

08 November 2022, Tuesday



**DENR**

# **NEWS ALERTS**

# **NEWS CLIPPINGS**

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THE national government will continue to prioritize efforts to enhance disaster preparedness and response, President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. said Sunday.

In his weekly vlog, Marcos underscored the need to improve local preparedness and response capacity to prevent and reduce the impact of disasters on communities.

"Ang disaster response at disaster preparedness natin ay prayoridad ng ating pamahalaan na lalong pagandahin o palakasin (Improving and strengthening our disaster response and disaster preparedness is a priority of our government)," he said.

He said collective efforts are necessary to safeguard ecosystems, which will ultimately build climate resilience.

"Kapag may pagkakataon, ay lagi ko bini-bring up ang climate change. Hindi ito biro na. Ito ay totoong-totoo na. Kaya't hindi makakatulong ang paglalapastangan natin sa ating mga kabundukan, ilog o dagat (Whenever there is an opportunity, I always bring up climate change. It's not a joke

anymore. It's real. So destroying our mountains, rivers or seas will not help us)," he said.

Marcos said planting trees will help reduce the impacts of climate change because they absorb carbon dioxide, the primary greenhouse gas emitted through human activities.

"Malayo ang mararaming ng simpleng pagtatanim ng mga puno. Ilang henerasyon ang maisasalba nito mula sa sakuna o trahedya. Yan po ang tungkulin natin, hindi lang sa ating bayan, kundi sa ating kapwa tao (Simply planting trees will go a long way. It will save many generations from disaster or tragedy. That is our duty, not only to our country, but to our fellow human beings)," he added.

He expressed confidence that joint societal efforts will help the country and the world deal better with climate change.

This month, the Philippines will reassert its entitlement to support and assistance to fight climate change during the 27th Conference of the Parties (COP27) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change which opened at

Sharm el-Sheikh City, Egypt on Sunday.

Environment Secretary Maria Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga, who leads the delegation to the November 6 to 18 event, said the Philippines would again call on developed countries to step up to obligations and "deliver without delay on their commitments on climate finance, technology transfer and capacity building."

Marcos likewise gave updates on continuing efforts to assist areas and people affected by Severe Tropical Storm Paeng (Nalgae) last week.

Among these are rescue operations by the Philippine Coast Guard; clearing of roads by the Department of Public Works and Highways; distribution of food and other forms of assistance by the Department of Social Welfare and Development and Office of Civil Defense; and distribution of seeds and financial loans to farmers by the Department of Agriculture (DA).

Marcos, the concurrent DA Secretary, said Paeng wiped out at least PHP1.3 billion worth of agricultural goods.

He recalled visiting disas-

ter-hit areas in Cavite, Maguindanao, and Western Visayas to assess response and relief efforts.

However, he also acknowledged some areas of improvement, particularly in terms of aid distribution.

He reiterated the need to do away with bureaucracy in providing assistance to those affected by natural calamities as he recalled the ticketing system imposed by a barangay official in Leyte in the onslaught of Super typhoon Yolanda (Haiyan) in 2013 to prevent multiple claims of relief goods.

Marcos said it is the government's job to ensure immediate dispatch of relief goods and make other adjustments for a more efficient distribution.

"Dapat ay abot kaagad. Nasalanta nga eh. Yan ang mindset na gusto ko sundan ng lahat ng ating ahensya pagdating sa disaster response. Na ang tulong ay wala ng pinipili (We should make distribution faster. That's the mindset that I want all our agencies to follow when it comes to disaster response. We don't choose whom to help," he said. PNA



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# COP27 discusses 'loss, damage' financing

Agreement to discuss money for victims of climate disasters only a first step

SHARM EL-SHEIKH, Egypt—UN climate negotiations on Sunday offered a sliver of hope for developing countries battered by increasingly costly impacts of global warming, in agreeing to discuss the thorny issue of money for “loss and damage.”

Countries least responsible for planet-heating emissions—but hardest hit by an onslaught of weather extremes—have been ramping up the pressure on wealthy polluting nations to provide financial help for accelerating damages.

But in a sign of how contentious the issue is among richer nations fearful of open-ended climate liability, the issue was only added to the formal agenda to the UN’s 27th Conference of Parties (COP27) climate summit in the Egyptian resort town of Sharm el-Sheikh after two days of last-ditch negotiations.

This “reflects a sense of solidarity and empathy for the suffering of the victims of climate



**PASSING BY** A participant walks past a mockup of the planet Earth at the Sharm el-Sheikh International Convention Center on the first day of the COP27 climate summit on Sunday. —AFP

induced disasters,” Egypt’s Sameh Shoukry, the COP27 president, said to applause.

At last year’s UN summit in Glasgow, the European Union and the United States rejected calls for a separate financial mechanism.

Instead, negotiators agreed to start a “dialogue” extending through 2024 on financial compensation.

The issue has grown ever

more urgent in recent months as nations were slammed by a crescendo of disasters, such as the massive flooding that put a third of Pakistan under water in August.

Senegal’s Madeleine Diouf Sarr, who represents the Least Developed Countries negotiating bloc, said climate action across the board had been far too slow.

“Lives are being lost. Cli-

mate change is causing irreversible loss and damage, and our people carry the greatest cost,” she said, adding that an agreement on funding arrangements must be reached in Egypt.

Ani Dasgupta, head of the World Resources Institute, said that getting negotiators to agree to discuss the issue was only an initial step. “We still have a marathon ahead of us.”

Simon Stiell, the UN’s climate change executive secretary, said vulnerable countries are “tired” and “frustrated.”

“Here in Sharm el-Sheikh we have a duty to speed up our international efforts and turn words into action,” he said. Wrangling over loss and damage has unfolded against the backdrop of an unmet promise by rich nations to provide \$100 billion a year starting in 2020 to help the developing world green their economies and adapt to future impacts. —AFP



## COP27 kicks off to discuss climate compensation

SHARM EL-SHEIKH, Egypt-Delegates from nearly 200 countries kicked off the UN climate summit in Egypt on Sunday with an agreement to discuss compensating poor nations for mounting damage linked to global warming, placing the controversial topic on the agenda for the first time since

climate talks began decades ago. The agreement set a constructive tone for the COP27 summit in the seaside resort town of Sharm el-Sheikh, where governments hope to keep alive a goal to avert the worst impacts of planetary warming even as a slew of crises - from a land war in Europe to

rampant inflation - distract the international focus.

For more than a decade, wealthy nations have rejected official discussions on what is referred to as loss and damage, the term used to describe rich nations paying out funds to help poor countries cope with the consequences of global warming for

which they bear little blame.

At COP26 last year in Glasgow, high-income nations, including the United States and the European Union blocked a proposal for a loss and damage financing body, instead supporting a three-year dialogue for funding discussions.

- Reuters



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'LOSS AND DAMAGE' NOW ON COP27 AGENDA

**GOV'T URGED TO TAP CIVIL SOCIETY GROUPS IN PH CLIMATE ACTION**

**By Imelda Abaño**  
@iabano

SHARM EL-SHEIKH, EGYPT—The 12-day global summit on climate change began on Sunday in this Red Sea resort city, with civil society groups urging the Philippine government to include them in the process and champion the issue of financial compensation from floods, rising seas and other climate-related impacts.

A week before the United Nations-backed climate conference, the Philippines was hit by Severe Tropical Storm "Paeng" (international name: Nalgae), leaving over a hundred people dead, causing landslides and widespread flooding.

Hit by an average of 20 typhoons a year, the Philippines is now the world's most disaster-prone country, according to the World Risk Report 2022.

Civil society groups said the Philippines and other vulnerable countries bearing the brunt of extreme weather events must call on governments to push loss and damage finance on top of the agenda at this year's 27th Conference of Parties (COP27) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. **(See related story in World, Page B3).**

But at the opening of COP27, countries have finally agreed to discuss loss and damage funding on the COP27 agenda since the adoption of the UN climate

convention in 1994.

"I expect the Philippine delegation to the climate talks to be at the forefront of the loss and damage discussions, which is the most important issue for our country in this meeting," Tony La Viña, associate director for climate policy and international relations of the Manila Observatory, told the Inquirer.

**'Different from past talks'**

According to La Viña, a former lead negotiator of the country, he has high hopes with the leadership of the Philippine delegation under Environment Secretary Toni Yulo Loyzaga since she is also a climate change expert and has partic-

ular interest in resilience and addressing climate impacts.

La Viña is attending COP27 as a climate justice advocate, together with his colleagues from the Manila Observatory led by its executive director, Fr. Jett Villarin, SJ.

"I hope the Philippine delegation would also seek assistance from us from the civil society who are veterans of the negotiations process," he said.

In last year's climate talks in Glasgow, civil society groups complained of exclusion and the lack of transparency in the strategy and decision-making of the Philippine delegation.

"The presence of many civil society representatives makes

this COP different from the past climate talks," Rodne Galicha, lead convener of the civil society network Aksyon Klima Pilipinas, said at this year's COP.

Christian Aid's advocacy partner Jessica Dator-Bercilla agreed, saying the Philippine delegation must engage those who have been actively involved in climate negotiations so that the country can have an institutional documentation of the key Philippine positions around issues that matter to the Philippines such as loss and damage.

**Transparency**

Gerry Arances, executive director of Center for Energy, Ecology and Development, said:

"While the level of transparency from the government on the official delegation's agenda and composition has been far from satisfactory, one can hope that the pronounced priorities of DENR (Department of Environment and Natural Resources) Secretary Loyzaga and her background in climate science and civil society would make its mark in the engagements of the delegation."

He also noted that the policy directions of the new administration, such as the President's marching orders to ramp up the gas buildup after over a decade of coal expansion, require civic movements and communities to keep

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watch over the government representatives and remind them of our need for ambitious climate action.

Loyzaga, in a statement, said: "The Philippine delegation in the following days will continue to assert and safeguard the country's interest in climate change negotiations, ensuring that we receive the appropriate support and assistance as a country vulnerable to climate change."

The delegation consists of representatives and negotiators from the DENR, Department of

Finance, Department of Foreign Affairs, Department of Agriculture, and Department of Energy, with advisers from climate scientists and development experts.

In the Philippines, several youth climate advocates are also actively lobbying government delegates to integrate their key recommendations into the country's position on critical climate issues.

