

15 September 2022, Thursday



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Cebu City turns to SC in bid to revive rivers

Local gov't preparing writ of kalikasan petition to clear easement zone of illegal settlers, structures

By Nestle Semilla
@nestleINQ

CEBU CITY—Local officials are filing a petition in the Supreme Court for the issuance of a writ of kalikasan in a bid to clear the city's riverbanks of informal settlers and commercial establishments that encroached on the 3-meter easement zone of waterways.

Lawyer Gerardo Carillo, chair of the Cebu City Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council, said the writ of kalikasan would also compel national government agencies to act and do their jobs in making sure the rivers were free from any obstructions.

"We have to rehabilitate our rivers. But we cannot do that if we don't clear the 3-meter easement. We wanted to restore the rivers," Carillo said on Tuesday.

The issuance of a writ of kalikasan, he said, would provide more teeth to the Water Code of the Philippines (Presidential Decree No. 1067) which prohibits its structures from encroaching



CLEARING OPERATION Workers from the Cebu City government, using heavy equipment, start clearing the banks of Kinalumasan River of illegal structures and settlers. —PHOTO COURTESY OF CEBU CITY COUNCILOR JERRY GUARDO

on the rivers' easement zone.

Carillo, however, didn't say when the city government's representatives would file the petition, but noted that a draft would be finished this week and would be submitted for review to Mayor Michael Rama.

Under the Supreme Court's Rules of Procedure for Environmental Cases, the writ of kalikasan is a remedy available "on behalf of persons whose constitutional right to a balanced and healthful ecology is violated... (and which) involves environmental damage of such magnitude as to preju-

dice the life, health, or property of inhabitants."

Demolition

Carillo said between 14,000 and 18,000 structures along Cebu City's rivers needed to be demolished. So far, however, the city has given notices of eviction to only 2,000 households and establishments.

Those who refuse to leave or remove the structures within the river's easement will be included in the case, he said.

According to the Environmental Management Bureau,

all seven major rivers in Cebu City—Guadalupe, Kinalumasan, Mahiga, Lahug, Estero de Parian, Bulacao and Butuanon—are already "dead" since these have ceased to perform its ecological functions, including its inability to sustain any form of life, such as fish and aquatic plants.

The city government has advised affected families and business owners to demolish their homes or establishments on their own so they can save their belongings.

Informal settlers will be transferred to medium-rise condominium buildings donated by a private firm at the South Road Properties. They will also receive P35,000 from the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH).

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the Cebu Port Authority and the DPWH will also be included in the case for failing to stop residents and owners of commercial establishments from constructing structures that encroached on the rivers' easement zones. INQ



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DENR-EMB-NCR LAUDS MAYNILAD: The Department of Environment and Natural Resources–Environmental Management Bureau–National Capital Region recently gave recognition to Maynilad Water Services Inc. for its various environmental conservation programs. Photo shows DENR-EMB-NCR’s regional director Michael Drake Matias and Environmental Monitoring and Enforcement Division officer-in-charge Engr. Jean Borromeo (3rd and 4th from left) handing over a Certificate of Recognition to (from left) Maynilad’s Corporate Affairs and Communication head Marie Antonette de Ocampo and Sustainability head Engr. John Emmanuel Martinez.



DENR-EMB-NCR LAUDS MAYNILAD ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION EFFORTS

GOODNEWS

email: rematenewscentral@yahoo.com



THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources–Environmental Management Bureau–National Capital Region (DENR-EMB-NCR) gave recognition to Maynilad Water Services, Inc. (Maynilad) for its various environmental conservation programs.

The photo shows DENR-

EMB-NCR's Regional Director Atty. Michael Drake Matias and Environmental Monitoring and Enforcement Division Officer-in-Charge Engr. Jean Borromeo (3rd and 4th from left, respectively) handing over a Certificate of Recognition to (from left) Maynilad's Corporate Affairs and Communication head Marie Antonette De Ocampo and

Sustainability head Engr. John Emmanuel Martinez.

