance of getting diagnosed with COVID-19, so she went instead to a traditional healer.

"Maybe it's due to combined stresses from the changing climate that affects our banana produce to thinking about not having enough money to buy our household needs and support the schooling of my kids," the 39-year-old mother of eight concluded.

Her husband has just been cleared of tuberculosis after a year of medication, during which she assumed the breadwinner role. "Now that he's well, it's I who has fallen sick."

Castro of The Climate Reality Project said these local narratives only show that “the prevailing climate crisis is not gender-neutral.”

“It exacerbates current inequalities between men and women,” Castro said. “It adds another burden to women, on top of lacking access to land, healthcare and financial services, decision-making structures, technology training, and other opportunities.”

Climate and women’s rights advocates urge the government to “design and implement a rights-based approach to climate-proofing the agriculture sector,” a strategy highlighted by the IPCC as crucial in pursuing “climate resilient development.”

Castro said this means the government should “strengthen further its efforts in providing capacity building to women farmers, ensuring their meaningful participation in policymaking processes, and improving their access to key resources such as financing and technology.”

“Addressing gender-based inequalities is a prerequisite to addressing the impacts of the climate crisis on the agriculture sector,” she added. – Rappler.com

## THE ASAHI SHIMBUN

### **Global warming study: 5-year droughts could become the norm**

By: Rintaro Sakurai

"Unprecedented" droughts lasting for at least five years will hit several regions around the world by mid-century if nothing is done to curb global warming, an international team of scientists warned.

The researchers from Japan, Europe, the United States and South Korea said measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions are needed immediately to delay the beginning of such drought conditions and shorten the duration of the dry spells.

The team included scholars from the University of Tokyo and Japan's National Institute for Environmental Studies.

Much of the study focused on global data showing changes in river flows from 1861 through 2005.

Prediction models were created for simulations of future trends concerning the annual number of drought days in each of 59 regions of the world.

If greenhouse gas emissions continue to be spewed into the atmosphere like now, unprecedented drought conditions would become the norm, continuing for five years or more, in seven regions, including in the circum-Mediterranean, South America and the Middle East, starting within around 30 years.

Similar dry conditions would hit 18 of the regions by the end of this century.

Droughts could also become more frequent in Japan, including western areas of the country, the scientists said.

"Measures should be taken to cut greenhouse gas emissions to delay droughts becoming the norm," said team member Yusuke Satoh, a research associate professor with the Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology.

"'Adaptation' measures to mitigate the negative impact of climate change should also be taken over the next several decades."

The research results were published in Nature Communications, a British science journal.

## THE HILL

### Climate Change: The global jenga game

By: William Becker

It has been 34 years, an entire generation, since the U.S. government's top climate scientist warned Congress the planet was warming with potentially dire consequences. "It is already happening now," Dr. James Hansen testified in 1988. "It is time to stop waffling." Scientists have struggled ever since to communicate this to the public and government officials.

Scientists and their translators have explained the pollution from burning fossil fuels is collecting above the Earth, where it acts like the glass in a greenhouse and holds the sun's heat close to the planet's surface — the "greenhouse effect." Or they have described the gases as an invisible blanket covering the Earth and getting thicker with every ton of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) civilization emits.

But before metaphors and analogies can explain climate change, audiences must be open to hearing about it. Unfortunately, the message is not good news. Many people with the power to do something about global warming have not listened because it's easier to deny a harsh reality than it is to fix it.

Those of us who try to break through the communications barrier about climate change get fixated on that crisis and fail to point out an even harsher reality: Climate change is only one manifestation of adverse human impacts on nature. What's really at risk is the biosphere — the atmosphere, the hydrosphere (oceans), and the lithosphere (the Earth's solid surface). These are where all life on the planet exists, working together like the organs in our bodies.

The best metaphor for this is the popular game Jenga. Players build a tower out of blocks, then take turns removing them one at a time. The loser is the person who removes the block that topples the tower.

