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**DENR**

# **NEWS ALERTS**

**STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE**



# DENR chief pushes local ecotourism sites as 'alternative' to dolomite beach

BY JONATHAN L. MAYUGA NOVEMBER 12, 2021



In file photo: People flock to the Manila Baywalk Dolomite Beach on Roxas Boulevard in Manila. The project was opened to the public on October 16, 2021, the same day the IATF placed Metro Manila under Covid-19 Alert Level 3.

Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Roy A. Cimatu on Thursday urged the public to consider visiting other local ecotourism sites in the country for relaxation while the controversial dolomite beach along Roxas Boulevard is temporarily closed to give way for other rehab works in the area.

The DENR chief even prodded the public to try visiting equally captivating ecotourism sites in protected areas (PA) near them.

In a news statement, the DENR chief said those living in nearby provinces who wish to rejuvenate their minds and bodies need not go to Manila just to see the dolomite beach.

"There are many ecotourism sites available in your localities for your enjoyment," Cimatu said, as he encouraged the public to explore and discover these areas.

Protected areas are established under the National Integrated Protected Areas System (NIPAS), through Republic Act (RA) 7586, as amended by RA 11038 or the Expanded NIPAS Act of 2018.

The DENR chief, however, reiterated, "Health protocols must be observed while visiting these sites to ensure the safety of the visitors while enjoying the tours."

"Those visiting PAs should expect to undergo the screening process and adhere to existing Covid-19 safety guidelines," Cimatu added.

PAs are managed by their respective Protected Area Management Boards (PAMB) through the PA Management Offices (PAMO).

The rules and regulations issued by the concerned local government units for the safety of the tourists are also implemented in ecotourism sites within the PAs.

With the enactment of RA 11038, 94 PAs were added to the roster of legislated PAs, bringing the number to a total of 107.

This means prospective travelers have "a vast array of places to choose from," according to the DENR chief.

However, most protected areas remain closed because of Covid-19 quarantine restrictions imposed by the government.

PA managers said they are still waiting for the quarantine restrictions to be relaxed aside from the fact that they need the approval of local government units to reopen and start accepting visitors.



The DENR is aware of the situation but is looking forward to the reopening of PAs, which also means generating much-needed revenues for the management of these areas set aside for conservation.

Image courtesy of Nonie Reyes



## Cimatu: Local ecotourism sites pwedeng alternatibo sa dolomite beach



November 11, 2021 @ 6:23 PM 13 hours ago

MANILA, Philippines- Upang may mapasyalan na ibang ecotourism sites dahil sa pansamantalang pagsasara ng Manila Baywalk Dolomite Beach, sinabi ni Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Roy A. Cimatu na maaaring ikonsidera ng publiko ang pagbisita sa ibang local ecotourism sites sa bansa para makapag-relax.

“Those living in nearby provinces who wish to rejuvenate their minds and bodies need not go to Manila just to see the dolomite beach. There are many ecotourism sites available in your localities for your enjoyment,” ani Cimatu, kasabay ng paghihikayat sa publiko na galugarin at idiskubre ang mga ito.

Sa press release ayon kay Cimatu, maraming katulad at kahali-halinang ecotourism sites na matatagpuan sa protected areas (PAs) na nabuo dahil sa National Integrated Protected Areas System sa pamamagitan ng Republic Act (RA) 7586 at inamiyendahan sa pamamagitan ng RA 11038 o ang Expanded NIPAS Act of 2018.

Ipinaliwanag pa ng DENR chief na “health protocols must be observed while visiting these sites to ensure the safety of the visitors while enjoying the tours.”

“Those visiting PAs should expect to undergo the screening process and adhere to existing COVID-19 safety guidelines,” dagdag ni Cimatu.

Kaugnay nito ang PAs ay pinamamahalaan ng kani-kanilang Protected Area Management Boards (PAMB) sa pamamagitan ng PA Management Offices (PAMO).

May mga alituntunin din at regulasyon ang ipinatutupad ng bawat local government unit para sa kaligtasan ng mga turista sa mga ecotourism sites na matatagpuan sa PAs.

Samantala dahil na rin sa pagsasabatas ng RA 11038, 94 pang protected areas (PAs) ang nadagdag sa listahan ng mga naisabatas na PAs kaya’t umabot na ito ngayon sa bilang na 107.

Ibig sabihin nito, maraming mga lugar na ang maaaring pagpilian ng mga manlalakbay, ayon pa rin sa DENR chief.

Noong Setyembre at Oktubre 2021 ay nagsagawa ng three-part webinar series ang DENR-Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB), United Nations Development Fund-Biodiversity Finance Project (BIOFIN), at ang Department of Tourism, na tinawag na “Ecotourism in Protected Areas: Toward Green Recovery.”

Tinalakay sa webinar ang epekto ng global pandemic sa ecotourism, mga leksiyon sa post-pandemic ecotourism recovery strategies, at paano mahikayat ang mga kalahok para maging responsableng maglalakbay.



Inimbitahan naman ni DENR-BMB Director Datu Tungko Saikol ang publiko na sumali sa “Virtual Travels to Protected Areas,” isang video contest para sa mga manlalakbay na nasa hustong gulang at naninirahan sa Pilipinas.

Layunin ng patimpalak na ito na makabuo ng video content ukol sa mga PAs sa bansa. Ang deadline sa pagsusumite ng mga kalahok ay sa Nobyembre 30, 2021. **Santi Celario**



# DENR outlaws transport of bamboo poles for aquaculture use to Cavite

BY JONATHAN L. MAYUGA NOVEMBER 11, 2021



Bamboo grass species thrives in most parts of the Philippines.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) outlawed the transport of bamboo poles for aquaculture purposes in Cavite's aquaculture hubs in a bid to prevent the illegal construction of fish cages and pens.

Sought for reaction, the fisherfolk group Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (Pamalakaya) criticized the move and chided the DENR for the policy, likening it to an act of "economic embargo" targeting small fisherfolk in Cavite province.

DENR Undersecretary for Field Operations and Environment Juan Miguel T. Cuna issued a memorandum dated November 8, 2021, indefinitely suspending the processing and issuance of bamboo transport permits in Bacoor City, Cavite City, Kawit, and Noveleta.

These are known aquaculture hubs in the province of Cavite.

In a news statement, Cuna said the suspension is in light of the need to continuously rehabilitate and restore the marine and coastal ecosystems in Manila Bay pursuant to Section 3 of Administrative Order 16 signed by Executive Secretary Salvador Medialdea under the authority of President Duterte on February 19, 2019.

"The entry and movement of bamboo for other purposes, including but not limited to construction materials for houses, scaffolding, bridges, fences, and buildings and for furniture shall be allowed," Cuna said in his memorandum.

Per initial data given by the respective local government units, there are a total of 370 illegal aquaculture structures in Cavite waters: 271 in Cavite City, 97 in Kawit, and 2 in Noveleta. However, per data gathered during the actual marking conducted from September 15 to 22, 2021, a total of 949 structures had been marked: 789 in Cavite City and 160 in Kawit. Most of these structures are made of bamboo.

On November 4, 2021, the Manila Bay Inter-Agency Task Force-Cavite Cluster started the clearing/dismantling of 32 sapras in Cavite City. DENR Calabarzon Regional Executive Director Nilo Tamorria said that the demolition is part of the Manila Bay Rehabilitation Program of the DENR.



# DENR bans bamboo use for aqua projects

By [Dennis Abrina](#) November 12, 2021

**TRECE MARTIRES CITY, Cavite:** The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has suspended indefinitely processing and issuance of transport permits for entry and movement of bamboo for aquaculture purposes within the municipal waters of Bacoor City and Cavite City and Kawit and Noveleta towns in the coastal part of the province of Cavite.

The suspension was made under a memorandum issued by Juan Miguel Cuna, DENR undersecretary for field operations and environment, dated Nov. 8, 2021.

Cuna said the memorandum had seen the need to continuously rehabilitate and restore the marine and coastal ecosystems in Manila Bay pursuant to Section 3 of Administrative Order 16 signed by Executive Secretary Salvador Medialdea, under authority of President Rodrigo Duterte, on Feb. 19, 2019.

"The entry and movement of bamboo for other purposes, including but not limited to construction materials for houses, scaffoldings, bridges, fences and buildings and for furniture shall be allowed," Cuna said in his memorandum as posted on the social media page of DENR Calabarzon.

Calabarzon groups the provinces of Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal and Quezon.

Initial data from local government units showed a total of 370 illegal aquaculture structures existing in Cavite waters: 271 in Cavite City, 97 in Kawit and 2 in Noveleta.

Most of these structures were made from bamboo.

No figure was available for Bacoor.

