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Biz leaders urged to implement EPR, help fight plastic pollution

By JONATHAN L. MAYUGA
@jonlmayuga

DEPARTMENT of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Maria Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga called on members of the Management Association of the Philippines (MAP) to implement Republic Act 11898, or the Extended Producers Responsibility (EPR) of 2022 to help the government fight plastic pollution.

Yulo-Loyzaga made the call as she urged the country's top business leaders to work with the government in addressing the climate crisis and create sustainable communities during MAP's general membership meeting held on Wednesday, June 14 in Taguig City.

An organization that promotes management excellence for nation building through the sharing of best management practices among its members, MAP promotes networking with other local and international business organizations and benchmarking with

counterpart organizations in other countries.

Partnership and collaboration

DURING the event, Yulo-Loyzaga talked about the national priorities on the environment, natural resources, and climate change, providing an avenue for potential partnerships and collaboration between the DENR and the business community, pointing out that "climate action for resilience is everyone's business."

"Our government needs partners who go beyond ESG [environmental, social and governance] and the fence lines of their operations to ensure ecosystem integrity and the resilience of communities that surround their operations," Loyzaga told an assembly of CEOs, COOs and other top management executives from the largest companies in the Philippines.

She said the government also needs "partners who go beyond compliance to achieve strategic shared values, and who are committed within their core business value cycles to going beyond just

their specific contributions to GDP."

Green and blue economy

THE Marcos administration's agenda of "pursuing a green and blue economy and establishing livable and sustainable communities" guides the DENR in fulfilling its mandate of protecting the environment, managing risk, and building resilience in all-natural domains, the DENR chief said.

"Our work covers the air we breathe, all life on land and below water, and all our natural resources. In sum, our priorities are to protect, conserve, restore, and regenerate the ecosystems that serve as the life support for all human, social, and economic development," she said.

"Some of you have already stepped forward and committed to work with us," Yulo-Loyzaga said.

Policy approach and practice

ACCORDING to Yulo-Loyzaga, the EPR law serves as the environmental policy approach and practice that

requires producers to be environmentally responsible throughout the life cycle of a product, especially during its post-consumer or end-of-life stage.

"Among the biggest threats to the environment are our unsustainable consumption and production practices that lead to the production of polluting waste. This is where our partnerships would not only be strategic but critical to our survival," she said.

"Confronting the complex roots of the pollution on land, seas, and air requires a 'whole-of-society' effort that will come at a cost but will have far-reaching benefits," she added.

Loyzaga said the EPR law is an opportunity to curb the destruction of ecosystems by setting targets for large enterprises to cover and divert 20 percent of the plastic waste they produce in 2022 by the end of 2023, gradually increasing this by 40 percent by 2024 and setting 10 percent targets until 80 percent can be decreased and reached by 2028 onwards.



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WATER CRISIS MASTER PLAN NEEDED—SOLONS

THE House Committee on Public Works and Highways has recently approved the proposal seeking to create an interagency body to propose, formulate, draft and direct the implementation of a comprehensive master plan to address the looming water crisis.

The committee chairman and Surigao del Sur Rep. Romeo Momo Sr. said his committee approved House Bill (HB) 6345, principally authored by Bulacan Rep. Lorna Silverio, which also vests the interagency body with the power to call on any government body, including private sector agencies, which can contribute to solving the crisis.

The interagency body shall be composed of the secretary of Department of Environment and Natural Resources as chairman and the secretaries of Trade and Industries, Agriculture, Agrarian Reform, Finance, Budget and Management, National Defense and Interior and Local Government as members.

The committee also adopted HR 601 and included its contents in HB 6345.

HR 601, authored also by Silverio, urged the national government to immediately form an interagency task force to plan, draft and formulate a comprehensive master plan to meet the imminent water crisis.

Silverio explained that the country, over the past two decades, has experienced various water shortages that impacted households, communities and the nation.

"Given the vital importance of water to everyday lives, leaders of the nation should be alarmed and should act today to avert a devastating water shortage. Even with the La Niña season, when there is supposed to be an abundance of water supply, the nation, particularly the National Capital Region [NCR], experiences water shortages that adversely impact on communities and business operations," she said.

Silverio lamented that the onset of the El Niño phenomenon has worsened the situation, drying up traditional water sources, and limiting their capacity to supply the water needs of a continuously growing metropolis.

"While water rationing is a stop-gap solution, a long-term solution that will assure a sustainable supply of clean, potable water must be put in place urgently," she said. Representatives of the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), Department of Budget and Management (DBM), and Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) supported the approval of the bill. *Jovee Marie N. Dela Cruz*



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NWRB advises water conservation to ensure supply in summer of '24

THE National Water Resources Board (NWRB) said water from Angat Dam must be conserved to ensure sufficient supply for the summer of 2024.

The state weather bureau Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) has predicted that the El Nino dry spell might last until 2024.

Nonetheless, the PAGASA allayed fears on the declining water level of the Angat Dam, which provides 90 percent of Metro Manila's water demand.

This means that the water allocation of the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) and its concessionaires Maynilad and Manila Water could change by July and the succeeding months.

NWRB executive director Dr. Sevillo

David said they allowed for the last time the extension of the 52 cubic meters per second allocation from June 16 to 30 this year.

If the expected rains don't come in to replenish the Angat and Ipo reservoirs, there could be water service interruptions for 630,000 Maynilad customers from nighttime until early morning, according to estimates, the NWRB said.

However, the interruptions might be averted if the rains could fill the dams to capacity.

The MWSS has urged ordinary consumers to conserve and harvest rainwater if possible, in order to lessen dependence and consumption from concessionaires.

If each household could fill a regular-sized drum with rainwater, that translates into the daily consumption of a regular family, David said.



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COA flags LLDA over uncollected fees

The Commission on Audit (COA) has called out the Laguna Lake Development Authority (LLDA) over its failure to collect rental and regulatory fees from several aquaculture operators in the lake amounting to P12.68 million last year.

In its annual audit report on LLDA, the COA said the uncollected fees due to inadequate assessment and collection procedures resulted in loss of funds that could have been used in the operations of LLDA.