With industrialization and population growth, civilization has been pulling blocks out of the Jenga tower for centuries, including many vital to the structure's integrity. The disturbing reality that many people don't want to accept, or even hear about, is that the hospitable Earth we have known for the last 10,000 to 12,000 years is on the verge of collapse.

Some years ago, the Stockholm Resilience Center at Stockholm University convened 28 renowned scientists to identify the planet's "safe operating spaces" and the boundaries humankind can't cross without creating large-scale, abrupt, irreversible changes in the biosphere. The team came up with nine critical spaces. Only one is climate change. Others include ocean acidification, ozone depletion, land-use changes and freshwater losses.

Geologists believe the human impact on the biosphere is so extensive that it has created a new era in the planet's 4.5-billion-year history. They have proposed calling it the Anthropocene, a term signifying that humankind is now the most influential and destructive force on Earth. The evidence, which ranges from plastic pollution to the fallout of nuclear weapons testing, reads like an indictment of modern civilization because that's what it is. Humanity is on trial, with little time left to fix things before the verdict is in and the planet imposes its most severe penalty.

We must answer some questions if we are generous enough to care about the future. What happens if we remove the biodiversity block, the freshwater block or the block representing fertile

soils? What if we remove the blocks representing the Earth's carbon and water cycles or the oceans' chemistry? For that matter, how many blocks do we dare add to the tower's top to represent the human population's growth?

If the U.S. Congress, other world leaders and the general population had heeded Hansen's warning about climate change 34 years ago, we could have made the necessary corrections with much less expense and disruption. Instead, the use of fossil fuels over the last three decades has made the blanket thicker, while urbanization, agriculture, deforestation and pollution have moved us closer to the planet's boundaries.

The Jenga tower is teetering while we blithely remove its blocks. Its loss of stability is too gradual to shock us awake. But all life will suffer when it collapses. Here the Jenga analogy falls apart because, unlike the game, we will not be able to rebuild the structure and start over.

This is not a message that political leaders, policymakers or friends and neighbors want to hear. It's the ultimate inconvenient truth. And yet, pulling civilization back from collapse would be the present generation's most precious gift to our progeny, the biosphere and the incredibly beautiful web of life.

## THE MANILA TIMES

### **Baguio eyes flood warning system**

By Gaby B. Keith

Baguio City: The Summer Capital's push to establish its own smart flood early warning, information and mitigation system that was initiated in August 2020 is ongoing, said Antonette Anaban, City Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office (CDRRMO) head.

In the third quarter meeting of the CDRRMO Council on July 14, Anaban said the project aims to improve community disaster preparedness and awareness and to ensure ownership to enhance urban resilience.

It is implemented under the Asean Australia Smart Cities Trust Fund supported by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and managed by the Asian Development Bank, Anaban added.

She said the project's expected outputs include the establishment and execution of a smart flood early warning information system (FEWS); the establishment of a real-time data capture system in four river basins in the city; and the preparation of a flood mitigation action plan. Anaban explained that FEWS is part of the city government's current Smart City initiatives such as the Smart City Command Center; digital innovations to speed up the delivery of government service; the Smart City twinning program with Perth, Australia; and the establishment of the National Government Data Center and Digital Transformation Hub.

Its key focus areas are enhanced capacity-building and on-the-job training; climate change assessment as input to modeling and design for enhancing city resilience; and gender transformative approach for strengthened development, application, and replication of the city's FEWS.

## **DMHC welcomes P600-M DBP funding**

By Eireene Jairee Gomez

Dupinga Mini Hydro Corp. (DMHC) welcomed the P600-million funding support from the Development Bank of the Philippines (DBP) for its 4.6 MW Dupinga Mini Hydropower Project in Gabaldon, Nueva Ecija.

"We are pleased to receive DBP's approval of financing as it shows confidence in our Dupinga Project and our commitment to harnessing renewable energy," DMHC President and CEO Eduardo Martinez-Miranda said in a statement on Wednesday.