The recognition was given to Maynilad for its environmental protection initiatives such as the Adopt-an-Estero program, particularly the adoption of a portion of Magdaong River in Muntinlupa City. DENR-EMB-NCR also hailed Maynilad's continuous implementation of environment-centric educational initiatives, such as its Daloy Dunong program that teaches schoolchildren about the importance of water and environmental protection, and its Wastewater Educational Campaign that highlights the value of proper wastewater management.

DENR-EMB-NCR also lauded Maynilad's move towards enhanced water sustainability through its New Water program that aims to recycle used water for drinking.



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The Manila Times

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Region 2 holds tree growing activity

MORE than 2,000 volunteers in Region 2 (Cagayan Valley) planted 7,000 bamboo propagules and indigenous trees as part of the government's nationwide bamboo- and tree-growing activity, according to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

This DENR activity in the Cagayan Valley region — which comprises the provinces of Cagayan, Isabela, Nueva Vizcaya, Quirino, and Batanes — was held on Tuesday, in collaboration with the Department of the Interior and Local Government.

DENR Region 2 executive director Gwendolyn Bambalan said the activity with the theme "Buhayin ang Pangangalaga sa Kalikasan" was conducted to help reduce the ill effects of climate change through massive reforestation activities.

She said the agency is also promoting "tree growing" to encourage the participants to plant and ensure the survival of the

seedlings.

"Our mandate is to mobilize the citizenry and we are happy to see many volunteers today as we address the pressing issues of climate change," Bambalan said.

Aside from the bamboo propagules, planted species included tree species such as narra, molave, tuai, talisay, bitaog, kupang, malasantol, kamagong, dao, ipil and arius.

Joining the tree-growing activity were the Department of Agriculture (DA), Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), and Department of Labor and Employment (DoLE).

Region 2 directors of DA, DTI, DoLE, and the Environment Management Bureau also joined the tree-growing activity, as well as officials and representatives from other national government agencies, local government units, villages, and Sangguniang Kabataan officials, civil society organizations, and the academe.

According to Bambalan, the planting activity in the region was simultaneously conducted in Uyugan town in Batanes; Quirino town in Isabela; Solana town in Cagayan; Cabarroguis town in Quirino; and Bayombong town in

Nueva Vizcaya.

Nueva Vizcaya Gov. Carlos Padilla and Mayor Tony Bagasao joined the event in Bayombong while Batanes Gov. Marilou Cayco joined in Uyugan.

LEANDER C. DOMINGO



TREE GROWING PROJECT This young environmental advocate is one of the 2,000 volunteers in the Cagayan Valley region who planted more than 7,000 bamboo propagules and indigenous tree species in a simultaneous planting activity in the provinces of Cagayan, Isabela, Nueva Vizcaya, Quirino and the island province of Batanes on Tuesday, Sept. 13, 2022. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



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FERDINAND ROMUALDEZ MARCOS JR.
President of the Republic of the Philippines



DOLE JOINS PBBM'S 65TH BIRTHDAY BAMBOO PLANTING EVENT

The Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), represented by Assistant Secretary for General Administration and Regional Operations Cluster Maria Liavel C. Badillo-Crisostomo (third from right, lower photo) joins the national simultaneous bamboo and tree planting kick-off ceremony marking President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.'s 65th birthday on September 13 at San Mateo, Rizal. With the theme "Buhayin ang Pangangalaga sa Kalikasan," the President (seventh from right, top photo) led the planting of over 8,000 seedlings and bamboo planting stocks in Calabarzon. PHOTO BY JEROME SAJISE DOLE/IPS



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Daily Tribune

WITHOUT FEAR & WITHOUT FAVOR



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PHOTOGRAPH BY BOB DUNGO JR. FOR THE DAILY TRIBUNE @tribuneph1_bob

THIS boy's view of the spanking Dolomite Beach along Roxas Boulevard Wednesday is ruined by floating trash and seaweeds washed ashore.



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Ang mga tauhan ng Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) habang hinahakot ang sangkaterbang basura na inaanod sa Dolomite Beach sa Maynila sa sunud-sunod na malalakas na pag-ulat dala ng bagyo at habagat. (Kuha ni Ernie Peñaredondo)



'Net-zero emission possible with clear government targets'

RENEWABLE-BASED power systems backed by grid balancing engines and energy storage can help the Philippines reach net zero emissions by 2050 especially in the Luzon Grid, according to global technology group Wärtsilä.

