



NEWS ROUNDUP

03 August 2022 (Wednesday) [as of 10:00am]

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ABS CBN

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BUSINESS MIRROR

Spain mandates temperature highs and lows in buildings to save energy

Madrid – Spanish businesses, restaurants, museums and public transport will be required to adhere to strict temperature requirements under emergency measures the government announced on Monday to save energy.

BUSINESS WORLD

Deloitte Philippines strengthens practice with new Partners and dedicated climate & sustainability team

Deloitte Philippines is proud to welcome four new partners to its Audit & Assurance practice, and a new partner and a director to its Risk Advisory practice. Claire Orille, Jenny Menes, Lloyd Moraño, and Sonny Lalunio have between them a combined 70+ years of experience auditing organizations from a wide range of industries.

PHL to participate in ASEAN program to jointly manage large marine ecosystems

By Luisa Maria Jacinta C. Jocson

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) said it is preparing to participate in an ASEAN collaborative project on large marine ecosystems (LMEs), which is funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF).

CNN PHILIPPINES

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GMA NEWS ONLINE

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A magnitude 5.6 earthquake was recorded offshore Davao Oriental before dawn on Wednesday, according to the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (PHIVOLCS).

GOV INSIDER

Data vs disaster: Inside the Philippines' natural emergency preparedness programme

By Jaz Low

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MANILA BULLETIN

'Disaster-prone': Solons underscore need to build permanent evacuation facilities in PH

By Ellson Quismorio

There is a move in the House of Representatives to establish fully-equipped, fully-operational evacuation centers nationwide following the magnitude 7 earthquake that displaced over 33,000 people in northern Luzon.

MANILA STANDARD

Urgent Need for a DDR

By: Emil Jurado

The recent magnitude-7 earthquake that hit Northern Luzon with epicenter in the town of Tayum in Abra emphasizes once again the urgency of the passage of the DDR (Department of Disaster Resilience) by the Senate.

PHILIPPINE INQUIRER

Heavy rains flood 3 Ifugao villages

By: Villamor Visaya Jr.

Alfonso Lista, Ifugao—Heavy rains on Monday, August 1, submerged three low-lying villages in Lamut town in this province in floodwater.

Non-stop rains flood 85 hectares of rice fields, 21 barangays in Antique

By: Gerica Vienne Ferrer

San Jose De Buenavista, Antique — At least 85 hectares of rice fields and 21 barangays in the province of Antique were affected by non-stop rains brought about by Tropical Depression Ester last Saturday.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

PH, France eye stronger ties on defense, climate change

By Priam Nepomuceno

The Philippines and France are looking at broadening cooperation in climate change initiatives and defense acquisition, among others.

PHILIPPINE STAR

[OPINION] 'Household risk' for COVID-19

By: Susan Mercado

Ask anyone who has caught COVID-19 in recent weeks about how they got it. They are likely to say "it entered my household." They will also tell you that some had mild or no symptoms, and others in the family were incapacitated for a few days and continued to have symptoms way over the seven-day isolation.

PHILVOLCS

Earthquake Information No.1: Magnitude 5.8 hits Davao Oriental

Date and Time: 03 August 2022 - 03:19 AM

Magnitude = 5.8

Depth = 010 km

Location = 07.15°N, 126.83°E - 032 km S 78° E of Manay (Davao Oriental)

Earthquake Information No. 1: Magnitude 5.6 hits Sultan Kudrat

Date and Time: 02 August 2022 - 01:24 PM

Magnitude = 5.6

Depth = 036 km

Location = 06.72°N, 123.75°E - 036 km N 75° W of Lebak (Sultan Kudarat)

THE MANILA TIMES

[OPINION] Inconvenient facts about climate change theology and the climate agenda

By: Yen Makabenta

I am asked by readers and fellow skeptics (on the climate apocalypse and the climate change movement) to comment on a privilege speech delivered by Sen. Loren Legarda at the Senate last Tuesday, July 26.

Keep Southeast Asia nuke-free – DFA chief

By Bernadette E. Tamayo

Nothing justifies the use of nuclear weapons and Southeast Asia should remain a nuclear-free region, Foreign Affairs Secretary Enrique Manalo said during the 10th Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in New York that began on Aug. 1, 2022.

Prospects for the maritime industry under the SONA

By Atty. Brenda V. Pimentel

Before President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.'s delivery of his State of the Nation Address (SONA) last July 15, there was anxious expectation marked by optimism among the maritime stakeholders that this time, the maritime industry will be included in the Philippine President's platform of government. The expectation is not without basis, after all, President Marcos Jr. must have acquired that strong affinity to the sea with his ancestral roots founded in the coastal province of Ilocos Norte and the island of Leyte. As governor of Ilocos Norte, he is not oblivious of the beauty of the waters that line the coast of his home province. It is therefore easy to assume he shares the Filipino's pride in being a citizen of the Philippine archipelago.

Information and Knowledge Management Division

ABS CBN

SEC approves SM Investment's acquisition of Philippine Geothermal Production

Manila - The Securities and Exchange Commission has approved SM Investment Corp's acquisition of 81 percent stake in AllfirstEquity Holdings Inc in exchange for SMIC shares, the Sy-led firm said Tuesday.

Allfirst is the holding company for the Philippine Geothermal Production Company Inc (PGPC).

The deal will bring SMIC's ownership in PGPC to 100 percent, the group said in a disclosure to the stock exchange.

The total consideration paid for is at P15.76 billion, SMIC said, adding that it involves the issuance of 17.44 million new shares to the sellers.

SMIC said the acquisition would allow the company to invest directly in clean renewable energy-related production.

"The acquisition of PGPC is sizeable, accretive to our shareholders and a strong strategic fit with our portfolio of investments in high growth sectors in the Philippines," SMIC president and CEO Frederic Dybuncio said.

"It further reinforces the SM Group's commitment to sustainability, good governance and acting as a catalyst for responsible development in the communities we serve," he added.

PGPC operates Tiwi steam field in Albay, the first commercial-scale geothermal steam field in Southeast Asia and Mak-Ban in Laguna, among others.

The two have a combined capacity to generate geothermal steam sufficient to produce about 300 MW of electricity, SMIC said.

BUSINESS MIRROR

Spain mandates temperature highs and lows in buildings to save energy

Madrid – Spanish businesses, restaurants, museums and public transport will be required to adhere to strict temperature requirements under emergency measures the government announced on Monday to save energy.

High summer temperatures and limits on gas supplies because of the war in Ukraine are straining Europe's power systems. Last month the European Union proposed a 15% cut in gas use from August to March to its 27 members.