The DBP recently announced approval of funding support for the Dupinga Project under DBP's Financing Utilities for Sustainable Energy Development (Fused) program, which aims to contribute to the increased access to electricity services through financing of utility-scale energy generation projects.

"We were one of the few energy projects that commenced construction at the height of the Covid-19 pandemic. The DBP loan will provide strong support to the ongoing construction of the Dupinga Project as we target completion by early 2024," Miranda said, noting that hydropower projects have long gestation process due to the volume of permits and clearances that are needed during pre-development stage and the challenges associated with civil works.

The Dupinga Project was awarded the hydropower service contract by the Department of Energy (DoE) in 2010. The right to further develop the project and utilize the hydro resource was transferred to DMHC in 2017 upon approval by the DoE. DMHC proceeded to conduct extensive technical studies and public consultations and secure permits.

As part of the memorandum of agreement entered into with the Katutubong Dumagat of Central Luzon and the Dupinga Project's "Kaagapay ng Komunidad" corporate social responsibility program, the Dupinga Project ensures protection of ancestral domain and the development of the Indigenous peoples community. Together with the Katutubong Dumagat and the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples, DMHC committed to preserving and uplifting the Indigenous communities by maintaining the Dupinga watershed, providing local employment, and assistance during times of needs and emergencies.

The Dupinga Project is being co-developed by DMHC, a partnership between Alternergy Holdings Corp., a renewable energy pioneer led by former Energy secretary Vicente Perez Jr., and Markham Resources Corp., also a renewable energy company led by Francisco Laurel of the Frabelle Group.

## **Enhanced operational efficiency helps avert the carbon crisis**

By Tony Maghirang

THE impacts of climate change include rapidly melting glaciers, global temperature spikes, frequent flash floods, intensifying hurricanes and cyclones are among such events triggered by growing carbon emissions that could reach critical levels.

One activity that is greatly responsible for these adverse impacts is logistics. Even though the transportation and logistics industry forms the backbone of any economy, it is also the most significant contributor to growing carbon emissions, and hence climate change.

Soham Chokshi, founder and chief executive of Shipsy, shares his knowledge and expounds on how reducing miles of travel, optimizing delivery routes and avoiding traffic congestions could decrease harmful CO2 emissions by 37 million metric tons annually.

The Manila Times (TMT): How has renewed economic activities in the post-pandemic period in the Philippines contributed to the country's adverse contributions to global warming? Do you project a further increase in the Philippine contribution in the wake of rising oil prices?

Soham Chokshi (SCh): The country recorded a real GDP decline of 9.6 percent in 2020, owing to the pandemic and subsequent lockdowns. Alarming levels of reduction in private consumption, rampant unemployment and supply chain paralysis took the country by storm. Hence, renewed economic activities that gradually began in the first quarter of 2021 are a sign of immense relief for the nation.

When it comes to sustainability, the Philippines occupies an interesting position in the global context. Here's why. Even though it is considered a "minor" contributor to climate change, the nation's GHG emissions rank in the top 25 percent among all developing economies. That's not it. Its emissions are projected to increase significantly in the coming decades. Since the country is extremely vulnerable to climate-related catastrophes, it's even more critical for the government to enforce robust policies that'll influence supply chain stakeholders to invest a greater focus on sustainability. Hence, even though many people termed the government's decision to revise its target to curb 75 percent of GHG emissions by 2030, up from 70 percent, as "ambitious," it's a strong step in the right direction.

From a supply chain perspective, a spike in fuel prices definitely impacts the cost of logistics operations. But one cannot simply halt operations for that reason. The solution here is to build supply chain strategies around sustainability by leveraging modern logistics management tools. For instance, using technology, we could intelligently balance the usage of EVs and vehicles powered by petrol and diesel.

TMT: In that light, how could the local heavy transport industry (trucking, shipping and aviation) reduce its contribution to global warming despite its dependence on carbon-emitting oil? What types of new technologies could assist the transport industry to reduce its contributions to global warming?

