

22 September 2022, Thursday



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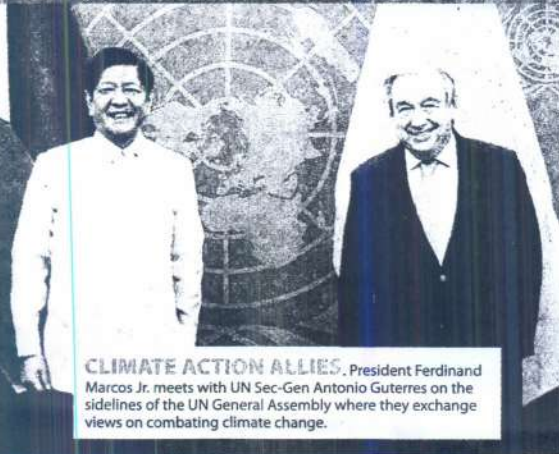
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PBBM SEEKS UNITED FRONT TO ADDRESS CLIMATE CHANGE, FOOD SECURITY



CLIMATE ACTION ALLIES. President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. meets with UN Sec-Gen Antonio Guterres on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly where they exchange views on combating climate change.

By Vito Barcelo, Vince Lopez and Othel V. Campos

PRESIDENT Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Wednesday (Manila time) called for a united effort among nations to address climate change. In a speech at the 77th session of the

United Nations (UN) General Assembly, Marcos said climate change is "the greatest threat affecting our nations and our peoples."

"There is no other problem so global in nature that it requires a united effort, one led by the United Nations," he said in a speech that

lasted over 20 minutes.

At the same time, Marcos—whom he met with UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres on the sidelines of the session—underscored the need for nations to invest in food security, noting that the coronavirus pandemic and

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Russia-Ukraine conflict have resulted in difficulties in accessing food worldwide.

Climate Change

Despite being one of the smallest contributors to CO2 emissions, the Philippines remains among the most vulnerable to the effects of climate change, Marcos said.

"The effects of climate change are uneven and reflect an historical injustice: Those who are least responsible suffer the most. The Philippines, for example, is a net carbon sink, we absorb more carbon dioxide than we emit. And yet, we are the 4th most vulnerable country to the effects of climate change," he said.

Marcos emphasized the need for nations to correct injustices by accepting their share of responsibilities.

He also enjoined industrialized countries to fulfill their obligations under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement to "cut their greenhouse gas emissions, provide climate financing and technology transfer for adaptation for the most vulnerable, and developing countries to lead by example."

"We look forward to concrete outcomes at the Conference of Parties in Egypt later this year," he said.

In June, Marcos said he was seriously considering his invitation to attend the UN Climate Change Conference's 27th session of the Conference of the Parties in Egypt in November this year.

Marcos also vowed that the Philippine government would continue to do its part to avert what he described as a "collective disaster."

"When future generations look back, let them not ask why we did not take this opportunity to turn the tide, why did we continue in our profligate ways, until it was too late? This threat knows no borders, no social class, nor any geopolitical consideration. How we address it will be the true test of our time," he said.

In March 2017, the Philippines ratified the Paris climate pact -- a worldwide effort to achieve a below 2-degrees Celsius increase in global temperatures.

The Philippines, which accounts for less than 1 percent of the world's emissions, has committed to reducing its emissions by 70 percent by 2030.

In his first State of the Nation Address on July 25, Marcos also vowed to increase the Philippines' use of renewable energy sources such as hydropower, geothermal, solar, and wind to help slow down the effects of climate change.

Food Security

In his speech, Marcos also emphasized the importance of food as "the very basis of human security."

"We need to take concrete steps towards modern and resilient agriculture. For food is not just a trade commodity nor is it just a livelihood. It is an existential imperative, and a moral one. It is the very basis of human security," he said.

Marcos, who concurrently heads the Department of Agriculture, discussed the Philippines' efforts to address problems in the agriculture sector such as providing innovative solutions and financial support to farmers and fishers to adopt new technologies and connect to national and global value supply chains.

He also expressed a desire to forge cooperation with the UN and other partners to boost agricultural productivity and food security.

"As host to 17 UN agencies, programs and funds, the Philippines strongly supports reforms to ensure that the UN Development System delivers as one through its UN Country Team," he said.

World powers met Tuesday at the United Nations on how to address rising food insecurity, with dire warnings of a devastating harvest next year due to the war in Ukraine.

The United States joined the European Union, African Union and Spain for a meeting at the ministerial level on food prices, seen as a key factor in conflicts and instability.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken noted the effects of rising prices in some of the world's most vulnerable places, including Yemen, which has been devastated by eight years of war from which it is seeing a respite.

"As we've seen over the last years as a result of Covid, before that climate change and, more recently, conflict -- notably Russia's aggression against Ukraine -- profound food insecurity touches well over 200 million people on this planet, including, of course, in Yemen," Blinken said. *(See full story online at manilastandard.net)*