The COA said LLDA also failed to collect

administrative fines from operators who have exceeded the 20-hectare maximum limit for fishpens under the Laguna de Bay Fishery Zoning and Management Guidelines or ZOMAG, which took effect on July 28, 2020.

Records showed that last year, two fish pen operators exceeded the allocated areas for them, but the LLDA did not impose administrative fines of P30,000.

The COA said the LLDA has yet to collect P1.435 million in administrative fines from other operators who have illegally put up their aqua structures in Cataquiz Belt.

The LLDA has yet to include the practice of following up and monitoring of delinquent operators on the issuance of aqua structure permits, the COA added.

"It is worth mentioning that the recommendation to address the monitoring of delinquent operators was communicated by the audit team to management since 2018. However, to date, said recommendation remained not implemented," the COA said.

In a reply, the LLDA said an aquaculture database is being developed for better monitoring of the operators.

The LLDA said it is committed to report the findings and recommendations of the audit team to its board of directors "to review, harmonize and amend existing policies and guidelines for aquaculture operations."
- Elizabeth Marcelo



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PROTECTING REMOTE ECOSYSTEMS

UN ADOPTS 'HISTORIC' HIGH SEAS TREATY

UNITED NATIONS—The world's first international treaty to protect the high seas was adopted Monday at the United Nations, a landmark environmental accord designed to protect remote ecosystems vital to humanity.

Secretary general Antonio Guterres hailed as a "historic achievement" the treaty that will establish a legal framework to extend swathes of environmental protections to international waters, which make up

more than 60 percent of the world's oceans.

Following more than 15 years of discussions, including four years of formal negotiations, UN member states finally agreed on the text for the treaty in March after a flurry of final, marathon talks.

Importance of oceans

The text, since frozen, has been pored over by the UN's lawyers and translators to make sure it matches in the body's six

official languages.

"Healthy oceans, from coastal waters to remote high seas and deep seabed areas, are integral to human health, wellbeing, and survival," a group of scientists noted in *The Lancet* journal.

Scientists have increasingly come to realize the importance of oceans, which produce most of the oxygen we breathe, limit climate change by absorbing CO₂, and host rich areas of biodiversity, often at the microscopic level.

But with so much of the world's oceans lying outside of individual countries' exclusive economic zones, and thus the jurisdiction of any single state, providing protection for the so-called "high seas" requires international cooperation.

Only 1% protected

The result is that they've been long ignored in many environmental fights, as the spotlight has been on coastal areas and a few emblematic species.

A key tool in the treaty will be the ability to create protected marine areas in international waters.

Currently, only about 1 percent of the high seas are protected by any sort of conservation measures.

The treaty is seen as crucial to countries protecting 30 percent of the world's oceans and lands by 2030, as agreed by world governments in a separate historic accord reached in Montreal in December. —AFP



PH hails int'l treaty on ocean protection

By JOSEPH PEDRAJAS and AFP

The Philippines welcomed the United Nations' move to adopt the first-ever treaty to protect biodiversity—the High Seas Treaty—after the country's two-decade participation in its process “with high hopes and inspiration.”

Foreign Affairs Undersecretary

Carlos Sorreta led the Philippine delegation that welcomed the development. He said the Philippines—“as an archipelagic state and home to richness in species—and the waters around the world form one single interconnected system.”

With the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) as the “guide- ▶ 4

PH hails int'l treaty on ocean protection ◀

post,” Sorreta said, the member states approach the process with the following principles:

- Common heritage of mankind
- Fair and equitable sharing of benefits
- Rights and jurisdiction of adjacent coastal states
- Special recognition for archipelagic states
- The precautionary principle
- Transparency of action and support

On June 19, the UN made a historic move after it adopted an agreement on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ Agreement).

According to DFA, the agreement was adopted by consensus and is consistent with the provisions of UNCLOS on protecting and preserving the marine environment.

It recognizes the need to address biological diversity loss and degradation of ocean ecosystems in a coherent and cooperative manner, DFA said.

The agreement also underscores the need for a comprehensive global regime, under UNCLOS, to better address conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity of areas beyond jurisdiction, it added.

High Seas Treaty: What it means

The world's first international treaty to protect the high seas contains landmark tools for the conservation and management of international waters.

International waters—outside the jurisdiction of any single state—cover more than 60 percent of the world's oceans.

Ocean ecosystems create half the oxygen humans breathe and limit global warming by absorbing much of the carbon dioxide emitted by human activities.

The UN treaty, which will open for signatures on Sept. 20, will go into force 120 days after 60 countries have ratified it.

Here are the key points of the text approved in March.

Ocean under threat

The treaty begins by recognizing “the need to address, in a coherent and cooperative manner, biodiversity loss and degradation of ecosystems of the ocean.”

These impacts include the warming of ocean waters along with their loss of oxygen, acidification, mounting plastics and other pollutants, as well as overfishing.

The text specifies that it will apply

to waters beyond countries' exclusive economic zones, which extend to a maximum of 200 nautical miles from the coasts.

It also covers what is known as “the Area,” shorthand for seabed and subsoil beyond the limits of national jurisdiction. The Area comprises just over half of the planet's seabed.

The Conference of the Parties (COP) will have to navigate the authority of other regional and global organizations.

Chief among these are regional fisheries bodies and the International Seabed Authority, which oversees permits for deep-sea mining exploration in some areas and may soon make the controversial move of allowing companies to mine beyond current test runs.

Marine protected areas

Currently, almost all protected marine areas (MPAs) are within national territorial waters.

The treaty, however, allows for these reserves to be created in the open ocean.

Most decisions would be taken by a consensus of the COP, but an MPA can be voted into existence with a three-quarters majority, to prevent deadlock caused by a single country.

One crucial shortcoming: the text


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does not say how these conserva-
tion measures will be monitored and
enforced over remote swathes of the
ocean—a task that will fall on the
COP.

Some experts say satellites could
be used to spot infractions.

Individual countries are already
responsible for certain activities on
the high seas that they have jurisdic-
tion over, such as those of ships flying
their flags.

Sharing the bounty?

On the high seas, countries and
entities under their jurisdiction will
be allowed to collect animal, plant,
or microbial matter whose genetic
material might prove useful, even
commercially.