SCh: There is so much that could be done, and one does not need to break the bank to reduce carbon footprint. When it comes to sustainability, the simplest of things could make a massive impact in the long run. Enabling the trucking industry with smart logistics management tools that help reduce the distance traveled, eliminate empty miles, boost capacity, enhance trip productivity, arrest truck idling and more goes a long way in reducing emissions. For instance, AI

and ML-powered routing solutions could reduce the distance traveled by 5 percent, boost vehicle capacity utilization by 31 percent and bring down trip volumes by 6 percent.

With regards to air and maritime freight movement today, we have tools available that could help supply chain stakeholders gain visibility of emissions their shipments would cause even before they commence shipping. Things like these make a winning difference in building sustainable supply chains.

TMT: What does Shipsy have to offer in this regard? Would your offerings be affordable to most businesses?

SCh: Shipsy is a SaaS-based logistics management platform that is highly modular, enabling easy and fast adoption for businesses of different sizes based on their maturity. Being a plug-and-play solution, it eliminates the need for "ripping and replacing" existing IT infrastructure. Our seamless and smart API integrations drastically reduce the IT development efforts required from the customer's end. With Shipsy, customers could go live in days and not weeks. We are not just technology providers, but partners in our customers' growth story.

Also, our route planning and optimization engine helps businesses to reduce the distance traveled by 5 percent and trip volumes by 6 percent. It drastically boosts first attempt delivery success rates, too. These combined translate into lesser fuel consumption and carbon emissions. Our latest innovation around sustainability dashboards gives insights to businesses on their carbon footprint across their shipment lifecycle.

## **Marcos to lay down food security plan**

By: Catherine S. Valente

TO head off a looming agriculture and food crisis, President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. has ordered "strategic agriculture measures" implemented immediately.

Marcos, who has assumed the reins of the Department of Agriculture (DA), is expected to lay out his food security strategy during his first State of the Nation Address (SONA) today, July 25, Executive Secretary Victor Rodriguez said.

"It is his thrust, it is his vision for us not only to have food security but food sovereignty. Meaning, if we can feed ourselves as a nation, if we can feed ourselves as Filipinos, I think we are on our way to where we want to be, much like where our neighbors are," Rodriguez said during a recent interview.

He said the President "is aware of the impending food price crisis and probably food supply crisis," and that is why he took over the DA.

poster

Press Secretary Rose Beatrix "Trixie" Cruz-Angeles acknowledged that the coronavirus pandemic, the Russia-Ukraine war, climate change, and oil price hikes are among the factors driving global food insecurity.

Cruz-Angeles assured the public that the Marcos administration is ready to stabilize the food supply and improve food production.

"Gaya nang nasabi na ni President Marcos, mangangailangan 'yan ng agarang tugon, at dapat agaran ding simulan ang pangmatagalang mga solusyon (Just like what President Marcos said, that will be immediately addressed by looking for long-term solutions)," she said.

Marcos has said his administration's efforts to reduce poverty and hunger should shift from "import-centric in which we rely heavily on importation of food products to feed the people, to production-centric in which our food requirements will be free from the dictates of market forces."

He said that only by strengthening the agricultural sector can the country achieve food sufficiency and food security.

The ultimate goal, however, is food sovereignty, he said.

"We must create a system that would allow Filipinos to reclaim power in the food supply chain. We are basically an agricultural country, so we have the resources and the land and the people to attain that food sovereignty," he said.

The President noted that the agricultural sector must provide a secure and strategic food supply for the economy to thrive and for the country to grow into an industrialized state.

He also stressed the need to revitalize research and development and to determine the best crop varieties and the best farm techniques that will work best for the different regions.

Earlier, some agri-producers said that Marcos' vision of food self-sufficiency will only be possible if the government moves away from the massive importation of fish, rice, pork, chicken and vegetables.

Tugon Kabuhayan's Asis Perez, former Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources director and convener of the food security and livelihood advocacy group, is confident the country can produce the food supply that the population requires.