Data from actual marking conducted on Sept. 15-22, 2021 showed a total of 949 illegal structures: 789 in Cavite City and 160 in Kawit.

No figures were also available from Bacoor City and Noveleta.

On Nov. 4-6, 2021, the Manila Bay Inter Agency Task Force - Cavite Cluster composed of DENR-Calabarzon, Cavite Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office, Philippine Coast Guard Cavite and Philippine National Police Maritime Group started the dismantling of 32 sapras (illegal fish traps) in Cavite City.

Nilo Tamera, DENR Calabarzon regional executive director, said the demolition was part of the Manila Bay Rehabilitation Program of the DENR.



## PHL vows to reverse forest loss by 2030

BYBERNADETTE D. NICOLAS NOVEMBER 12, 2021



The thick forest-covered Mt. Singit in Janiuary, Iloilo.

The Philippine government formalized its commitment to reverse forest loss and land degradation by 2030 as stated under the Glasgow Leaders' Declaration on Forests and Land Use.

In his letter to UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson, President Duterte said the action areas expressed in the Leaders' Declaration are consistent with the targets and goals of the Philippines in attaining sustainable forest management.

Over 100 countries, including, China, Russia, and Brazil had signed the Leaders' Declaration, Johnson earlier said. The Philippines was also among the countries on the list.

The Philippines' support for the Leaders' Declaration came after the recommendation of Finance Secretary Carlos Dominguez III, who is the chairman-designate of the Climate Change Commission (CCC) and head of the country's delegation to the 26th United Nations (UN) Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) held in Glasgow, Scotland.

The action areas expressed in the Declaration include conserving forests and other terrestrial ecosystems and accelerating their restoration; and facilitating trade and development policies, internationally and domestically, that promote sustainable development along with sustainable commodity production and consumption that work to countries' mutual benefit, and that do not drive deforestation and land degradation.

Reaffirming international financial commitments and significantly increasing finance and investment from a wide variety of public and private sources, while also improving its effectiveness and accessibility, to enable sustainable agriculture, sustainable forest management, forest conservation, and restoration, and support for Indigenous Peoples and local communities, are also among the action areas in the Declaration.

In his letter, President Duterte said the Declaration is also consistent with the Philippines' National Climate Change Action Plan 2011-2028, "particularly under Ecological and Environmental Stability that is focused on the protection and rehabilitation of critical ecosystems, and restoration of ecological services."

President Duterte pointed out that "sustainable and resilient agriculture and forestry are essential for commodity production and achieving the SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals), promoting economic development, reducing poverty food security, and improving the livelihoods of billions of people."

The President also expressed optimism that the Philippines will be able to deliver the action areas under the Declaration through collective action and efforts among countries and regions. He also said the country believes that it will achieve the targets of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement, the UN Convention on Biological Diversity, the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, the UN Convention to Combat Desertification, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and other initiatives.





Dominguez earlier affirmed the Philippines' support to the Declaration during a meeting with Richard Graham, member of Parliament for Gloucester, and the UK Prime Minister's Trade Envoy to the Asean Economic Community.

Graham also discussed with Dominguez the issue of green finance and the Philippines' initiatives to combat climate change during the meeting.

Dominguez cited the importance of the "blended approach" or the sustainable orchestration of grants, investments, and subsidies to make climate finance work for its beneficiaries.

Image courtesy of Ramon Ramirez from DENR web site



## Pinas nakilahok sa pagkilos vs deforestation



November 11, 2021 @ 6:11 PM 13 hours ago

MANILA, Philippines- Pormal na nakilahok ang Pilipinas kasama ang 100 pang bansa sa pagpirma ng deklarasyon na nangangako na ititigil at babaligtarin ang forest loss at land degradation sa 2030.

Ito ay matapos ipadala ng Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) ang liham ni Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte sa pamahalaan ng United Kingdom (UK) na pormal na inihahayag ang pangako ng Pilipinas na wakasan ang deforestation sa 2030, na nakasaad sa ilalim ng Glasgow Leaders' Declaration on Forests and Land Use.

Sa liham ng Pangulo kay UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson, sinabi ni Duterte na alinsunod sa ipinahayag na action areas sa Leaders' Declaration sa mga target at layunin ng Pilipinas sa pag-abot sa sustainable forest management.

Dagdag pa ng pangulo, alinsunod din ang deklarasyon sa Philippines' National Climate Change Action Plan 2011-2028, "particularly under Ecological and Environmental Stability that is focused on the protection and rehabilitation of critical ecosystems, and restoration of ecological services."

"Sustainable and resilient agriculture and forestry are essential for commodity production and achieving the SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals), promoting economic development, reducing poverty, food security, and improving the livelihoods of billions of people," giit ni Duterte.

"The Philippines believes that through collective action and efforts among countries and regions, it will be able to deliver the action areas under the Declaration, and even the targets of the United Nations (UN) Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement, the UN Convention on Biological Diversity, the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, the UN Convention to Combat Desertification, the SDGs, and other initiatives," dagdag pa ng Pangulo.

Ang suporta ng Pilipinas sa Leaders' Declaration ay ayon sa rekomendasyon ni Finance Secretary Carlos Dominguez III, Chairman-designate ng Climate Change Commission at pinuno ng delegasyon ng bansa sa 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) sa Glasgow, Scotland.

Nagsama-sama ang nasa 120 lider sa COP26 kung saan ginanap ang dalawang linggo ng negosasyon ukol sa mga hakbang upang labanan ang climate change. **RNT/SA**



### A look at PH's efforts to curb deforestation

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The Philippines vowed to step up the fight against climate change at the United Nations COP 26. Among the promises, saving our forests in the next decade.

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# Sea turtle eggs relocated to secured hatchery in Ilocos Norte

By Leilanie Adriano November 11, 2021, 6:45 pm



**SEA TURTLE HAVEN.** Workers of Northwind Development Corp. in Bangui, Ilocos Norte relocate sea turtle eggs to a guarded hatchery. The move aims to keep them safe during high tide and protect them from predators. *(Photo courtesy of Pawikan Conservation Group)*

**LAOAG CITY** – Some 115 sea turtle eggs were relocated on Thursday from the Bangui shoreline in Ilocos Norte to a secured hatchery of the Northwind Development Corp. to keep them safe during high tide and protect them from predators.

On Wednesday, at least two nests with 106 and 64 sea turtle eggs were relocated by the same Pawikan conservation volunteers as they have been monitoring the 150-kilometer stretch of Ilocos Norte coastline for sea turtle nesting areas.

Eduardo Angadol, forestry senior manager of North Luzon Renewables, reported to environment officials on Thursday that the new found nests at the Bangui wind farm's turbines 5 and 6 need to be relocated to safer ground.

"It seems that it's their (sea turtles) nesting month again. There may be other nests in the nearby shoreline," he said.

To help secure the endangered sea turtles that lay their eggs on the shore, the wind power companies operating in Bangui and nearby Pagudpud established a guarded hatchery and ensure their release when it is their time to return to the wild.

Over the past seven years, the Northwind Development Corp. operating the wind farm and which holds a lease within the foreshore area, has commissioned locals to watch over the sea turtle eggs within their hatching period to protect them from predators and poachers.

Local environment officials as well as the provincial fishery division of the Ilocos Norte government and local government units continue to strengthen their information and education drive about the conservation and protection of sea turtles among other endangered species.

Marine sea turtles often lay their eggs from dusk till dawn and the peak season is from November to March, according to Pawikan experts.

Even with the pandemic, Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Roy A. Cimatu earlier said the preservation of wildlife in the country must continue.

"Even if we are faced with a difficult situation brought about by the threats of the disease, we must continue to strive to protect and preserve our endangered *pawikan*," Cimatu said, adding that the sightings only prove that "our efforts are not in vain." **(PNA)**

Source: <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1159468>



# Women lead waste management capacity building in litter-vulnerable islands in PHL

BY **BMPLUS** NOVEMBER 11, 2021



Sustainability is at the core of Coca-Cola's way of doing business. From supporting women entrepreneurs to its many recycling and packaging collection programs — Coca-Cola has been at the forefront of industry initiatives towards inclusive, sustainable solutions in the Philippines.

Together with Coca-Cola Foundation Philippines, the social development arm of Coca-Cola in the country, the company has forged longstanding partnerships through the years to help contribute local solutions to strengthen community efforts on solid waste management.

One partner of Coca-Cola Foundation Philippines is marine conservation social enterprise Pure Oceans. The collaboration aims to train and empower communities and their women leaders to create waste management solutions that have a lasting impact.

Pure Oceans is composed of changemaker women led by founder, Pia Roxas-Ocampo, an advertising consultant by profession, and a scuba diver and marine advocate at heart. The organization works with coastal communities to achieve sustainable solutions against plastic litter, with its flagship project in the Philippines, Linis Islas, running in Tingloy, Batangas.