Scientists, for example, have dis-
covered molecules with the potential
to treat cancer or other diseases in
microbes scooped up in sediment,
or produced by sponges or marine
mollusks.

Benefits-sharing of those re-
sources has been a key point of con-
tention between wealthy and poorer
nations.

The treaty establishes frameworks
for the transfer of marine research
technologies to developing countries
and a strengthening of their research
capacities, as well as open access to
data.

But it's left to the COP to decide
exactly how any monetary benefits

will eventually be shared, with op-
tions including a system based on
specific commercialized products, or
more generalized payment systems.

Environmental impact studies

The treaty requires signatories to
assess the environmental impacts of
planned activities under their con-
trol on the high seas before they are
authorized in instances when such
activities may have more than a minor
or transitory effect.

It also calls for countries to assess
the potential impact on international
waters of activities within national
jurisdictions that may cause "sub-
stantial pollution" or harm the high
sea marine environment.

Ultimately, states are responsible
for giving the green light to any
potentially harmful activity—a role
NGOs hoped would go to the COP, to
make controversial approvals more
difficult.

The treaty also requires states to
publish updates on an activity's envi-
ronmental impacts. Approvals can be
called into question if unanticipated
impacts arise.

Though they are not specifically
listed in the treaty, activities that
could come under regulation in-
clude transport and fishing, as well
as more controversial subjects such
as deep-sea mining or even geo-
engineering initiatives to mitigate
global warming.



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UN ADOPTS 'HISTORIC' HIGH SEAS TREATY

THE world's first international treaty to protect the high seas was adopted Monday (Tuesday in Manila) at the United Nations, creating a landmark environmental accord designed to protect remote ecosystems vital to humanity.

Secretary-General Antonio Guterres hailed as a "historic achievement" the treaty that will establish a legal framework to extend swathes of environmental protections to international waters, which make up more than 60 percent of the world's oceans.

"The ocean is the lifeblood of our planet and today you have pumped new life and hope to give the ocean a fighting chance," he told delegates.

Following more than 15 years of discussions, including four years of formal negotiations, UN member states finally agreed on the text for the treaty in March after a flurry of final, marathon talks. The text, since frozen, has been pored over by the UN's lawyers and translators to make sure it matches in the body's six official

languages.

"Countries must now ratify it as quickly as possible to bring it into force so that we can protect our ocean, build our resilience to climate change, and safeguard the lives and livelihoods of billions of people," said Rebecca Hubbard of the High Seas Alliance.

Scientists have increasingly come to realize the importance of oceans, which produce most of the oxygen we breathe, limit climate change by absorbing CO2, and host rich areas of biodiversity, often at the microscopic level.

But with so much of the world's oceans lying outside of individual countries' exclusive economic zones, and thus the jurisdiction of any single state, providing protection for the so-called high seas requires international cooperation.

The result is that they've been long ignored in many environmental fights, as the spotlight has been on coastal areas and a few emblematic species.

A key tool in the treaty

will be the ability to create protected marine areas in international waters.

Currently, only about one percent of the high seas are protected by any sort of conservation measures.

The treaty is seen as crucial to countries protecting 30 percent of the world's oceans and lands by 2030, as agreed by world governments in a separate historic accord reached in Montreal in December.

With it, "We are giving ourselves the means to achieve" the 30-percent target, said the French Secretary of State for the Sea, Herve Berville.

'Miracle molecules'

He called for a "sprint" toward ratification so that the accord enters into force by the next UN Ocean Conference in Nice, France in June 2025.

The treaty, officially known as the treaty on "Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction" or BBNJ, also introduces requirements to carry out environmental impact studies for proposed

activities to be carried out in international waters.

Such activities, while not listed in the text, would include anything from fishing and maritime transport to more controversial pursuits, like deep-sea mining or even geoengineering programs aimed at fighting global warming.

The treaty also establishes principles for sharing the benefits of "marine genetic resources" (MGR) collected by scientific research in international waters — a sticking point that almost derailed last-minute negotiations in March.

Developing countries, which often don't have the money to finance such expeditions, fought for benefit-sharing rights, hoping to not get left behind by what many see as a huge future market in the commercialization of MGR, especially by pharmaceutical and cosmetic companies searching for "miracle molecules."

The treaty will open for signatures on September 20, when dozens of heads

of state will be in New York for the UN General Assembly.

It remains to be seen how many countries will decide to come on board.

Russia distanced itself from the treaty as soon as it was adopted, declaring some elements of the text "categorically unacceptable."

NGOs believe that the threshold of 60 ratifications required for it to enter into force should be reachable since the High Ambition Coalition for the BBNJ — which pushed for the treaty — counts some 50 or so countries as members, including those of the European Union, as well as Chile, Mexico, India and Japan.

But 60 is far from the universal adoption — the UN has 193 member states — that defenders of the ocean are pushing for.

"Let's carry this momentum forward. Let's continue working to protect our oceans, our planet and all the people on it," said UN General Assembly President Csaba Korosi. **AFP**



'Integrated ocean governance crucial'

THE Philippines said integrated ocean governance "is crucial" as it welcomed the adoption of an agreement on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ).

The Department of Foreign Affairs on Tuesday said the Philippines welcomed the "historic adoption" of the BBNJ Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (Unclos).

"The agreement recognizes the need to address biological diversity loss and degradation of ecosystems of the ocean in a coherent and cooperative manner," it added.

The agreement, the DFA said, also underscored the need for a comprehensive global regime, under Unclos, "to better address conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity of areas beyond jurisdiction."

"For two decades, we have participated in the process leading up to this agreement, with high hopes and high aspirations. As an archipelagic state, and home to richness in species, the waters around the world form one single interconnected system," said DFA Undersecretary Carlos Sorreta, who led the Philippine delegation to the conference.

"Activities on waters in other parts of the world impact our ecosystems, and ultimately our people. Integrated ocean governance is crucial," he added.

BERNADETTE E. TAMAYO



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El Niño is almost here – PAGASA

By ELLALYN DE VERA-RUIZ

The Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical, and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) may soon issue its first El Niño Advisory due to its impending arrival in the country.