The plan establishes a minimum temperature of 27 Celsius (80 Fahrenheit) in summer and a maximum of 19 C (66 F) in winter.

It will take effect a week after publication in the official bulletin and remain in place until November 2023, Spain's Minister for Ecological Transition and Demographic Challenge, Teresa Ribera said.

The measures promote working remotely several days a week to save fuel, switching off lights in public buildings and shop windows when not in use, and closing windows and doors to reduce the strain on air conditioning and heating systems.

The measures remain only recommendations for private households.

Energy Minister Teresa Ribera said last week households could save energy for example by turning off lights and lowering blinds. [Read full story](#)

The government has already approved mass installation of solar panels on the roof public buildings' roofs and encouraged civil servants to work more from home. [Read full story](#)

Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez proposed last week that ministers, public officials and private sector employees stop wearing neckties during hot summer months.

BUSINESS WORLD

Deloitte Philippines strengthens practice with new Partners and dedicated climate & sustainability team

Deloitte Philippines is proud to welcome four new partners to its Audit & Assurance practice, and a new partner and a director to its Risk Advisory practice. Claire Orille, Jenny Menes, Lloyd Moraño, and Sonny Lalunio have between them a combined 70+ years of experience auditing organizations from a wide range of industries.

Orille is a homegrown talent of Deloitte Philippines, beginning her professional career with the firm as a junior auditor. Since then, she has logged extensive work auditing large, publicly listed entities and multinational companies, and specializes in working with organizations from the consumer, life sciences & health care, and energy, resources & industrials sectors.

Before joining Deloitte Philippines, Menes was an auditor at Deloitte Indonesia and another Big 4 firm. She specializes in the audit of companies from the life sciences & health care, and industrial products sectors, and leads the Audit & Assurance division's Technical Research Group, where she provides consultation advice on contentious technical issues.

Like Menes, Moraño also worked as an auditor overseas with a Big 4 firm, where he held the post of Operations Head for the main office. While overseas, he gained extensive experience working with high-profile, publicly listed companies, specializing in the audit of organizations in the telecommunications, insurance, and oil & gas sectors. In addition to being an Audit Partner, Moraño takes on the role of Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Leader at Deloitte Philippines.

Lalunio joined Deloitte Philippines from another local auditing firm where he oversaw the Audit & Assurance division's technical standards, quality control, methodology, and training functions. He also has audit experience overseas and now specializes in auditing organizations in the following sectors: financial services, real estate, business process outsourcing, manufacturing, and not-for-profit organizations.

Deloitte Philippines also strengthened its Risk Advisory (RA) practice with the addition of a new partner – Ronald Gonzales – and the significant expansion of its Climate & Sustainability advisory team, led by Director Bonar Laureto, also under RA.

Gonzales joins Deloitte Philippines from one of the country's largest and most diversified conglomerates, where he held the role of Chief Information Security Officer. He has more than two decades of experience in the areas of information risk management, enterprise risk management, security architecture, and data privacy, and has worked with organizations from a broad range of sectors including consumer goods, banking, transportation, telecommunications, manufacturing, and health care. Gonzales is certified in IT Infrastructure Library (ITIL) Foundations. He is also a Computer Hacking Forensics

Investigator (CHFI), an Information Security Management System (ISMS-ISO/IEC 2700i) Certified Practitioner, and a Certified Information Security Manager (CISM).

Recognizing the growing threat of climate change and the opportunities for organizations to be a part of the solution, Deloitte Philippines brought on board a nine-person team of professionals with a combined 50+ years of experience working in the fields of sustainability, climate change, and risk management. Led by Director Bonar Laureto, the Climate & Sustainability advisory team brings to the table specialized knowledge in areas such as ESG reporting, sustainability strategy & roadmaps, decarbonization, climate resilience, circular economy, and ocean plastics and solid waste management to partner with organizations in taking bold climate action now.

Laureto has over 17 years of experience working with multi-stakeholder groups to deliver systemic solutions addressing climate change and other sustainable development challenges. In 2019, he was a lead consultant for a project to design and pilot-test a Philippine-customized, private sector-led Extended Producers' Responsibility (EPR) system. The output, which includes standards for methodologies and protocols for waste footprint accounting and waste diversion accounting and certification, will enable companies – particularly those that use plastic packaging – to effectively meet compliance requirements under the country's EPR Law.

With over 345,000 people in 150 countries, Deloitte provides audit & assurance, consulting, financial advisory, risk advisory, tax and related services to public and private clients across multiple industries. These new leaders, who were elevated to their roles in the Philippine practice during a period of great disruption, signal Deloitte Philippines' commitment to remain a trusted partner and advisor to its clients, especially during times of uncertainty. As the world steadily reopens and the Philippines digs into the hard work of recovering from the coronavirus pandemic, Deloitte Philippines is ready to meet the challenges of, and help clients thrive in, the new world of work.

PHL to participate in ASEAN program to jointly manage large marine ecosystems

By Luisa Maria Jacinta C. Jocson

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) said it is preparing to participate in an ASEAN collaborative project on large marine ecosystems (LMEs), which is funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF).

“The project is expected to complement our existing efforts in the Philippines towards productive partnerships with the neighboring countries in terms of scaling up management under the regional marine protected area network approach,” DENR Foreign-Assisted and Special Projects Service Director Al O. Orolfo said.

According to the DENR, ASEAN coastal and marine areas are home to 20% of the world’s seagrass beds, a third of worlds mangrove forests with 45 to 75 true species, and a third of the world’s coral reefs, with more than 75% of coral species and 40% of fish species.

The project aims to manage networks of marine protected areas in LMEs, which are a source of livelihood for fishermen. LMEs are marine areas extending beyond national boundaries.

“It aims to develop and improve the management of networks of marine protected areas (MPAs) and marine corridors within selected LMEs in the ASEAN region for the conservation of globally significant biodiversity. It will support sustainable fisheries and other ecosystem goods and services,” the DENR added.

The collaboration will involve the Philippines, Indonesia, and Thailand, with ultimate participation targeted at least five ASEAN members.

Mr. Orolfo said the collaborative management approach hopes to address climate change, marine pollution and biodiversity loss.

The GEF tallies about 66 LMEs worldwide, with the program supporting the sustainable governance of 23.

CNN PHILIPPINES

Magnitude 5.6 quake hits Sultan Kudarat

By: Faith Yuen Wei Ragasa

A magnitude 5.6 earthquake jolted Sultan Kudarat province Tuesday afternoon, state seismologists reported.

The quake hit 36 kilometers northwest of the province's Lebak municipality at 1:24 p.m. based on the advisory of the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs).