"We never forget to demand accountability and transparency from the government and businesses for their statements and actions in the context of climate justice," said John Leo Algo, deputy ex-

ecutive director of Living Laudato Si Philippines.

### Sea level rise

Meanwhile, the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) said the country needs to ramp up its disaster preparedness and resilience measures, since it now faces rising sea levels and increased risk of tsunamis.

According to recent data from the agency, over 80 percent of the country's 81 provinces are exposed to tsunamis. This includes 832 coastal municipalities and 25 coastal cities housing 62 percent of the country's population.

Of the many climate-related threats coastal communities face, tsunamis are the rarest as they could only happen during earthquakes.

But the DOST urged both national and local governments to "not be complacent" as rising sea levels also raise the risk of exposure.

"Tsunami hazards can result in disaster losses, [but] we can reduce disaster risks. Information, tools, systems and plans are available for communities to be safer," said Joan Salcedo, DOST supervising science research specialist. —WITH A REPORT FROM KRIXIA SUBINGSUBING INQ



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## World leaders gather for climate talks under cloud of crises

SHARM EL SHEIKH, Egypt (AFP)  
- The World leaders' meeting on Monday, Nov. 7, for climate talks in Egypt are under pressure to deepen cuts in emissions and financially back developing countries already devastated by the effects of rising temperatures. ▶ 7

## World leaders gather for climate talks under cloud of crises 1◀

The UN's COP27 climate summit in the Red Sea resort of Sharm el-Sheikh comes as nations worldwide are facing increasingly intense natural disasters that have taken thousands of lives this year alone and cost billions of dollars.

At the opening ceremony on Sunday, COP27 officials urged governments to keep up efforts to combat climate change despite the economic crises linked to Russia's war on Ukraine, an energy crunch, soaring inflation and the persistent Covid-19 pandemic.

"The fear is other priorities take precedence," top United Nations climate change official Simon Stiell told a news conference.

The "fear is that we lose another day, another week, another month, another year - because we can't," he said.

The world must slash greenhouse emissions 45 percent by 2030 to cap global warming at 1.5 degrees Celsius above late-19th-century levels.

But current trends would see carbon pollution increase 10 percent by the end of the decade and Earth's surface heat up 2.8C, according to findings unveiled in recent days.

Only 29 of 194 countries have presented improved climate plans, as called for at the UN talks in Glasgow last year, Stiell noted.

Some 110 heads of state and government are expected to participate in two days of talks, with the notable absence of Chinese leader Xi Jinping, whose country is the world's top emitter of greenhouse gases.

US President Joe Biden, whose country ranks second on the top-polluters list, will join COP27 later this week after midterm elections on Tuesday that could put Republicans hostile to international action on climate change in charge of Congress.

### 'Loss and damage'

Fresh from his own election vic-

tory, Brazil's Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva is expected to attend the summit, with hopes high that he will protect the Amazon from deforestation after defeating climate-sceptic President Jair Bolsonaro.

Another new leader, British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, reversed a decision not to attend the talks and is due to urge countries to move "further and faster" in transitioning away from fossil fuels.

He will also hold discussions with French President Emmanuel Macron.

On Sunday, the heads of developing nations won a small victory when delegates agreed to put the controversial issue of money for "loss and damage" on the summit agenda.

Pakistan, which chairs the powerful G77+China negotiating bloc of more than 130 developing nations, has made the issue a priority.

"We definitely regard this as a success for the parties," said Egypt's Sameh Shoukry, who chairs the COP27.

The United States and the European Union have dragged their feet on the issue for years, fearing it would create an open-ended reparations framework.

But European Commission Vice President Frans Timmermans welcomed the inclusion of loss and damage, tweeting that the "climate crisis has impacts beyond what vulnerable countries can shoulder alone."

Rich nations will also be expected to set a timetable for the delivery of \$100 billion per year to help developing countries green their economies and build resilience against future climate change.

The promise is already two years past due and remains \$17 billion short, according to the OECD.

COP27 is scheduled to continue until November 18 with ministerial meetings.



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# UN report:

# Climate woes bad, getting worse faster

BY SETH BORENSTEIN  
AP Science Writer

**S**HARM EL-SHEIKH, Egypt—Earth's warming weather and rising seas are getting worse and doing so faster than before, the World Meteorological Organization warned Sunday in a somber note as world leaders started gathering for international climate negotiations.

"The latest State of the Global Climate report is a chronicle of climate chaos," United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said. "We must answer the planet's distress signal with action—ambitious, credible climate action."

In its annual state of the climate report, the United Nations' weather agency said that sea level rise in the past decade was double what it was in the 1990s and since January 2020 has jumped at a higher rate than that. Since the decade began, seas are rising at 5 millimeters a year (.2 inches) compared to 2.1 millimeters (.08 inches) in the 1990s.

The last eight years have been the warmest on record, the WMO said in a report that didn't break new ground but was a collection of recent weather trends, data and impacts in one central place.

"The melting [of ice] game we have lost and also the sea level

rate," WMO chief Petteri Taalas told The Associated Press. "There are no positive indicators so far."

The only reason that the globe hasn't broken annual temperature records in the past few years is a rare three-year La Niña weather phenomenon, he said.

The data on sea level and average temperatures are nothing compared to how climate change has hit people in extreme weather. The report highlights the summer's incredible flood in Pakistan that killed more than 1,700 people and displaced 7.9 million, a crippling four-year drought in East Africa that has more than 18 million hungry, the Yangtze River drying to its lowest level in August, and record heat-waves broiling people in Europe and China.

"This latest report from the World Meteorological Organization reads like a lab report for a critically ill patient, but in this case





**WOMEN** carry belongings salvaged from their flooded home after monsoon rains, in the Qambar Shahdadkot district of Sindh Province, in Pakistan on September 6, 2022. Earth's warming weather and rising seas are getting worse and doing so faster than before, the World Meteorological Organization warned Sunday, November 6, 2022, in a somber note as world leaders started gathering for international climate negotiations in the Egyptian resort of Sharm el-Sheikh. AP/FAREED KHAN

the patient is Earth," said climate scientist Jennifer Francis of the Woodwell Climate Research Center in Cape Cod, who wasn't part of the report.

Levels of heat-trapping carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide all reached record high levels, with potent methane increasing at a record pace, the report said.

That means more than just warming temperatures on land. Ice, both Greenland's ice sheet and the world's glaciers, are shrinking precipitously, the report said. For the 26th year in a row, Greenland lost ice when all types of ice are factored in. The volume of glacier snow in Switzerland dropped by more than one-third from 2001 to 2022, the report said.

But 90 percent of the heat trapped on Earth goes into the ocean

and the upper 2000 meters (6,561 feet) of the ocean is getting warmer faster. The rate of warming the last 15 years is 67 percent faster than since 1971, the report said.

That ocean heat "will continue to warm in the future—a change which is irreversible on centennial to millennial time scales," the report said.

Outside experts weren't surprised by the report and said no one should be.

"What climate scientists have warned about for decades is upon us. And will continue to worsen without action," said University of Georgia meteorology professor Marshall Shepherd. "Two things must go away: Climate delayism and speaking about climate change impacts in the future tense. It's here."



## World in crisis a grim backdrop for UN climate talks

By FRANK JORDANS & SAMY MAGDY | *The Associated Press*

**S**HARM EL-SHEIKH, Egypt—Envoys from around the globe gathered Sunday in the Egyptian seaside resort of Sharm el-Sheikh for talks on tackling climate change amid a multitude of competing crises, including the war in Ukraine, high inflation, food shortages and an energy crunch.

Notching up a first small victory, negotiators agreed after two frantic days of preliminary talks to formally discuss the question of vulnerable nations receiving money for the loss and damage they've suffered from climate change. The issue has weighed on the talks for years, with rich nations including the United States pushing back against the idea of climate reparations.

"The fact that it has been adopted as an agenda item demonstrates progress and parties taking a mature and constructive attitude towards this," said the UN's top climate official, Simon Stiell.

"This is a difficult subject area. It's been floating for 30 plus years," he said. "I believe it bodes well."

The decision was also welcomed by civil society groups.

"At long last, providing funding to address losses and damages from climate impacts is on the agenda of the UN climate negotiations," said Ani Dasgupta, president of the World Resources Institute.

But he cautioned that participants "still have a marathon ahead of us before countries iron out a formal decision on this central issue."

German climate envoy Jennifer Morgan, who led negotiations on the issue together with Chile in the run-up to the talks, said the agreement could help negotiators also

make "serious progress" on the issue of reducing emissions.

The outgoing chair of the talks, British official Alok Sharma, said countries had made considerable progress at their last meeting in Glasgow in keeping alive the goal of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 Fahrenheit) by the end of the century.

Experts say that chances of meeting that target, agreed in the 2015 Paris climate accord, is fast slipping away though. Already, temperatures around the world have increased by about 1.2 C (2.2 F) since pre-industrial times. Sharma warned that other global crises meant international efforts to curb climate change were being "buffeted by global headwinds."

"(Russian President Vladimir) Putin's brutal and illegal war in Ukraine has precipitated multiple global crisis, energy and food insecurity, inflationary pressures and spiraling debt," said Sharma. "These crises have compounded existing climate vulnerabilities and the scarring effects of the pandemic."

"As challenging as our current moment is, inaction is myopic and can only defer climate catastrophe," said Sharma. "We must find the ability to focus on more than one thing at once."

"How many more wake up calls does the world to world leaders actually need," he said, citing recent



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**"At long last, providing funding to address losses and damages from climate impacts is on the agenda of the UN climate negotiations," said Ani Dasgupta, president of the World Resources Institute.**

devastating floods in Pakistan and Nigeria, and historic droughts in Europe, the United States and China.

His successor, Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry, said Egypt would "spare no effort" to make the meeting in Sharm el-Sheikh a success and achieve the goals of the Paris accord.

In an opening speech, the chair of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, Hoesung Lee, said countries have "a once in a generation opportunity to save our planet and our livelihoods." Cutting emissions is only part of the task, however. Scientists and campaigners say the world also needs to do more to adapt to those effects of global warming that can't be avoided anymore.

The head of the UN migration agency urged the international community Sunday to mobilize human and financial resources to address growing climate migration.

Antônio Vitorino told The Associated Press that millions of people across the world "are already suffering in their daily lives because of the impacts of natural disasters and climate change."