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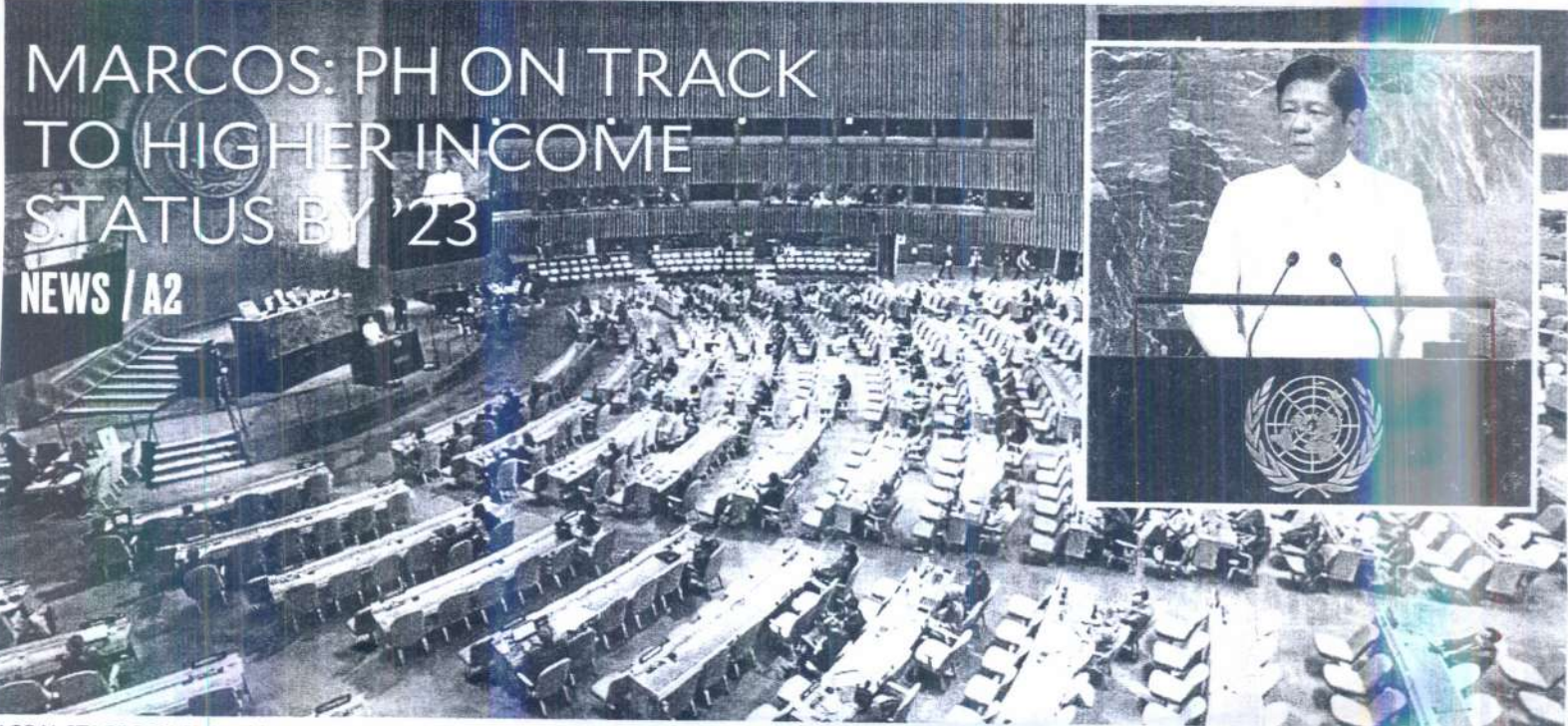
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MARCOS: PH ON TRACK TO HIGHER INCOME STATUS BY '23

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GLOBAL STAGE DEBUT President Marcos reports on the country's economic goals while calling for stronger international cooperation on the issues of climate change, agriculture and food security in a 20-minute speech delivered Sept. 20 at the United Nations General Assembly at the UN Headquarters in New York. —MALACANANG PHOTO



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Marcos tells UN: PH on track to higher income status by '23

By **Dona Z. Pazzibugan**
@dpazzibuganINQ

NEW YORK CITY—Despite the COVID-19 pandemic and the global crisis caused by soaring energy and food prices, President Marcos on Tuesday (Wednesday in Manila) told the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) that the Philippines was on track to a higher income status by 2023.

Addressing the biggest annual gathering of world leaders—the first in-person assembly in three years since the pandemic—the Philippine leader, in his 20-minute speech, also called for stronger cooperation on climate change, agriculture and food security.

“Despite the challenges of the pandemic and the global economic upheavals, we remain on track to reach upper middle-income status by next year,” he said.

The World Bank (WB) classifies the world’s economies into four income groups—low, lower-middle, upper-middle and high income. The classifications are updated each year on July 1 and are based on the gross national income (GNI) per capita of the previous year. GNI is the total amount of money earned by a country’s people and industries. Dividing GNI among the population results in the GNI per capita.

The WB’s new thresholds for GNI per capita for 2022-2023 are: \$1,085 or less for low income; \$1,086 to \$4,255 for lower-middle income; \$4,256 to \$13,205 for upper-middle income, and \$13,205 and higher for high income countries.

The Philippines is currently considered a lower-middle income country, together with Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) neighbors Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam. Asean members in the upper-middle income category are Malaysia and Thailand, while Brunei and Singapore are in the high income bracket.

The Philippines had a GNI per capita of \$3,640 for 2021, which was up by 6.12 percent from \$3,430 in 2020.

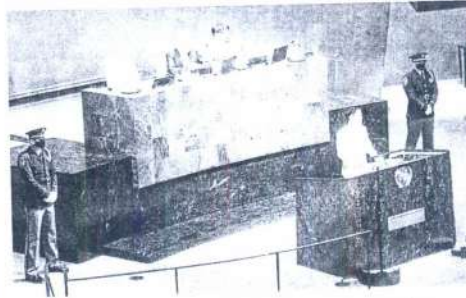
“With steady investment in food security, public health, education and other social services, we expect to become a moderately prosperous country by 2040. I am confident that we will achieve this vision,” Mr. Marcos added.

Climate change

In his speech, Mr. Marcos joined calls for immediate action by industrialized nations to cut greenhouse gas emissions, describing climate change as the “greatest threat affecting our nations and peoples.”

“There is no other prob-

lem so global in nature that it requires a united effort, one



CHEERING SQUAD As President Marcos speaks at the United Nations General Assembly, on hand to cheer him on are (front row, from left) his son Ilocos Norte Rep. Sandro Marcos, his cousin Speaker Martin Romualdez, first lady Liza Araneta-Marcos, (back row) Philippine Permanent Representative to the UN Antonio Manuel Lagdameo, Foreign Secretary Enrique Manalo and Philippine Ambassador to Washington Jose Manuel Romualdez. —MALACANANG PHOTOS



led by the United Nations. The effects of climate change are uneven and reflect a historical injustice,” he said.