The temblor was also felt in other parts of Mindanao — at Intensity 3 in Cotabato City, Intensity 2 in General Santos City and Intensity 1 in Zamboanga City.

Phivolcs warns of aftershocks but no damage is expected.

GMA NEWS ONLINE

Magnitude 5.6 earthquake strikes offshore Davao Oriental

A magnitude 5.6 earthquake was recorded offshore Davao Oriental before dawn on Wednesday, according to the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (PHIVOLCS).

The tectonic quake occurred at 3:19 a.m.

Its epicenter was located at 07.13°N, 126.99°E - 051 km S 79° E of the municipality of Manay in Davao Oriental at a depth of 20 km.

The earthquake was first reported by PHIVOLCS as having magnitude 5.8, but then lowered it to magnitude 5.6.

Intensity IV was felt in the municipalities of Manay, Tarragona, and Caraga in Davao Oriental.

Intensity III meanwhile was felt in the City of Mati and municipality of Baganga in Davao Oriental.

Intensity II on the other hand was felt in Davao City.

No damage is expected but aftershocks may occur, PHIVOLCS said.

GOV INSIDER

Data vs disaster: Inside the Philippines' natural emergency preparedness programme

By Jaz Low

One of the most powerful tropical cyclones ever recorded struck the Philippines nine years ago. Six-metre storm surges hurled boats inland, collapsed buildings, and swept debris out to sea. Typhoon Haiyan devastated large parts of the country and left thousands of people dead.

The catastrophic typhoon indelibly underscored the importance of disaster response and recovery among the country's authorities. Today, the Philippines has beefed up its resilience by creating a centralised database to predict natural hazards.

Constant vigilance

Located in the Pacific typhoon belt, the Philippines experiences many forms of natural disasters. Alongside typhoons, earthquakes, floods, volcanic eruptions and landslides are common, causing much suffering and millions of dollars of damage.

In response to these threats, the United Nations Development Programme in the Philippines and the Australian government have launched a natural disaster mitigation initiative named Shield – the Strengthening Institutions and Empowering Localities against Disasters and Climate Change Program.

Shield's aim is to facilitate work with local governments on building resilience against natural hazards and climate change.

One of the projects that Shield supports is GeoRiskPH, a multi-agency government initiative led by the Department of Science and Technology that serves as a centralised database to help government and the public anticipate and prepare for natural disasters.

"The information warehouse is vital in ensuring that there is fluid data sharing among agencies to optimise disaster planning," says Rodolfo Calzado Jr, a Manila-based National Coordinator at the UNDP.

This database supports a number of functions. One function allows users to find out whether a location is prone to natural hazards, allowing them to zoom in to observe roads, bridges, houses and other infrastructure that might be vulnerable. It also produces hazard assessment reports in just 15 seconds, far more quickly than the one to three days it may take government agencies to generate them manually.

Another function of the database generates maps, charts and graphs to help members of the public understand the scale of impending disasters and take necessary precautions against them, showing exactly which areas of land, population groups and health facilities are likely to be affected.

Monitoring government money

In addition to working to mitigate natural disasters, the UNDP is also committed to advancing social development in the Philippines. It has created an application named Development through Local Indicators and Vulnerability Exposure Database (DevLIVE+) to monitor natural hazards and the delivery of social services.

DevLIVE+ helps authorities make decisions by studying a number of data sets, including geographic coordinates tagged to media. Such data can reveal that many people in a certain region may be seeking the types of financial relief available to single mothers, for instance, indicating that the government should divert more of those types of resources to the area.

By the same token, if large numbers of complaints are made about a particular policy, DevLIVE+ prompts authorities to implement changes.

Not only can authorities use DevLIVE+ to gauge how effective community programmes are, but they can use its data to improve budgeting. “They can allocate more funds to areas that require more interventions,” Calzado says.

Community focus

The Piagapo municipal government in the southern region of Mindanao used the DevLIVE+ database to target beneficiaries for a social assistance and relief goods distribution effort.

In the northern city of Vigan, DevLIVE+ data was crucial to helping the government plan and manage its early childhood care and development programme. Findings revealed that many children lagged behind in reading skills for their age group, so the city put together an after-school reading programme to boost comprehension skills. Initially, 30 per cent of children were deemed to possess inadequate reading abilities, but by the end of the initiative, that figure had dropped to 10 per cent.

The city also developed the Vigan Access Card, which allows citizens to access public amenities. By keeping track of how often facilities were used through DevLIVE+, government officials were able to refine city planning. For instance, if the public library experienced constant crowding, authorities could introduce measures to regulate traffic or construct more libraries around the city.

The UNDP will continue to support the Philippines disaster risk management efforts and fine-tune its social development programmes. Although Typhoon Haiyan might have left the country on the back foot in 2013, data is helping to prepare Philippine communities on all fronts today.

MANILA BULLETIN

'Disaster-prone': Solons underscore need to build permanent evacuation facilities in PH

By Ellson Quismorio

There is a move in the House of Representatives to establish fully-equipped, fully-operational evacuation centers nationwide following the magnitude 7 earthquake that displaced over 33,000 people in northern Luzon.

Camarines Sur 2nd district Rep. LRay Villafuerte led the filing of House Bill (HB) No.1091, which provides for immediate and temporary accommodation for people who have been evacuated or dislocated from their homes due to emergency events such as earthquakes; typhoons, floods, storm surges, droughts, and other severe climate disturbances; fires; and disease outbreaks that present imminent danger to life and property.

"The dislocation of thousand of families as an offshoot of the magnitude 7 earthquake that jolted Abra and other parts of the north has underlined anew the urgency of establishing disaster-resilient evacuation centers for the temporary shelter of those adversely affected by the onslaught of natural calamities and disease outbreaks," said Villafuerte, one of four authors of the measure.

"The Covid-19 pandemic, the climate crisis and this latest earthquake have heightened the need for the construction of permanent evacuation centers in every city and municipality to ensure that evacuees have enough safe, well-ventilated, comfortable private spaces to go to during times of disasters," added the solon, who is vice president for political affairs of the National Unity Party (NUP).

The bill provides that evacuation centers shall be constructed and designed to withstand super typhoons or wind speeds of at least 300 kilometers per hour (300 kph) and earthquakes of magnitude 8.

The bill specifies that these facilities must be calamity-resilient, built with sturdy materials and in accordance with the specifications of Republic Act (RA) No. 6541, otherwise known as the "National Building Code of the Philippines," or shall be at par with the standards set by the International Building Code.

"The Philippines is susceptible to natural hazards, unforeseen disasters and other calamities because of its location along the so-called 'Pacific Ring of Fire,' an area where earthquakes and volcanic eruptions are more recurring than in any other areas of the world," the Bicolano and his three co-authors said.