"We are looking forward to the issuance of the El Niño Advisory. Right now, we are on El Niño Alert status, but we're heading to El Niño Advisory status," PAGASA officer-in-charge Dr. Esperanza Cayanan said.

An El Niño Watch was issued on March 23, as part of PAGASA's El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO) Alert and Warning System, before the weather bureau raised the monitoring status to El Niño Alert on May 2.

An El Niño Advisory is issued when the climate event reaches "full-blown" El Niño status.

"We're just waiting to see if the required atmospheric conditions—not just the oceanic conditions—are met, because the atmosphere must respond to rising sea surface temperatures in order to declare the arrival of El Niño," Cayanan said.

She pointed out that the probability that El Niño is developing and will continue toward the last quarter of 2023 and the first quarter of 2024 is "very high."

"Sigurado na tayo na nandiyan 'yung El Niño (We are sure that El Niño is there)," she said.

The El Niño or warm phase is characterized by unusually warmer-than-average sea surface temperatures in the central and eastern

equatorial Pacific.

According to PAGASA, El Niño increases the likelihood of below-normal rainfall conditions, which could have negative impacts, such as dry spells and droughts, in some parts of the country between the fourth quarter of 2023 and the first quarter of 2024.

However, PAGASA said the western parts of the country may still receive "above-normal" rainfall during the southwest monsoon or "habagat" season, the pre-development stage of El Niño.

The United States National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration issued an El Niño Advisory on June 8, saying the climate phenomenon's conditions are present and are expected to strengthen gradually into the winter.



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Himalayan glaciers melting faster than ever – study

KATHMANDU: Himalayan glaciers providing critical water to nearly 2 billion people are melting faster than ever before due to climate change, exposing communities to unpredictable and costly disasters, scientists warned on Tuesday.

The glaciers disappeared 65 percent faster from 2011 to 2020 compared with the previous decade, said a report by the International Center for Integrated Mountain Development (Icimod).

"As it gets warmer, ice will melt. That was expected. But what is unexpected and very worrying is the speed," lead author Philippus Wester told Agence France-Presse (AFP). "This is going much faster than we thought."

Glaciers in the Hindu Kush Himalaya (HKH) region are a crucial water source for about 240 million people in the mountainous regions, as well as for another 1.65 billion people in the river valleys below, the report said.

Based on current emissions trajectories, the glaciers could lose up to 80 percent of their current volume by the end of the century, said the Nepal-based Icimod, an intergovernmental organization that also includes member countries Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Myanmar and Pakistan.

The glaciers feed 10 of the world's most important river systems, including the Ganges, Indus, Yellow, Mekong and Irrawaddy, and directly or indirectly supply billions of people with food, energy, clean air and income.

"With 2 billion people in Asia reliant on the water that glaciers and snow here hold, the conse-

quences of losing this cryosphere (a frozen zone) are too vast to contemplate," Icimod deputy chief Izabella Koziell said.

Even if global warming is limited to the 1.5 to 2.0 degrees Celsius from pre-industrial levels agreed to in the Paris climate treaty, the glaciers are expected to lose a third to a half of their volume by 2100, the peer-reviewed report said.

"It underscores the need for urgent climate action," Wester said. "Every small increment will have huge impacts and we really, really need to work on climate mitigation ... that is our plea."

He also said improving technologies and previously classified high-resolution satellite imagery meant predictions could be made with a good degree of accuracy.

The world has warmed an average of nearly 1.2 C since the mid-1800s, unleashing a cascade of extreme weather, including more intense heat waves, more severe droughts and storms made more ferocious by rising seas.

Hardest hit are the most vulnerable people and the world's poorest countries, which have done little to contribute to the fossil-fuel emissions that drive up temperatures.

Amina Maharjan, a livelihoods and migration specialist at Icimod, said communities did not have the support they need.

"Most of the adaptation is communities and households reacting [to climate events]. It is inadequate to meet the challenges posed by climate change," Maharjan said.

"What is going to be very critical moving forward is anticipating change," she added. **AFP**



ICE, ICE BYE-BYE An aerial view of the Himalayas' Passu glacier, near Passu village in Pakistan's northern Gilgit-Baltistan region, on June 10, 2022. AFP FILE PHOTO



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Vanishing ice on world's highest mountains threatens lives, livelihood of 2 billion people

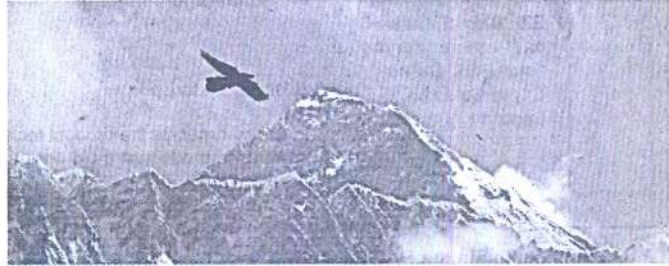
By SREEJA BISWAS

RAPIDLY melting glaciers in Asia's Hindu Kush Himalayan region—home to the world's highest mountains—are threatening the lives and livelihoods of as many as two billion people downstream, according to a new study.

The glaciers thawed 65 percent faster in the 2011 to 2020 period compared with the preceding decade and may lose 80 percent of their current volume by the end of this century on current emissions trajectories, the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development, or ICIMOD, found in its latest study. This may over time drastically reduce freshwater supplies in 12 rivers that flow across 16 nations in the region, it said.

These mountain ranges, which stretch over 3,500 kilometers (2,175 miles) in length from Afghanistan in the west to Myanmar in the east, are also seeing shrinking permafrost that can trigger more landslides, the study said. The Nepal-based ICIMOD has eight member nations across Asia including China and India.

"There is still time to save this critical region, but only if fast and deep emissions cuts start now," said Izabella Koziell, ICIMOD's



A BIRD flies with Mount Everest seen in the background from Namche Bajar, Solukhumbu district, Nepal, on May 27, 2019. A new report Tuesday, June 20, 2023, from a Nepal-based research organization finds that water security for nearly 2 billion people living downstream of rivers that originate in the Himalayan ranges will likely be threatened by the end of this century due to rapid glacier melt if global warming is not controlled. AP/NIRANJAN SHRESTHA

deputy director general, adding that glaciers are very sensitive to even slight temperature increases. "Snowmelt, glacier melt and permafrost thawing will mean that disasters are projected to happen more frequently, and will be deadlier and costlier."