Wärtsilä said the Philippine government must come up with clear net-zero targets to attract clean energy investments.

Based on the firm's power system modelling of the Luzon Grid, both the government and the private sector must rapidly accelerate the adoption of flexible balancing power plants with 13,000 megawatts (MW) needed by 2030 for the island to be on course of the targeted 35 percent renewables by that year and 50 percent by 2040.

Wärtsilä added by 2050, Luzon will need 14,000 MW of balancing power plants and 69,000 MW of energy storage to achieve net zero emissions.

It said Luzon must install 18,000 MW of solar capacity or 63 percent more than the 11,000 MW target set out in the country's Power Development Plan.

Wärtsilä said once the plan is achieved, the country would also have a reduced need for combined cycle gas turbines and coal, down by 5,000 MW to 12,700 MW by 2030, even under a business-as-usual scenario.

"The results of the study clearly show the opportunity of a generation is in reach for the Philippines' energy leaders.

In the Philippines, renewables can be levelled up using flexible capacity to serve the current load, while comfortably meeting rising power demand and decarbonizing at the lowest cost," said David Kayanan, Wärtsilä's financial and market analyst.

In an online briefing yesterday, Kayanan said a clear net zero commitment will send a "strong signal to investors" to help the country attract the investments to achieve this transition to cleaner energy.

"On the flip side, without a net zero goal, the Philippines risks detaching itself from an increasingly climate-conscious global community and worsening its own exposure to climate change," Kayanan said. *-Jed Macapagal*



KATAS NG NARRA, MABISA KONTRA SA ILANG KARAMDAMAN

NAPAG-ALAMAN ng isang research team buhat sa De La Salle Univerity – College of Pharmacy na ang extract o katas na mula sa puno ng Narra o *Pterocarpus indicus* ay nagtataglay ng anti-oxidants na panlaban sa mga karamdamang katulad ng diabetes, hypertension, asthma, weakened immunity, ulcer, allergy at ibang uri ng cancer.

Gamit ang ORAC Score na mula sa Oxygen Radical Absorbance Capacity, isang measurement na para sa antioxidant capacity ng iba't ibang pagkain, ay nakagawa sila ng paghahambing.

Ang ORAC Score ay siya ring pinagbabasehan ng kaka-yahan ng katawan ng tao para labanan ang mga mapanganib na sangkap ng pagkain.

Lumabas sa kanilang pag-aaral na mataas ang ORAC Scores ng lahat ng metodolohiyang ginamit sa pananaliksik at nagtataglay ng "high levels of antioxidant potency".

Napag-alaman din ng isa sa mga kabahagi ng research team na base sa listahan ng Department of Agriculture ng United States, ang Narra extract ay may mataas na ORAC Score at may mataas na antioxidant properties.

Ang Narra ay ang pambansang puno ng bansa. Kabilang ito sa mga critically endangered tree species sa listahan ng Unversirt of the Philippines dahil sa illegal logging. Marami nito sa mga lalawigan ng Albay, Batanes, Bulacan, Cagayan, Camarines



Norte at Sur, Ilocos Norte at Sur, Isabela, Laguna, Pangasinan, Quezon, Rizal, Sorsogon, Zamboanga peninsula, at Davao city.



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Transparency in mining industry

Finance Secretary Benjamin Diokno took the mining industry by surprise last week with the announcement that after quitting in June, the Philippines was rejoining the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) as a demonstration of the Marcos Jr. administration's "commitment to transparency and good governance."

In his letter to EITI chair and former New Zealand prime minister Helen Clark, Diokno said the EITI, which prescribes a standard for transparency and accountability in the mining, oil, and gas industries, "will complement the administration's agenda on transparency and accountability" and help maximize the extractive sector's potentially significant contribution to the country's sustainable economic growth.

"We believe that EITI is an important tool for resource-rich countries like the Philippines to improve transparency and increase accountability in the management and governance of the extractive industries," said Diokno.

Headquartered in Oslo, the EITI advocates a global standard meant to ensure transparency of revenues—in the form of taxes, royalties, signature bonuses, and other payments—from natural resources, particularly petroleum and minerals.