"The country fronts the Pacific Ocean, making it vulnerable to typhoons and related weather disturbances regularly, especially at the onset of climate change," they added.

Villafuerte first proposed the construction of permanent evacuation facilities in September 2018, following the onslaught in Luzon of supertyphoon “Ompong,” which killed at least 65 people and sent over 100,000 people fleeing to evacuation centers.

Villafuerte, a former deputy speaker, filed HB No.1091 along with Camarines Sur Reps Miguel Luis Villafuerte (5th district) and Tsuyoshi Anthony Horibata (1st district), and Bicol Saro Party-List Rep. Nicolas Enciso VIII.

MANILA STANDARD

Urgent Need for a DDR

By: Emil Jurado

The recent magnitude-7 earthquake that hit Northern Luzon with epicenter in the town of Tayum in Abra emphasizes once again the urgency of the passage of the DDR (Department of Disaster Resilience) by the Senate.

This bill has been pending for so long in the Senate, but despite the calamities and disasters hitting the Philippines, a disaster-prone country, the Senate did not enact it in the 18th Congress.

I have been writing columns urging the creation of this department because I know that in a country like the Philippines, disaster and calamities can hit anytime, such as earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, typhoons, floods, and storm surges like that of typhoon Yolanda in Tacloban years ago, Santa Banana.

President Marcos realizes the need for such a body that will serve to mitigate disaster and calamities but only an “agency” under the Office of the President because he said a “department” would cost a lot of money.

Santa Banana, while President Marcos and Senate President Migz Zubiri have the last say whether it will be a department or just an agency under the office of the President, in my opinion, since disasters and calamities can hit the Philippines at any time, I believe a department is necessary.

I believe, however, that a separate department is more practical and urgently needed because it will have its own budget.

A DDR with its own budget and allocation would be able to have the funds for the rescue, relief and rehabilitation of the disaster affected areas of the country.

Technical staff will consist of experts and it will take over the functions of the NDRRMC (National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council). A mere agency will not answer the need of the country to effectively mitigate disasters and calamities.

The DDR becomes more urgent because it will focus itself on strategizing and meeting the problems of disaster-prone areas of the Philippines, especially the effects of disasters and calamities like the loss of lives, loss of agriculture, loss of livelihood and infrastructure and to build permanent evacuation centers where they are needed.

It must be noted that while we have the NDRRMC, it is only an ad hoc body, under the Civil Defense Bureau of the Department of National Defense.

What we need, my gulay, is a permanent DDR because disasters and calamities affect everybody.

In the case of earthquakes, we must not forget that the Philippines is in the Pacific Ring of Fire, a region around much of the rim of the Pacific Ocean where many volcanic eruptions and earthquakes occur.

Earthquakes in the Philippines can happen anytime and anywhere without warning.

As to President Marcos saying a department will cost money, I think it becomes immaterial when we count all the effects of disasters and calamities like devastation of agriculture and infrastructure, loss of livelihood, and especially in the loss of lives.

There is now a move in the Senate by Senator Bong Go to enact the DDR bill.

I think this must be given priority by President Marcos.

I emphasize once again the need for a DDR in the wake of the recent earthquake in Abra, that affected almost all of Northern Luzon.

We see the disastrous effects of the earthquake to infrastructure, to heritage buildings and churches and ultimately to tourism.

I know quite well that Vigan is an important tourist destination because of its historical and heritage buildings and houses.

I myself and my family have been there many times because we enjoy seeing the churches, heritage homes and sites.

Once again, I believe the Senate should now enact the long pending DDR bill and not wait for President Marcos to put up an agency as he said, considering the fact that our country is prone to so many disasters and calamities, and with climate change, these disasters and calamities will happen more frequently, my gulay.

There is really a need for such a department, instead of just an agency under the Office of the President.

It is very alarming to know that monkeypox is now in the Philippines. The first case of monkeypox in our country was reported last Friday by the DOH.

To answer the question how dangerous it is, according to the WHO (World Health Organization), monkeypox is a virus that typically causes mild symptoms including fever, body aches and pus-filled skin lesions. Recovery time is within two to four weeks.

The WHO also said that anyone can spread the virus primarily via intimate skin-to-skin contact, usually with someone who has an active rash, as well as via contact with contaminated clothes or bedding.

Like with COVID-19, we must protect ourselves by avoiding close personal contact with someone who has an illness presenting with a distinctive rash, or is unwell according to the WHO.

I pray that monkeypox will not spread in the country. It might not be as well known as COVID-19, but in my opinion, it is very alarming.

President Marcos had all his legal team headed by former Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile to decide what measure to take following the decision of the ICC (International Criminal Court) to prove the alleged crimes against humanity committed by the former President Rodrigo Duterte in his war against illegal drugs.

It is interesting to note that the legal team of President Marcos also has Duterte's former spokesman Harry Roque because of his expertise on international law.

Inside reports tell me, however, my gulay, that the legal team may decide against the return of the Philippines to the fold of the ICC .

The legal team is most likely to deny the alleged investigation of the crimes against humanity committed by Duterte, considering the fact that the judicial system of the Philippines is working.

In my opinion, it's just as well.

PHILIPPINE INQUIRER

Heavy rains flood 3 Ifugao villages

By: Villamor Visaya Jr.

Alfonso Lista, Ifugao—Heavy rains on Monday, August 1, submerged three low-lying villages in Lamut town in this province in floodwater.

The Lamut municipal disaster risk reduction and management office (MDRRMO) said the flood struck the town in the afternoon, inundating Bimpal, Nayon, and Payawan villages.

But no families were evacuated after the floodwater subsided in the evening, the MDRRMO said in a report.

Lamut Mayor Victomar Bunnol said they immediately distributed relief goods to the affected villagers.

Junifer Ngannoy, head of the Lamut MDRRMO, said all major roads in the town remained passable after the flooding.

Non-stop rains flood 85 hectares of rice fields, 21 barangays in Antique

By: Gerica Vienne Ferrer

San Jose De Buenavista, Antique — At least 85 hectares of rice fields and 21 barangays in the province of Antique were affected by non-stop rains brought about by Tropical Depression Ester last Saturday.

According to Broderick Tan, Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Officer, P3.5 million worth of rice crops were affected by the flood based on the initial report from the Office of the Provincial Agriculturist (OPA).

At least 21 barangays in the province were affected: 11 in the municipality of Sibalom, nine in San Jose, and one in Hamtic.