Linis Islas is an advocacy program that has given women the power to lead and transform their communities by educating more people, especially in litter-vulnerable islands. It also established buying programs at Barangay Santo Tomas in Tingloy and Barangay San Teodoro in Mabini, Batangas to encourage communities to source clean and segregated plastics from coastal island communities for recycling or upcycling.

Tingloy, a fifth-class municipality comprising Maricaban and Caban Islands and other small islets in Batangas with a total population of less than 20,000, remains geographically isolated and at risk of solid waste accumulation and pollution; the island faces daily logistics and transport challenges in its solid waste management system.



As of Q1 this year, the Pure Oceans project has diverted 29,585 kg of plastic waste from oceans, including film and multilayer plastics, and types 1 to 6 plastics; established three materials recovery facilities; and provided solid waste management design training to 170 participants—80 percent of whom are women—in 15 barangays.



Despite the grave impact of the pandemic on various sectors, the project was able to provide livelihood opportunities to women by funding their communities and encouraging them to segregate waste, recycle and earn extra income for every bottle recovered in their household. In Q1 of 2021 alone, Pure Oceans was able to provide a Php 26,000 monthly income to 11 plastic buying program staff, mostly composed of women, while beneficiaries were able to recover 32 tons of plastic waste—equivalent to at least Php 156,852—from the ocean since 2018.

“I’ve been scuba diving since 2006 and I’ve seen how much the sea has changed in less than two decades. It is disheartening for me to see the reefs being destroyed by plastics that come from tributaries or communities. There is a need to convince people that their waste is their responsibility. If one must use plastic, our waste management system is in such a state that we ourselves need to make sure our plastic waste gets diverted from their current, default endpoint—the reefs and seas,” shares Ocampo.

“We are grateful to Coca-Cola Philippines for ensuring the recyclability of their packaging and increasing recycling capacity in the Philippines with their upcoming bottle-to-bottle recycling facility. Apart from that, we appreciate that they are helping us on the other end of the plastic lifecycle—increasing collection rates where the waste is most threatening to community livelihood and health, while also helping communities earn extra from those collection activities, too. With their assistance, we were able to begin and expand our work in 15 barangays within Maricaban Island,” Ocampo adds.

### **Women as pillars of change**

The partnership between Coca-Cola Foundation and Pure Oceans is leading the charge toward better waste management in local communities.

With the objective to collect at least 2,700kg of plastics per month and reach at least 2,120 beneficiaries, it has opened an opportunity to women of Tingloy to have another source of income while staying at home and taking care of their children.

“Our mission at Coca-Cola Foundation Philippines has always been to deliver happiness, refresh communities, and help improve the lives of people. Our partnership with Pure Oceans enables women and waste pickers of Tingloy to receive training and education on waste management. Our milestone of collecting 29,585 kg of plastic waste is just a start. We believe in collective action toward a common goal. And we look forward to working with more equally-passionate organizations who can help us in shaping a better future for the people in the communities that we are part of,” says Cecile Alcantara, President of Coca-Cola Foundation Philippines.



In 2018, Coca-Cola announced an ambitious goal to collect and recycle the equivalent of every bottle and can it sell globally by 2030. Coca-Cola Philippines has made progress on its World Without Waste roadmap over the past three years and is steadfast in doing more to make this vision come to life.

“We recognize the urgency of the growing plastic waste problem and we are determined to be part of the solution. We will continue to forge partnerships with like-minded organizations, industries, consumers, and local government units to support the transition to a closed-loop economy and tackle marine pollution. This will help create a cleaner and more sustainable environment and uplift lives in underserved communities through income-generating programs that help reduce waste,” says Tony Del Rosario, Coca-Cola Philippines President and VP for Franchise Operations for the ASEAN and South Pacific Unit-East Asia Region.

To learn more about the sustainability programs of Coca-Cola, visit <https://www.coca-colacompany.com/sustainable-business/packaging-sustainability>.



# Responsible waste disposal builds learning facility in Cabanatuan

By ... -November 12, 2021



*Officials grace the turnover.*

As schools prepare to reopen in the new normal, PLDT, in partnership with the Philippine Business for Social Progress (PBSP), recently turned over new classrooms, built from the proceeds of a sustainable recycling program, to Pula Elementary School in Barangay Pula, Cabanatuan City, Nueva Ecija.

PLDT constructed the two-storey, four-classroom building with funds from the Motolite-PBSP Balik Baterya program, a sustainable partnership program that encourages member companies to donate their used lead acid batteries (ULABs) for proper recycling. The fund derived from the responsible waste disposal is then used for various education projects, such as new classrooms.

“Realizing the urgent need for classrooms in many regions across the country, and guided by its core value of malasakit, the PLDT Group has been donating classrooms over the years through its various education programs,” said PLDT and Smart first vice president and head of Corporate Communications Catherine Yap-Yang. “With PLDT’s support to the Motolite-PBSP Balik Baterya Program, our education assistance has built and rehabilitated more than 40 classrooms nationwide,” she added.





# Green groups renew demand for plastic waste data from e-commerce firms amid 11/11 sale

By [Catalina Ricci S. Madarang](#) - November 11, 2021 - 6:41 PM



Image by Brian Yurasits via Pixabay

Environmental organizations are once again calling on e-commerce companies to reveal the plastic waste they produce amid **Singles' Day** shopping festival on November 11

The 11.11 sale or the Singles Day is considered the largest shopping event in Asia and the counterpart of the Black Friday Sale in the United States.

**Greenpeace Philippines**, along with other environmental organizations, sought to hold leading e-commerce firms in the country, Lazada and Shopee, accountable for the plastic waste they produce through their packaging.

They expressed this call by sharing a comic strip wherein Mara Klima character wished for the e-commerce firms to reduce their plastic waste at 11:11 hour. The Mara Klima comic strip was illustrated by Desiree Llanos Dee and Nityalila Saulo or Tofu Creatives.

“Ikaw, anong wish mo? Help us urge big e-commerce companies like Lazada and Shopee to reduce their plastic packaging waste and protect our beloved planet & communities,” read the post.

The green group also invited the public to sign their online petition on Bataris platform, headed by the youth group **Youth Strike for Climate Philippines**.

As of writing, the petition garnered 15,767 signatures of the 20,000 target number.

Waste and pollution watchdog group **EcoWaste Coalition** also made a separate call through a witty meme it shared on November 10.

“NAKO, NAKO! Paparating na naman ang monthly sale! (face palm emoji) Paalala sa mga bibili ng kanilang Christmas gifts na hindi pa rin nilalabas ng [Shopee](#) at [Lazada](#) ang data ng plastic packaging waste nila buwan-buwan at pati na rin ang internal mechanisms nila for environmental sustainability! Nakakalungkot, ‘di ba?” its post read.



**Greenpeace Philippines**  
on Wednesday

Ikaw, among wish mo?

Help us urge big e-commerce companies like Lazada & Shopee to REDUCE their plastic packaging waste and protect our beloved planet & communities 🌍❤️

Sign the petition >> [act.gp/2VOWdOI](https://act.gp/2VOWdOI)... See more



BATARIS.ORG.PH

**It's Time to Reveal, Reduce, and Redesign for Lazada and S.**

The E-Commerce industry has been growing at an exponential rate, proje

👍 91 💬 4 ➡ 68



**Ecowaste Coalition**  
on Wednesday



NAKO, NAKO! Paparating na naman ang monthly sale! 🙄

Paalala sa mga bibili ng kanilang Christmas gifts na hindi pa rin nilalabas ng Shopee at Lazada ang data ng plastic packaging waste nila buwan-buwan at pati na rin ang internal mechanisms nila for environmental sustainability! Nakakalungkot, 'di ba?

Let's keep the pressure up! 🙄 Join buyers, sellers, and different organizations in demanding that they REVEAL, REDUCE, REDESIGN. Sign the petition >> [act.gp/2VOWdOI](https://act.gp/2VOWdOI) ... See more

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## Online petition

Their collective petition demanded three main changes from the plastic-heavy businesses of Shopee and Lazada:

1. Reveal – “Corporate accountability and transparency regarding plastic packaging waste.”
2. Reduce – “The development of policies that ensure the rational reduction of unnecessary plastic packaging.”
3. Redesign – “Capacitating small- to medium-sized eco-friendly vendors.”

They noted that consumers and sellers are already looking for ways to reduce and recycle their packages.

Large corporations should also do their part in reducing the amount of plastic they produce with their packaging, the petition read.