“The Philippines, for example, is a net carbon sink. We absorb more carbon dioxide than we emit. And yet, we are the fourth most vulnerable country to climate change,” he said.

Mr. Marcos also raised the need to invest in food security to ease a growing global food security crisis.

“We need to take concrete steps towards a modern and resilient agriculture,” he said.

He likewise noted that stability in Asia was “under threat by increasing strategic and ideological tensions,” referring to the US-China tension over Taiwan.

“Reinforcing the predictability and stability of international law, particularly the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, we provided an example of how states should resolve their differences: through reason and through right,” he said, his only reference to Philippines’ historic win before an UN arbitral ruling in 2016 in the territorial dispute with China over the West Philippine Sea.

He stressed, however, that “the Philippines shall continue to be a friend to all, and an enemy of none,” first framed by the previous Duterte administration.

Protests

He spoke at the UN plenary hall, where seats have been assigned per country delegation.

The plenary hall was mostly empty, which was not unusual

since the leaders have meetings on the sidelines.

After his speech, he met with UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres and discussed “areas of [UN] cooperation and support [and] exchanged views on the international situation as well as climate action initiatives,” according to the read-out issued by the UN.

More than 100 protesters against Mr. Marcos and the martial law regime of his father and namesake joined the various antigovernment demonstrations outside the UN headquarters.

A small contingent of about two dozen pro-Marcos supporters also held their own alongside the anti-Marcos protesters.

In Manila, an environmental group stressed on Wednesday that the President should come up with a “clear plan” for climate action and climate justice.

Lea Guerrero, Greenpeace Philippines’ country director, underscored how the President’s UNGA remarks ran contrary to his administration’s domestic policies, such as pursuing fossil gas expansion and inclusion of nuclear energy into the country’s energy mix.

“At present, we hear all this talk about climate justice, climate action, protecting biodiversity, ensuring food security, and upholding justice and human rights, but, in reality, most developments on the ground and the administration’s policy direction are leading us away from these purported aspirations,” Guerrero said in a statement sent

to the Inquirer. —WITH A REPORT FROM DEMPSEY REYES INQ



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EDITORIAL

PBBM takes to the world stage

IN HIS first three months in office, President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. has had to tackle mainly domestic issues and concerns.

But on September 20, he had the unique opportunity to bring his key advocacies to the premier world stage: no less than the 77th Session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York City.

In his speech at the UN high-level debate, Mr. Marcos emphasized that disputes should only be resolved through peaceful means, citing the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea: "By reinforcing the predictability and stability of international law, particularly the 1982 UNCLOS, we provided an example of how states should resolve their differences: through reason and through right," he said. This is the correct policy particularly in relation to our territorial and maritime disputes with China on the South China Sea.

The President also called on all nations to take part in the common effort to fight the effects of climate change.

He described climate change as the "greatest threat" affecting all countries and people: "Those who are least responsible suffer the most. This in-

justice must be corrected, and those who need to do more must act now."

"This threat knows no borders, no social class, nor any geopolitical consideration. How we address it will be the true test of our time," adding that fighting climate change would require a "united effort," and that industrialized countries should do their part in mitigating the environmental crisis.

“Echoing his call for unity in the country, Mr. Marcos rallied world leaders to unite and shape the world’s transformation”

Mr. Marcos likewise cited the need for investments in food security for a "future that is resilient and inclusive" where people can be "healthy, happy, and secure."

He said nations must take concrete steps towards a modern and resilient agriculture as "food is not just a trade commodity nor a livelihood — it is an existential imperative and a moral one" and the "very basis of human security."

As concurrent Agriculture Secretary, he is in a good position to give agriculture the importance it deserves in the country's economic development.

The President also asked for the

support of the United Nations for the Philippines' candidature to the Security Council for the term 2027-2028, saying the Philippine experience in building peace and forging new paths of cooperation can "enrich the work of the Security Council." The Security Council's primary responsibility is to maintain international peace and security.

Echoing his call for unity in the country, Mr. Marcos rallied world leaders to unite and shape the world's transformation.

"The future beckons and we can embark upon that journey as single nations or as a world in harmony. I say, let the challenges of one people be the challenges for all nations. And in that way the success of one will be a success for us all," he pointed out.

"The peoples of the world look to their leaders, to us, to make into reality these aspirations for our future. We must not fail them. And if we stand together, we will not fail them. If we stand together, we can only succeed."

It's not often that the Philippine President has the chance to address other world leaders and ask for unity and cooperation in solving common concerns.

But barely three months in office, Mr. Marcos has demonstrated a clear grasp of the challenges that all nations face today, and, more important, offered suggestions on how we can all move forward in the years to come.



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AT UNGA, PBBM FLAGS CLIMATE, GEOPOLITICS

BY SAMUEL P. MEDENILLA
@sam_medenilla

IN his first ever engagement with the United Nations, President Ferdinand "Bongbong" R. Marcos Jr. called for harnessing new technology and international cooperation to stop climate change and other global threats.

Speaking in person during the High-Level Debate of the 77th UN General Assembly last Tuesday (New York time), Marcos said climate change is now the "greatest threat" for the international community.

Scientific experts have attributed climate change to extreme

weather such as long droughts and super typhoons, which are now devastating many parts of the world.

"There is no other problem so global in nature that it requires a united effort, one led by the United Nations," Marcos said.

He noted international solidarity will be crucial for holistic water conservation and biodiversity protection amid the challenges posed by climate change.

President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. introduced himself as "Ferdinand Marcos" in his first speech before the UN, omit-

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ting the extension of his name "Junior."