"We are running short of time to act," Vitorino said. "The international community needs to mobilize the expertise, human resources but also the financial resources to come in to support those who are already

today seriously impacted by climate change."

Vitorino, IOM's director general, said the world needs to double the \$100 billion current funding for adaptation especially in regions and communities impacted by the fast-changing climate.

"If we don't focus on solutions for the future," he said. "We will leave a dramatic humanitarian crisis in the future (that) will eat millions and millions of people in the world," he said.

More than 40,000 participants have been registered for this year's talks, reflecting the sense of urgency as major weather events around the world impact many people and cost billions of dollars in repairs. Organizers say about 110 world leaders will attend, many of them speaking at a high-level event on Nov. 7-8, while US President Joe Biden was expected to arrive later in the week.

But many top figures including China's President Xi Jinping and Prime Minister Narendra Modi of India were not planning to come, casting doubt on whether the talks in Egypt could result in any major deals to cut emissions without two of the world's biggest polluters.

Rights groups again criticized Egypt for restricting protests and stepping up surveillance during the summit, and highlighted the case of Alaa Abdel-Fattah, a prominent imprisoned pro-democracy activist. Abdel-Fattah's aunt, award-winning novelist Ahdaf Soueif, said he went into a "full hunger strike" Sunday and stopped drinking water at 10 a.m. local time. *Associated Press writers Kelvin Chan and Seth Borenstein contributed to this report.*



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# World leaders gather to talk climate, but don't expect much

BY SETH BORENSTEIN  
*The Associated Press*

**S**HARM EL-SHEIKH, Egypt—More than 100 world leaders are about to discuss a worsening problem that scientists call Earth's biggest challenge, yet observers don't expect much from it, maybe not even a lot of attention.

Nearly 50 heads of states or governments on Monday will take the stage in the first day of "high-level" international climate talks in Egypt with more to come in the following days. Much of the focus will be on national leaders telling their stories of being devastated by climate disasters, culminating on Tuesday with a speech by Pakistan Prime Minister Muhammad Sharif, whose country's summer flood caused at least \$40 billion in damage and displaced millions of people.

But it may not quite have the drama or headlines that past such meetings have had.

Why? Because of bad timing and who isn't showing up, is coming late or are dithering about it.

Most of the leaders are meeting Monday and Tuesday, just as the United States has a potentially policy-shifting midterm election. Then the leaders of the world's 20 wealthiest nations will have their powerful-only club confab in Bali in Indonesia days later. Add to that, "there are big climate summits and little climate summits and this was never expected to be a big one," said Climate Advisers CEO Nigel Purvis, a former US negotiator.

Leaders of two of the three biggest carbon polluting nations—China and India—appear to be skipping the climate talks, although underlings are here negotiating. The leader of the other top polluting country—US President Joe Biden—is coming days later than most of the other presidents and prime ministers on his way to Bali.

United Kingdom Prime Minister Rishi Sunak was initially going to avoid the negotiations, but public pressure and predecessor Boris Johnson's plans to come changed his mind. New King Charles III, a longtime environment advocate, won't attend because of his new role. And Russia's leader Vladimir Putin, whose invasion of Ukraine created energy chaos that reverberates in the world of climate negotiations, won't be here.

"We always want more" leaders, United Nations climate chief Simon Stiell said in a Sunday news conference. "But I believe there is sufficient (leadership) right now for us to have a very productive outcome."

In addition to speeches given by the leaders, the negotiations include "innovative" roundtable discussions that "we are confident,



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**SAMEH SHOUKRY**, president of the COP27 climate summit, left, speaks during an opening session at the COP27 UN Climate Summit on Sunday, November 6, 2022, in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt. Nearly 50 heads of states or governments on Monday will take the stage in the first day of "high-level" international climate talks in Egypt with more to come in following days. AP/PETER DEJONG

will generate some very powerful insights," Stiehl said.

The leaders showing up in droves are from the host continent Africa.

"The historical polluters who caused climate change are not showing up," said Mohammed Adow of Power Shift Africa. "Africa is the least responsible, the most vulnerable to the issue of climate change and it is a continent that is stepping up and providing leadership."

"The South is actually stepping up," Adow told The Associated Press. "The North that historically caused the problem is failing."

Monday will be heavily dominated by leaders of nations victimized by climate change—not those that have created the problem of heat-trapping gases warming up the atmosphere from the burning of fossil fuel. It will be mostly African nations and small island nations and other vulnerable nations that will be telling their stories.

And they are dramatic ones, droughts in Africa and floods in Pakistan, in places that could least afford it. For the first time in 30 years of climate negotiations, the summit "should focus its attention on the severe climate impacts

we're already seeing," said World Resources International's David Waskow.

"We can't discount an entire continent that has over a billion people living here and has some of the most severe impacts," Waskow said. "It's pretty clear that Africa will be at risk in a very severe way."

Host leader, Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi, and United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres will kick off the leaders' speeches. Guterres keeps ratcheting up his rhetoric about how little time is left with each public talk.

Leaders come "to share the progress they've made at home and to accelerate action," Purvis said. In this case, with the passage of the first major climate legislation and \$375 billion in spending, Biden has a lot to share, he said.

While it's impressive that so many leaders are coming to the summit, "my expectations for ambitious climate targets in these two days are very low," said Climate Analytics' scientist Niklas Hohne. That's because of Putin's invasion of Ukraine, which caused energy and food crises that took away from climate action, he said.



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## How COP27 can help reverse climate chaos

REPRESENTATIVES from around the world gathered on Sunday in the Egyptian seaside resort of Sharm el-Sheikh for the 27th United Nations Climate Change Conference, more commonly referred to as Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change or COP27. Egypt said over 120 world leaders confirmed attendance to the November 6 to 18 summit, which takes place under the presidency of Egyptian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sameh Shoukry.

Held annually since the first UN climate agreement in 1992, the conference serves as a forum for governments to agree on policies to limit global temperature rises and adapt to impacts associated with climate change. Apart from world leaders, more than 40,000 participants have registered for this year's conference.

A major issue seen taking center stage in this year's summit is the \$100 billion-a-year promise made by developed nations that is already two years past its deadline. At the 2009 UN climate summit in Copenhagen, rich nations promised to channel \$100 billion a year to less wealthy nations by 2020, to help them adapt to climate change and mitigate further rises in temperature.

Climate experts said the \$100-billion pledge is a small amount compared with the investment required to avoid dangerous levels of climate change. They said trillions of dollars will be needed each year to meet the 2015 Paris agreement restricting global warming to "well below" 2°C, if not 1.5°C, above pre-industrial temperatures. And developing nations will need hundreds of billions of dollars annually to adapt to the warming that is already inevitable.

United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres warned last week that the planet was heading toward irreversible "climate chaos" unless countries find a way to put the world back on track to cut emissions and help poor countries cope with the impacts of global warming. However, major world leaders like China's President Xi Jinping and India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi are reportedly not attending the summit, casting doubt on whether the talks in Egypt could result in any major deals to cut emissions without two of the world's biggest polluters.

Headed by DENR Secretary Ma. Antonia "Toni" Yulo-Loyzaga, the Philippine delegation to COP27 include representatives and negotiators from the House of Representatives, Climate Change Commission, Department of Finance, Department of Foreign Affairs, Department of Agriculture and Department of Energy, as well as advisers from scientific and civil society organizations. Yulo-Loyzaga said the Philippines will reiterate our "call for bolder climate action and demand the delivery of what is due for the developing countries that hardly produce any greenhouse gas emissions, yet they suffer the most and continue to bear the brunt of the adverse impacts of climate change."



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"As developing countries need resources for climate adaptation, the Philippine delegation will call on developed countries to step up to these obligations and deliver without delay on their commitments on climate finance, technology transfer and capacity building," Yulo-Loyzaga said.

As government leaders meet in Egypt for the 2022 UN Climate Change Conference, the phrase "loss and damage" is expected to be the main subject of discussion. This refers to the costs, both economic and physical, that developing countries are facing from climate change impacts that are getting worse. Many of the world's most climate-vulnerable countries have done little to cause global warming, yet they are experiencing extreme heat waves, super typhoons, floods and other climate-related disasters. Developing countries want rich nations—historically the biggest sources of greenhouse gas emissions—to pay for the harm.

Countries that are most vulnerable to climate change, including the Philippines, are hoping that the ongoing COP27 in Egypt will finally develop an urgent plan to assist millions of people suffering the ravages of extreme weather. Now is the time for rich countries to seriously start thinking about loss and damage in a meaningful way that does not get lost in political rhetoric.



## EDITORIAL

# 'Chronicle of climate chaos'

**T**HE two-week high profile climate change summit of the United Nations is now on its second day in the Red Sea resort of Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt with the echoes of a warning that Earth is "sending a distress signal" still loud and clear.

The 27th edition of the Conference of Parties (COP27), which will end on the 18th, is an opportunity to get world leaders in the same space to discuss protecting the planet, with themes that include biodiversity, water, gender and transport.

In Egypt, COP 27 offers an opportunity to bridge the gap between NDCs – the nationally determined contributions – and the actions needed to avert the worst impacts of a rapidly changing climate.

NDCs, at the heart of the Paris Agreement and the achievement of its long-term goals, embody efforts by each country to reduce national emissions and adapt to the impacts of climate change.

The Paris Agreement, a legally binding international treaty on climate change, was adopted by 196 Parties at COP 21 in Paris on December 12, 2015 and entered into force on November 4, 2016.

Its goal is to limit global warming to well below 2, preferably to 1.5 degrees Celsius, compared to pre-industrial levels.

To achieve this long-term temperature goal, countries aim to reach global peaking of greenhouse gas emissions as soon as possible to achieve a climate neutral world by mid-century.

In this year's summit, hosts Egypt called on countries to move from "pledges to an era

*"The (World Meteorological Organization) report warned of the other wide-ranging impacts of climate change, including the acceleration of sea level rise, record glacier mass losses, and record-breaking heatwaves"*

of implementation," with at least 120 world leaders expected to make speeches at the conference.

With the "distress signal" warning, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has responded, saying the past eight years were on track to be the warmest on record.

COP27 president, Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry, has urged leaders to not let food and energy crises related to Russia's invasion of Ukraine get in the way of action on climate change.