Extracting companies in implementing countries are expected to publicly disclose the payments they make to the government as well as host-communities.

The Philippines started implementing the EITI in 2013 under the Aquino administration following the formation of the Philippine EITI, a multistakeholder group chaired by the Department of Finance (DOF) and composed of representatives from the government, industry, and civil society.

According to the DOF, the PH-EITI has produced seven country reports on the mining, oil, gas, and coal industries, and reconciled more than P362 billion in revenues from these activities from 2012 to 2019.

In 2017, the Philippines even became the first among some 50 countries to have fully complied with the 2016 EITI standards.

But in one of his last official acts as finance secretary of the Duterte administration, Carlos Dominguez III decided to withdraw the Philippines from the EITI, assailing the EITI assessment process as "subjective, biased, and unfair."

"The Philippines has no confidence in the ability of the EITI to undertake an impartial, transparent, and evidence-based validation process," Dominguez said in his June 20, 2022 letter to Clark.

Dominguez was particularly incensed by the finding that the Philippines had only "partly met" the standard on full engagement with civil society.

In coming up with its February 2022 implementation score, the EITI noted in its report "instances of intimidation of civil society activists and journalists" related to their stand on extractive operations or investments, as well as the "apparent use of the 2020 Anti-Terrorism Act to justify attempts at police intervention, judicial action, or intimidation which may have limited civil society freedoms."

Dominguez rejected the findings and said the country was "treated unfairly" by the EITI board, which used "irrelevant metrics" and relied on "unvalidated reports" in assessing the status of civil space in the extractives sector.

"We refuse to be taken hostage by unverified allegations from foreigners and people who have no mandate from the electorate," said Dominguez.

Diokno, who likewise served during the Duterte administration, has fortunately broken off from his predecessor's policy, fanning hopes of greater accountability in the extractives industry, with which civil society has traditionally been at odds due to concerns over regulatory capture, environmental destruction, and displacement of indigenous peoples from ancestral domains where most mining claims are located.

While the return to the EITI fold is not the magic bullet that will solve issues surrounding the extractives industry, it is undoubtedly a step in the right direction.

With the Philippines actively engaging the EITI in reviewing the standards to make them "more relevant" to implementing countries, there is added assurance that the activities and financial accountability of the mining industry can be scrutinized under the full glare of transparency, rather than kept hidden in the shadows.



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Balisacan: Neda revisits 'methodology' of estimating PHL poverty estimates

By CAI U. ORDINARIO
@caiordinario

THE National Government (NG) is now in the process of examining the methodology of estimating the country's poverty estimates, particularly the computation of poverty thresholds, according to the National Economic and Development Authority (Neda).

In a Senate budget hearing on Wednesday, Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Arsenio M. Balisacan explained the intricacies of estimating poverty, particularly the thresholds. He also assured senators that the government adjusts these estimates for inflation.

"The purpose here is not so much what is a threshold that can afford to achieve a decent life. It's not a methodology that we prescribe for example determining minimum wage or decent wage," Balisacan said.

"As we have shown, there are different kinds of thresholds, many food threshold, *merong* poverty threshold, just to see how sensitive the results are, especially the change over time," he added.

Based on the current estimates, the per person poverty threshold is P28,871, and he said that stories that pertained to an P18 per meal threshold in order to not be considered food poor, is correct based on the food threshold estimated at P8,379 per month.

However, this was based on the food menu identified by the Food and Nutrition Research Institute (FNRI). The FNRI based their computation on the Recommended Energy and Nutrient Intakes (RENI) of 2,000 kilocalories on average.

Based on this, the National Food Bundle, which is used to compute for the national food threshold, is composed of food consumed in four meals—breakfast, lunch, dinner and snacks—that meet the RENI.

A breakfast meal is composed of scrambled egg, coffee with milk, and boiled rice/corn mix while lunch is composed of boiled monggo with malunggay and dried dilis as well as boiled rice/corn mix and banana.

Dinner is composed of fried fish or boiled pork, a vegetable dish, and boiled rice/corn mix while snacks are composed of bread or boiled root crops.

Based on this menu, the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) said, they will check the average monthly price to compute the price of food items.