Perez said it should start by ensuring local food producers have enough public and private support.

"If the President is serious about food self-sufficiency, it would be a game-changer. It would mean available and affordable Philippine-produced food. This is both a challenge and an opportunity to local food producers," he said.

"What we do need from the government is a policy environment that would make it possible," Perez said.

Management Association of the Philippines President Rogelio Singson expects the President to reveal his plans to address the looming food crisis and soaring prices of basic goods during his SONA.

Singson said that Marcos must encourage more investments that will boost the productivity of the agriculture and fishery sectors.

This can be done by providing more government resources to farmers and fishermen and by lifting land-use restrictions.

"Let's put more resources on post-harvest facilities and farm inputs to the agricultural sector, especially to increase our rice production," Singson said during a recent television interview.

The Marcos government can push for public-private partnerships in funding infrastructure projects, which Singson said he did as Public Works and Highways secretary during the term of the late president Benigno Aquino 3rd.

Public Works Secretary Manuel Bonoan earlier said Marcos has directed the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) to prioritize infrastructure projects that will help attain food security.

The projects include farm-to-market roads, Bonoan said.

The DPWH reported that last month, it completed local and farm-to-market road projects in Cabanatuan City and the towns of Gabaldon and General Tinio in Nueva Ecija.

## **The EPR Law takes on the Philippines' plastic problem**

By: Ma. Celina Añonuev

BARRING any last-minute hiccups, the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) Act of 2022 should have lapsed into law by now, which means companies are now responsible for the plastic packaging they use to protect, transport and sell their products.

The law is meant to address our country's contribution to the global plastic pollution problem, where 40 percent of global plastic waste ends up in the ocean. In 2016 alone, 11 million metric tons (MT) of plastic entered the ocean. If nothing is done, this may reach 29 million MT by 2040.

Previously, manufacturers were only responsible for the impact of the actual production of their products. But under the EPR Act, product manufacturers will be held responsible for the entire life cycle of their product — from manufacture to use and to end of life.

### **Who will be affected?**

The law covers brand owners who sell or supply any commodity under a brand or identity using a product it produced or a material supplied to it by another manufacturer or supplier. Brand owners are also responsible for their toll manufacturers as they manufacture products on behalf of the brand owner.

Large enterprises, or businesses with total assets worth more than P100 million, are required to participate in EPR. Micro, small and medium enterprises are not required to do so but are highly encouraged.

### **What materials are covered?**

The law covers plastic packaging that is used to "carry, protect, or pack goods for transportation, distribution, or sale." This includes:

- sachets, labels, laminates and other flexible plastic, whether single layer or multilayered with other materials, examples of which include packaging used for shampoo and noodles;
- rigid plastic packaging, whether layered with any other materials, and their coverings or lids such as bottles used for drinks and cosmetics;
- rigid plastic promotional items such as cutlery, plates, drinking straws or signage;
- plastic bags, including single-use plastic bags used to transport products that are provided or used upon purchase; and
- polystyrene, including both rigid (e.g., takeout containers) and foam polystyrene (e.g., cups, packing foam).

Products made of plastic are not covered by the law.

### **What do companies have to do?**

Companies must establish or phase in EPR programs for their plastic packaging within six months of the law's effectivity and register these with the National Solid Waste Management Commission.

They also need to measure their annual plastic packaging footprint and meet diversion targets. By the end of 2023, they need to demonstrate recovery and diversion of 20 percent of their 2022 plastic packaging footprint. This rises to 40 percent in 2024 with a 10-percent annual increase up to 80 percent by 2028 and onwards.

Companies are also required to submit annual compliance reports that are audited and assured by an independent third-party auditor. The report should include the company's plastic packaging footprint, amount of plastic recovered, recovery rate and EPR program compliance based on standards to be established by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

Compliance comes in many forms, including:

- recovery schemes such as redemption, buy-backs, or any other method that results in high collection and recycling rates of the plastic waste;
- recycling and other sustainable methods;
- transporting plastic waste to appropriate processing or disposal sites in the country;
- cleanup of plastic waste leaked to coastal areas, public roads and other areas;
- establishment of commercial or industrial-scale recycling, thermal treatment, or other waste diversion or disposal facility; and
- partnerships with local government units (LGUs), communities and the informal waste sector to recover plastic waste.