The planet is already 1.2C hotter than during pre-industrial times, melting Arctic and Antarctic ice at a record pace. As heat waves bake more and more countries from the UK to China, wildfires scorch Canadian forests and a very severe cyclone lashes into the coastlines of India and Pakistan, there's a growing acknowledgment that climate emergencies are no longer just freak weather events and need

careful policy action. While severe flooding and landslides left 2,000 tourists stranded in India's Northeastern hilly state of Sikkim in the past few days, nearly 100 people reportedly died in eastern India as a result of higher-than-normal temperatures. Local authorities disputed the fatalities are linked to the heat.

Besides the risk of flash floods and landslides, the region is at a high risk of glacial lake outburst floods with 200 glacier lakes across Hindu Kush Himalaya "deemed dangerous," the report said. The cascading effects threaten to upend agriculture, food security, fresh water availability and energy sources. It can also endanger some plant and animal species in

the biodiversity hotspots to the point of extinction.

"As ice retreats, land where ice used to be becomes unstable and starts to move—the extra melt water then has the potential to easily wash that away, resulting in destructive mass flows," said Jakob Steiner, a research fellow at ICIMOD.

The changing cryosphere is also expected to put infrastructure in these mountainous regions at risk or economically unviable. "After the peak glacier melt is reached and meltwater recedes, future hydropower stations may find themselves over-sized, lacking the necessary water they were originally designed to harness," Steiner said.

The report also spoke about the need to urgently scale up adaptation of the affected local communities to climate change.

"It is beyond time that governments, donors and agencies step up: to exit fossil fuels and honor their commitments to limit warming, to help communities adapt to those temperature rises already locked in and to compensate them for property and ways of life that have already been lost," said Saleemul Huq, a climate change expert who's also on the advisory committee to COP28.

Bloomberg News



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EUROPE IS WORLD'S FASTEST WARMING CONTINENT—REPORT

PARIS—Europe should brace for more deadly heat waves driven by climate change, said a report, noting the world's fastest-warming continent was some 2.3 degrees Celsius hotter last year than in preindustrial times.

Crop-withering drought, record sea-surface temperatures and unprecedented glacier melt are among the consequences laid out in a report by the World Meteorological Organization and the European Union's Copernicus Climate Change Service.

The continent, which has been warming at twice the global average since the 1980s, saw its warmest summer last year, with countries including France, Germany, Italy, Portugal, Spain and the United Kingdom experiencing their warmest year on record.

The world has warmed an average of nearly 1.2 degrees Celsius since the mid-1800s, unleashing a devastating cascade of extreme weather, including more intense heat waves, more severe droughts in some areas and storms made more ferocious by rising seas.

Increasingly severe

Hardest hit are the most vulnerable people and the world's poorest countries, who have done little to contribute to the fossil fuel emissions that drive up temperatures.

But impacts are becoming increasingly severe across the world, with regions in the northern hemisphere and around the poles seeing particularly rapid warming.

In Europe, the high temperatures "exacerbated the severe and widespread drought conditions, fueled violent wildfires, and led to thousands of heat-associated excess deaths," said WMO secretary general Petteri Taalas.

Temperatures across the continent rose 1.5 degrees Celsius in 30 years, from 1991 to 2021, according to the report, the State of the Climate in Europe 2022. —AFP



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THE EXPONENT OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS
SINCE 1900
MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER



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Mayon Volcano lava flow reaches 'maximum length' — Phivolcs 1◀

from the summit crater of Mayon Volcano continued to feed lava flows and collapsed debris" on the Mi-isi and Bonga gullies on the south and southeastern sides of the crater, respectively.

It pointed out that the lava flows have advanced to maximum lengths of 2,500 meters and 1,800 meters along the Mi-isi and Bonga gullies, respectively.

Meanwhile, it has displaced collapsed debris up to 3,300 meters from the crater.

During its 24-hour monitoring of the restive volcano, Phivolcs recorded two dome-collapsed pyroclastic density currents (PDCs) that lasted two to three minutes, 301 rockfall events, and one volcanic earthquake

"Continuous moderate degassing from the summit crater produced steam-laden plumes that rose 800 meters before drifting to the general west," it added.

'High-level' unrest persists

Phivolcs said Mayon's current state could last for a few months and its alert level 3 status could be maintained.

Mayon Volcano has been on alert level 3 since June 8, indicating a "hazardous eruption is possible within weeks or even days."

It is "currently in a relatively high level of unrest as magma is at the crater," Phivolcs pointed out.

The evacuation of residents within the six-kilometer permanent danger zone has been recommended due to the risk of PDCs, lava flows, rockfalls, and other volcanic hazards.

Phivolcs warned the public to be cautious of PDCs, lahars, and sediment-laden stream flows along channels draining the volcano edifice.

It pointed out that heavy rainfall could cause channel-confined lahars and sediment-laden stream flows on channels where PDC deposits were emplaced.

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Phivolcs advised civil aviation authorities to ask pilots to avoid flying close to the volcano because ash from sudden eruption may pose hazard to aircraft.



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AVOIDING ASHFALL, SULFURIC FUMES

**ALBAY EVACUEES OUTSIDE OF MAYON'S
PDZ REFUSE TO LEAVE SHELTERS**

By Ma. April Mier-Manjares
@MaAprilMierINQ

LEGAZPI CITY—Residents who evacuated in the towns of Sto. Domingo and Guinobatan in Albay have refused to return to their houses despite being told by their town officials that those living outside the 6-kilometer permanent danger zone (PDZ) of the restive Mayon Volcano could already leave the shelters.

Some Sto. Domingo evacuees said they preferred staying at shelters and "hut city" even if they live outside the PDZ since they believe it was safer that way.

Rose Milarpes, 29, said they would still stay inside the nipa hut they built at Sitio Bical in Barangay Salvacion of Sto. Domingo to protect her five children from the possible threat of an eruption.