"It is inherent on us all in Sharm el-Sheikh to demonstrate our recognition of the magnitude of the challenges we face and our steadfast resolve to overcome it," he said.

The need for action was laid bare in the latest report from the UN's World Meteorological Organization.

Guterres sent a video message to the conference in which he called the the State of the Global Climate Report 2022 a "chronicle of climate chaos."

In it, scientists estimate that global temperatures have now risen by 1.15C since pre-industrial times and said the latest eight years were on track to be the warmest on record.

The report also warned of the other wide-ranging impacts of climate change, including the acceleration of sea level rise, record glacier mass losses and record breaking heatwaves.

Guterres said in light of these findings, COP27 must be the place for urgent and credible climate action.

We have our eyes and ears on the COP27.





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**THE past eight years were the eight hottest ever recorded, a new UN report has found, indicating the world is now deep into the climate crisis.**

The internationally agreed 1.5C limit for global heating is now "barely within reach", it said.

The report, by the UN's World Meteorological Organization (WMO), sets out how record high greenhouse gases in the atmosphere are driving sea level and ice melting to new highs and supercharging extreme weather from Pakistan to Puerto Rico.

The stark assessment was published on the opening day of the UN's Cop27 climate summit in Egypt and as the UN secretary-general warned that "our planet is on course to reach tipping points that will make climate chaos irreversible".

The WMO estimates that the global average temperature in 2022 will be about 1.15C above the pre-industrial average (1850-1900), meaning every year since 2016 has been one of the warmest on record.

For the past two years, the natural La Niña climate phenomenon has actually kept global temperatures lower than they would otherwise have been.

The inevitable switch back to El Niño conditions will see temperatures surge even higher in future, on top of global heating.

The WMO report said: "Carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide are at record levels in the atmosphere as emissions continue. The annual increase in methane, a potent greenhouse gas, was the highest on record. The sea level is now rising twice as fast as 30 years ago and the oceans are hotter than ever."

Records for glacier melting in the Alps were shattered in 2022, with an average of 13ft (4 metres) in height lost. Rain - not snow - was recorded on the 3,200m-high summit of the Greenland ice sheet for the first time.

The Antarctic sea-ice area fell to its lowest level on record, almost 1m km2 below the long-term average.

"The greater the warming, the worse the impacts," said the WMO secretary-general, Prof Petteri Taalas.

"We have such high levels of CO2 in the atmosphere now that the lower 1.5C [target] of the Paris Agreement is barely within reach. It's already too late for many glaciers [and] sea level rise is a long-term and major threat to many millions of coastal dwellers and low-lying states."

António Guterres, UN secretary-general, said ahead of Cop27: "Emissions are still growing at record levels. That means our planet is on course for reaching tipping points that will make climate chaos irreversible. We need to move from tipping points to turning points for hope."

A series of recent reports signalled how near the planet is to climate catastrophe, with "no credible pathway to 1.5C in place" and the current level of action set to see no fall in emissions and global temperature rise by a devastating 2.5C.

Rising global heating is making extreme weather more severe and more frequent around the world. The WMO report highlighted the drought in east Africa, where

rainfall has been below average for four consecutive seasons, the longest in 40 years. About 19 million people are now suffering a food crisis.

The WMO analysis also reported: "Devastating flooding in Pakistan, with at least 1,700 deaths and 7.9 million people displaced. A series of cyclones that battered southern Africa, which hit Madagascar hardest with torrential rain."

Exceptional heatwaves and droughts in the northern hemisphere, with China enduring its longest heatwave on record, the UK passing 40C for the first time, and European rivers including the Rhine, Loire and Danube falling to critically low levels.

Hurricane Ian wreaking extensive damage and loss of life in Cuba and Florida.

"All too often, those least responsible for climate change suffer most, but even well-prepared societies this year have been ravaged by extremes," said Prof Taalas.

Prof Mike Meredith, at the British Antarctic Survey, said: "The messages in this report could barely be bleaker - all over our planet, records are being shattered as different parts of the climate system begin to break down. The loss of ice is especially alarming as the impacts on people, societies and economies are huge. If this doesn't focus the minds of the global leaders at Cop27, I don't know what will."

**The Guardian**



# We're on a highway to climate hell - UN boss

SHARM EL-SHEIKH, EGYPT -- United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres told countries gathered at the start of the COP27 summit in Egypt on Monday they face a stark choice: work together now to cut emissions or condemn future generations to climate catastrophe.

The speech set an urgent tone as governments sit down for two weeks of talks on how to avert the worst of climate change, even as they are distracted by Russia's war in Ukraine, rampant consumer inflation and energy shortages.

"Humanity has a choice: cooperate or perish," Guterres told delegates gathered in the seaside resort town of Sharm el-Sheikh.

He called for a pact between the world's richest and poorest countries to accelerate the transition from fossil fuels and funding to ensure poorer countries can reduce emissions and cope with the climate impacts that have already occurred.

"The two largest economies - the United States and China - have a particular responsibility to join efforts to make this pact

a reality," he said.

Despite decades of climate talks - the Egypt COP is the 27th Conference of the Parties - progress has been insufficient to save the planet from excessive warming as countries are too slow or reluctant to act, he noted.

"Greenhouse gas emissions keep growing. Global temperatures keep rising. And our planet is fast approaching tipping points that will make climate chaos irreversible," he said. "We are on a highway to climate hell with our foot on the accelerator."

Former US Vice President Al Gore, also speaking at the event, said global leaders have a credibility problem when it comes to climate change. He criticized developed nations' ongoing pursuit of gas resources in Africa, which he described as "fossil fuel colonialism."

"We have a credibility problem all of us: We're talking and we're starting to act, but we're not doing enough," Gore said.

"We must see the so-called 'dash for gas' for what it really is: a dash down a bridge to nowhere, leaving the countries of the world

facing climate chaos and billions in stranded assets, especially here in Africa," he said.

## UAE TO CARRY ON PUMPING OIL, GAS

Immediately after Guterres' speech, United Arab Emirates President Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed al-Nahya took the stage and said his country, a member of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries, would continue to produce fossil fuels for as long as there is a need.

"The UAE is considered a responsible supplier of energy and it will continue playing this role as long as the world is in need of oil and gas," he said.

The UAE will host next year's UN conference, which will attempt to finalize agreements made last year in Britain and at this year's Egyptian talks.

Many countries with rich resources of oil, gas, and coal have criticized the push for a rapid transition away from fossil fuels arguing it is economically reckless and unfair to poorer and less developed nations keen for economic growth.

Signatories to the 2015 Paris

climate agreement had pledged to achieve a long-term goal of keeping global temperatures from rising by more than 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, the threshold at which scientists say climate change risks spinning out of control.

Guterres said that goal will only stay alive if the world can achieve net zero emissions by 2050. He asked countries to agree to phase out the use of coal, one of the most carbon-intensive fuels, by 2040 globally, with members of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development hitting that mark by 2030.

The head of the International Monetary Fund told Reuters on the sidelines of the conference that climate targets depend on achieving a global carbon price of at least \$75 a ton by the end of the decade, and that the pace of change in the real economy was still "way too slow."

The World Trade Organization, meanwhile, said in a report published on Monday that it should tackle trade barriers for low carbon industries to address the role of global trade in driving climate change. - Reuters



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## Loss and damage: The fight over human harm, huge climate costs

BY SETH BÖRENSTEIN  
*AP Science Writer*

**S**HARM EL-SHEIKH, Egypt—It was a total loss—the type that is usually glossed over in big impersonal statistics like \$40 billion in damage from this summer's Pakistan floods that put one-third of the nation underwater.

"We lost everything, our home and our possessions," said Taj Mai, a mother of seven who is four months pregnant and in a flood relief camp in Pakistan's Punjab province. "At least in a camp our children will get food and milk."

This is the human side of a contentious issue that will likely dominate climate negotiations in Egypt this month. It's about big bucks, justice, blame and taking responsibility. Extreme weather is worsening as the world warms, with a study calculating that human-caused climate change increased Pakistan's flood-causing rain by up to 50 percent.

While Pakistan was flooding, six energy companies—ExxonMobil, Chevron, Shell, BP, Saudi Aramco and Total Energies—made \$97.49 billion in profits from July to September. Poorer nations, United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, Europe's leaders and US President Joe Biden are calling for fossil fuel firms to pay a windfall profits tax. Many want some of that money, along with additional aid from rich nations that spewed the lion's share of heat-trapping gases, to be used to pay countries victimized by past pollution, like Pakistan.

The issue of polluters paying for their climate messes is called loss and damage in international climate negotiations. It is all about reparations.

"Loss and damage is going to be the priority and the defining factor of whether or not COP27 succeeds," said Kenyan climate activist Elizabeth Wathuti, referring to the climate talks in Egypt. United Nations top officials say they are looking for "something meaningful in loss and damage" and were "certainly encouraged" by negotiations Friday, Saturday and Sunday that put the issue on the meeting agenda.

Money for loss and damage is different from two other financial aid systems already in place to help poorer nations develop carbon-free energy and adapt to future warming.

Since 2009, the rich nations of the world have promised to spend \$100 billion in climate aid for poor nations, with most of it going toward helping wean them off coal, oil and natural gas and build greener energy systems. Officials now want as much as half of that to go to building up systems to help adapt to future climate disasters.

Neither financial pledge has been fulfilled yet, but both don't address the issue of paying for current and past climate disasters, such as heat waves in India, floods in Pakistan and droughts in Africa.

"Our current levels of global warming at 1.1 degrees Celsius (2 degrees Fahrenheit) have already caused dangerous and widespread losses and damages to nature and to billions of people," said Climate Analytics scientist Adelle Thomas of the Bahamas.

"Losses and damages are unavoidable and unequally distributed" with poorer nations, the elderly, the poor and vulnerable hit harder, she said.

After years of not wanting to talk about reparations in climate talks, US and European officials say they are willing to have loss and damage discussions. But the US—the No. 1 historic carbon polluter—won't agree to anything that sounds like liability, special envoy John Kerry said.

US emissions that created warmer temperatures caused at least \$32 billion in damage to Pakistan's gross domestic product between 1990 and 2014, according to calculations by Dartmouth climate researchers Christopher Callahan and Justin Mankin based on past emissions. And that's only based on temperature-oriented damage, not rainfall.