"Mister President, Excellencies. I am Ferdinand Marcos, and I am the President of the Republic of the Philippines," Marcos Jr. opened his speech during the General Debate of the 77th Session of the UN General Assembly, Wednesday, 3am (Philippine time).

The presiding officer of the UNGA intro-

duced him as "Ferdinand Romualdez Marcos, President of the Republic of the Philippines."

Most leaders who spoke at the same session did not mention their names during their speech after being introduced by the UNGA President. In the past two speeches of President Duterte in the UNGA delivered virtually, Duterte also did not state his name in the introduction.

DFA spokesperson Ma. Teresita Daza told BUSINESSMIRROR that the DFA drafted the speech of the President but the final draft was approved by Malacañang.

"As for the part about his introduction, you

have to ask Malacañang," she said.

Lead by example

IN his statement at UNGA, Marcos said industrialized nations "should lead by example" by immediately cutting down their greenhouse gas emissions as stipulated in their obligations under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement.

The nations, he said, should also extend climate financing and technology transfer for adaptation for the most vulnerable and developing countries, including Philippines.

"The Philippines, for example, is a net carbon sink, we absorb more carbon dioxide than we emit. And yet, we are the 4th most vulnerable country to the effects of climate change," Marcos said. He said he hopes the UN Climate Change Conference in Egypt in November will yield "concrete steps" to stop the said "collective disaster."

"We must seek solutions that preserve our planet. These solutions must transcend our time and win the future for the succeeding generations," Marcos said.



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PBBM calls for end to Asian hate, racism

BY JOCELYN MONTEMAYOR

PRESIDENT Marcos Jr. (PBBM) called for an end to racism and Asian hate as he pressed for fairness and equality not only of states but of all people.

"We still dream of an end to the disturbing incidents of racism, of Asian hate, of all prejudice," he said at the 77th session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York on Tuesday (Wednesday in Manila).

Marcos said acceptable international systems should be fair and should work even for the "most vulnerable, especially the marginalized, migrants and refugees."

He said the world is witness to the contributions of migrant workers, including in the fight against the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, despite

a rise in incidents of hate crimes against Filipinos and other Asians since the pandemic started.

The incidents include unprovoked attacks in subways or streets where the victims are either punched, or stabbed. One of the latest cases involved a 74-year-old Filipino who was assaulted by another woman, unprovoked, while walking along Madison Avenue near 52nd Street in New York City. The Philippine consulate has monitored 43 race-based harassment cases and attacks involving Filipinos this year.

Marcos said the Philippines-United Nations Joint Program on Human Rights is an example of a "constructive approach that puts our people, not our politics, at the center of this work."

"It provides a model for revival-

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PBBM

izing the structures that facilitate solidarity between the United Nations and a sovereign duty-bearer," he added.

The joint program also seeks to affirm the country's commitment to human rights, the importance of free democratic space for civil society, as well as the principle of international cooperation.

FOOD SECURITY

The President said a lot has happened since the UN was founded in 1945 by 51 countries including the Philippines.

"The world is ready for transformation. It is up to us as leaders

protect water resources and address climate change.

"Water connects our world and sustains our existence, but it is also a finite resource that requires our stewardship. Equally important, our biodiversity must be protected amidst the continuing challenge of climate change. We must enhance our cooperation in these areas," he said.

The President also called on more developed nations to do their part in addressing climate change and to consider the interest of all developing nations, including middle-income countries where the majority of the world's poor lives, in all actions or decision that they make.

He urged them to fulfill their

of our nations to move and shape that transformation... I say, let the challenges of one people be the challenges for all nations. And in that way, the success of one will be a success for us all," he said as he emphasized that member-states should help each other in addressing pressing issues worldwide such as climate change and food security.

Marcos said food is not just a trade commodity but it is even the "very basis of human security."

He said the recent pandemic and Russia-Ukraine conflict resulted in difficulties in accessing food worldwide.

"We need to take concrete steps towards modern and resilient agriculture. For food is not just a trade commodity nor is it just a liveli-

obligations under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement to cut their greenhouse gas emissions, provide climate financing and technology transfer for adaptation for the most vulnerable, and developing countries to lead by example.

Marcos said climate change is the "greatest threat" affecting the nations and it "requires a united effort, one led by the United Nations" to address it.

"The effects of climate change are uneven and reflect a historical injustice. Those who are least responsible suffer the most," he said.

He lamented that the Philippines' is in such a vulnerable situation as it has become a "net

hood. It is an existential imperative, and a moral one. It is the very basis of human security," he said.

The President, who is concurrent Agriculture secretary, said the Philippines' efforts to address food concerns include providing innovative solutions and financial support to farmers and fisherfolk to adopt new technologies and to connect to national and global value supply chains.

Marcos also said he hopes to forge cooperation with the UN and other partners to boost agricultural productivity and food security in the Philippines.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Marcos emphasized the need to

carbon sink" that absorbs all carbon dioxide that are being emitted.

He said the Philippines now has even become the fourth most vulnerable country to climate change.

"We accept our share of responsibility and will continue to do our part to avert this collective disaster. This threat knows no borders, no social class, nor any geopolitical consideration. How we address it will be the true test of our time," he added as he again emphasized the importance of unity -- which was the core of his presidential campaign -- but this time among nations.

The President, who is on his third foreign visit since becoming president on June 30, will be in the US until Friday.



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LETTER FROM AUSTRALIA

HK YU, PSM



Right climate for a strategic partnership

Dear friends,
Two days ago, President Marcos delivered a powerful speech at the 77th United Nations General Assembly High Level Week in New York: He spoke of increased strategic tensions and set out the Philippines' ongoing commitment to an open, inclusive and rules-based international order governed by international law. He spoke about the importance of tackling climate change and the role of emerging technologies on our lives. He stressed the importance of reinvigorating the world economy in the wake of the pandemic, and continuing investment in Philippine food security, public health, education and other social services. Australia has similar priorities and is working closely with the Philippines to promote our common objectives.