This is multiplied by 30.4 or the approximate number of days per



BALISACAN

month to compute the monthly per capita food threshold. This is multiplied by 12, which is the number of months in a year to get the annual per capita food threshold.

"We can quarrel on what exactly is the standard [but] we will not be able to agree on that standard *kasi magkakaiba*," Balisacan said.

Growth drivers

IN order to address poverty and hunger, the economic team highlighted the importance of growth drivers. Finance Secretary Benjamin E. Diokno said some of these sectors include agriculture, mining, manufacturing, construction, tourism, and even the creative industries.

Balisacan said currently, the main economic driver of the Philippines is the Services sector, which accounts for around 60 percent of the economy followed by Industry, which accounts for over 20 percent, and the rest is accounted for by the agriculture sector.

However, he said, there is a lot of room to grow in the Industry sector which includes Manufacturing, Mining, and Construction. Balisacan said there was "so much potential," particularly in mining.

Citing data from the environment department, Balisacan said the country has only mined six percent of its mining potential. This leaves a significant room for growth, especially if the country can promote sustainable mining practices.

Balisacan said Melbourne, Australia, one of the best cities to live in the world, was once a mining town. He said this city could become a model in terms of how prosperous cities can emerge from mining towns.

The Neda chief also said the country also has a real potential in the manufacturing sector, if it will be able to reduce the cost of energy and make telecommunications more affordable and reliable for all.

Balisacan said the amendments in the Public Service Act could make this possible. He added that the country's growth in the manufacturing sector could also be driven by the country's competencies in the IT-BPO sector.



FIRM ASKED TO SETTLE P397M

TAMPAKAN MINE OPERATOR RAPS LGU OVER TAX DEMAND

By **Bong S. Sarmiento**
@InqNational

KORONADAL CITY—Sagittarius Mines Inc. (SMI), operator of the \$5.9-billion Tampakan project in South Cotabato province, has filed a petition for review and temporary restraining order against its host local government unit (LGU) for demanding tax dues worth P397 million from the company.

Tampakan Mayor Leonard Escobillo confirmed on Wednesday that his office last week received a copy of the civil case filed by SMI against the local government.

Escobillo earlier ordered the municipal treasurer to re-evaluate the taxes paid by all business establishments operating in the town over the past few years.

Deficiencies

The assessment made by the local treasurer found SMI to have deficiencies for business tax covering the years 2020 to 2022 and mayor's permit fees and other regulatory fees from 2013 to 2022.

"We have sent them three notices to settle their tax obligations but to no avail. I am just implementing our local (tax) ordinance which has been in effect since 2012," the

mayor told the Inquirer in a telephone interview.

He said the local government was willing to discuss a settlement but the company decided instead to bring the case to court.

SMI on Wednesday had yet to issue a media statement on the petition it filed against the local government.

The Tampakan project has been touted the largest undeveloped copper-gold minefield in Southeast Asia and among the largest of its kind in the world.

Based on a company study, the project has the potential to yield an average of 375,000 tons of copper and 360,000 ounces of gold in concentrate per year in the 17-year life of the mine.

The national government earlier granted SMI a 25-year Financial and Technical Assistance Agreement (FTAA), which expired on March 21, 2020, upon which SMI sought a 12-year extension until March 21, 2031, which can still be renewed for another 25 years.

The company's request for an extension has been granted. Its FTAA covers about 10,000 hectare straddling the towns of Tampakan in South Cotabato, Kiblawan in Davao del Sur, and Columbio in Sultan Kudarat.

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Canada envoy, environment champions gather to protect Masungi Georeserve

THE Embassy of Canada in the Philippines and the Masungi Georeserve Foundation recently cohosted an environment champions' meeting to discuss ways to jointly address the conservation of the threatened Masungi landscape, restoration of the surrounding watershed, and protection of environmental defenders.

"It is essential to defend our environmental defenders as part of our conviction to protect the environment," Ambassador Peter MacArthur said. "I've been deeply touched by the stories of these individuals—including the rangers of Masungi Georeserve, who put their own safety at risk for the sake of protecting the forests and watershed areas on which we all depend."

Last month at the 2022 International Ranger Awards, the International Union for Conservation of Nature-World Commission on Protected Areas recognized Masungi rangers from the Bayog Ranger Station for their remarkable resilience in the face of dangers while fulfilling their duties.