“As much as consumers are responsible for waste disposal, so too are corporations accountable for the plastic they end up producing, especially unnecessary plastic packaging,” they [said](#).

In a previous briefing last September, Greenpeace cited a Shopify report where consumers around the globe are willing to patronize environmentally-sustainable brands.

The top countries with residents willing to purchase from eco-friendly brands are:

- China – 67%
- Australia – 52%
- Sweden – 46%
- United States – 42%

In a Business World report, a [survey](#) by consulting firm Bain and Company also showed that more Filipinos have a preference for sustainable products than before the pandemic.

In the survey cited, nine out of ten Filipinos are also willing to pay a higher price for products from businesses and brands with ESG (environmental, social and governance) in their policies.



# Choking in plastics

[EYES WIDE OPEN](#) - [Iris Gonzales](#) - The Philippine Star November 12, 2021 | 12:00am

Roxas Boulevard, that famed waterfront promenade in Metro Manila, is many things to many people a boulevard of dreams new, old, and broken dreams; for lovers, it's a place to make promises of forever with the pledges of love often backlit by the setting crimson sun. For those who want to avert a nervous breakdown, it's a slice of paradise, fake as the dolomite beach may be.

But somewhere in the southern tip of the boulevard, a place filled with mangroves has become a catch basin of sorts for plastic waste. The place is literally choking in plastics, and piles and piles of rubbish – from empty water bottles, slippers, plastics of varied shapes and sizes, sachets of soap, shampoos, cigarette butts, candy wrappers, used condoms and a whole lot of sleaze.

A few weeks ago, I travelled across five cities to see the opposite ends of the Pasig River and in many parts of it, I also saw heaps and heaps of plastic filth.

I am sure there are many unseen parts of the country teeming with plastic waste, the strongest indicator that we are seeing unprecedented volumes of mostly plastic garbage accumulating all around us. No, I am not imagining things – all my senses tell me that plastic filth is as real as it can get.

This must stop and not because they're eyesores, but because they're killing our rivers, the fish that we eat, our bodies, our homes, our planet, too.

I can go on and on.

## Solving the plastic problem

How then do we solve the problem of plastic waste? For sure, it's not going to happen overnight.

It's a deep-seated problem that all sectors of society must commit to face and address. Big business, government and individual households must all work together to address the intensifying effects of the plastic crisis.

Waste segregation and recycling are some of the solutions, but companies such as those in the fast moving consumer sector must take urgent action to reduce their use of plastic.

### Single-use plastic and the bread industry

The phaseout of all single-use plastic packaging and products is likewise a positive move. The House of Representatives has already passed the measure seeking to halt the use of single-use plastics.

However, as I said, this won't happen overnight. Some sectors, in fact, are already lobbying now for a just transition period.

The bread industry, for instance, said the measure will easily increase the price of bread in the country as the cost of production goes up.

Why? This is because the industry uses plastic to pack the bread. Packaging would have to be thicker to make it reusable and comply with the measure.

"This will not benefit consumers at all because whether the polybag is 25 microns or 50 microns, it serves the same purpose of protecting the bread from the elements. Micron, equivalent to one thousandth of a millimeter, measures the thickness of plastics," the group said.



Making the plastic thicker will not make it more re-usable as the bag is long and narrow, the group said.

A thicker plastic will also translate to higher cost of production as the current packaging system needs to be upgraded, retooled, redesigned for us to seal and lock using a thicker plastic. It will entail consuming more electricity and more manpower to package bread using thicker plastics. This would easily add at least P1.50 per loaf of bread or a pack of pan de sal, it added.

### **Other companies**

The bread industry is just one and it has valid reasons for seeking a just transition period.

Overall, however, other giant companies – especially multinational firms, must take full responsibility for their use of plastic in packages. They must show full transparency about their plastic footprint and move toward a business where their use of plastic is significantly reduced.

E-commerce giants – or our favorite sources of budol fun – which wrap our orders in layers and layers of unnecessary plastic, must end this packaging method. Besides, it's really difficult to open these items and it really takes away the budol fun.

Seriously though, the e-commerce business has so much room to reduce plastic waste. It must be more responsible considering that the usage of e-commerce doubled during the pandemic.

Moving forward, big business including e-commerce giants must invest in sustainable solutions.

### **Compostable plastics**

There are also compostable and biodegradable plastics in the market now, says listed company D&L Industries, developer of proprietary lines of plastic materials and additives that can make plastic compostable and biodegradable.

As the ongoing Climate Change Conference in Glasgow comes to an end, it's important to remind ourselves that individually, we can also do our part in helping the environment.

At the household level, there's a lot we can do to reduce our plastic waste, from shifting to sustainable alternatives to really committing to reduce our waste.

Let's be part of the solution, not part of the pollution. That sounds like a cliché but seriously, it's not.

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# Duterte calls for climate change support for vulnerable countries in APEC meeting

BY SAMUEL MEDENILLA NOVEMBER 12, 2021



President Rodrigo Duterte

President Rodrigo R. Duterte called on developed nations to provide “scaled-up and predictable support” to countries vulnerable to climate change.

Duterte made the appeal during his virtual speech at the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Business Advisory Council (ABAC) Dialogue last Thursday.

He noted people from developing countries are in dire need of such aid, which can be in the form of climate finance, technology transfer and development and capacity-building.

Such intervention, he said, could help the said countries transition to a low-carbon economy.

“In the interest of climate justice, we need these to transition to climate-smart development and adapt to and mitigate the worsening effects of climate change,” Duterte said.

Likewise, Duterte highlighted the important role of the ABAC for the pandemic recovery in the Asia-Pacific region by improving digital literacy in rural areas and establishing the Social Protection Floor (SPF).

He noted the importance of promoting digital literacy and establishment of the necessary infrastructure to facilitate it during the pandemic, when many business operations were made online.

“This will help increase the economic productivity of marginalized groups under the new normal,” Duterte said.

Such transition, he pointed out, should be complemented with the national Social Protection Floor (SPF) to address the “gaps in the social protection programs that were exposed during the pandemic.”

“An SPF will guarantee a minimum set of social security benefits for all, including workers in the informal sector and gig economy,” Duterte said.

Source: <https://businessmirror.com.ph/2021/11/12/duterte-calls-for-climate-change-support-for-vulnerable-countries-in-apec-meeting/>



# Philippines highlights 'concrete' climate efforts in COP26, but groups say gov't should do more

[Gaea Katreena Cabico](#) - Philstar.com November 11, 2021 | 7:16am

GLASGOW, United Kingdom (**Updated 12:11 p.m.**) — The Philippines said it is “moving ahead with urgency” in cutting its greenhouse gas emissions through localized climate change interventions and transition from coal to clean energy, but experts and observers want the government to do more.

In a speech delivered during the high-level segment of the 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) on Tuesday, Finance Secretary Carlos Dominguez enumerated “concrete actions” to demonstrate the country’s so-called leadership in fighting climate change.

Dominguez leads the government’s 19-member delegation to COP26, which is billed as humanity’s last, best chance to keep global temperature rise under control.

In a national statement delivered at the Scottish Event Campus, the finance chief cited the government’s new panel of technical experts on climate change, which is composed of scientists, and medical and disaster risk reduction practitioners from different regions who will implement programs on climate change in their localities.

“We shifted from theorizing about climate change to executing practical adaptation and mitigation projects on the ground,” Dominguez said.

He also mentioned the government’s sustainable financial roadmap that sets the guiding principles creating the environment for greener policies, as well as the energy transition mechanism facility, which aims to fund the early retirement of coal-fired power plants and replace them with renewable energy alternatives.

Aksyon Klima convenor Rodne Galicha said the implementation of programs must be transparent.

“[We need to ask:] Whose definition, whose mechanism should be adopted, and what’s the role of civil society, of other sectors when it comes to such programs?” Galicha said.

In 2020, the energy department declared a moratorium on new coal-powered generators. It, however, does not include previously approved projects that are already in the pipeline.

Early this year, the Philippines also committed to slashing its emissions by 75% by 2030. But a bulk of this commitment, called Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC), is hinged on foreign funding and assistance.

Negotiations in the UN climate summit, which is designed to reduce emissions and stem global warming, have entered the crunch point. A draft decision text urged countries to raise emission cutting goals by next year after data showed the current pledges fall off track to cap warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

“We have very high expectations for COP26 to become not just merely an annual platform for discussion, but a catalyst for concrete action plans. It’s time to do some actual work on the ground and build a framework for climate justice,” Dominguez said, as he called on the world’s biggest polluters to finance the grants, investments and subsidies needed by climate vulnerable nations.



## **Agriculture, forestry**

Environmental lawyer Tony La Viña called the national statement “good” as it presented justifications to the claim the country is a leader in fighting climate change.