Australia's cooperation with the Philippines is broad and deep. It spans defence and security, development cooperation, trade and investment and people-to-people links. There are countless opportunities for us to work together towards our common objectives and, for this reason, I intend to develop our cooperation even further. To this end, I will be working to elevate our relationship from an already strong base to an even stronger Strategic Partnership.

Our defence relationship is underpinned by cooperation on counterterrorism and maritime security. Australian and Filipino defence personnel have regular senior level dialogues and expert exchanges and cooperate on diverse training and education opportunities. Two Royal Australian Navy ships will visit Manila in October as part of Australia's annual Indo-Pacific Endeavor. As part of this visit, Australian and Philippine defence personnel will conduct joint exercises and exchanges on maritime security, maritime law, humanitarian and disaster response and gender, peace and security.

Our maritime cooperation has expanded to include a senior officials maritime dialogue, where we advance joint maritime security and marine environment projects. I was at the Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore in 2017 with former Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull, where in the wake of the 2016 South China Sea arbitral award he articulated Australia's support for the international rules-based order and expressed concern about tensions in the South China Sea.

Our support for the peaceful resolution of disputes and international law is unwavering. Indeed, it remains central to the Australian Labor Government's vision for a stable and prosperous Indo-Pacific where sovereignty is respected.

Cyber security is an increasingly concerning problem for both our nations. This week, Australia's Ambassador for Cyber Affairs and Critical Technology, Dr. Tobias Feakin, is in Manila engaging with Philippine government officials and business leaders on how we can work together more effectively to take advantage of opportunities and address common challenges of cyber resilience and security.

Australia partners with the Philippines to counter violent extremism and support the peace process in conflict-affected Mindanao. We share a vision of a peaceful and prosperous Philippines. Next week, Australia's Ambassador for Counter-Terrorism, Mr. Roger Noble, will visit the Philippines to meet with senior officials in the Marcos administration to discuss ways in which we can work together in this mutually important area.

Australia's development program in the Philippines is one of our largest, totalling approximately P3 billion (AUD80 million) annually. Our support aims to improve economic governance, public infrastructure, health systems and COVID-19 responses. In fact, just last week, the Australian Government provided 2.28 million doses of paediatric Pfizer vaccines to the Philippines.

Our investments in education and skills development promote economic growth, and our work on the enabling environment for business and trade is focused on women's economic empowerment. We support disaster preparedness and response systems and foster social cohesion by strengthening governance and social protection.

Our trade and investment relationship is significant and growing. In 2021, the two-way goods trade between our countries was P183 billion, up by 40 percent on 2019 levels. There are over 300 Australian companies in the Philippines, and significant Philippine investments in Australia, including the AC Energy Corporate Solar Farm Project in New South Wales and International Container Terminal Services Incorporated's Victoria International Container Terminal in Melbourne.

Australia has contributed to infrastructure projects in the Philippines, including the interior design of the Clark Airport terminal and tunnelling for the New Clark City. At the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, Philippine-Australian company PrimeBMD built nine health facilities and received a Gold Stevie Award at the Asia-Pacific Stevie Awards for Most Valuable Corporate Response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Our friendship is based on shared interests, values and strong people-to-people links. Filipinos are the fifth largest migrant community with over 400,000 residing in Australia. Training and education exchanges are expansive; Australia provides scholarships to Filipinos to study masters courses in priority areas including economic development, education and maritime. In 2021, around 13,000 Filipino students were studying in Australia.

On climate change, Australia recently increased its commitment, via legislation, to reduce carbon emissions by 43 percent by 2030 and to net zero by 2050. President Marcos said he would prioritize climate change action and environmental protection, including by reducing plastic and ocean pollution. Australia is working with the Philippines to protect its marine environment, through coral restoration, geospatial mapping of Philippine maritime features and resources and combating illegal fishing.

As I wrote in my previous *Letter from Australia*, we are living in increasingly challenging times. It is precisely at times like these that friends come together to solve common problems and support one another, and that's exactly what Australia and the Philippines are doing, in the enduring spirit of mateship and bayanihan.

I will be building on a relationship that is already broad and deep, and will work continuously to achieve even more together on the issues of importance for both our governments.

Yours truly,
HK

* * *

HK Yu is the Australian Ambassador-designate to the Philippines. Follow her on Twitter @AusAmbPH.





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Marcos hits 'historical injustice' of climate change

UNITED NATIONS – President Marcos decried the “historical injustice” reflected by climate change and called on industrialized countries to honor their obligations under agreements designed to address what he called the “greatest threat” to nations.

Addressing the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), Marcos said the effects of climate change are uneven and reflect “historical injustice” as those who are least responsible suffer the most.

He cited the case of the Philippines, which absorbs more carbon dioxide than it emits and remains the fourth most vulnerable country to the effects of climate change.

“The time for talk about if and when has long since passed. It is here, it is now. Climate change is the greatest threat affecting our nations and our peoples. There is no other problem so global in nature that it requires a united effort, one led by the United Nations,” Marcos said.

“This injustice must be corrected, and those who need to do more must act now. We accept our share of responsibility and will continue to do our part to avert this collective disaster,” he said.

The President urged industrialized countries to immediately fulfill their obligations under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement; cut their greenhouse gas emissions; provide climate financing and technology

transfer for adaptation for the most vulnerable and developing countries and lead by example.

He said he is looking forward to concrete outcomes on climate agreements at the Conference of Parties in Egypt later this year.

“When future generations look back, let them not ask why we did not take this opportunity to turn the tide, why did we continue in our profligate ways, until it was too late? This threat knows no borders, no social class, nor any geopolitical consideration. How we address it will be the true test of our time,” Marcos said.