At least 128 families who were evacuated due to the flooding have already returned to their respective homes as the weather improved.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

PH, France eye stronger ties on defense, climate change

By Priam Nepomuceno

The Philippines and France are looking at broadening cooperation in climate change initiatives and defense acquisition, among others.

Department of National Defense (DND) officer-in-charge, Undersecretary Jose Faustino Jr. made this remark in a meeting with French Ambassador to Manila Michèle Boccoz at Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City on Monday.

Boccoz noted that the 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Philippines and France has been observed with a six-month commemoration since June 26.

"Both sides expressed keen interest in broadening the Philippines-France bilateral defense relations by exploring more areas of cooperation, such as addressing climate change, humanitarian assistance and disaster response (HADR), information-sharing, and defense acquisition," DND spokesperson Arsenio Andolong said in a statement Tuesday.

Also present during the meeting were officials from the DND and the French Embassy.

"Senior Undersecretary Faustino Jr. extended the DND's congratulations in connection with the 233rd anniversary of the French National Day last 14 July 2022. The Philippines side also expressed appreciation for the military education and training opportunities offered by France to the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP)," Andolong said.

Boccoz said the Indo-Pacific region is a priority for Paris, adding that defense and security is the first pillar of its Indo-Pacific Strategy.

"Both sides recognized the importance of the Asean (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) Centrality and the Asean Outlook in the Indo-Pacific (AOIP). Senior Undersecretary Faustino reaffirmed the Philippines' full support for France's engagement with Asean," Andolong said.

PHILIPPINE STAR

[OPINION] 'Household risk' for COVID-19

By: Susan Mercado

Ask anyone who has caught COVID-19 in recent weeks about how they got it. They are likely to say “it entered my household.” They will also tell you that some had mild or no symptoms, and others in the family were incapacitated for a few days and continued to have symptoms way over the seven-day isolation.

We sighed with relief when we found out that Omicron BA.5 results in less severe symptoms compared to the other variants; however it is highly transmissible. While that sounded better, in reality what has happened is that people have been programmed to think less about what could happen to their families, and more about their individual risk.

Using the principle of “individual risk” is a Western notion in public health prevention. This is probably because Western societies are individualistic. Western public health prevention programs – that we tend to copy – focus on what “a person should do” to stay healthy. But in our context in Asia and the Pacific, prevention must be grounded in collective action and “taking care of each other” – rather than just “taking care of myself.” This is why approaches to public health prevention that rely on the principles of “individual behavior change” have not resulted in better public health outcomes for the public health challenges of the Philippines today.

Take tuberculosis for example. We have at least a million active cases every year, with about 70 deaths every day. We have gotten to this disastrous level of tuberculosis using an individual risk approach. When we diagnose one person with tuberculosis, shouldn't our health teams check the whole family, look at household ventilation and nutrition, even check the workplace? No, we just treat the individual patients – and send them back to the conditions that made them sick in the first place.

Take hypertension as another example. A fourth of the adult population, possibly 17 million Filipinos, are hypertensive. This does not include 32 percent of those with hypertension who drop dead without knowing their blood pressure. Then there are the 5 million Filipinos who know they have hypertension, but take no medications. The yearly deaths from heart attacks are estimated at 100,000 that translate to roughly 274 deaths per day. When we have a death from a heart attack, shouldn't we be taking everyone's blood pressure in the family? Should we not be educating entire households about reducing salt and fat in the family meals? Should we not be encouraging household physical activity and recreation in groups?

Against this backdrop of co-morbidities from tuberculosis and hypertension – not to mention diabetes, asthma, cancer and the like – should we not be educating our people about household risk to COVID-19?

A big and resounding yes to minimum public health standards – mask wearing, social distancing, staying home when one is sick, handwashing. We already know that. But we need a household risk approach in our public health communication for Omicron BA.5 because of its high transmissibility.

Families need to understand their “household risk” and take care of each other, because of the co-morbidities that run into millions, and the presence of seniors in the home who are unvaccinated and at risk because of their age, and when there are children below the age of six – as Dr. John Wong of Epimetrix has recently reported – who have higher severe COVID and death rates compared to other age groups of children.

In 2021, WHO published guidelines on family approach; but in the context of Asia and the Pacific and its many informal settlements and poor housing conditions where multiple families live in under one roof, a household approach is more appropriate.

What are your household risks for COVID-19 when the variant is highly transmissible? The more of these you have in your living quarters, the greater your household risk: unvaccinated adults; unvaccinated children; seniors who refuse vaccination; adults who refuse boosters; a health worker who sees patients; an employee who uses public transportation; young adults who go to crowded areas; poorly ventilated house; cramped living conditions; working adults who refuse to stay home when they are sick; refusal to wear a mask at home when symptoms occur; household helpers who go home on weekends; anyone in the household who does not inform the others of possible exposure.

The way to survive this new wave of Omicron BA.5 is for the household to make sure that every eligible person is fully vaccinated and boosted. This has got to be a collective effort. We need to be responsible for each other – including the seniors who are refusing the shots. You are only as safe as the people you live with. If you answered yes to any of the above, it is time to have a household meeting and discuss your collective risk.

Omicron BA.5 is contagious and is notorious for “immune escape” – vaccination and previous infection is NOT a guarantee that you cannot get it. However, if you are fully vaccinated the likelihood of severe disease is minimal.

So why not just let everyone get infected and develop natural immunity? Well, the more this virus reproduces, the greater the chances it will mutate further. And who knows what the next mutation will be like?

I caught COVID-19 a few weeks ago from a household exposure. I’ve evaded this nasty bug in the community for more than two years through all the things an individual must do. But when it entered my household, there was very little I could do. I had fever, chills and vomiting. Couldn’t get up for a few days. Couldn’t eat. I have recovered well. But now into my fourth week, I occasionally feel a little weak and wonder what would have happened if I had not been fully vaccinated and fully boosted.

What WHO calls the “wall of immunity” has to start in your household. It is your responsibility to see to it that everyone is vaccinated and boosted and following minimum health standards. The consequences of continuing with an individual approach to risk are unthinkable – but we are headed in that direction unless we all reduce our household risk.

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THE MANILA TIMES

[OPINION] Inconvenient facts about climate change theology and the climate agenda

By: **Yen Makabenta**

I am asked by readers and fellow skeptics (on the climate apocalypse and the climate change movement) to comment on a privilege speech delivered by Sen. Loren Legarda at the Senate last Tuesday, July 26.

She tackled in one swoop the twin challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic and the eschatological climate crisis.

The senator beat her Senate colleagues to the draw in winning the distinction of delivering the very first privilege speech in the Senate of the 19th Congress.