But are the government’s commitments good enough? No, he said, noting more work needs to be done on agriculture and forestry.

“We signed up to the methane pledge and need to back that up with targets and actions. Same with forestry. We signed up to the deforestation pledge but forest actions are not even in our NDC,” said La Viña, associate director for climate policy and international relations of Manila Observatory.

Last week, some 100 countries pledged to reduce emissions of greenhouse gas methane by 30% and reverse deforestation by the end of 2030.

Denise Fontanilla, associate for policy advocacy of think tank Institute for Climate and Sustainable Cities, said the DOF has yet to promote the transition of small island grids to hybrid power systems, which could bring down the dependence and costs associated with diesel.

Galicha also stressed the importance of transparency and inclusivity in the process of crafting the positions of the country.

“The civil society, the academe, were not consulted when it comes to the positions to be given,” he said.

## **Development needs**

Fontanilla said the government also needs to stop its fixation on energy policies as the only means to tackle climate change.

“Much of the climate needs in the country are intrinsically rooted in actual development needs of the working public,” Fontanilla said, citing mobility that does not require ownership of private cars, adequate and healthy food, and clean air and water.

“It’s time we see the urgent need to protect small business interests. To make everything more resilient, we need to upgrade everything, from infrastructure, agriculture, supply chains, tourism,” she added.

Lastly, humanities must be integrated more in scientific and policy making, said Fontanilla, to “reach more people and work on more creative and holistic solutions to the climate crisis.”

*This story was produced as part of the [2021 Climate Change Media Partnership](#), a journalism fellowship organized by Internews' Earth Journalism Network and the Stanley Center for Peace and Security.*





# PH leads vulnerable countries' call for climate justice at COP 26

Published November 12, 2021, 12:05 AM

by [Manila Bulletin](#)



Editorial

The time to do some actual work on the ground and build a framework for climate justice is now.

That was the call made by Finance Secretary Carlos Dominguez III at the 26th United Nations (UN) Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) in Glasgow, Scotland, which is closing today, Nov. 12.

He sounded the call for climate justice, saying that countries that have “polluted and continue to pollute the earth’s environment must pay for the grants, investments, and subsidies needed for the most vulnerable countries.”

The Philippines is determined to be “a world leader” in efforts to cap global warming to not more than 1.5 degrees Celsius, he said.

The UN says this is an ambitious target considering that the earth is on a “catastrophic course” toward reaching a 2.7 degrees Celsius rise in temperature based on current national commitments on reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

Rather than dissipate efforts on fruitless debate, Dominguez said that the Philippines is presently engaging farmers and fishermen on executing localized action plans on climate change adaptation and mitigation that would be implemented in farms, rivers and waterways.

As Philippine delegation head, Dominguez proposed a three-point “blended approach” to make climate finance work.

One of the unfulfilled commitments of the wealthiest countries that are also the biggest polluters is to provide a \$100 million financing facility annually. Blended finance involves the “sustainable orchestration” of grants, investments and subsidies so that optimal benefits may be attained.

Grants must be given in the form of educational or technical assistance programs that provide clear benefits to affected communities.



Investments “should focus on projects and activities that will unlock more business opportunities, create new jobs, and lead to energy self-reliance in the long run.” Subsidies will enable communities to bear the financial costs and risks of transitioning to climate resiliency such as, for instance, the shift to renewable energy as coal-fired plants are phased out.

The Philippines’ assertive tone reflects the disappointment among climate vulnerable countries on the lack of concrete follow-through action from the countries most responsible for global pollution. These countries have crafted a package of proposals that include “making clean power the prominent option globally, making zero-emission vehicles the new normal, creating markets and support for ‘near-zero’ steel and ensuring it is used in infrastructure projects globally, creating low-carbon hydrogen globally, and delivering climate-resilient and sustainable agriculture across the world by 2030.”

Other significant COP 26 resolutions involve the Global Methane Pledge on reducing methane emissions by 30 percent by 2030 that has garnered support from 100 of the UN’s 193 member states; and the commitment by 100 nations that account for 85 percent of the world’s forests to end deforestation and reverse land degradation to stop flooding, drought and wildfires.

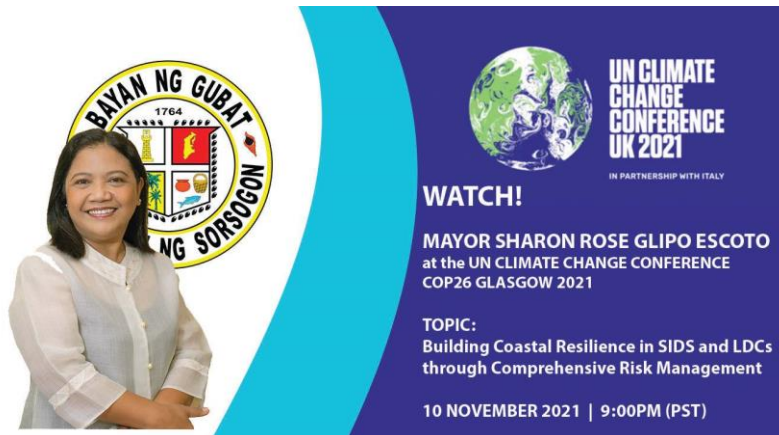
Special focus will also be placed on protecting the rights of indigenous communities in regions hosting about 80 percent of the world’s biodiversity.

After the curtains fall on COP26, the reckoning begins. Will agreements forged during the summit usher in an era of effective response to global warming and bring about climate justice?



# Alkalde sa Sorsogon, naimbitahang speaker sa COP26 summit; ibinida ang tulong ng mangrove at 'best practices' ng bayan sa mga kalamidad

By **Bombo Radyo Legazpi** -November 11, 2021 | 5:59 PM



LEGAZPI CITY – Ibinida ni Mayor Sharon Escoto ng Gubat, Sorsogon ang mga best practices ng bayan sa isang session na bahagi ng nagpapatuloy na 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26) sa Glasgow, Scotland.

Si Escoto, ang tanging Filipino na naimbitahang maging speaker sa paksang Building Coastal Resilience in SIDS (Small Island Developing States) and LDCs (Least Developed Countries) through Comprehensive Risk Management.

Sa eksklusibong panayam ng Bombo Radyo Legazpi, ibinahagi ni Escoto sa session ang malaking tulong ng malawak na taniman ng mangroves sa bayan upang magprotekta sa kanilang water source sa mahabang panahon.

Naging atraksyon din ito sa mga turista kaya't nakapagpasulong ng local employment.

Sa 42 barangay sa bayan, 13 ang coastal areas na pinakaapektado kung may kalamidad kaya't naglatag rin ng mga pamamaraan sa paghahanda sa risks.

Samantala, hinikayat ni Escoto ang mga kababayan na maging bahagi ng solusyon sa patuloy na paglaban sa mga bantang kaakibat ng usapin sa climate change.



# US, China show rare agreement in climate change declaration

November 11, 2021, 7:58 pm



**ISTANBUL** – The pressing climate crisis has brought together global rivals China and the US in rare unity, with both pledging to use multilateral processes to avoid catastrophic impacts of the changing climate.

The agreement was announced by China’s special envoy on climate Xie Zhenhua and his US counterpart John Kerry on the sidelines of the UN climate conference in Scotland, which is set to wrap up Friday.

“The US and China are committed to pursuing such efforts, including by taking enhanced climate actions that raise ambition in the 2020s in the context of the Paris Agreement, with the aim of keeping the above temperature limit within reach and cooperating to identify and address related challenges and opportunities,” the US State Department said Wednesday night in a joint statement with Beijing.

It said the “US and China recall their firm commitment to work together and with other parties to strengthen implementation of the Paris Agreement.”

The world’s top two economies are the largest emitters of carbon dioxide.

It came as a surprise to many, but experts had suggested climate, besides Afghanistan and Iran, was one of the areas where the interests of the world’s top two economies converge.

Beijing and Washington have been at loggerheads over the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19), Taiwan, Hong Kong, and the Uyghur human rights issue in Xinjiang.

The climate deal appeared on Wednesday to be a rare example of unity.

Praising “significant efforts” being made around the world to address the climate crisis, the statement said: “There remains a significant gap between such efforts, including their aggregate effect, and those that need to be taken to achieve the goals of the (2015) Paris Agreement.”

“The two sides stress the vital importance of closing that gap as soon as possible, particularly through stepped-up efforts. They declare their intention to work individually, jointly, and with other countries during this decisive decade, in accordance with different national circumstances, to strengthen and accelerate climate action and cooperation aimed at closing the gap, including accelerating the green and low-carbon transition and climate technology innovation,” the statement said.

But some said the agreement had little in the way of details for how and when the actions would be taken.