Note that while schemes such as redesigning products to increase reusability and recyclability, using recycled content in a product and establishing refilling stations reduce a company's overall plastic footprint, these are not considered "diversion activities."

Who can I work with on this?

Companies can do an EPR program on their own or form partnerships with other companies, nongovernment organizations and/or LGUs to scale up their activities. Companies can also join a producer responsibility organization.

For the waste footprint and diversion certification, companies need to work with independent auditors who can certify that their declared waste footprint and waste diversion are correct.

EPR program costs, meanwhile, are considered necessary business expenses and are deductible from annual gross income.

Lastly, companies that don't register their EPR programs or fail to meet the diversion targets will be fined as follows:

- for the first offense, between P5 million and P10 million;
- second offense, between P10 million and P15 million; and

– third offense, P15 million to not more than P20 million and suspension of business permit until they comply.

If a company does not meet the diversion requirements, it will have to pay the above fines or a fine twice the cost of recovering and diverting the amount of plastic needed to comply, whichever is higher.

No doubt this new law will have a significant impact on the operations of covered companies, at a time when many businesses may still be on recovery mode from the pandemic. But considering that the Philippines is one of the world's largest contributors to marine plastic pollution, it is our collective responsibility to take bold action now. Let's clean up our act while we can still make a difference.

## **US heat wave soars as California wildfire rages**

By Agence France-Presse

LOS ANGELES, California: Tens of millions of Americans already baking in a scorching heat wave braced Saturday (Sunday in Manila) for record-setting temperatures to climb while a major fire ravaged part of California.

The country's central and northeast regions face the brunt of the extreme temperatures, which are not expected to peak until Sunday at the earliest and have sent public health officials scrambling.

The sweltering heat has also increased the risk of blazes, such as the major Oak Fire, which broke out Friday in California near Yosemite National Park, where giant sequoias have already been threatened by fire in recent days.

The Oak Fire — described as "explosive" by officials — went from 60 acres to more than 6,555 (2,650 hectares) in less than 24 hours. Concentrated in Mariposa County, it has already destroyed 10 properties and damaged five others, with thousands more threatened.

As of midday Saturday, it was zero percent contained, according to California's Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.

The department said the fire's activity was "extreme" and that emergency personnel were working to evacuate residents and protect structures.

More than 400 firefighters assisted by water-dropping helicopters are fighting the blaze, the department said, but the Los Angeles Times (LA Times) cited officials who said it could take a week to contain.

"Explosive fire behavior is challenging firefighters," the department added on its website.

Climate scientist Daniel Swain tweeted that the fire was "exhibiting consistently extreme behavior," while stunned social media users posted images of billowing plumes of smoke — with the LA Times reporting that the cloud reached up to 30,000 feet into the air.

In recent years, California and other parts of the western United States have been ravaged by huge, hot and fast-moving wildfires, driven by years of drought and a warming climate.

### **Record-breaking heat**

Evidence of global warming could be seen elsewhere also, as more than a dozen US states were under a heat advisory.

Central US metropolitan areas, such as Dallas and Oklahoma City, were expected to reach highs of over 100 degrees Fahrenheit (above 38 degrees Celsius) for at least the next five days.

A heat emergency is in effect for cities up and down the northeast coast, from Boston to Philadelphia to Washington.

Not even the usually cool Pacific Northwest will escape the far-reaching heat, with the region expected to face several days in the 90s next week.

The high temperatures have already caused an uptick in emergency calls for heat-related illness.

Cities have, meanwhile, been forced to open cooling stations and increase outreach to at-risk communities such as the homeless and those without access to air-conditioning.