Two crises

In her speech, Senator Legarda urged the national government (both the President and the legislature) to match the aggressive program to promote full national recovery from the pandemic with an equally determined pouring of funds and effort into the fight against climate change.

I shall quote her words lest I misrepresent her thinking:

"As we pull ourselves up from the pandemic, we must also put in the forefront of our collective awareness how we should deal with the graver and irreversible impacts of the climate crisis.

"We are obviously living in challenging times of climatic changes that are unparalleled over thousands to millions of years.

"More troubling is that the Philippines ranked fourth among countries most affected by long-term climate change, according to the 2021 Global Risk Index. This is all the more reason for us to accelerate our efforts in climate action, paralleling our fight with this pandemic.

"Only through a climate pathway can we truly recover in a resilient and sustainable manner. As concluded in the Paris Agreement, among others, all countries must commit to limiting global warming by 1.5 degrees Celsius. In order to achieve this, a net-zero global economy must be targeted worldwide by reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 45 percent by 2030, or by 7.6 percent every year from 2020 to 2030, to reach net zero by 2050.

"We are committed to support this global goal through our Nationally Determined Contribution, which intends to avoid and cut emissions to 75 percent by 2030 and

modernize our carbon-intensive sectors on agriculture, waste, industry, transport and energy.

"We believe that climate-resilient development is the right path to improving the lives of our vulnerable population, while also unlocking our potential for green growth."

She recited all the familiar nostrums and warnings of the climate change movement.

There can be no doubting her bona fides in worshiping in the church of climate change, and in marching to save the planet.

But there are also holes in the climate movement and its proposed policies that should be explained before Congress and the executive rush to place our country on the frontlines of the global fight against climate change.

Climate change agenda weaknesses

My chief comment on this screed on climate change is to enumerate innumerable inconvenient facts in the climate change movement and contrarian developments in climate policymaking that are now unraveling amid the global food and energy crises.

It was the late Washington Post columnist and author Charles Krauthammer who characterized climate change theory and belief as "the church of global warming." In his book, *Things That Matter* (Crown Forum, New York, 2013). He wrote:

"Predictions of catastrophe depend on models. Models depend on assumptions about complex planetary systems — from ocean currents to cloud formation — that no one fully understands. Which is why the models are inherently flawed and forever changing. The doomsday scenarios posit a cascade of events, each with a certain probability. The multiple improbability of their simultaneous occurrence renders all such predictions entirely speculative."

The late British prime minister Margaret Thatcher pointedly titled a brief section in her book *Statecraft* (Harper, New York, 2002), "Hot air and global warming."

Other notables labeled global warming or climate change a "travesty" (George Will), a "hoax" (Cal Thomas) and "science fiction" (Sen. Jim Inhofe).

The name-calling and putdowns are dispiriting, but tougher still are the serious lapses in the theory and the movement of climate change that serious analysts have pointed out.

And these, I submit, must be brought to the attention of Congress and answered before our legislators move to legislate actions to mitigate or adapt to climate change.

Legarda's rhetoric will not be enough. Her proposals must weather serious scrutiny and debate, including a Senate inquiry.

In order of seriousness, I list down the following as vulnerabilities of the entire climate change agenda. These are:

1. The continuing struggle of climate change theory and belief to find a name that it can stick to.
2. The retreat to silence of Nobel Peace laureate Al Gore and acknowledged pope of global warming. The former US vice president has gone into the climate movement and debate. He seems to have nothing more to say about climate change.
3. The authoritarian threat of President Joe Biden to declare a climate emergency, and his subsequent retreat from the initiative.
4. The publication and release of two opinion polls in the US that show the great majority of the American people do not rate climate as a major concern. In one poll, climate ranked last.
5. The growing reversal of the gains in the loud campaign against fossil fuels and for renewable energy. The US media now report a comeback by both coal power and nuclear energy. The American people long for the return of their fossil fuel economy.
6. The global sentiment against green inflation, as the green agenda is increasingly perceived as the chief cause of runaway inflation today.
7. The testimony of many scientists, some of whom worked in the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), that there is to date no scientific evidence to prove the case of the climate change movement.

Religion in search of a name

First, the alarmist community cannot even agree on what to call the problem.

As the would-be high priestess of climate change in the Philippines, Senator Legarda needs to explain a striking phenomenon: climate change advocates and believers are still struggling up to now to find a name for their theology and church.

Their adherents in the media are bewildered by the frequent change in name for a problem that is supposed to be existential and will herald the end of the world.

In the beginning, the problem was called "inadvertent climate modification."

Then it became "global warming."

From global warming, they then decided to substitute "climate change."

And now there is a move to drop "climate change" and replace it with "climate emergency."

Ed Henry of Fox News mocked the science community's terminology on man-made climate change.

"Before it was 'global warming', then it was 'climate change', now maybe 'extreme weather'?" he observed. "The left keeps rolling out new terms but pushing the same agenda change. Why do they keep shifting the language?"

However, climate change, which references the overall impact on the planet as a result of human carbon emissions, is not the same thing as global warming, a term used to describe the increased temperature on the earth's surface as one effect from climate change. In the 1970s, the term "inadvertent climate modification" was used to refer to the impact of increased carbon dioxide on the planet, but the science community shifted from that phrase after realizing the changes are no longer inadvertent since awareness of the effects had grown.

Radio host Mike Slater believes he has the real answer though, as he told Henry progressives are changing terms "because they are not winning the argument."

"That's what the left does when they don't win the argument, they change the words," he said. "'Alien', to 'illegal immigrants', to 'undocumented', and now 'Dreamers', right?"

The term "climate change" was first suggested by Republican adviser Frank Luntz who reportedly penned a memo to President George W. Bush that advised using the new term over the then more threatening term, "global warming."

The latest development in this name-changing saga is the move of Scientific American in 2021 to drop the term "climate change" and replace it with "climate emergency," a term that they feel is more appropriate for the state of the planet and humanity.

Comparing Earth's environmental concerns to medical situations that require 911 help, senior editor Mark Fischetti said there was no mistaking the planet is in an emergency of its own. "...you have the biggest environmental emergency to beset the Earth in millennia: climate change."

"Journalism should reflect what science says: the climate emergency is here," he said.

The magazine joins Columbia Journalism Review, The Nation, The Guardian, Noticias Telemundo, Al Jazeera, Japan's Asahi Shimbun and La Repubblica of Italy in making the change in terminology.

"The planet is heating up way too fast. It's time for journalism to recognize that the climate emergency is here," their statement read in part. "This is a statement of science, not politics."

"Why 'emergency'? Because words matter. To preserve a livable planet, humanity must take action immediately," the publication continued.