"Loss and damage is a way of both recognizing past harm and compensating for that past harm," Mankin said. "These harms are scientifically identifiable. And now it's up to the politics to either defend that harm or remunerate for that harm."



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The United States in 16 days puts more carbon dioxide into the air from burning fossil fuel than Pakistan does in a year, according to figures by the Global Carbon Project.

American Gas Association CEO Karen Harbert said Americans won't go for such payments to faraway nations and that's not the way to think of the issue.

"It's not just Pakistan. Let's talk about Puerto Rico. Let's talk about Louisiana. Other things that are happening here at home that we also need to pay attention to and help our fellow Americans," Harbert said in an interview with The Associated Press.

"If there was an opportunity to talk to people in Pakistan, I'd say ... the solution is first of all, you have the opportunity with natural gas to have a much cleaner electric system than you have today," she said.

But for Aaisa Bibi, a pregnant mother of four from Punjab province, cheaper cleaner energy doesn't mean much when her family has no place to live except a refugee camp.

"With less than 1 percent of the global emissions, Pakistan is certainly not a part of the problem of climate change," said Shabnam Baloch, the International Red Cross Pakistan director, adding that people like Bibi are just trying to survive floods, heat waves, droughts, low crop yields, water shortages and inflation.

In semi-arid Makueni County in Kenya, where a devastating drought has stretched more than three years, 47-year old goat and sheep farmer John Gichuki said: "It is traumatizing to watch your livestock die of thirst and hunger."

Gichuki's maize and legumes crops have failed four consecutive seasons. "The farm is solely on the mercies of climate," he said.

In India, it's record heat connected to climate change that caused deaths and ruined crops. Elsewhere it's devastation from tropical cyclones that are wetter and stronger because of the burning of fossil fuels.

This global issue has a parallel inside the United States in at times contentious discussions about paying for damages caused by slavery.

"In many ways we're talking about reparations," said University of Maryland environmental health and justice professor Sacoby Wilson. "It's an appropriate term to use," he said, because the rich northern countries got the benefits of fossil fuels, while the poorer global south gets the damage in floods, droughts, climate refugees and hunger.

The government of Barbados has suggested changes in how the multinational development banks loan to poorer nations to take into account climate vulnerability and disasters. Pakistan and others have called for debt relief.

It's "about putting ourselves in everybody else's shoes," said Avinash Persaud, special envoy to Barbados Prime Minister Mia Mottley.

Persaud suggests a long-term levy on high oil, coal and natural gas prices, but one done in reverse. At current high energy prices there would be no tax, so no increase in inflation. But once fossil fuel prices decline 10 percent, 1 percent of the price drop would go to a fund to pay victims of climate loss and damage, without adding to the cost of living.

*Climate data journalists Mary Katherine Wildeman in Hartford, Connecticut, and Camille Fasset in Seattle; Wanjohi Kabukuru in Mombasa, Kenya; Frank Jordans in Berlin; Ellen Knickmeyer in Washington; Shazia Bhatti in Rajanpur, Pakistan; Aniruddha Ghosal in New Delhi, and Megan Janetsky in Havana, Cuba, contributed.*



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## PBBM to discuss economy, food, climate at APEC

By Vito Barcelo and  
Vince Lopez

PRESIDENT Ferdinand Marcos Jr will join other heads of state for the annual Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Economic Leaders' Meeting (AELM) in Bangkok, Thailand from Nov. 18 to 19.

There, he will raise economic issues, food and energy security, and climate change during the 8th APEC Meeting next week, Malacanang said Monday.

In a media briefing, Office of the Press Secretary officer-in-charge Cheloy Garafil said the annual regional forum is an opportunity for the country to advance its economic agenda and priorities.

"The economic leaders from 21 APEC economies will discuss sustainable trade and investment, reconnecting the region and charting our path towards post-pandemic recovery and inclusive and sustainable growth," Garafil said.

"This will be an opportunity for the country to push for economic agenda and priorities including empowerment of the micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) and their inclusion in global value chains, recognition of the essential role of maritime crews and seafarers in ensuring stable and resilient supply chains and ensuring food and energy security as well as climate change mitigation and adaptation," she said.

Garafil said Mr. Marcos will attend the APEC CEO Summit, a gathering of the region's top business leaders, and meet with Thai businessmen to discuss investments and expansion plans.

The President will also meet with APEC leaders of economies to strengthen bilateral relations and explore avenues for mutual economic benefit, as well as with the Filipino community in Bangkok, she added. *(See full story online at [manilastandard.net](http://manilastandard.net))*



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## APEC meet: BBM tackles food, security

BY MICHELLE GUILLANG  
@tribunephil\_mish

President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. will underscore the need for

food and energy security as he is set to join fellow heads of state for the annual Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Economic Leaders' Meeting in Bangkok, Thailand next week.

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The President will be in the neighboring country for four days to attend the summit, meet local business leaders, and tackle business opportunities, investments, and expansion plans with potential investors from 16 to 19 November.

In a Palace press briefing Monday, Office of the Press Secretary officer-in-charge and Undersecretary Cheloy Garafil said aside from APEC 2022, the President will also attend other related summits to tackle plans and priorities of the Philippine government in terms of trade, investment, and post-pandemic economic recovery.

"The economic leaders from 21 APEC economies will discuss sustainable trade and investment, reconnecting the region and charting our paths towards post-pandemic recovery and inclusive and sustainable growth,"

Garafil said.

She said APEC is an opportunity for the country to push for economic agenda and priorities including empowerment of the micro, small- and medium-sized enterprises and their inclusion in global value chains.

The President, she added, will also utilize the platform to recognize the essential role of maritime crews and seafarers in ensuring stable and resilient supply chains as well as to tackle climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Marcos will also meet with six state leaders on the sidelines of APEC, the Department of Foreign Affairs Assistant Secretary Eric Tamayo said.

"The President is having bilateral meetings with six counterparts. The arrangements are still being finalized so I'm not at liberty to disclose yet at this time which economies and leaders they are," Tamayo said in the same press briefing.

Tamayo added the President aims to encourage a "robust response of economies to the challenge of climate change and mitigation" in his four-day visit to Bangkok.

"It is important for us to be able to highlight the fact that economies need to address and need the future proof of the region in responding to these disruptions, be it coming from the pandemic and other disruptions around the globe," Tamayo said.

When asked if the ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine will be brought up by the President at the summit, Tamayo said the Philippine government has already expressed its stand on the issue in more appropriate platforms.

"Bilateral issues will not be part of the discussions in the APEC platform. Although in the context of the President's advocacy on food security, of course, reference will be made on the rising prices of inputs to food," he said.

He added: "This is something that each economy is concerned about, the rising inflation and how this is impacting our efforts to facilitate rapid economic recovery in the region. On energy, of course, we have seen rising prices of energy, and again these are critical inputs and critical components of keeping the wheels of the economy running."

This will be the first in-person meeting of the 21-member regional economic bloc since the pandemic hit at the start of the year 2020.

The two previous AELMs were held virtually in 2021 and 2022, hosted by Malaysia and New Zealand, respectively.

The 21 member economies of APEC are Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Philippines, Russia, Singapore, Chinese Taipei, Thailand, the United States and Vietnam.



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## CRUCIAL CONCERNS

PRESIDENT Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. will shed light on the role of the country's maritime crews and seafarers in ensuring stable supply chains when he participates in the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Economic Leaders' Meeting (AELM) in Thailand next week, Malacañang announced Monday.

In a Palace press briefing, Undersecretary Cheloy Garafil, officer-in-charge of the Office of the Press Secretary (OPS), confirmed that Marcos will be joining other heads of state at the 8th APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting in Bangkok from Nov. 16 to 19.

This will be the first APEC meeting for the President and his administration. It will also be the first in-person meeting of the 21-member regional economic bloc since the coronavirus pandemic hit at the start of the year 2020.

Aside from maritime crews and seafarers, Garafil said other topics that will be raised by Marcos are the importance of empowering micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) and their inclusion in global value chains, the need to ensure food and energy security, and climate change mitigation and adaptation measures.

Garafil said Marcos will also participate in the APEC CEO Summit which is a meeting of top business leaders in the region. "He will meet with top executives of Thai companies to discuss business opportunities, investments, and expansion plans," she said.

She said Marcos will also have the opportunity to meet with leaders of economies to discuss the country's bilateral relations and seek paths toward mutual economic benefits.



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## Kapakanan ng MSMEs, seafarers, food, energy security tatalakayin ni PBBM sa APEC Summit 2022

**TATALAKAYIN** ni Pangulong Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. ang Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), kapakanan ng mga seafarer, food and energy security sa gaganaping Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Summit sa Bangkok, Thailand mula November 16 hanggang 19.

Sa pahayag ni Office of the Press Secretary OIC Undersecretary Cheloy Garafil sa Palace briefing nitong Lunes, isang oportunidad ang APEC Summit para isulong ang agenda at prayoridad sa ekonomiya.

"The APEC is an opportunity for us to push for our economic agenda and priorities. These include the empowerment of our MSMEs and their inclusion in glo-

bal value chains, recognition of the essential role of our maritime crews and seafarers in ensuring stable and resilient supply chains, ensuring our food and energy security and climate change mitigation and adaptation," ayon kay Garafil.

Samantala, ayon naman kay Foreign Affairs Assistant Secretary Eric Tamayo, kanilang pag-uusapan sa APEC ang mga hamon sa pagbangon ng mga bansa mula sa pandemya dulot ng Covid-19.

Gayundin ay nakatakdang dumalo ang Pangulo sa iba pang mga related summits sa Thailand na kung saan ay posibleng talakayin ang

tungkol sa kawalan ng pamumuhunan at post pandemic economic recovery.

Ayon pa sa DFA, inaasahang makikipagtulungan din si PBBM SA mga ilang lider ng bansa sa sidelines ng APEC summit.

Bukod pa rito, harap din ang Pangulo sa Filipino community sa Thailand.

Ito ang kauna-unahang pagdalo ni PBBM sa APEC Leaders Summit.

Kauna-unahan din ito na in-person meeting ng 21-member regional economic bloc mula nang tumama ang pandemya noong taong 2020.