MacArthur also highlighted Canada's efforts in supporting innovative climate finance tools and helping with green technology. "[We have recently announced a contribution of \$3 million, or about P123.9 million, to support the Philippines's efforts in strengthening its climate-finance mechanisms, while helping] improve the resiliency and environmental security of Filipinos."

Among environment champions

who participated in the luncheon meeting at the georeserve in Baras, Rizal were Climate Change Commission Secretary Robert E.A. Borje, Environment and Natural Resources Undersecretary Juan Miguel Cuna, as well as Interior and Local Government Undersecretary Margarita Gutierrez.

Heads of environmental organizations Forest Foundation Phils. (FFP) and Wild Bird Club of the Philippines, as well as the leaders of the *Kaksaan Ne Dumaget De Antipolo Inc.*, Rizal Province's Youth Development Council, the Knights of Rizal, and the *Buhay-Ilang* Research Group, also attended the event.

"It is really important for us to be self-affirming...[We know that,] while we have challenges...

to face, there are success stories that we need to share," Borje said. He reiterated that it was encouraging to see efforts to battle climate change happening at the local level, especially since those have been effective.

Cuna, in a relayed message from Secretary Ma. Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, emphasized the need to focus on policy reforms for sustainable conservation. He also shared the enthusiasm and commitment of the DENR, the National Museum of the Philippines, and the FFP to use science in reevaluating the protected areas' suitability while enforcing plans relative to ecosystem functions and services.



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PH lost \$10B due to climate change – Diokno

FINANCE Secretary Benjamin Diokno on Wednesday said the Philippines has incurred losses of \$10 billion over the past decade due to climate-related hazards.

In a statement released by the Department of Finance, Diokno underscored the critical role of sustainable finance in driving the country's shift to climate change adaptation and mitigation practices.

"Climate change is the greatest threat facing humanity today," he said. "With its devastating social and economic impacts, it requires urgent action from all levels of society."

Climate change, he added, is a "daily reality" in the Philippines.

"We are, therefore, determined to be a world leader in this fight against the crisis," the Finance chief said.

Diokno said that the Marcos administration will continue to put climate action at the front and center of the country's pursuit of a robust, sustainable, and twenty-first-century economy.

He added that the administration's legislative priorities will promote environmental sustainability to address climate change.

"We will not sit idly by as the planet burns — and with it, our people and the gains we have

fought tooth-and-nail for," the official said.

"We intend to take all the necessary steps now and act decisively for the good of our people, our economy, and our planet."

The government formed the Green Force co-led by the Department of Finance and the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) to synergize public and private investments in greening the business landscape and mainstreaming climate change through the financial sector.

Earlier this year, the government launched the Philippine Sustainable Finance Roadmap, which lays out the country's ac-

tion plan to mobilize financing for climate action initiatives, facilitate investments in climate-resilient public infrastructure, and develop projects that promote sustainable development.

The country also issued its first sustainability global bonds worth \$1 billion and sustainability samurai bonds worth \$600 million.

The Asian Development Bank has also extended to the Philippines its first climate change policy-based financing worth \$250 million, making the country one of the pioneers in climate policy development financing.

TIZIANA CELINE PIATOS



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THE EXPONENT OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS
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World in 'wrong direction' as climate impacts worsen – UN

PARIS, France (AFP) – Humanity is “going in the wrong direction” on climate change due to its addiction to fossil fuels, the UN said Tuesday in an assessment showing that planet-warming emissions are higher than before the pandemic.

The UN’s World Meteorological Organization and its Environment Programme warned catastrophes will become commonplace should the world economy fail to decarbonize in line with what science says is needed to prevent the worst impacts of global heating.

They pointed to Pakistan’s monumental floods and China’s crop-withering heatwave this year as examples of what to expect.

“Floods, droughts, heatwaves, extreme storms and wildfires are going from bad to worse, breaking records with alarming frequency,” said UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres.

The UN warned last month that the drought gripping the Horn of Africa and threatening millions with acute food shortages was now likely to extend into a fifth year.

“There is nothing natural about the new scale of these disasters. They are the price of humanity’s fossil fuel addiction,” said Guterres.