The statement said the decision was spurred in part by the media's use of "emergency" when covering the coronavirus pandemic.

If climate change is passé, what is Senator Legarda going to do now? (To be continued on Thursday, Aug. 4, 2022)

Inconvenient facts about climate change theology and the climate agenda

Keep Southeast Asia nuke-free – DFA chief

By Bernadette E. Tamayo

Nothing justifies the use of nuclear weapons and Southeast Asia should remain a nuclear-free region, Foreign Affairs Secretary Enrique Manalo said during the 10th Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in New York that began on Aug. 1, 2022.

"The Philippines affirms its commitment to this treaty and its goals to advance peace, security and development," Manalo said in a statement.

He added that the preservation of Southeast Asia "as a region free from nuclear weapons is of fundamental importance."

"The humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons are too unimaginable to consider," the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) chief said.

"No nuclear weapons should ever be used and there is nothing that justifies their salience in the military and security doctrine of any nation," Manalo added.

The Philippines "attaches great significance to the enduring role of the treaty in the 21st century, to keep nuclear weapon states firmly on the path of completely eliminating their stockpiles as well as to address the modernization of nuclear arsenals, enhance transparency and establish security dialogue mechanisms among relevant regional actors," he said.

"We recognize that international arms control and disarmament instruments like the NPT are fundamental to a rules-based international order that sustains the security of nations and the conditions for our peoples to thrive in peace," he said.

"The Philippines upholds our inalienable right to use nuclear energy and nuclear-related technologies for peaceful purposes and in pursuit of our environmentally conscious climate-change-resilient sustainable development," Manalo added.

The Philippines, he said, has engaged actively and consistently with NPT states that are parties to the treaty through the years "to strengthen the anchors of this treaty as a cornerstone of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation that recognizes the right of nations to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy."

"Our contributions include the robust national implementation of our obligations and the Philippine presidency of the 8th review conference of the NPT in 2010," Manalo added. "Our commitment is rooted in the Constitution, in our laws and regulations and national aspirations for peace and development."

The review conference is an opportunity to affirm that the treaty "is on a solid footing 50 years after its adoption, and the spirit of constructive multilateralism prevails among nations, notwithstanding geopolitical challenges and conflicts," Manalo added.

"The Philippines will work closely with the NPT state parties, in our national capacity, as well as through the Non-Aligned Movement and the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative, a cross-regional group of 12 state parties, to contribute actively to making the 10th review conference productive and meaningful."

Prospects for the maritime industry under the SONA

By Atty. Brenda V. Pimentel

Before President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.'s delivery of his State of the Nation Address (SONA) last July 15, there was anxious expectation marked by optimism among the maritime stakeholders that this time, the maritime industry will be included in the Philippine President's platform of government. The expectation is not without basis, after all, President Marcos Jr. must have acquired that strong affinity to the sea with his ancestral roots founded in the coastal province of Ilocos Norte and the island of Leyte. As governor of Ilocos Norte, he is not oblivious of the beauty of the waters that line the coast of his home province. It is therefore easy to assume he shares the Filipino's pride in being a citizen of the Philippine archipelago.

Another good reason for the high expectation of the maritime stakeholders is grounded on the fact that it was his father, the late President Ferdinand Edralin Marcos Sr. who issued Presidential Decree (PD) 474 in 1974 to accelerate the development of the Philippine maritime industry.

The decree lays down in very clear terms the following objectives: a) increase production and productivity in the various islands and regions of the archipelago; b) provide for the economical, safe, adequate and efficient shipment of raw materials, products, commodities and people; c) enhance the competitive position of Philippine flagged-vessels in the carriage of foreign trade; d) strengthen the balance of payments position by minimizing the outflow of foreign exchange and increasing dollar earnings; and e) generate new and more job opportunities.

These objectives are still valid and appropriate up to this time, 48 years after President Marcos Sr. signed PD 474. The programs mentioned by his son, President Marcos Jr., in his first SONA corresponds to the intentions of PD 474. All these are anchored on the vision of expanding and developing a Philippine merchant fleet.

The immediate years following the issuance of PD 474 were dedicated to putting in place the government organization, i.e., the Maritime Industry Authority (Marina) which is given the primary function of realizing the objectives stipulated in PD 474. Such a mandate revolves on assisting the shipping industry and all pertinent sectors involved in modernizing Philippine sea transport and improving the country's maritime safety record.

With time, the focus of government in overseeing the maritime industry shifted as the direction from the highest leadership of the land waned; then the state of affairs of the Philippine maritime industry became distorted.

SONA 2022 is replete with maritime consequences...

As in the SONAs by all past administrations, the maritime stakeholder's expectations' turned into one of frustration with sea transport all forgotten; with hopelessness that resonates across the industry. To placate maritime stakeholders, there in the SONA of

President Marcos Jr. traces maritime. It is packed with matters relating to sea transport, notwithstanding that specific reference was limited only to road, air and rail modes of transportation. Government must realize that until the seas run dry, maritime transport will remain a major means of moving people and cargoes in this archipelago.

Agriculture, disaster response, tourism, infrastructure

President Marcos Jr. spoke of increasing the productivity of farmers; that is the first objective of PD 474. Transport of modern machinery and implements as well as fertilizers, either in bulk or in bags/sacks intended for beneficiary farmers in the various islands of the archipelago are most likely to be undertaken by sea. It is inconceivable to think of a national network of farm-to-market roads as proposed by President Marcos Jr. without including shipping services. The country, after all, consists of more than 7,000 islands.

Farmers of Mindoro, the Visayas and Mindanao consider sea transport the most viable means of bringing agricultural produce to the market. Recent events showed big quantities of rotten tomatoes and onions in the island provinces. Was there any effort to find out if the lack or inadequacy of economical and reliable sea transport services was part of the problem, notwithstanding that the cause for such waste was deflected to competition posed by imported vegetables? Which agency should have ascertained there are, in fact, adequate sea transport services that will cater to the needs of the farmers?

Replicating specialized medical facilities such as the Philippine Heart Center, Lung Center, Children's Hospital and National Kidney Institute across the country will require massive movement of engineering and construction equipment. Again sea transport will be the best option for moving these. In cases of natural calamities such as earthquakes and typhoons, ships are used extensively in the transport of relief goods and the needed equipment for response and rescue operations ashore and at sea.

Tourism was identified as a priority program, therefore, building roads, airports and seaports are to be pursued. Ships trading in domestic voyages must offer transport services suited to the needs of both local and foreign tourists. It is unthinkable for foreign tourists not to try a sea trip in this archipelago, regardless of how short this may be. Likewise, allowing local travelers to relish the beauty of the archipelago through sea transport deserves attention. Regardless that sea transport was overlooked, stakeholders must endure the rebuff and sustain their services to the tourists of this archipelago.