(Vanz Fernandez)





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## PBBM, magkakaroon ng 6 bilateral meetings sa sidelines ng APEC summit

MAY anim na bilateral meetings ang dadaluhan ni Pangulong Ferdinand Marcos Jr. sa sidelines ng Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Summit sa Thailand.

"Yes, the President is having bilateral meetings with six counterparts. The arrangements are still being finalized so I'm not at liberty to disclose yet at this time which economies and leaders they are," ayon kay DFA Assistant Secretary Eric Tamayo sa isang panayam.

Napaulat na dadalo rin sa APEC Leaders Meeting si United States Vice President Kamala Harris na nakatakda sa susunod na linggo.

Sa tanong kung makapupulong ni Pangulong Marcos sina United States Vice President Kamala Harris at Russian President Vladimir Putin, na dadalo sa summit, sinabi ni Tamayo na: "Right now, I can say that among the roster of bilateral meetings of the President that these meetings have yet to be explored for the time being."

Nauna nang sinabi ng White House na bibisita sa Pilipinas si Harris para muling pagtibayin at palakasin ang US-Philippines Alliance at "underscore the breadth of our cooperation as friends, partners, and allies" matapos ang kanyang partisipasyon sa APEC.

Ang Thailand ang magho-host ng APEC Summit ngayong taon na may layunin na itaon ang pansin na ipanum-

batik ang connectivity sa pamamagitan ng pagpapataloy ng safe and seamless cross-border travel, reinvigorating tourism and the services sector, facilitating business mobility as well as increasing investment in health security."

Ayon kay Office of the Press Secretary officer-in-charge Undersecretary Cheloy Garafil, ang APEC Summit ay isang oportunidad para sa Pilipinas para isulong ang "economic agenda at priorities."

"These include the empowerment of our MSMEs (micro, small and medium enterprises) and their inclusion in global value chains, recogni-

tion of essential role of our maritime crews and seafarers in ensuring stable and resilient supply chains, ensuring our food and energy security and climate change mitigation and adaptation," ayon kay Garafil.

Sa gitna ng COVID-19 pandemic, ang APEC ay gumawa ng "utmost effort" nito na i-adapt at pag-usapan ang "unprecedented challenges" na ma-kaaabot sa economic well-being ng rehiyon.

Itinatag noong 1989, ang APEC ay mayroong core value na i-promote ang regional economic integration sa ilalim ng non-legally binding manner at friendly environment.

KRIS JOSE



**Editorial EDITORIAL Editorial**

**ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION, REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH  
AT DRUG PREVENTION, ISAMA SA CURRICULUM**

**M**ARAMING pagbabago at banta sa paligid.  
Kadalasang nalalagay sa alanganin ay ang kabataan.

Talamak ang mga ilegal na gawain at biktima ang mga menor-de-edad. Sila rin ang dumaranas sa mga epekto o resulta ng ginagawa ng nakatatanda.

Kaugnay nito, isinusulong ang House Bill No.5202 o Responsible Youth Act, na makapagtuturo at mangangalaga sa kabataan.

Ang panukalang batas na ito ay naglalayong isama ang ilang mga paksa sa curriculum ng elementary at high school. Ito ay ang Environmental Protection, Entrepreneurship, Reproductive Health and Population Control at Drug Prevention.

Malaking tulong ito sa kabataan na magkaroon ng kaalaman sa mga naturang usapin at magkaroon ng positive-mindset.

Batid naman natin na nahaharap ang kabataan sa maraming panganib at hamon kabilang dito ang drug addiction, teenage pregnancy at kakulangan ng kaalaman sa usaping climate change o global warming.

Kaya kailangan ng tamang gabay para matiyak na sila'y tumatahak sa tamang landas.

Dapat mas matutukan ang mahahalagang isyu sa pamamagitan ng mga content sa teaching modules na angkop sa edad ng mga bata.

Kasabay ng pagharap natin sa kasalukuyang panahon na puno ng pagsubok, huwag din nating kalimutan ang haharapang kinabukasan ng ating mga anak.

Hindi man natin maibigay sa kanila ang maginhawang bukas, tulungan natin silang maging mas matatag, palaban at may alam.



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# STOP 'ENVIRONMENTAL ABUSE' -- BISHOP

**By Yvonne P.  
Cervantes**

A Catholic bishop has called for an end to "environmental abuse" ahead of the ninth anniversary of the deadly Typhoon Yolanda.

Citing experts, Borongan Bishop Crispin Varquez said that many of the calamities that the world is facing are related to climate change.

"We must hear the poor cry of our planet for common action to save our common home," Varquez said.

For this to happen, Varquez said people must heed the call

of Pope Francis for "ecological conversion".

"We must move away from the sins of environmental abuse and neglect to show that we are truly returning to the Lord and we truly care for one another," he said.

More than 6,000 people were killed by one of the world's deadliest natural disasters that wiped out practically everything in its path as it swept ashore on Nov. 8, 2013.

Yolanda, known internationally as Haiyan, inflicted serious damage to several central Philippine provinces, with Leyte and Samar appearing to bear

the brunt of the storm.

For the bishop, it was "a story of grief and sorrow for those who have lost their loved ones, of acceptance, of humility and redemption."

The threats and challenges remain, he said, "but what we have are the lessons of the past, something we have learned, and by all means we have to sustain — continue educating ourselves, our young ones especially for they will be the ones who will bear the consequences of our decisions and actions of today."

"For this commemoration, let us continue with binding hopefulness and solidarity in

the face of so many challenges coming our way and be thankful to the Lord that we have risen from the horrible destruction that super typhoon Yolanda had brought," Varquez said. He also asked for continued prayers for people who died from the typhoon and for the survivors "that they may find comfort and strength in God to rebuild and move forward in their lives."

"As we face an uncertain future let us continue to pray for deliverance from all calamities, both natural and man-made, and other vagaries of weather," he said.



# Borongan bishop calls for end to 'environmental abuse'

*Ahead of typhoon 'Yolanda' anniversary*

By YVONNE P. CERVANTES

A CATHOLIC bishop has called for an end to "environmental abuse" ahead of the 9th anniversary of the deadly typhoon "Yolanda."

Citing experts, Borongan Bishop Crispin Varquez said that many of the calamities that the world is facing are related to climate change.

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## President to issue EO declaring all idle gov't land for housing projects

By Vince Lopez

PRESIDENT Ferdinand Marcos Jr. is set to sign an executive order (EO) that will put all idle government lands under the name of the Republic of the Philippines to enable the executive department to use these lands for government housing.

Mr. Marcos said he is set to meet with banks and financial institutions to assist the Department of Human Settlements

and Urban Development (DHSUD) in realizing its goal of building 1 million housing units per year or 6 million houses by the end of his term.

The EO will implement Section 24 of Republic Act No. 11201, which mandates several government agencies to jointly identify idle state lands suitable for housing and rural development.

President Marcos said the EO will

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### President...

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not create new regulations but will just enforce the existing law.

The Chief Executive said putting all these government assets under the Republic of the Philippines will ensure flexibility in deciding which of these lands should be used for housing.

Under the issuance, an inventory will be conducted by the DHSUD and the departments of Agrarian Reform (DAR), Agriculture (DA), Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Interior and Local Government (DILG), and the Land Registration Authority (LRA) to identify these lands, estimated to be more than 16,000 hectares, to be used for socialized housing.

RA 11201 paved the way for the creation of the DHSUD and vested the housing agency with the power to take and administer government lands that have been idle for 10 years and use these for urban development.

Under RA 11201, the housing department is empowered to own and administer government-owned lands that have not been utilized for the purpose they have been originally reserved or acquired for at least 10 years and identified as suitable for urban development.

Housing Secretary Jose Acuzar earlier told the President that it had acquired the commitment of the Development Bank of the Philippines (DBP) to the government's housing program.



## Marcos to issue EO on reserving idle govt land for housing devt

**P**RESIDENT Ferdinand "Bongbong" R. Marcos Jr. is eyeing the issuance of a new Executive Order (EO) for the implementation of the government mandate to reserve its idle lands for housing projects.

Marcos clarified that the new issuance "will not create a new regulation," but only implement the provisions of Section 24 of Republic Act (RA) No. 11201 to identify the said idle lands.

A government land is deemed "idle" if it has been unutilized for at least 10 years and suitable for urban development.

Among the agencies which will be tasked to conduct the assessment are the Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development (DHSUD), Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR), Department of

Agriculture (DA), Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) and the Land Registration Authority (LRA).

Over 16,000 hectares of idle lands are expected to be covered by the inventory.

The issuance is expected to help DHSUD in achieving its target of building 6 million housing units by 2028.

Marcos will meet with private banks and financial institutions to secure their commitment to assist DHSUD in reaching its goal by providing financing to potential homeowners.

DHSUD proposed a P36 billion budget, which will be used as interest subsidy for its mass housing program.

*Samuel P. Medenilla*



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## Aksyon ang kailangan



PULONG DUTERTE

**A**ng pananalasa ng bagyong 'Paeng' sa maraming parte ng bansa ay muling pinakita sa atin na kailangan ng pangmatagalang solusyon sa mga ganitong problema na dumarating taon-taon.

Hindi na natin iisa-isahin kung saan-saan naghasik ng pinsala ang bagyong Paeng dahil halos lahat ng rehiyon ay tinamaan. Maging ang Davao ay hindi pinalagpas ni Paeng. Daan-daang pamilya ang naapektuhan sa Davao ayon sa Office of Civil Defense-Davao Region. May mga nilikas na pamilya at ilang mga nasirang bahay dahil sa bagyo.

Pero ito ay maliit na problema lamang kung ikukumpara sa pinsalang sinapit ng Maguindanao, at ibang bahagi ng Luzon at Western Visayas. Sa huling tala ay mahigit 100 na ang nasawi at mahigit 30 katao ang nai-report na nawawala. Halos 200,000 katao ang lumikas sa mga evacuation center at ang damage sa sektor ng agrikultura ay mahigit P1 billion na. Sa panahong sinusulat ng inyong Kuya Pulong ang kolum na ito, ang mga numerong nabanggit ay mga pang-unang tala pa lang ng destruksyon na dala ng bagyong Paeng.

Ang mga long-term o pangmata-

galang solusyon sa ganitong paulit-ulit na problema ay nakasalalay sa aksyon ng Kongreso.