At the Glasgow conference, Xie said: “Both sides will work jointly and with other parties to ensure a successful COP26 and to facilitate an outcome that is both ambitious and balanced.”

Kerry said the two countries “set out our support for a successful COP26, including certain elements which will promote ambition.”

“Every step matters right now, and we have a long journey ahead of us,” he added. **(Anadolu)**



# No lifting of sanctions, no climate deal – Iran

By [Agence France-Presse](#) November 12, 2021

**TEHRAN:** Iran won't ratify the Paris Agreement on climate change while the Islamic republic remains under sanctions, the head of its environment department said on Wednesday (Thursday in Manila).

"For Iran to sign and commit, the first condition is for the oppressive sanctions to be lifted," Ali Salajegheh was quoted as saying by state-run IRNA news agency.

Iran is party to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change but never signed the 2015 Paris Agreement to limit global warming.

That same year, Iran struck a landmark deal with major powers to limit its nuclear program in return for sanctions relief.

That agreement has been on life support since 2018, when then-US president Donald Trump unilaterally pulled out and reimposed crippling sanctions.

"Our principal message in this summit is that countries commit to discussing lifting the sanctions on the Islamic Republic of Iran as a priority," Salajegheh was quoted saying in Glasgow, on the sidelines of the COP26 UN Climate Change Conference.

He also said about his oil-rich country that "Iran's condition for reducing greenhouse gases by 4 percent by 2030 was the lifting of all sanctions as it would cost Iran \$56 billion to achieve this objective."

# COP26: How much is spent supporting fossil fuels and green energy?

By Reality Check team

BBC News Published 21 hours ago



The burning of fossil fuels is one of the primary causes of global warming.

But despite pledges to phase out support, governments around the world **spend more than \$420bn (£313bn) each year** subsidising the non-renewable energy, according to the UN Development Programme.

How do fossil fuel subsidies work and which countries are spending the most?

## What are fossil fuel subsidies?

Fossil fuel subsidies are measures taken by governments that artificially lower the price of coal, oil, or natural gas.

These take two forms:

- production subsidies - tax breaks or direct payments that reduce the cost of producing fossil fuels
- consumption subsidies - energy price cuts for consumers, such as setting fixed prices at petrol stations

Transparency on fossil fuel funding is generally poor, but about three-quarters of the world's subsidies are estimated to be focused on consumers, and a quarter on producers.

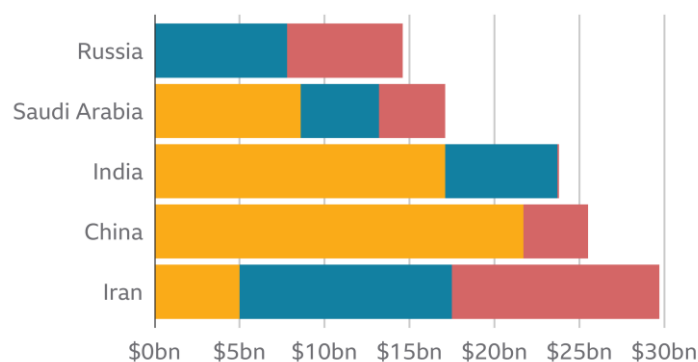
Consumption subsidies are often seen in lower-income countries - largely to help alleviate poverty through measures that can make cooking gas cheaper, or lower the cost of transport.

Iran topped the list for consumption subsidies for 2019 - **according to data from the International Energy Agency (IEA)** - followed by China and India, all of whom subsidise petrol prices.

## Countries with highest consumption subsidies

Government support for fossil fuel industries, 2019

■ Gas ■ Electricity ■ Oil



Source: IEA

BBC



### What action is being taken to phase them out?

A draft agreement published at the COP26 climate summit has called on all countries to accelerate the phasing out of subsidies for fossil fuels - but no firm dates have been set.

All countries in the G7 - representing the world's largest advanced economies - have previously committed to phase out "inefficient" fossil fuel subsidies by 2025.

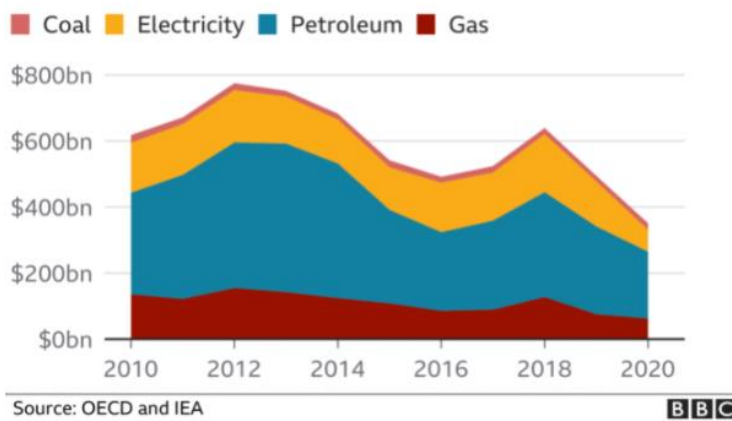
"If you look globally, you can see there is progress on phasing out subsidies, but it is slow," says Peter Wooders, senior director at the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD).

"Within the G7 members there's been some progress on subsidy reform, but it's been quite limited - they really need to do better and it's obviously inconsistent with climate pledges," he adds.

Support for fossil fuels across 81 major economies **has been declining in recent years** but was still more than \$350bn in 2020.

#### Fossil fuel support from major economies

Estimates for 81 countries, 2010-2020



### What about support for clean energy?

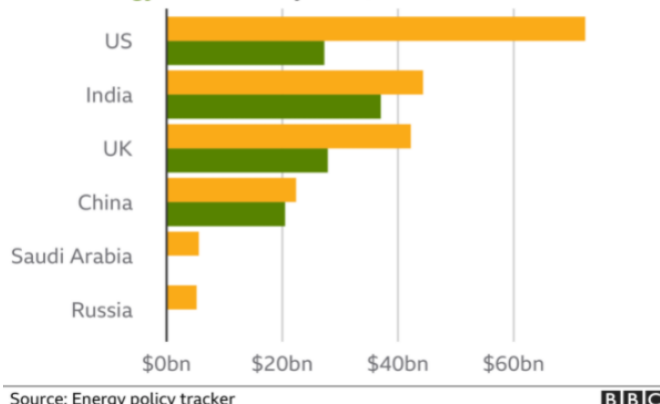
**The Energy Policy Tracker has collected data** on how major countries have enacted new policies since January 2020 to help fund the energy industry.

It found that since the start of 2020, the world's major economies have spent more funding fossil fuels through new or amended policies than clean energy.

The definition of a subsidy is broader than the IEA and Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) estimates, so the overall figures are higher, but they give us an idea of how countries are funding clean energy compared with fossil fuels.

#### Energy industry subsidies through new or amended policies

Government financial support for fossil fuels and clean energy since January 2020, selected countries







The US and the UK have invested in clean energy, but they have still spent significantly more funding fossil fuels, according to the data.

US President Joe Biden and UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson have both said tackling fossil fuel subsidies is a top priority.

In January this year, Mr Biden signed an order to stop fossil fuel subsidies - pledging to eliminate government support by 2022.

**The Environmental and Energy Study Institute estimates** direct subsidies to the fossil fuel industry in the US amount to \$20bn per year - 80% of which goes towards oil and gas.

On top of this, the US provides a number of tax breaks to the fossil fuel industry to encourage domestic energy production.

Mr Johnson announced in December 2020 that the UK would stop supporting the fossil fuel industry overseas.

**A BBC investigation last year** found the UK was spending billions of pounds on fossil fuel projects abroad.



China and India have been increasing investment in renewable energy - but they remain amongst the world's largest public financiers of fossil fuels, spending tens of billions of dollars every year by subsidising both their production and consumption.

Saudi Arabia and Russia have long-standing policies of subsidising fossil fuel consumption through low energy prices, because of vast natural resources of oil and natural gas.

According to the IISD, Saudi Arabia **is doing the least** of the G20 countries to phase out fossil fuel funding.

It has joined other G20 nations in a pledge to phase out inefficient fossil fuel subsidies, but no target date has been set.



# Climate change: Blah, blah, blah and boom, boom, boom

BY DR. JESUS LIM ARRANZA NOVEMBER 11, 2021



It's true, and I agree with the young Greta Thunberg, that all we've been getting from world leaders on the issue of climate change are mere words—rhetorics—and nothing really substantial were gained from the years that we've had the Conference of the Parties (or UN Climate Change Conference), which is now on its 26th edition.

Yes, it's been all “blah, blah, blah.”

But allow me to put in my two cents' worth on this serious matter.