There is an unending acknowledgment of the benefits of the Build, Build, Build program of the past administration, earning as it is, the affirmation to continue the program during the six-year term of President Marcos Jr. It is conceded that many support such a program. As the program provides the tangible response to establishing a multimodal transport in the archipelago, though never articulated as such, then it must necessarily include the sea transport leg.

It is disheartening that the contribution of the Philippine Nautical Highway (PNH) in connecting the islands of the archipelago is hardly acknowledged. The PNH consists of

ships procured and maintained by the private sector, with no cost to the government except the provision of seaports. These domestic ships correspond to the concrete roads ashore, built and maintained with high government participation. The shipping sector therefore must continue to advocate for the PNH to be given a place on the government agenda. Maritime stakeholders must therefore work relentlessly with the concerned agencies in this respect.

Education, digitalization

Maritime stakeholders support the review of the K to 12 education program and consider this as key to further improving the country's maritime education and training. While many would look at the K to 12 as a means to making completers of the senior high school job-ready, the maritime education sector considers the program crucial in making the completers ready to pursue a merchant marine higher education. Therefore, it is incumbent on the pertinent agencies and the maritime higher education institutions to closely and pro-actively participate in the ongoing review of the K to 12.

Being good at English is not what makes a Filipino seafarer. Merchant marine professionals must be educated as problem solvers and critical thinkers, considered essential attributes in navigation. K to 12 must therefore provide the foundation for the Filipino brand of world-class seafarers.

Global trade is highly dependent on shipping credited to moving ninety percent (90 percent) of traded goods. The rapid development in technology and digitalization is observed in the shipping sector contributing to the promotion of maritime safety, security, and efficiency. For a country touted to be the premier supplier of competent seafarers to the international shipping community, this matter must be taken in the review of the K to 12 program. The matter of a maritime high school or a maritime track in addition to the existing program has been percolating since the K to 12 was introduced. This could be the appropriate time to bring this up.

Job generation, migrant workers

Creating employment opportunities is one of the pledges of PD 474. This pledge is anchored on President Marcos Sr.'s vision of raising the quality of life of the Filipinos. Short of stating this in his SONA, this appears compatible with the dream that President Marcos Jr. shares with the Filipinos as he articulated during his inaugural address last June 20.

In crafting PD 474, creating job opportunities in the maritime industry was identified as central to integrating the maritime functions under one institution. For this archipelago, it has become easy to count on the overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) for their substantial contribution to the economy; for this, the OFWs deserve the protection of the government.

There are countless OFWs, however, who have expressed their desire to come back to the Philippines and be with their families. To many, the wage they receive could never compensate for the long separation with and sometimes, breakdown of the family.

Given the necessary support and assistance by the government, coupled with policy, legislative and institutional reforms, the maritime industry should be able to generate job opportunities. Seafaring is just one of the many maritime career opportunities. Employment in ship management, superintendency, naval architecture and engineering, port management/operations plus specialized skills in the shipyards, stevedoring, ship agency, a ship brokerage, and the like should be given extra attention. Running a progressive ship registry could create jobs as an alternative to housekeeping and similar menial tasks overseas.

There is a need to support the OFWs, yet, the government should not abandon the attendant obligation of generating jobs within the country.

The maritime stakeholders continue to contribute to this national aspiration of job creation given the limited support from the government. There is no reason for the private sector to shrink from the commitment to employ Filipinos. Bringing back as many OFWs who are in the housekeeping jobs is a target aimed at restoring national pride.

Climate change and environment protection

Among the various modes of transportation, sea transport contributes the least to pollution of the environment which is faulted for climate change. Maritime agencies and stakeholders should endeavor to share the best practices in pollution prevention with other transportation facilities. Maritime and shipping enterprises must continue in reducing carbon footprint and for safeguarding the marine environment.

The Philippines has gained the humiliating title of being one of the top three plastic polluters, many of such solid waste ending up at sea. While shipping may not be the source of this waste, maritime stakeholders both in government and the private sector must endeavor to sustain utmost care and attention in handling waste from ships. This is part of a flag State obligation, and a review of the implementation of international and national regulations has to be undertaken, as well.

National Government Rightsizing Program (NGRP)

Of the legislative agenda laid down in the SONA, the government rightsizing program responds to the call of the stakeholders to put an order in the exercise of maritime regulatory functions. The confusion brought about by widespread overlaps among the various agencies adversely impacts the sustainability and viability of maritime enterprises. Acknowledging the role of the private sector as one of the engines of growth in the economy provides a better perspective on why the government must support and assist the industry players. Shipping and the associated sectors are highly capitalized and

expect that in delivering maritime services on behalf of the government, they should at least be given support through a better business environment.

Foremost to the support expected from the government is ensuring there is constancy, consistency, and predictability in the policies, legislation, and regulations. The absence of a clear understanding of the various operations in the maritime industry gives rise to a plethora of regulations. The result is a confused and distorted view of the exercise of the government's maritime functions which contradicts the spirit of PD 474. The overarching objective of PD 474 has been forgotten, a conclusion that is based on policies and regulations that have been formulated and implemented. PD 474 stipulates in very specific terms for the government to provide support to the maritime industry, yet the latter continues to live up with incoherent and conflicting programs and regulations. Decades-long Issues and concerns of the maritime industry remain unresolved; thus retarding the development of the maritime industry.

And the key to the above is transforming the maritime agency(cies) to capacitate them in performing their mandates as per their respective charters.

SONA 2022, what is it to the maritime industry?

The absence of any direct reference to the maritime industry in President Marcos Jr.'s State of the Nation Address is indicative of the degree of importance or the lack of it for the maritime industry. From President Marcos Sr. up to President Fidel V. Ramos, the maritime industry received the highest attention as they introduced policy, legislative and institutional reforms with the expansion and development of the Philippine merchant fleet as the top-line objective of these reforms.

As an aside, maritime stakeholders must closely follow the crafting of the Implementing Rules and Regulations Republic Act 11659 which amended the Public Service Act of 1936 to ensure the promised safety nets to protect the Philippine maritime industry are not jettisoned.

In conclusion, that the maritime industry was not mentioned in the SONA 2022 is of no moment. It is for the stakeholders to read between the lines; it is for them to discern what and where the plans of this administration could help the industry. And most importantly, it is for the stakeholders to increase the visibility of the maritime industry as a potent economic tool of this archipelago! Then will the maritime industry be acknowledged!

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