"This is really one of the things that we recognize in Oklahoma — heat is the number one weather-related killer across the United States. It far surpasses any other" nature-related cause of death, Joseph Kralicek, director of the Tulsa Area Emergency Management Agency, told CNN.

Residents of the central US city were expecting temperatures to reach 103 F on Saturday and up to 106 degrees on Sunday and Monday.

The nation's capital Washington was predicted to reach temperatures at or near 100 F on Saturday, with New York not far behind.

"Look for daytime max temps to eclipse the century mark in the Central Plains and record-breaking high temps from the Central Plains to the Northeast today," the National Weather Service (NWS) said in a forecast.

"Sunday grows even hotter in the northeast," it added.

Severe thunderstorms are expected in the Midwest on Saturday, with the potential for damaging winds, large hail and tornadoes, the NWS said.

Various regions of the globe have been hit by extreme heat waves in recent months, such as Western Europe in July and India in March to April, incidents that scientists say are an unmistakable sign of climate change.

## THE PHILIPPINE STAR

### **[OPINION] PBBM's SONA: Roadmap to recovery**

For more than a week now, President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. has been working on his first State of the Nation Address (SONA) that he will be delivering tomorrow. The President has been getting inputs from his Cabinet secretaries and from other segments of society, including the private business sector, to elucidate on the roadmap for the next six years, not only for our economic recovery but to bring the Philippines towards a place that is "better than the one we lost before the pandemic," as he had stressed in his inaugural address.

From the President's pronouncements, there is no doubt that he will be conducting a significantly different approach to our independent foreign policy. But while we will be strengthening relations with old allies such as the United States, we will also be reaching out to other countries, particularly within the ASEAN region, in order to pursue mutually beneficial engagements while upholding our national interests.

As the President had emphasized on several occasions, the Philippines must maintain good relations with the global community, considering that economies have become so interconnected today. And if we are to recover from the pandemic, we must work with allies and friends from the international community.

Obviously, agriculture is also high on the priority list of President BBM, who has also decided to hold the agriculture secretary portfolio for now, knowing that the sector – described as the backbone of the economy – is crucial for the country to attain food security.

To this end, the President has tasked executives of the Department of Agriculture to come up with a farm-to-market roads (FMR) master plan with priority areas to be identified in order to address supply chain issues. Meetings with the private sector were also held to come up with projects that could help our farmers.

The President is also focusing on climate change and global warming because the Philippines is one of the most vulnerable when it comes to the impact of extreme climate disasters. PBBM knows very well the kind of devastation that typhoons, earthquakes and other disasters can bring to people in provinces such as Leyte, where his mother hails from.

The President's climate change mitigation agenda dovetails very well with his advocacy for clean energy and renewables – something that he started when he was governor of Ilocos Norte where he built the Bangui wind farm that harnesses wind power to supply electricity. The province, which has been dubbed as the renewable energy capital of the Philippines, also utilizes solar and hydro energy.

On several occasions, the President told me that he wants the United States to play a major role in helping us develop clean and renewable energy sources to avert a looming energy crisis. In fact, we have been in discussions with US Special Presidential Envoy on Climate John Kerry as well as several US energy companies on the impact of climate change and alternative sources such as nuclear to accelerate the shift to clean and renewable energy.

With regard to the economy, there is no question that the President's appointment of the economic team managers that include Finance Secretary Ben Diokno and NEDA chief Arsenio Balisacan has not only been well received but also lauded even by those who did not vote for him.

For obvious reasons, I am not accustomed to praising relatives, but one cannot help but recognize someone who has stood out as the biggest asset of the President: presumptive House Speaker Martin Romualdez.

Speaker Martin's experience in the legislative branch has been described as "par excellence" because of his exemplary work, having authored over 290 bills including RA 10754 that expanded the benefits and privileges of persons with disability. This is not surprising because when he first ran as congressman for the First District of Leyte in 2007, it was out of a desire to give back to the people. He went around the province when he was young and met with fellow youth leaders for livelihood, financing and other projects for out-of-school youth.