In 2017, the Philippines signed the historic Paris climate agreement that seeks to cut carbon emissions that have been linked to natural disasters.

The agreement, which was crafted during the 2015 meeting of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, aims to limit the increase in the global average temperature to “well below” two degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.

Developed countries are also required to support developing countries’ mitigation and adaptation efforts.

While not a major emitter, the Philippines has committed to reduce 75 percent of its greenhouse gas emissions by 2030.

In the same address, Marcos cited the need for nations to enhance their cooperation in protecting biodiversity amid the challenges posed by climate change.

In his first State of the Nation Address, Marcos emphasized the need to invest in science and technology to ensure accurate weather forecasts and on-time disaster alerts.

He added that the use of renewable energy is one of the priorities in his climate agenda. – Alexis Romero



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Climate disinformers bring a bigger gun to the fight

THE in-house anti-environmentalist was at it again this week, this time using the occasion of the opening of the 77th General Assembly of the United Nations to inveigh against “the alleged climate emergency,” and once again try to gaslight everyone into believing that the vast, half-century’s worth of scientific research and corresponding public policy will collapse at the slightest touch, if only the right “expert” is found to deliver the blow.

As just one small point of order, the UN General Assembly did not open on Tuesday, September 20, the day the opinion piece was published, but a week earlier, on September 13, at least according to the official schedule posted on the United Nations website. Please try to keep up.

To our comprehensively misguided colleague’s credit his choice of “expert” — which, as a number of readers have pointed out, apparently means the same thing as “content provider” — is rather more interesting this time than the usual barely literate and detached from reality fare offered by right-wing media outlets.

In this case, the supplied content is a lengthy republication of recent (September 15) testimony before the US Congress by a certain Michael Shellenberger, who is described as “the noted author and environmental policy advocate.” Shellenberger’s position on climate change, as summarized in a controversial article he wrote in June 2020 (more on that later) is that, “Climate change is happening. It’s just not the end of the world. It’s not even our most serious environmental problem.”

Shellenberger’s recent congressional testimony was an argument that climate action in the form of the push toward renewable energy “is being used to repress domestic energy production,” and that the US should increase oil and gas production as a lesser evil than inflation, joblessness and growing social



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unrest the “energy shortage” is causing. To be clear, Shellenberger didn’t advocate scrapping climate action altogether, but instead repeated his long-held advocacy that expanding the development of nuclear power and pursuing technologies such as hydrogen fuel are the practical solutions to addressing fossil fuel reliance.

In any event, Shellenberger argued, the world has more time to do this than it thinks, offering several problematic assertions in support of this notion, namely, that US carbon emissions declined 22 percent between 2005 and 2020 (not quite; it was actually about 19 percent, and that due to the decline in fossil fuel use that Shellenberger argues should be reversed); that global emissions were flat over the last decade (not true; they have increased steadily since 2009 and reached their highest level ever in 2021); and that weather-related disasters have declined since the beginning of this century (completely false; they have increased by a factor of five over the past 50 years).

Climate scientists and advocates have been reluctant to completely dismiss Shellenberger over his lengthy career because at its most basic, his position is not completely unreasonable, i.e., climate change is an actual thing that needs to be addressed, and if technology can be applied to address it, it should be. However, this seeming agreeableness is rather insidious; Shellenberger actually represents two rather well-worn positions in the spectrum of climate action rejection: “technological optimism” (disruptive change is not necessary), and the “appeal to well-being” (change will be too disruptive to bear).

An examination of his background — what lies behind the



■ Photo of Michael Shellenberger from his Twitter account

“environmental policy advocate” tag, in other words — exposes Shellenberger as a rather conventional climate denier, which became evident in the controversy surrounding the previously mentioned article of June 2020. It was originally published by Forbes, but was retracted just a day later due to “violating Forbes’ editorial policy on self-promotion,” in this case, Shellenberger’s 2020 book *Apocalypse Never*. In that book, Shellenberger makes several spurious claims, including the aforementioned claims on global emissions reductions and a decline in the number of weather disasters. Shellenberger, who complained bitterly on social media that he was being “censored,” quickly found a more appreciative audience for his piece on right-wing platforms such as Zero Hedge, Breitbart, PJ Media and The Daily Wire.

One of Shellenberger’s biggest advocacies is the use of nuclear power, and he has lobbied extensively both at the national and state levels in the US to prevent the closure of several nuclear plants. While he may have had a rational basis for taking this position originally, his credibility in sticking with the argument has been severely compromised by associations he has never publicly acknowledged. In 2017, in an end-of-year report to its members, the Nuclear Energy Institute (NEI), a nuclear industry lobbying group, disclosed that it “engaged third parties to engage with media through interviews and

op-eds,” including Shellenberger. In addition, Shellenberger’s biggest single contributor in a failed campaign he waged for the governorship of California in 2018 was Frank Batten Jr., president of the Landmark Foundation, “a charitable foundation that provides support for nuclear fuel recycling,” according to congressional records.

Although they have a less direct bearing on his climate change perspectives, Shellenberger’s political orientations over the years have done little to assuage critics. Besides his Breakthrough Institute and the ironically named Environmental Progress think tank, Shellenberger is also the president of the political consulting firm Lumina Strategies, which in 2004 was hired by the government of Hugo Chavez “to oversee the media relations strategy for Venezuela’s government.”

More recently, Shellenberger has casually aligned himself with the insurrectionist supporters of the defeated former US president Trump, suggesting in a Twitter post that the coup attempt of Jan. 6, 2021, was justifiable with language that is disturbingly racist. “Once progressives adopted the toxic language of the campus left, absurdly vilifying old-stock White Americans as ‘settlers,’” he wrote, “it was only a matter of time before young white male right-wing radicals began wearing cowboy hats or buckskins in response,” referring to the now-infamous “QAnon Shaman” who was later jailed for his part in the attack on the US Capitol. In another post, Shellenberger suggested that a certain individual seen in the Capitol “appears to be a paid actor,” echoing the claims of some that the attack was staged by leftists in an attempt to discredit the former president. Most of Shellenberger’s social media commentary on the January 6 insurrection has since been deleted, but much of it has nevertheless been archived by climate information watchdogs.