Watching Greta Thunberg lambast powerful leaders in her viral videos made me see clearly another mistake that mankind has been guilty of for the past several decades —it's population boom, boom, boom.

Consider these:

Earth's temperature has risen by 0.14° F (0.08° C) per decade since 1880, and the rate of warming over the past 40 years is more than twice that: 0.32° F (0.18° C) per decade since 1981.

Meanwhile, from 1980 to 2020, also a 40-year span, the world's population soared from 4.45 billion to 7.79 billion.

Again, you don't need to be a rocket scientist to be able to break down the impact of a population explosion on our environment, triggering the extent of climate change that powerful nations have been promising to address since the first COP in Berlin, Germany in 1995.

How much of our forests would need to give way to provide food and water, clothing, and shelter—just the most basic needs—to nearly 8 billion people in the world?

How much timberland do we need to clear for subdivisions, recreational facilities, crops, roads, and other infrastructure to support life, as we know it?

How much fossil fuel do we need to burn every second to provide energy to the things needed by your 7.79 billion neighbors?

My basic premise is, if we need to address climate change, the blah, blah, blah of our world leaders should also include solutions to the boom, boom, boom of the world's population, and ensure their implementation. Population explosion exemplifies depletion and emission, as you can glean from the examples I've cited above.

Controlling population growth is one program that the Philippines and other developing nations can participate; not just the big nations.

In fact, population growth is one area where we Filipinos may have outdone ourselves—from 47.36 million in 1980 to 109.6 million in 2020. Quite a feat, indeed.



Are Filipinos, being predominantly Catholics, still of the belief that they must follow the Biblical injunction to “go forth and multiply”? Taken literally, being fruitful and multiplying is no longer apt in today’s setting—we are now overpopulated that we are having a really difficult time feeding and taking care of our people. It was different, of course, when God gave this commandment to Adam and Eve and the family of Noah.

I’m calling for a review of policies related to population growth in the next Congress under a new president who may—or may not be—covered by religious dogma and influence.

This is one reason I’m joining the senatorial race in the 2022 elections. These critical matters should be ventilated and discussed extensively in all fora, from the campaign period up to the august chambers.

I may be there at the Senate’s session hall come July 2022 with the people’s help, or maybe not. But at the minimum, I’ve accomplished my goal of bringing to the people important issues—which policy-makers should discuss as part of their platform—at every opportunity I will get during the campaign period.

This is how the battle should be won.

*Dr. Jesus Lim Arranza is the chairman of the Federation of Philippine Industries and Fight Illicit Trade; a broad-based, multisectoral movement intended to protect consumers, safeguard government revenues and shield legitimate industries from the ill effects of smuggling.*



# The man turning cities into giant sponges to embrace floods

By Tessa Wong

BBC News Published 21 hours ago



TURENSCAPE

The Wujiang river in Zhejiang, Yu's home province, was recently revamped

## Yu Kongjian can remember the day he nearly died in the river.

Swollen with rain, the White Sand Creek had flooded the rice terraces in Yu's farming commune in China. Yu, just 10 then, ran excitedly to the river's edge.

Suddenly, the earth beneath his feet collapsed, sweeping him into the floodwaters in one terrifying instant. But banks of willows and reeds slowed the river's flow, allowing Yu to grab the vegetation and pull himself out.

"I am sure that if the river was like it is today, smoothed with concrete flood walls, I would have drowned," he tells the BBC.

It was a defining moment that would impact not only his life, but the rest of China as well.

One of China's most prominent urban design thinkers and Dean of the prestigious Peking University's college of architecture and landscape, Yu Kongjian is the man behind the sponge city concept of managing floods that is being rolled out in scores of Chinese cities.

It is an idea he believes other places can adopt - even as some raise questions of whether, in the face of more extreme floods linked to climate change, sponge cities can truly work.



YU KONGJIAN

White Sand Creek as Yu remembers it, in a picture taken in 1984

## 'Don't fight the water'

What if a flood could be something we embrace rather than fear? This is the central idea of Prof Yu's sponge city.



Conventional flood water management often involves building pipes or drains to carry away water as swiftly as possible, or reinforcing river banks with concrete to ensure they do not overflow.

But a sponge city does the opposite, seeking instead to soak up rainfall and slow down surface run-off.

It tries to do it in three areas. The first is at the source, where just like a sponge with many holes, a city tries to contain water with many ponds.

The second is through the flow, where instead of trying to channel water away quickly in straight lines, meandering rivers with vegetation or wetlands slow water down - just like in the creek that saved his life.

This has the added benefit of creating green spaces, parks and animal habitats, and purifying the surface run-off with plants removing polluting toxins and nutrients.

The third is the sink, where the water empties out to a river, lake or sea. Prof Yu advocates relinquishing this land and avoiding construction in low-lying areas. "You cannot fight the water, you have to let it go," he says.



**TURENSCAPE**

Tianjin's Qiaoyuan park has been held up as an example of sponge city principles in action

While similar concepts exist elsewhere, the sponge city is notable for using natural processes to solve the city's problems, says sustainable design expert Dr Nirmal Kishnani of the National University of Singapore.

"Right now we have a disconnect... but the thinking is that we have to find our way back to seeing ourselves as a part of nature."

Much of the concept is influenced by ancient farming techniques Prof Yu learnt growing up in the eastern coastal province of Zhejiang, such as storing rainwater in ponds for crops. It has won Prof Yu and his landscaping firm Turenscape many awards.

"Nobody would drown, not even in the monsoon season. We just lived with the water. We adapted to the water when the floods came," he says.

He left for Beijing aged 17 where he studied landscaping, and later studied design at Harvard. When he returned to his homeland in 1997, China was deep in the throes of the construction frenzy we still see today.

Appalled by its "grey, lifeless infrastructure", Prof Yu began advocating an urban design philosophy based on traditional Chinese concepts.

Besides sponge cities, for instance, he calls for natural rustic landscaping or a **"big feet revolution"**, in opposition to overly manicured parks which he likens to the outdated Chinese practice of binding women's feet.



**TURENSCAPE**

Prof Yu is seen as the godfather of the sponge city concept in China

He believes China's coastal cities, and other places with a similar climate, have adopted an unsustainable model for building cities.

"The technique that evolved in European countries cannot adapt to the monsoon climate. These cities fail because they have been colonised by Western culture and copy their infrastructure and urban model," he says.

He initially faced opposition from the establishment, some of whom were annoyed by his vocal criticism of Chinese engineering including projects of national pride like the Three Gorges Dam. This, coupled with his Harvard background and plaudits from the West, earned him accusations of being a traitor and a "Western spy" undermining China's development.

Prof Yu, who considers himself a child of the Cultural Revolution, finds this notion ludicrous.

"I'm not a Westerner, I'm a Chinese traditionalist," he says with a laugh. "We have thousands of years of experience, we have the solution you cannot ignore. We have to follow our Chinese ways."

He has cannily appealed to Chinese officials' sense of patriotism in lobbying for sponge cities, helped by media coverage of his ideas following high-profile flooding disasters in Beijing and Wuhan in recent years.

It paid off. In 2015, following President Xi Jinping's endorsement, the government announced a multi-million yuan plan and an ambitious goal: by 2030, 80% of China's municipal areas must have elements of a sponge city and recycle at least 70% of rainfall.

### **A magic bullet?**

Around the world, more places are struggling to cope with more extreme rainfall, a phenomenon scientists have linked to climate change. As temperatures rise with global warming, more moisture evaporates into the atmosphere, causing heavier rain.

And they say it will only get worse: in the future, **rainfall will be more intense and severe** than previously expected

But with heavier storms is the sponge city really the answer?

Some experts are not sure.

"Sponge cities may only be good for mild or small rainstorms, but with the very extreme weather we are seeing now, we still need to combine it with infrastructure such as drains, pipes and tanks," says flood management expert Faith Chan of the University of Nottingham Ningbo.



He also points out that for many dense cities where space is a premium, it may be difficult to implement some of Yu's ideas such as providing land for floodplains.

Despite spending millions of yuan, China still sees catastrophic flooding.

Last summer, a series of floods killed 397, affected 14.3 million, and contributed to \$21.8bn in economic losses, according to UN estimates.

But Prof Yu insists ancient Chinese wisdom cannot be wrong, and these failures are due to local officials executing his idea improperly or in a piecemeal fashion.

The Zhengzhou flood earlier this year, he says, was a classic example. The city had paved over its ponds, so not enough water was retained upstream when the rain began.

The main river had been channelled into concrete drains, causing water flow to speed up "like a flushed toilet", he says. Important infrastructure such as hospitals were built on low-lying land. "A sponge city could handle any flood - if it doesn't, it's not a sponge city. It has to be resilient," he says.