"We will stay here at Bical because I have a 3-month-old baby. If (Mayon) erupts, we can't easily escape because my husband is in Manila. We're safe here," Milarpes said in a phone interview on Tuesday.

Milarpes, her children and mother left Zone 3 of Barangay Lidong on June 12 out of fear that pyroclastic materials and ashfall would reach their area even if it was already outside of the PDZ.

In an advisory on Tuesday, Sto. Domingo Mayor Joseling Aguas Jr. ordered the village officials of Lidong, Fidel Surtida, Sta. Misericordia and San Fernando to allow the evacuees to return home starting on Wednesday after Albay Gov. Edcel Greco Lagman urged them to decamp the evacuees who were living in the 7-km to 8-km extended danger zone.

Only those residing within the 6-km PDZ were told not to enter the area as ashfall, lava flow and pyroclastic density currents could occur anytime.

Protocols

"Should the evacuees prefer to stay at the evacuation camps or areas for fear [of a possible eruption], they should inform the respective officials for proper coordination," Aguas said in the advisory.

Some of the town's residents built nipa huts in the villages of Salvacion, Calayucay and San Andres to avoid the crowded evacuation centers in schools.

In his letter to Aguas and Guinobatan Mayor Paul Chino Garcia on Monday, Lagman said the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) only recommended evacuation of the residents within the 6-km PDZ.

Lagman said in a social media post on Tuesday that he

would be meeting with local officials to ask for justification for "diverting with the evacuation protocols" indicated in the provincial disaster risk reduction and management advisory released on June 8.

"It is clear without any debate or doubt that during alert level 3, the jurisdiction of the mayors is to evacuate their residents who are inside the 6-km PDZ. Again, if alert level 3, [the evacuation is] within 6-km only," Lagman said.

About 1,688 families (5,473 people) in Sto. Domingo and 377 families (2,972 people) in Guinobatan were evacuated from the 7-km to 8-km extended danger zone, comprising about 44 percent of the total evacuees.

Inconvenience

Joy Maravillas, head of the Guinobatan municipal disaster risk reduction and management office, said by phone on Tuesday that village officials in Maninila, Tandarora and Muladbucad Grande would not allow the evacuated 377 families to return home as they were living close to two big gullies of the volcano.

Many of the residents living within the extended danger zones reported they were affected by ashfall, heard the rumblings of the volcano and smelled the pungent sulfuric fumes emitted by Mayon.

Only some evacuees in Guinobatan, mostly the elderly, would like to return to their homes due to the inconvenience experienced while living in evacuation centers.

"For 11 days now, I experienced sleepless nights [because] the children were noisy, and worst of all, it is very hot, so it would be best to go home," Sergia Otila, 84, a resident of Maninila village, said in an interview Tuesday.

Meanwhile, some displaced farmers from Barangay Mi-isi in Daraga town were allowed to go back to their farms within the boundaries of the PDZ on Monday to harvest their vegetables. The farmers were given permits to visit their farms but were told to go back to their evacuation centers in Barangay Anislag of the town after harvesting their crops. The Daraga police and personnel from the municipal agricultural services office assisted them on their harvest.

Helen Salvadora, 45, said they would still have to decide if it would be wise to go home since the ashfall from Mayon has reached their area at Zone 1 in Barangay Lidong, Sto. Domingo, during the past weeks, triggering her asthma and creating panic in their household.

—WITH REPORTS FROM MICHAEL B. JAU-CIAN AND GEORGE GIO BRONDIAL INQ



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Over 900 farm animals evacuated due to Mayon unrest

By MICHAEL PUNONG BAYAN

Aside from people, livestock are also affected by Mayon Volcano's eruption in Albay and other parts of the Bicol Region.

As of yesterday, 908 animals have been pre-emptively evacuated from within the extended permanent danger zone (PDZ) and other affected communities.

The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) said affected areas include 18 cities and municipalities that have been placed under state of calamity.

Although there are no specifics on what animals have been pre-emptively evacuated, these are most likely pigs, goats, chickens, cows and horses that produce meat, milk, eggs and other products.

To date, the NDRRMC said the number of affected families stand at 10,167 or 39,045 persons from various towns and barangays within and near the extended PDZ.

Of the number, 5,466 families or 18,904 persons are being served in 28 different evacuation centers where some 628 persons have been reported to have fallen ill, with the most common ailments being cases of cough and colds followed by fever, acute respiratory infection, headache, HPN, dizziness, skin disease, abdominal pain, colds and acute gastroenteritis.

Lava flow

The unabated oozing of fresh lava out of the summit crater of Mayon Volcano has further stretched the lava flows to 2,500 meters yesterday inside the Mi-isi Gully, and 1,800 meters along the Bonga Gully, the Philippine Institute of Volcanology

and Seismology (Phivolcs) reported.

Phivolcs said that collapse debris remained confined at 3,300-meter distance from the crater.

It also reported two dome-collapse pyroclastic density currents (PDC) that lasted two to three minutes, 301 rockfall events and a volcanic earthquake were recorded in the past 24-hour monitoring.

Paul Alanis, Phivolcs resident volcanologist at the Lignon Hill Observatory in Legazpi City, said these long stretches of lava flows were due to the slow but incessant lava spewing of Mayon in a round-the-clock duration.

"Because the lava effusion continues, we could really expect the lava to further roll down. But lava fronts are still far from breaching the six-kilometer radius permanent danger zone at present," Alanis told **The STAR**.

He said that images taken through Phivolcs drones had given them the exact location of the lava flows and the collapse debris.

Alert Level 3 is still maintained over Mayon, as there is still a relatively high level of unrest as magma is at the crater.

"Continuous moderate degassing from the summit crater produced steam-laden plumes that rose 800 meters before drifting to the general west, sulfur dioxide emission averaged 389 tons per day on June 19," the state bureau added.

Albay Public Safety and Emergency Management Office OIC Eugene Escobar said the number of evacuees decreased after 100 families not residing inside the six-kilometer radius PDZ were sent home yesterday. — **With Cet Dematera, Romina Cabrera**



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Pagasa: Longest day on June 21

By **ROMINA CABRERA**

The summer solstice on June 21 marks the longest day and shortest night of the year in the Philippines, according to the state weather bureau.

The Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) said the sun

will rise at 5:28 a.m. and will set at 6:28 p.m.

"During the June Solstice, the northern hemisphere will experience the longest day and will mark the first day of summer. Subsequently, it will also mark the first day of winter in the southern hemisphere, wherein the sun will have a shorter time

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staying above the horizon than any other day of the year," PAGASA said.

Meanwhile, an inter-tropical convergence zone (ITCZ) is affecting Palawan

and Mindanao.

The ITCZ will bring cloudy skies and rain over Palawan, Basilan, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi.

Metro Manila and the rest of the country will see isolated rainshowers due to the ITCZ and localized thunderstorms.



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NWRB advises water conservation to ensure supply in summer of '24

THE National Water Resources Board (NWRB) said water from Angat Dam must be conserved to ensure sufficient supply for the summer of 2024.

The state weather bureau Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) has predicted that the El Nino dry spell might last until 2024.

Nonetheless, the PAGASA allayed fears on the declining water level of the Angat Dam, which provides 90 percent of Metro Manila's water demand.

This means that the water allocation of the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) and its concessionaires Maynilad and Manila Water could change by July and the succeeding months.

NWRB executive director Dr. Sevillo

David said they allowed for the last time the extension of the 52 cubic meters per second allocation from June 16 to 30 this year.

If the expected rains don't come in to replenish the Angat and Ipo reservoirs, there could be water service interruptions for 630,000 Maynilad customers from nighttime until early morning, according to estimates, the NWRB said.

However, the interruptions might be averted if the rains could fill the dams to capacity.

The MWSS has urged ordinary consumers to conserve and harvest rainwater if possible, in order to lessen dependence and consumption from concessionaires.

If each household could fill a regular-sized drum with rainwater, that translates into the daily consumption of a regular family, David said.



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GLOW IN THE DARK — Molten lava glows as it flows from the mouth of Mayon Volcano in this photo taken from Barangay Budiao in Daraga, Albay, on Saturday night, June 17, 2023. (Ali Vicoy)

Mayon Volcano lava flow reaches 'maximum length' — Phivolcs

By ELLALYN DE VERA-RUIZ

Lava flow from Mayon Volcano's effusive eruption has reached a "maximum length" of up to 2.5 kilometers from the summit crater, the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) said on Tuesday, June 20.

Phivolcs said a "very slow effusion of lava" ► 4



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Mayon Volcano lava flow reaches 'maximum length' — Phivolcs 1◀

from the summit crater of Mayon Volcano continued to feed lava flows and collapsed debris" on the Mi-isi and Bonga gullies on the south and southeastern sides of the crater, respectively.

It pointed out that the lava flows have advanced to maximum lengths of 2,500 meters and 1,800 meters along the Mi-isi and Bonga gullies, respectively.

Meanwhile, it has displaced collapsed debris up to 3,300 meters from the crater.

During its 24-hour monitoring of the restive volcano, Phivolcs recorded two dome-collapsed pyroclastic density currents (PDCs) that lasted two to three minutes, 301 rockfall events, and one volcanic earthquake

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'High-level' unrest persists

Phivolcs said Mayon's current state could last for a few months and its alert level 3 status could be maintained.

Mayon Volcano has been on alert level 3 since June 8, indicating a "hazardous eruption is possible within weeks or even days."

It is "currently in a relatively high level of unrest as magma is at the crater," Phivolcs pointed out.

The evacuation of residents within the six-kilometer permanent danger zone has been recommended due to the risk of PDCs, lava flows, rockfalls, and other volcanic hazards.

Phivolcs warned the public to be cautious of PDCs, lahars, and sediment-laden stream flows along channels draining the volcano edifice.

It pointed out that heavy rainfall could cause channel-confined lahars and sediment-laden stream flows on channels where PDC deposits were emplaced.

Likewise, it said that ashfall events may "most likely" occur on the south side of the volcano, based on the current wind pattern.

Phivolcs advised civil aviation authorities to ask pilots to avoid flying close to the volcano because ash from sudden eruption may pose hazard to aircraft.



PH hails int'l treaty on ocean protection

By JOSEPH PEDRAJAS and AFP

The Philippines welcomed the United Nations' move to adopt the first-ever treaty to protect biodiversity—the High Seas Treaty—after the country's two-decade participation in its process “with high hopes and inspiration.”

Foreign Affairs Undersecretary

Carlos Sorreta led the Philippine delegation that welcomed the development. He said the Philippines—“as an archipelagic state and home to richness in species—and the waters around the world form one single interconnected system.”

With the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) as the “guide- ▶ 4

PH hails int'l treaty on ocean protection ◀

post,” Sorreta said, the member states approach the process with the following principles:

- Common heritage of mankind
- Fair and equitable sharing of benefits
- Rights and jurisdiction of adjacent coastal states
- Special recognition for archipelagic states
- The precautionary principle
- Transparency of action and support

On June 19, the UN made a historic move after it adopted an agreement on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ Agreement).

According to DFA, the agreement was adopted by consensus and is consistent with the provisions of UNCLOS on protecting and preserving the marine environment.

It recognizes the need to address biological diversity loss and degradation of ocean ecosystems in a coherent and cooperative manner, DFA said.

The agreement also underscores the need for a comprehensive global regime, under UNCLOS, to better address conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity of areas beyond jurisdiction, it added.

High Seas Treaty: What it means

The world's first international treaty to protect the high seas contains landmark tools for the conservation and management of international waters.

International waters—outside the jurisdiction of any single state—cover more than 60 percent of the world's oceans.

Ocean ecosystems create half the oxygen humans breathe and limit global warming by absorbing much of the carbon dioxide emitted by human activities.

The UN treaty, which will open for signatures on Sept. 20, will go into force 120 days after 60 countries have ratified it.

Here are the key points of the text approved in March.

Ocean under threat

The treaty begins by recognizing “the need to address, in a coherent and cooperative manner, biodiversity loss and degradation of ecosystems of the ocean.”

These impacts include the warming of ocean waters along with their loss of oxygen, acidification, mounting plastics and other pollutants, as well as overfishing.