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Marcos tells world to act fast vs climate change

UNITED NATIONS: President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. on Tuesday (Wednesday in Manila) called on all nations to launch a unified and immediate response against climate change.

"Climate change is the greatest threat affecting our nations and peoples. There is no other problem so global in nature that it requires a united effort, one led by the United Nations," Marcos said during his address at the 77th session of the United Nations General Assembly here.

Marcos lamented that further inaction would result in the extreme suffering of "least responsible" smaller nations such as the Philippines.

"The effects of climate change are uneven and reflect a historical injustice: Those who are least responsible suffer the most. The Philippines, for example, is a net carbon sink, we absorb more carbon dioxide than we emit. And yet, we are the fourth most vulnerable country to climate

change," he said.

"This injustice must be corrected, and those who need to do more must act now. We accept our share of responsibility and will continue to do our part to avert this collective disaster," Marcos added.

Marcos urged big economies to lead by example.

"We call on industrialized countries to immediately fulfill their obligations under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement to cut their greenhouse gas emissions, provide climate financing and technology transfer for adaptation for the most vulnerable and developing countries to lead by example," he said.

"When future generations look back, let them not ask why we did not take this opportunity to turn the tide, why did we continue in our profligate ways, until it was too late? This threat knows no borders, no social class, nor any

geopolitical considerations. How we address it will be the true test of our time," Marcos added.

Marcos said he is looking forward to attending COP27, the 27th Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, at the Egyptian resort of Sharm el-Sheikh on November 6 to 18.

The Climate Change Commission data said natural disasters in the Philippines caused P506 billion in economic losses during the past decade alone.

A new study recently released by UN climate experts warned of a catastrophic climate change by 2025 if carbon emission levels remain unchanged.

Effect on labor

In a related development, Department of Migrant Workers Secretary Susan Ople has called for more study on the impact of

climate change on labor migration and on workers around the world.

"The Philippines is sadly very familiar with the effects of climate change and how it results in the displacement of people," Ople said during bilateral talks with International Organization on Migration Director-General Antonio Vitorino in New York City.

"We are also aware of the need to enhance multi-sectoral, multi-agency, and multi-country partnerships to mitigate the negative effects of climate change on migrant workers and communities," she added.

Ople was joined in the event by United Nations Permanent Representative Antonio Manuel Lagdameo Sr. and Department of Foreign Affairs Undersecretary for Multilateral Affairs and International Economic Relations Carlos Sorreta.

**CATHERINE S. VALENTE
AND FRANCO BARONA**



'United effort' to address climate change

PRESIDENT Marcos Jr. has called for a "united effort" among nations to address climate change.

In his debut speech at the 77th session of the United Nations General Assembly, the President said climate change is "the greatest threat affecting our nations and our peoples".

"There is no other problem so global in nature that it requires a united effort, one led by the United Nations," Marcos said in a speech that lasted over 20 minutes.

Despite the Philippines being one of the smallest contributors to CO2 emissions, he said that the country remained to be among the most vulnerable to the effects of climate change.

"The effects of climate change are uneven and reflect an historical injustice: Those who are least responsible suffer the most. The Philippines, for example, is a net carbon sink, we absorb more carbon dioxide than we emit. And yet, we are the 4th most vulnerable country to the effects of climate change," he said.

The President stressed the need for nations to "correct" injustices by accepting their share of responsibilities.

He also enjoined industrialized

countries to fulfill their obligations under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement to "cut their greenhouse gas emissions, provide climate financing and technology transfer for adaptation for the most vulnerable, and developing countries to lead by example".

"We look forward to concrete outcomes at the Conference of Parties in Egypt later this year," he said.

Last June, Marcos said he was seriously considering his invitation to attend the UN Climate Change Conference's 27th session of the Conference of the Parties in Egypt in November this year.

He also vowed that the government would continue to do its part to avert what he described as a "collective disaster".

"When future generations look back, let them not ask why we did not take this opportunity to turn the tide, why did we continue in our profligate ways, until it was too late? This threat knows no borders, no social class, nor any geopolitical consideration. How we address it will be the true test of our time," he said.

In March 2017, the Philippines ratified the Paris climate pact – a

worldwide effort to achieve a below two-degrees Celsius increase in global temperatures.

The country, which accounts for less than 1 percent of the world's emissions, has committed to reducing its emissions by 70 percent by 2030.

Just a few days before departing for the US, Marcos spent his 65th birthday in a tree-planting activity in San Mateo, Rizal on September 13 as part of efforts to raise awareness on environmental welfare and protection.

The tree-planting initiative is expected to contribute to the government's National Greening Program, the country's most ambitious reforestation program yet.

In his first State-of-the-Nation Address on July 25, Marcos also vowed to increase the country's use of renewable energy sources such as hydropower, geothermal, solar, and wind to help slow down the effects of climate change.

Marcos' working visit to the US is until September 24.

Shortly after his arrival in the US on Monday (Manila time), he met with the Filipino Community in New Jersey, and on Tuesday (Manila time) attended the New York Stock Exchange Economic Forum.

Climate gab eyes renewable energy bid boost

A lawmaker on Wednesday stressed that the First Disaster and Climate Emergency Policy Forum is expected to “lay the groundwork for President Marcos’s call for a way forward for renewable energy in the context of climate change in the Philippines.”

Albay 2nd District Representative Joey Salceda made the statement in response to President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.’s commitment to a governance framework that will allow us to harness the power of renewable energy during the President’s United Nations General Assembly speech.