Sa panig ng inyong Kuya Pulong, kasama ang ating bill sa may 20 pang ibang panukalang batas na naihain sa Kamara de Representante para sa pagtatag ng Department of Disaster Resilience (DDR). Naaprubahan na ito ng Kamara sa nakaraang Kongreso pero kailangang i-file ulit ngayon dahil hindi naisabatas noon.

Magiging mas mabilis ang pagkilos at koordinasyon sa rescue, relief at rehabilitation efforts kung may DDR. Tulad ng nasabi na natin noon, maging opisina o departamento man ito, ang mahalaga ay may sapat itong kapangyarihan at modernong kagamitan para maging epektibong ahensya hindi lang sa panahon at pagkatapos ng kalamidad, kundi bago pa man sumapit ito.

Marami na rin ang nakapaghain muli ng mga bill, kasama ang inyong Kuya Pulong, para sa panukalang pagpapatayo ng mga evacuation center sa bawat lungsod at munisipalidad.

Bukod diyan, kamakailan lang ay nanawagan tayong bilisan na ang pagpasa ng ating panukalang National Land Use Act (NLUA). Karaniwan ng sinasabing ang pagsasabatas nito ay instrumento para matigil na ang walang habas na paggamit ng mga lupang pangsakahan para sa pagpapatayo ng mga subdibisyon at iba pang commercial properties. Ito ay sa kadahilanang kapag may NLUA na, matutukoy kung ano ang mga lupang pang-agrikultura, pang-industriya, ang para sa pabahay, at mga lugar na

dapat pangalagaan.

Isa pang layunin ng NLUA ay ang pagtukoy sa pamamagitan ng siyensya at modernong teknolohiya ang mga lugar na danger areas, hazard-prone o kailangan ng mga karagdagan proteksyon sa mga nakatira rito. Sa ganitong paraan, maliligat ang mga kababayan natin sa mga pinsala at panganib bago pa man sumapit ang kalamidad.

May panukalang batas rin tayo para maging libre ang paghahatid ng mga donasyon ng relief organizations sa mga lugar na dineklarang under a state of calamity. Sa panukalang Relief Goods Free Transportation Act, dapat ikarga at ihatid ng mga cargo companies, freight forwarders at iba pang logistics companies ng libre ang mga donated relief goods.

Ilan lang 'yan sa bill na naihain na sa kasalukuyang Kongreso para mas tumatag, bumilis at umayos ang ating paghahanda at pagresponde sa panahon ng kalamidad at iba pang emergency. Karamihan ay naipasa na ng Kamara de Representante sa mga nakaraang Kongreso pero hindi naisabatas dahil laging nagkukulang ng panahon.

Sa muling pagpapatuloy ng sesyon ng Kongreso ngayong linggo, umaasa akong aaksyunan agad ng buong kapulungan ng Kamara ang mga panukalang batas na kailangan natin para maging handa ang buong bansa sa panahon ng krisis. Ang mabilisang aksyon ay para matiyak rin na may maihahatid na magandang bukas para sa mga anak natin at mga susunod pang henerasyon.



## Congressmen not inclined to 'outlaw' disasters

**W**ith his island province of Catanduanes often pounded by furious typhoons, some times in the dead of night, causing loss of many lives and wreaking serious damage on property and crops, Rep. Francisco Perfecto filed a bill in Congress in the late 1950s to address the problems caused by typhoons. A cynical member of the House of Representatives immediately named the bill as the "Bill to Outlaw Typhoons."

Nowhere in the bill was there any statement or even a hint to declare typhoons outlaws. The label "A bill to outlaw typhoons" was only the product of the satirical mind of another congressman as the true intent of Perfecto's bill was to study typhoons with a view to dissipating their force and reducing the damage they wreak. The bill included provisions for funding the acquisition of technical equipment and the specialized training of personnel. For that reason, a political rival of Rep. Perfecto mocked, unjustly, the bill as being tantamount to outlawing typhoons.

The press lapped up the derisive label, prompting political pundits to comment that the bill was reflective of the shallowness of the occupants of the Lower House. Because of the jeers rained down on his bill and the snide remarks blown his way, Perfecto allowed his bill to die a quick death. He retired from politics after the end of his term in 1957.

We do not know how many lives could have been saved and damage to property reduced had the bill to study typhoon prospered in the halls of Congress and passed into law before the end of the 1950s. On May 28, 1960 a strong typhoon hit Metro Manila in the dead of night, cutting off power and dumping so much rain as to plunge the metropolis in total darkness and placed it under water. So many lives were lost and so much property was destroyed. On Nov. 19, 1970, super typhoon Yoling raged over Metro Manila in the morning of that day, knocking down power and communication lines and destroying many homes and business structures. Regular activities ground to a halt as the capital region lay in ruins.

Painful lessons were learned from the death and destruction wrought upon Metro Manila, the seat of government and the center of the country's economy. So, in December of 1972, two years after super typhoon Yoling devastated Metro Manila, the Weather Bureau was reorganized into the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration, abbreviated as PAGASA. It was mandated to provide flood and typhoon warnings, public weather forecasts and advisories, meteorological, astronomical, climatological, and

### MUSINGS OSCAR P. LAGMAN, JR.

other specialized information and services for the protection of life and property.

In 2010, the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC), was established to provide a comprehensive, all-hazard, multi-sectoral, inter-agency, and community-based approach to disaster risk management. The Council plans and leads the guiding activities in the field of communication, warning signals, emergency, transportation, evacuation, rescue, engineering, health and rehabilitation, public education, and auxiliary services.

It is a working group of various government, non-government, civil sector and private sector organizations administered by the Office of Civil Defense under the Department of National Defense (DND). The chairperson is the Secretary of Defense, vice-chairperson for Disaster Preparedness is the Secretary of the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG), the vice-chairperson for Disaster Prevention and Mitigation is the Secretary of the Department of Science and Technology (DoST), and the vice-chairperson for Disaster Response is the Secretary for Social Welfare and Development (DSWD).

In November of 2015, or after the passage of 43 years since PAGASA was established, a law was passed to modernize PAGASA's technological operational capacity. The

modernization program included the acquisition of state-of-the-art equipment, facilities, and systems, the establishment of a technology-based data center that is consistent with international standards, the creation of a human resource development program that will include a new salary scale, and the establishment of regional weather service centers. Its current top officials — the administrator and the three deputy administrators — all have doctoral degrees.

Today, thanks to weather satellites and Doppler radar, we can track a typhoon days before it makes landfall, and even before it enters the Philippine area of responsibility, enabling people to ensure their safety and to secure their property. But in spite of all the extensive advances in weather forecasting and damage control, severe tropical storm Paeng caused the loss of at least 150 lives and about P2.74 billion worth of crops. It also rendered hundreds of thousands of homes across 64 provinces, from Ilocos Norte to Maguindanao, roofless, flooded, or totally destroyed.

Michael Rama, mayor of Cebu City and president of the City Mayors League, blames PAGASA for giving inaccurate information, leading some other city mayors to take inadequate or inappropriate emergency measures to protect lives and property. He also points to quarrying as the major cause of landslides. Others hold local government officials responsible for the unusual enormous damage wrought by a tropical storm.

Naguib Sinarimbo, Minister of the Interior and Local Government of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region of Mus-



  
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lim Mindanao attributes much of the devastation of Maguindanao to the logs that the continuous rain of Paeng caused to cascade from the mountains of Bukidnon. The province accounts for 68 of the total fatalities caused by the tropical storm.

Dino Reyes Chua, mayor of Noveleta, Cavite said the town's preparations for Paeng's impact turned out to be inadequate as floodwaters rose much higher than in past storms. He also attributes the cause of the unusually high floodwaters to the logs and debris that came down from the nearby mountain and Tagaytay. They wrecked the wall on the river bank, allowing the river's rampaging water to surge into the barangays, causing more damage than in previous floods.

PAGASA top officials acknowledged their shortcomings. But they in turn blame the Department of Budget and Management for not giving them the funds necessary to equip and man the 32 weather stations. Administrator Vicente Malano says PAGASA needs 700 more people to staff all 32 stations 24 hours seven days a week. They also admit they are wrong in using technical terms when disseminating weather forecasts to the public. "Winds of 120 kph" and "24 Inches of rainfall" are meaningless to ordinary folks. They resolved to translate technical terms into description of impacts of such winds and rainfalls.

Alexander Pama, former head of the NDRRMC, attributes the high number of casualties and extensive damage to crops and property to the lack of a government agency empowered to directly do damage

control. While there is the NDRRMC, it is only a policy formulating body. Actual damage control — from prediction to preparation to protection of lives and property to rehabilitation — is performed by units of the different departments (DND, DILG, DoST, and DSWD).

Each unit is accountable to the secretary of the department it belongs to. The level of performance and coordination among these separate units is dependent on the capabilities and resources of their respective departments. Incompetence of the personnel of one unit or the inadequacy of resources of another unit would result in failure in disaster risk reduction and damage control. He recommends the creation of an authority or a whole department for disaster management.

Well, in his State of the Nation Address in July 2018, President Rodrigo Duterte urged Congress to pass a bill creating the Department of Disaster Management. He said:

"To help safeguard the present and the future generations, we have to earnestly undertake initiatives to reduce our vulnerabilities to natural hazards, and bolster our resilience to the impact of natural disasters and climate change. As I had stated last year, we must learn from the experiences from the super typhoon Yolanda, and other mega disasters, and from global best practices.

"We need a truly empowered department characterized by a unity of command, science-based approach and full-time focus on natural hazards and disasters, and the wherewithal to take charge of the disaster risk reduction; preparedness and response; with better recovery and faster rehabilitation.

"Hence, we, in the Cabinet, have approved for immediate endorsement to Congress the passage of a law creating the Department of Disaster Management, an inter-agency crafted and a high-priority measure aimed at genuinely strengthening our country's capacity for [resilience] to natural disasters. I fervently appeal to Congress to pass this bill with utmost urgency. Our people's safety requirements cannot wait."

In the 1950s congressmen dismissed derisively a bill to study typhoons and to acquire the necessary technical equipment as "The Bill to Outlaw Typhoons." In the 2020s, it appears congressmen dismiss facetiously Duterte's proposal as "The Bill to Outlaw Disasters" as the proposal has been given only cursory attention. ■

OSCAR P. LAGMAN, JR. is a retired corporate executive, business consultant, and management professor. He has been a politicized citizen since his college days in the late 1950s.