The text specifies that it will apply

to waters beyond countries' exclusive economic zones, which extend to a maximum of 200 nautical miles from the coasts.

It also covers what is known as “the Area,” shorthand for seabed and subsoil beyond the limits of national jurisdiction. The Area comprises just over half of the planet's seabed.

The Conference of the Parties (COP) will have to navigate the authority of other regional and global organizations.

Chief among these are regional fisheries bodies and the International Seabed Authority, which oversees permits for deep-sea mining exploration in some areas and may soon make the controversial move of allowing companies to mine beyond current test runs.

Marine protected areas

Currently, almost all protected marine areas (MPAs) are within national territorial waters.

The treaty, however, allows for these reserves to be created in the open ocean.

Most decisions would be taken by a consensus of the COP, but an MPA can be voted into existence with a three-quarters majority, to prevent deadlock caused by a single country.

One crucial shortcoming: the text



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does not say how these conservation measures will be monitored and enforced over remote swathes of the ocean—a task that will fall on the COP.

Some experts say satellites could be used to spot infractions.

Individual countries are already responsible for certain activities on the high seas that they have jurisdiction over, such as those of ships flying their flags.

Sharing the bounty?

On the high seas, countries and entities under their jurisdiction will be allowed to collect animal, plant, or microbial matter whose genetic material might prove useful, even commercially.

Scientists, for example, have discovered molecules with the potential to treat cancer or other diseases in microbes scooped up in sediment, or produced by sponges or marine mollusks.

Benefits-sharing of those resources has been a key point of contention between wealthy and poorer nations.

The treaty establishes frameworks for the transfer of marine research technologies to developing countries and a strengthening of their research capacities, as well as open access to data.

But it's left to the COP to decide exactly how any monetary benefits

will eventually be shared, with options including a system based on specific commercialized products, or more generalized payment systems.

Environmental impact studies

The treaty requires signatories to assess the environmental impacts of planned activities under their control on the high seas before they are authorized in instances when such activities may have more than a minor or transitory effect.

It also calls for countries to assess the potential impact on international waters of activities within national jurisdictions that may cause "substantial pollution" or harm the high sea marine environment.

Ultimately, states are responsible for giving the green light to any potentially harmful activity—a role NGOs hoped would go to the COP, to make controversial approvals more difficult.

The treaty also requires states to publish updates on an activity's environmental impacts. Approvals can be called into question if unanticipated impacts arise.

Though they are not specifically listed in the treaty, activities that could come under regulation include transport and fishing, as well as more controversial subjects such as deep-sea mining or even geo-engineering initiatives to mitigate global warming.



AVOIDING ASHFALL, SULFURIC FUMES

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@MaAprilMierINQ

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Over 900 farm animals evacuated due to Mayon unrest

By MICHAEL PUNONG BAYAN

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Of the number, 5,466 families or 18,904 persons are being served in 28 different evacuation centers where some 628 persons have been reported to have fallen ill, with the most common ailments being cases of cough and colds followed by fever, acute respiratory infection, headache, HPN, dizziness, skin disease, abdominal pain, colds and acute gastroenteritis.

Lava flow

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El Niño is almost here – PAGASA

By ELLALYN DE VERA-RUIZ

The Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical, and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) may soon issue its first El Niño Advisory due to its impending arrival in the country.

"We are looking forward to the issuance of the El Niño Advisory. Right now, we are on El Niño Alert status, but we're heading to El Niño Advisory status," PAGASA officer-in-charge Dr. Esperanza Cayanan said.

An El Niño Watch was issued on March 23, as part of PAGASA's El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO) Alert and Warning System, before the weather bureau raised the monitoring status to El Niño Alert on May 2.

An El Niño Advisory is issued when the climate event reaches "full-blown" El Niño status.

"We're just waiting to see if the required atmospheric conditions—not just the oceanic conditions—are met, because the atmosphere must respond to rising sea surface temperatures in order to declare the arrival of El Niño," Cayanan said.

She pointed out that the probability that El Niño is developing and will continue toward the last quarter of 2023 and the first quarter of 2024 is "very high."

"Sigurado na tayo na nandiyan 'yung El Niño (We are sure that El Niño is there)," she said.

The El Niño or warm phase is characterized by unusually warmer-than-average sea surface temperatures in the central and eastern

equatorial Pacific.

According to PAGASA, El Niño increases the likelihood of below-normal rainfall conditions, which could have negative impacts, such as dry spells and droughts, in some parts of the country between the fourth quarter of 2023 and the first quarter of 2024.

However, PAGASA said the western parts of the country may still receive "above-normal" rainfall during the southwest monsoon or "habagat" season, the pre-development stage of El Niño.

The United States National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration issued an El Niño Advisory on June 8, saying the climate phenomenon's conditions are present and are expected to strengthen gradually into the winter.



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Website: <http://www.denr.gov.ph> / E-mail: web@denr.gov.ph

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER
No. 2023- 04

MAR 08 2023

SUBJECT : RENAMING OF THE DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT AND CONTROL STAFF (DMCS) TO DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT AND OPERATIONS SUPPORT (DMOS)

In the interest of the service, the Document Management and Control Staff (DMCS) under the Office of the Secretary (OSEC) is hereby renamed to Document Management and Operations Support (DMOS).

The DMOS shall be responsible for the receiving, releasing, tracking, recording and management of documents within the OSEC. It shall also ensure completeness of the documents endorsed to the OSEC prior to approval/decision by the Secretary. Further, it shall refer documents to and/or require additional inputs from concerned Offices, whenever necessary. Additionally, the DMOS shall assist in the day-to-day operations of the Secretary.

The DMOS shall be headed by a Director designated by the Secretary and shall work directly under the supervision of the Chief of Staff. The Director shall be assisted by current personnel complement of the Department.

The Financial and Management Service shall allocate the necessary operating and administrative expenses of the DMOS, to include the Representation and Transportation Allowance (RATA) and other entitlements allowed for the Director, subject to existing financial and auditing rules and regulations.

This Order take effect immediately and supersedes all previous issuances inconsistent herewith.

MARIA ANTONIA YULO LOYZAGA
Secretary



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