The UN’s United in Science report underscores how, nearly three years since Covid-19 handed

governments a unique opportunity to reassess how to power their economies, countries are ploughing ahead with pollution as normal.

It found that after an unprecedented 5.4 percent fall in emissions in 2020 due to lockdowns and travel restrictions, preliminary data from January-May this year shows global CO2 emissions are 1.2 percent higher than before Covid-19.

This is largely down to large year-on-year increases in the United States, India, and most European countries, the assessment found.

“The science is unequivocal: we are going in the wrong direction,” said WMO Secretary-General Petteri Taalas.



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"The science is unequivocal: we are going in the wrong direction," said WMO Secretary-General Peteri Taalas.

"Greenhouse gas concentrations are continuing to rise, reaching new record highs. Fossil fuel emission rates are now above pre-pandemic levels. The past seven years were the warmest on record."

'Uncharted territory'

Last week the European Union's Copernicus climate monitor said that summer 2022 was the hottest in Europe and one of the hottest globally since records began in the 1970s.

Tuesday's report said there was a 93 percent chance that the record for the hottest year globally — currently, 2016 — will be broken within five years.

It warned the continued use of fossil fuels meant the chance of the annual mean global temperature temporarily exceeding 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels in one of the next five years was roughly even (48 percent).

Keeping longer term temperatures below 1.5 C is the most ambitious goal of the 2015 Paris Agreement.

Despite more than three de-

acades of UN-lead negotiations, rich polluters show little sign of being willing to make the kind of swinging emissions cuts that would keep the 1.5 C goal in play.

The UN's Environment Program (UNEP), in an update to its annual "emissions gap" assessment following new pledges made at last November's COP26 summit in Glasgow, said Tuesday that even these promises were far from adequate.

In fact, it said the ambition even in countries' most recent pledges would need to be four times greater to limit warming to 2 C, and seven times higher to make 1.5 C.

All told, current worldwide climate policies put Earth on course to warm 2.8 C by 2100, UNEP said.

Guterres said that Tuesday's assessment showed "climate impacts heading into uncharted territory of destruction." "Yet each year we double-down on this fossil fuel addiction, even as the symptoms get rapidly worse," he said in a video message.

AFP



UN report sums up climate science: World heading in wrong direction

GENEVA—With weather disasters costing \$200 million a day and irreversible climate catastrophe looming, the world is “heading in the wrong direction,” the United Nations says in a new report that pulls together the latest science on climate change.



FLOATING boat docks sit on dry ground as water levels have dropped near the Callville Bay Resort & Marina in the Lake Mead National Recreation Area on August 30, 2022, near Boulder City, Nevada. The United Nations says weather disasters costing \$200 million a day and irreversible climate catastrophe looming show the world is “heading in the wrong direction.”
AP/JOHN LOCHER

The World Meteorological Organization, in the latest stark warning about global warming, said weather-related disasters have increased fivefold over the last 50 years and are killing 115 per day on average—and the fall-out is poised to worsen.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres cited the floods in Pakistan, heat waves in Europe, droughts in places such as China, the Horn of Africa, and the United States—and pointed the finger at fossil fuels.

“There is nothing natural about the new scale of these disasters. They are the price of humanity’s fossil fuel addiction,” he said. “This

year’s United in Science report shows climate impacts heading into uncharted territories of destruction.”

“Yet each year we double-down on this fossil fuel addiction, even as the symptoms get rapidly worse,” he added.

The report, drawn from data compiled by several UN agencies and partners, cited a 48 percent chance that global temperature rise compared to pre-industrial times will reach 1.5 degree Celsius (2.7 Fahrenheit) in the next five years. There’s a 93 percent chance that one year in the next five will see record heat.

It comes amid fresh warnings

from scientists last week that four climate “tipping points” will likely be triggered if that temperature threshold—set in the 2015 Paris climate accord—is passed.

Many governments are already trying to address the threat of more severe weather due to climate change, and data show that deaths from natural disasters are down in recent years. Yet the economic cost of climate-induced catastrophes is

projected to rise sharply.