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## Reversing Duterte's follies

In the wake of Severe Tropical Storm "Paeng," President Marcos Jr. flew over the areas in Maguindanao devastated by landslides with Maguindanao del Sur Gov. Bai Mariam Sangki-Mangudadatu. He reports on the sortie: "I was pointing out to the governor that in all those places where there are trees, the ground did not move. All the damage that you saw on the mountains, it's because they were bald." Mr. Marcos told her he could refer the Maguindanaons and the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao to plenty of nongovernmental organizations. The governor must have been bemused by the President's display of cluelessness.

Despite the profound speeches the President had given in the United Nations General Assembly and other forums about climate change, Mr. Marcos' real understanding of the wicked environmental problems besetting the nation is questionable. Jon Bonifacio of the environmental group Kalikasan found it "strange that it seems like it's only now he's come to appreciate the benefits provided by well-conserved watersheds."

Nations are supposed to find the resolve and resilience to squarely face their specific natural and human-made challenges. Israel and Singapore, which are minority nations in ethnically dominant neighborhoods, have learned to steel and steer themselves with strategic purpose and national will to prevail.

The Philippines has its share of challenges that could trigger a rugged and robust national response. The 20 typhoons that batter the nation every year could be the equivalent of the harsh winters that many nations have learned to anticipate, plan for, and adapt to.

But after over half a millennium since a single unified administration has been estab-



### ON THE MOVE

SEGUNDO ECLAR ROMERO

lished in the archipelago in 1565 by a succession of Spanish, American, and now Filipino control, we display a certain level of masochism by staying in the destructive pathways of typhoons, suffering widespread damage and despair with no visible and significant collective or individual mitigation and adaptation.

It is certain that over the six-year term of office of Mr. Marcos, there will be 120 typhoons, one-fourth or 30 would be destructive. This is as it has been over the terms of recent past presidents. One out of four typhoons occurs globally within the Philippine Area of Responsibility.

Why then do we have continuing public and private institutional clumsiness in disaster risk reduction and management? One of the most inspiring initiatives in Philippine disaster risk reduction and management was the initiation of Project NOAH (Nationwide Operational Assessment of Hazards) in 2012 by the country's leading scientists. It was promoted as the Philippines' flagship disaster risk reduction and management program during the Aquino administration.

The project was defunded in 2017 when the Duterte administration took over on the pretext that the innovations of Project NOAH could already be mainstreamed under the Department of Science and Technology. It was not only the scuttling of ABS-CBN and the erratic response to the COVID-19 pandemic that further debilitated Filipinos reeling from disasters. Project NOAH should be on the list of the Duterte administration's epic follies.

Project NOAH was an all too brief renaissance surge in technological and behavioral innovation applied to getting the nation and local communities ready and resilient against hazards. It was getting international and local acclaim. Among other achievements, Project NOAH's specific and targeted advisories enabled the municipality of Daram in Samar to preemptively evacuate in the face of Typhoon "Ruby" on Dec. 6, 2014. There were no recorded casualties even though 1,664 houses were washed away by the storm surge of Ruby.

Altogether, Project NOAH from 2012 to 2016, cost the Filipino taxpayer a measly P6.4 billion. Even in real terms, this pales in comparison with the P5 billion confidential funds of Mr. Marcos and Vice President Sara Duterte of at least P30 billion over six years.

Mr. Marcos' post-Paeng clueless remarks could be easily forgotten if he will reconsider the revival of Project NOAH as a complementary, enriching, display of Filipino capacity to sustain national resilience-building. That will be a good start for the President as a leader able to break the prevailing wait-and-see attitude of the governing, economic, and social elite, and inspire and mobilize them to provide the leading edge to the nation.

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## Filing of bill to boost tree planting lauded

By CAI U. ORDINARIO [@caiordinario](#)

**E**CONOMISTS have expressed their support for the tree-growing agreement bill filed in both houses of Congress to increase the country's forest cover and mitigate disasters caused by floods and heavy rainfall.

The Foundation for Economic Freedom said the bills filed by Senators Imee Marcos and Cynthia Villar as well as Reps. Joey Salceda and Rufus Rodriguez could mitigate the negative effects of climate change.

"The proposed law will contribute to generating green jobs, providing a sustainable source of livelihood for the indigenous peoples such as the Lumads, and other rural poor upland dwellers, ensuring water and energy security, supporting the agriculture sector for food security," the economists said.

"[The bill will also contribute to] reviving the country's forest and wood industry, boosting forest ecotourism, and effectively mitigating the adverse effects of climate change such as destructive typhoons, severe flooding, and landslides," they added.

The core feature of the proposed bill is to treat planted trees as crops and personal property in forestlands under the law.

By treating planted trees as personal property, the state will encourage private sector investments in tree farming and plantation development on an estimated 5 million hectares of unmanaged and denuded forest lands.

If planted trees in farms and plantations are legally treated as personal property, they can be collateralized, securitized, and have agreements beyond the 50-year limitation on the exploration, development and utilization of natural resources under the Constitution.

Moreover, if planted trees are renewable, harvestable, and no longer considered part of the land, foreign funds can also be tapped for the sustainable development and management of tree farms and plantations.

"There is an urgent need, therefore, to boost the private sectors' participation in tree farming and plantation development, and effective reforestation of the country's degraded forest lands," they added.

Based on Bulletin No. 7 of the Department of Agriculture, typhoon "Paeng" wrought damages amounting to P2.86 billion and affected 80,295 farmers and fishers.

The typhoon caused a volume of production loss of 116,291 metric tons (MT) and 86,574 hectares of agricultural areas.



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## San Juan launches project vs plastic pollution

The city government of San Juan launched over the weekend the "Kuha sa Tingi" project, which seeks to address plastic pollution.

Mayor Francis Zamora said the local government would establish

refilling stations in 10 *sari-sari* or convenience stores in the city.

The store owners will have technical and business development support from the city government.

The initiative was launched in

partnership with Greenpeace Philippines and Impact Hub Manila.

"We are happy to partner with San Juan for this endeavor," Greenpeace country director Lea Guerrero said.

- Jose Rodel Clapano



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# House to boost funding for clean water, sanitation access

By RYAN PONCE PACPACO

*Amid spike in cholera cases*

ALBAY 2nd District Representative Joey Sarte Salceda on Monday said the House is committed to increasing access to clean water and sanitation facilities through more water systems projects amid ongoing cases of cholera in certain regions of the country.

"We are committed to increasing funds for water and sanitation facilities. Right now, the 2023 budget has about P5.28 billion dedicated to water systems under the DPWH budget. We will do more," Salceda, chairman of the House Committee on Ways and Means, said.

Salceda said, "the Department of Budget and

Management (DBM) considers the recommendations of members of Congress in funding programs from the Allocations to Local Government Units or ALGUs item. That's P63 billion this year, and we will recommend that more water systems be funded."

Data from the Department of Health (DOH) indicated an upsurge in cholera cases in the country, from 976 cases recorded in January to October last year to 3,729 during the same period in 2022. Most of the cases were from Eastern Visayas, Davao region, and Caraga.

Likewise, Central Luzon, Western Visayas, and Eastern Visayas have surpassed the epidemic thresh-

old levels for cholera over the same period.

"Cholera cases are at an upsurge globally, in part due to floods caused by a changing climate. So, we are no exception. But cholera is totally avoidable - largely with clean water and proper sewage systems," he said.

"We are committed to funding more of that during the budget process," Salceda said.

Salceda added that water supply systems could also be funded with disaster risk reduction and management funds.

"Water supply also tends to be quite difficult in disaster-affected areas. Certainly, access to clean water is also a disaster

management measure, especially in evacuation centers," he added.

Salceda said his panel will also work with the House Committee on Appropriations to see whether "measures passed under my leadership of the committee can help fund more water facilities."

"Among the items, I'm looking at is the 20% earmarked revenues for sustainable development goals from the POGO [Philippine Offshore Gaming Operator] Tax Law, and the same item from the alcohol excise tax law and from vape taxes. Clean water and sanitation, after all, is goal number 6 of the SDGs," Salceda said.



## Buhayin Bicol River Basin project - Villafuerte

Umapela si Camarines Sur Rep. LRay Villafuerte kay Pangulong Ferdinand Marcos Jr. na buhayin ang Bicol River Basin Development Project Office (BRBDPO) upang mapangalagaan ang 317,000 ektaryang watershed sa Bicol region.

Binigyan-diin ni Villafuerte ang kahalagahan na mapangalagaan ang Bicol River Basin (BRB) watershed upang maproteksyunan nito ang rehiyon mula sa mga darating na bagyo.

Ang BRB ay sakop ng 963 barangay sa 50 munisipyo at siyudad sa mga probinsya ng Camarines Sur, Albay at Camarines Norte.

Sinabi ni Villafuerte na napapanahon din ang kanyang panukala matapos na bigyan-diin ni Marcos ang pangangailangan na tugunan ang climate change at tugunan ang problema sa pagbaha upang malimitahan ang mga nasasawi at pinsala ng mga bagyo.

Ayon sa mambabatas, ang BRBDPO ay itinayo ni dating Pangulong Ferdinand Marcos Sr. noong 1973 upang linangin ang BRB na makatutulong umano sa pag-unlad ng rehiyon.

Ang mandato ng mga opisining binuwag ay inilipat sa Regional Development Councils at mga lokal na pamahalaan.

Unang itinulak ni Villafuerte ang pagbuhay sa BRBDPO noong nakaraang administrasyon matapos manalasa ang bagyong Quinta, Rolly at Ulysses.

Samantala, hiniling din ni Villafuerte sa Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) na ipadala ang dredging facility nito sa Bicol upang muling mapalalim ang BRB at maiwasan ang pagbaha sa maraming lugar. **(Billy Begas)**



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## NEWS BRIEF

### Cagayan inuga ng lindol

Tinamaan ng magnitude 5 na lindol ang Cagayan bandang ala-1:00 ng tanghali, ayon sa Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs).

Ayon sa Phivolcs, tectonic ang origin ng lindol.

Bagama't walang pinsalang naitala sa insidente, tinataya ng state seismologists na masusundan pa ito ng mga aftershock kaya't pinag-iingat ng ahensya ang mga residenteng nakaramdam ng lindol.