I must admit – I admire Speaker Martin's energy and extremely pleasant personality that enables him to "unite" legislators from different party affiliations to push for the timely passage of important bills such as the two Bayanihan laws during the height of the pandemic, and the COVID-19 vaccination program law that is crucial to our economic recovery.

In fact, the presumptive Speaker is known for being a "consensus builder" – necessary in the world of politics to get proposed bills moving in Congress. Anyone who knows Speaker Martin finds him amiable – particularly members of Manila Golf where he has been president for many years.

He is basically an all-around type of person and I find him extremely astute and very good at anything that he sets his mind on.

While younger than me, Martin is street smart, resourceful, intelligent and has a good feel for people. He is highly educated, having obtained a Bachelor of Arts in Government at Cornell University, then went to Harvard for a Certificate of Special Studies in Administration. He finished his Bachelor of Laws degree from the University of the Philippines College of Law, and bravely joined the Upsilon Sigma Phi – the oldest Greek-letter fraternity in Asia – in 1985. Incidentally, Martin is currently the chairman of the Upsilon Sigma Phi Alumni Association.

I am of the strong belief that the country is fortunate to have a young and progressive Speaker like Martin Romualdez, and we certainly wish him well as he takes on the leadership of the House of Representatives in the 19th Congress.

## **World Bank: Southeast Asia needs stronger rules on plastic value chain**

By Louella Desiderio

MANILA, Philippines — Southeast Asian countries need to come up with stronger regulatory frameworks and innovative methods in the plastic value chain in order to reduce plastic waste, according to the World Bank.

In a World Bank blog post, Axel van Trotsenburg who serves as managing director of operations at the World Bank, and Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) secretary general Lim Jock Hoi said the region has become a hot spot for plastic pollution amid the region's rapid urbanization, rising middle class and lack of infrastructure for waste management.

According to the experts, half of the top 10 countries that contribute plastic leakage to rivers and seas are located in Southeast Asia.

In Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand, World Bank studies found that over 75 percent of material value of recyclable plastic worth \$6 billion is lost every year when single-use plastic is thrown out instead of being recovered and reused.

Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, consumption of masks, sanitizer bottles, online delivery packaging and other single-use items increased, exacerbating the problem of plastic waste.

As plastics are produced mainly from fossil fuels, the experts said the growing demand for such also intensifies the climate crisis.

"If no action is taken, greenhouse gas emissions from the production, recycling and incineration of plastics could account for 19 percent of the total allowable emissions under the Paris Agreement, which seeks to limit warming by 2040 to 1.5 Celsius degrees. Reducing plastics thus has a critical climate co-benefit," the experts said.

Both the industry and governments, they added, are aware of the problem and of what needs to be done to reduce the annual plastic leakage into the ocean by about 80 percent below the projected levels by 2040.

"But to be able to do its part, Southeast Asia needs stronger regulatory frameworks, more innovative business models and a wider array of funding mechanisms," they said.

As countries in the region have shared rivers and coastlines as well as markets for plastic products and waste, they said collaboration would be needed.

There are calls within ASEAN to regionally harmonize standards for recycled plastics, as well as technical requirements for plastic packaging and labeling.

This, as initiatives aimed at coming up with plastic-smart designs to help minimize waste and make it easier to reuse or recycle are sometimes prevented by the confusing and varying regulations, standards, certifications and labeling in the different countries.

Apart from harmonization of standards, the experts said there should be efforts to raise consumers' awareness on the issue to enable them to make conscious and sustainable choices when making purchases.

In order to design products to help minimize waste, they also said innovation will be needed throughout the plastic value chain. This involves using new alternative materials, sustainable packaging, innovative technologies and new types of financing.

Last month, the World Bank approved a \$20 million grant to support ASEAN's actions to address the problem including strengthening and harmonizing policies that govern the production and use of plastics across the region.

"Although it has become a hot spot for mismanaged plastic waste, the region is resolving to turn the tide," the experts said.

**=END=**