The UN report says such “losses and damages” can be limited by timely action to prevent further warming and adapt to the temperature increases that are now inevitable. Questions around compensation for the damage that poor nations suffer as a result of emissions produced by rich countries will play a major role at the upcoming UN climate talks in Egypt this fall. AP

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The critical role of sustainable finance in climate action

FINANCE Sec. Benjamin Diokno stressed the critical role of sustainable finance in driving the country's shift to climate change adaptation and mitigation practices.

"Climate change is the greatest threat facing humanity today. With its devastating social and economic impacts, it requires urgent action from all levels of society," Diokno said at a virtual sustainability forum organized by Eco-Business – a sustainability media and business intelligence company.

He cited how the country has incurred losses and damages amounting to \$10 billion over the past decade due to climate-related hazards despite contributing only 0.3 percent of the world's greenhouse gas emissions.

"Clearly, climate change is a daily reality in the Philippines. We are therefore determined to be a world leader in this fight against the crisis," he said.

The government formed the Green Force that is co-led by the Department of Finance and the Bangko Sentral to synergize public and private investments in greening the business landscape and mainstreaming climate change through the financial sector.

Earlier this year, the government launched the Philippine Sustainable Finance Roadmap, which strategically lays out the country's action plan to

mobilize financing for climate action initiatives, facilitate investments in climate-resilient public infrastructure, and develop projects that promote sustainable development in the country.

The country also recently issued its first-ever sustainability global bonds worth \$1 billion, and sustainability samurai bonds worth \$600 million.

The Asian Development Bank has also extended to the Philippines its first-ever climate change policy-based financing worth \$250 million, making the country one of the pioneers in climate policy development financing.

The DoF chief also cited the government's collaboration with the ADB and private sector partners in developing the Energy Transition Mechanism project, which is the largest emission mitigation program in the world.

"The Energy Transition Mechanism project will help us accelerate the retirement of coal and quicken our transition to clean energy. This comes after the government imposed a moratorium on new coal plants in October 2020," he explained.

In April 2021, the government committed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 75 percent by 2030 as its first-ever nationally determined contribution or NDC.

In the same year, the government

signed a Memorandum of Understanding on the ASEAN Low Carbon Energy Programme.

"This Programme will be instrumental in our bid to promote inclusive economic growth and reduce poverty incidence in the country through increased green finance flows for low carbon energy and increased energy efficiency," Diokno said.

He said that the Marcos administration would continue to put climate action at the front and center of the country's pursuit of a robust, sustainable, and twenty-first century economy.

He added that the administration's legislative priorities would promote environmental sustainability to address climate change.

The DoF is proposing the imposition of excise tax on single-use plastics. There is also an ongoing study on the imposition of a carbon tax in the country.

The Finance chief said that businesses must boldly take the lead in embracing sustainability and mainstreaming climate action in society.

"We will not sit idly by as the planet burns – and with it, our people and the gains we have fought tooth-and-nail for. We intend to take all the necessary steps now and act decisively for the good of our people, our economy, and our planet," he said.



CARP seen unsustainable without support services

AGRARIAN REFORM beneficiaries (ARBs) need support services to sustain them and keep them productive after they have been awarded land, a senior legislator said.

"The Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) without adequate support services and with limited capital or entrepreneurship among farmer-beneficiaries, is shown to have reduced agricultural productivity in CARP lands by as much as 34.1%," Albay Rep. Jose Ma. Clemente S. Salceda said at a hearing of the committee on agrarian reform on Wednesday.

Mr. Salceda said the agriculture industry foregoes about P418 billion a year in gross value added due to the absence of support, access to capital, and capacity among ARBs under CARP.

On Tuesday, President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. signed an executive order imposing a one-year moratorium on payments of amortization and interest on loans to ARBs.

Mr. Salceda said condonation of ARB debt could result in an increase in productivity of between 23.8% and 38.3%, as land is allocated more efficiently and more interventions to boost production become available.

He proposed the distribution of 52,000 hectares of public agricultural land that Mr. Marcos earlier promised to grant to landless farmers during his State of the Nation Address.

Mr. Salceda also called for the revival of the Samahang Nayon and Kilusang Bayan programs as authorized by Presidential Decree No. 175. — **Luisa Maria Jacinta C. Jocsos**