Another question has been whether the sponge city concept is truly exportable.

Prof Yu says flood-prone countries like Bangladesh, Malaysia and Indonesia could benefit from the model, and some places such as Singapore, the US and Russia have started implementing similar concepts.

But much of the success of the sponge city's proliferation across China is arguably due to its centralised government and hefty state coffers.

Prof Yu says a sponge city would cost only "a quarter" of conventional solutions - if done right. He argues that building on higher ground and allocating land for flooding, for instance, would be cheaper than building a pipe and tank system.

Many of Turenscape's projects are now aimed at fixing flood infrastructure that cost millions, and this money could have been saved if officials followed sponge city principles in the first place, he says.

Using concrete to manage a flood is thus like "drinking poison to quench your thirst... it is a short-sighted view," he says.

"We have to change the way we live to adapt to the climate. If they don't follow my solution, they will fail."

12 NOVEMBER 2021, FRIDAY



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# Philippines' COVID count up by 1,974 more cases

Philstar.com November 11, 2021 | 4:01pm



Giant traditional parols made of capiz shells adorn the center island of Island Avenue in Makati City on November 4, 2021 as the holiday season approaches.

The STAR / Miguel de Guzman

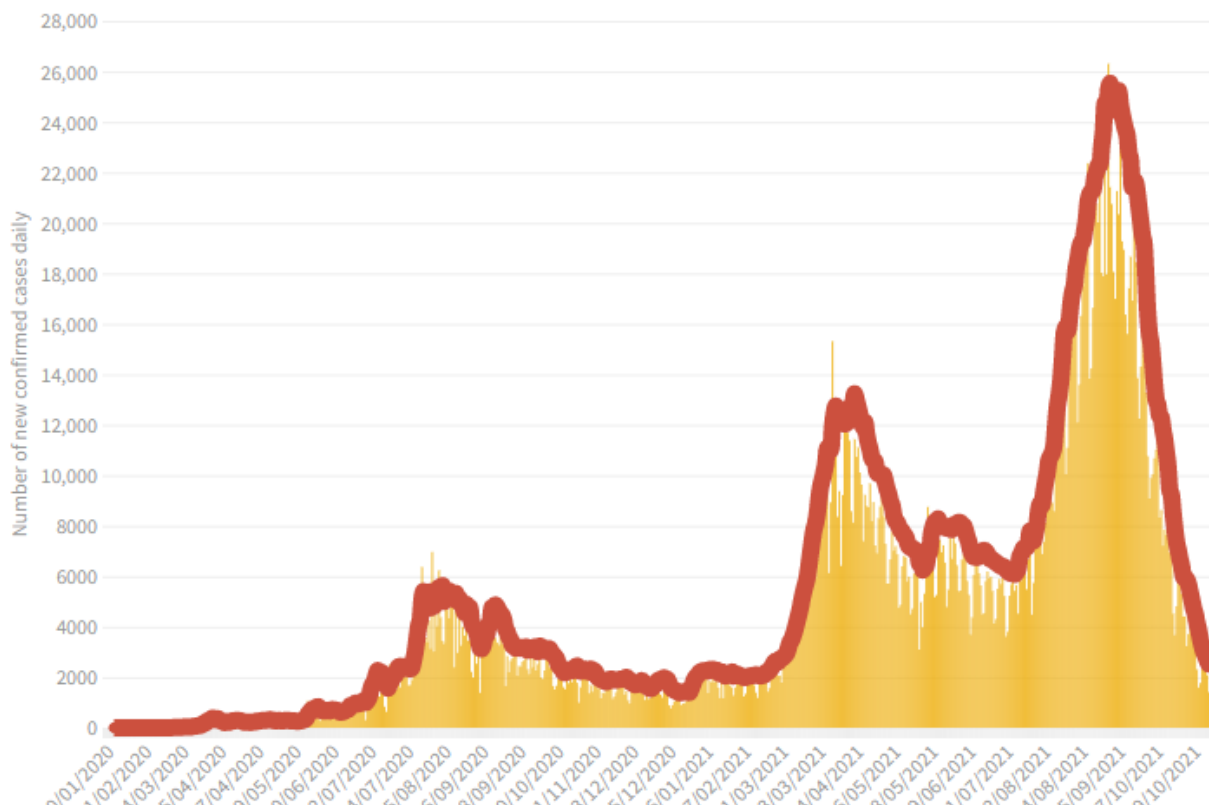
MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Health on Thursday said 1,974 more Filipinos contracted the COVID-19, bringing the country's total count of infections to 2,811,248.

Authorities said 1.0% of the overall caseload remain as active cases. DOH said, too, that two laboratories failed to submit COVID-19 testing output.

- **Active cases:** 28,660 or 1.0% of the total
- **Deaths:** 142, pushing the count to 44,866
- **Recoveries:** 2,388 bringing the number to 2,737,722

## COVID-19 cases in the Philippines

■ Seven-day moving average   ■ Number of new confirmed cases



Source: Department of Health • As of November 11, 2021, 4 p.m.



### Alert level system expanded nationwide

- President Rodrigo Duterte approved the expansion of the government's [alert level system](#) to the rest of the country after its pilot run on Metro Manila and select areas.
- A nationwide survey by OCTA Research showed Filipinos' approval of the government's pandemic response declined by 30%, or from 80% in July to [50% in September](#).
- Malacañang said it looking if the government's National Vaccination Days from November 29 to December 1 would be declared holidays.
- Metro Manila mayors agreed to require vendors in [Christmas bazaars](#) to be fully vaccinated for COVID-19 this approaching holiday season.
- The Philippines received 866,970 more doses of [Pfizer's](#) COVID-19 vaccine. Latest data showed there are now 30.47 million Filipinos complete with their shots, or 39.51% of the government's target of 77.13 million this year.



# Nahawa ng COVID-19 sa Pilipinas humataw na sa 2.81 milyon

(Philstar.com) - November 11, 2021 - 4:00pm



Giant traditional parols made of capiz shells adorn the center island of Island Avenue in Makati City following the official lighting of Christmas decorations on Wednesday night, Nov. 4, 2021, to signify the start of the city's start yuletide celebration.

The STAR/Miguel de Guzman

MANILA, Philippines — Nakapagtala ang Department of Health ng 1,974 bagong infection ng coronavirus disease, Huwebes, kaya't nasa 2.81 milyon na sumatutal ang nahahawaan nito sa bansa.

Batay sa mga bagong nakalap na datos ng Kagawaran ng Kalusugan, narito ang bagong mga pasok na datos para araw na ito:

- **Lahat ng kaso:** 2,811,248
- **Nagpapagaling pa:** 28,660, o 1% ng total infections
- **Kagagaling lang:** 2,388, dahilan para maging 2,737,722 na lahat ng gumagaling
- **Kamatay lang:** 142, na siyang nag-aakyat sa total local death toll sa 44,866

## COVID-19 'alert systems' nationwide na

- Inaprubahan na ni Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte ang [Executive Order 151](#) na tuluyang magpapatupad ng COVID-19 "alert level systems" sa buong bansa, bagay na paglayo sa mga community quarantine system habang nagluluwag ng restrictions ang gobyerno.
- Sa kabila ng pagbaba ng kaso ng COVID-19 cases sa Pilipinas nitong mga nagdaan linggo at buwan, lumalabas na bumaba ng 30% ang "approval rating" ng mga Pilipinas sa pag-asikaso ng gobyerno sa pandemya, ayon sa [pag-aaral](#) na isinagawa ng OCTA Research.
- Nagtakda naman na ng panuntunan ang mga alkalde ng Metro Manila sa mga magtitinda sa mga Christmas bazaars atbp. seasonal markets sa pagpasok ng holiday season — ang [full COVID-19 vaccination](#) ng mga nagtratrabaho sa nasabing lugar.
- Pwede na uli ang Christmas caroling ngayong Disyembre 2022 sa mga Alert Level 2 areas gaya ng Metro Manila, ayon sa DOH. Gayunpaman, pinapayuhan nilang [huwag ditong lumahok ang mga matatandaang senior citizens at mga vulnerable ang kalusugan](#).
- Umabot na sa 30.47 milyon ang nakakukumpleto ng COVID-19 vaccine doses sa Pilipinas. Bahagi lang 'yan, [66.81 milyong gamot na naituturok na sa bansa sa ngayon](#).



- Sumampa na sa 250.71 milyon ang tinatamaan ng COVID-19 sa buong daigdig, [ayon sa huling datos ng World Health Organization](#). Sa bilang na 'yan, patay na ang 5.06 milyong katao.

— James Relativo

12 NOVEMBER 2021, FRIDAY



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



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
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