“We are heeding President Marcos’s call by convening the country’s leading climate-related institutions, multilateral and private sector financing groups, the big energy companies, and civil society and academe, to reassess our path to climate change adaptation and mitigation,” said Salceda, who chairs the House Committee on Ways and Means.

Salceda said given the President’s pronouncements and priorities, the direction must be towards renewable energy.

The aim is really cross-pollination of ideas. We want to come up with the most viable, durable, and financeable ways forward for the country’s energy transition.

The climate forum on 22 September will be attended by executives from the Departments of Finance, Energy, Interior and Local Government, Budget and Management, Environment and Natural Resources, National Economic Development Authority, the National Security Council, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas and Climate Change Commission.

“The aim is really cross-pollination of ideas. We want to come up with the most viable, durable, and financeable ways forward for the country’s energy transition. So, we gathered the ones who can take action,” the lawmaker said.

Senior Representatives from the World Bank, UN Development Programme, Asian Development Bank, Global Green Growth Institute, Japan International Cooperation Agency and from local banks such as the LandBank, Development Bank of the Philippines, Bank of the Philippine Islands and Rizal Commercial Banking Corporation will also lead panels to discuss the financing of renewables.

Executives from the First Philippine Holdings, Philippine Geothermal Production Company Inc., the PNOC-Renewable Energy Corporation, and Aboitiz Power will also hold a panel on “The Role of the Private Sector in the Philippine Energy Transition.”

Governors and mayors, leaders from the academe and civil society groups, former Cabinet members, and other key attendees are also expected in the event.



PHOTOGRAPH BY BOB DUNGO JR. FOR THE DAILY TRIBUNE. FISHERMEN try their luck at the waters of Manila Bay for a possible catch before lunchtime.



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

A LONE fishing vessel is crowded by hyacinths at the Baseco beach in Manila.



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NEWS

Masungi armed men fined just P1K each

The armed men whose alleged intrusion earlier raised concerns at the Masungi Georeserve will be fined only P1,000 each for not bringing their gun licenses, a police official said. But for the foundation looking after the site, their very presence violated the law. It accused them of illegal occupation and construction of structures, and called on local law enforcers "to do more than keep peace and order." —STORY BY **A4**
DEXTER CABALZA AND DEMPSEY REYES



ARMED MEN IN MASUNGI COMPLAINT FINED MERE P1K EACH

**By Dexter Cabalza
and Dempsey Reyes**
@Team_Inquirer

Armed men found occupying an area of the Masungi Georeserve will be fined a mere P1,000 each for not having in their possession their firearms licenses.

Otherwise, "no crime [was] committed" upon inspection by the police of the conservation site in Rizal province, an official of the Philippine National Police said on Wednesday.

On Monday, members of the Regional Civil Security Unit of Police Regional Office 4A, the Calabarzon police, confiscated 12 shotguns and three .38-caliber pistols from six security guards of the Sinagtala Security Agency Services whom the police found at Masungi—in particular, the area along Kilometer 48 of the Marikina-Infanta Highway.

Administrators of the Masungi Georeserve Foundation said those guards had been there for over a week now.

But according to Elpidio Mabonga, one of those guards, they had been there since Aug. 15. He also said there were 20 others (not counting himself) in that area.

Agency's expired license

Still, "[t]here was no crime committed during the conduct of post-to-post inspection, so no arrests were made," said Brig. Gen. Leumar Abugan, chief of the Supervisory Office for Security and Investigation Agencies of the PNP.

But the guards were found without their licenses. Abugan said this was a violation of the revised implementing rules and regulations (IRR) of the Private Security Agency Law (Republic Act No. 5487).

According to Rule XVII of that IRR, "not having in possession [a] license to exercise profession, duty detail order and/or firearms license... while performing private security service" constituted a "less grave offense" for which the penalty would be suspension of one to six months or a fine of P500 to P1,000.

A further check by the police on the firearms licenses showed that while the 15 guns confiscated had licenses that were due to expire yet in 2024, Sinagtala's own License to Own and Possess Firearms (LTOPF) had already expired on Jan. 30 this year.

Abugan said the LTOPF is a prerequisite for the issuance of the licenses for the confiscated firearms.

"We have initiated an investigation to ascertain the violations committed [by the securi-

ty agency]," he said, as he cited the Comprehensive Firearms and Ammunition Regulation Act of 2012 (RA 10591)—which penalizes with imprisonment any officer of a company that "willfully or knowingly" allows the use of its firearms without any legal authority.

Bigger violation

But for Billie Dumaliang, a trustee of the foundation, this matter was more than just a question of whether or not the weapons had proper licenses.

She said the very presence of those guards was already a violation of the Expanded National Integrated Protected Areas System Act of 2018 (RA 11038).

Under that law, illegal occupation and the erecting of structures constituted criminal acts. Dumaliang said this should have led to the arrest of

those armed men. She said earlier that the situation in Masungi had already been brought to the attention of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, which said in response that it had forwarded a report to "appropriate offices for immediate action."

"We expect the government and its agencies, especially the PNP, to do more than keep peace and order," she said, adding that "They must enforce the law."

As for Abugan's suggestion that "it is better [for] the Masungi [Foundation to] file a complaint" against the agency that deployed the guards, Dumaliang noted that the aggrieved party in this case is "the Republic of the Philippines," since the site is its "titled property," in accordance with Presidential Proclamation Nos. 1636 and 573.

Those edicts issued by the

father and namesake of President Marcos reserve several areas of Luzon, including Masungi, as "national parks," "permanent forests" and "parcels of the public domain."

"If this group and their security does... in Malacañang [what they did to Masungi], will they not [be] arrest[ed]? What makes it different here?" Dumaliang said.

Meanwhile, Brig. Gen. Jose Melencio Nartatez Jr., acting regional director of the Calabarzon police, said he had ordered a sustained police presence at the site.

"We will continue to ensure stability in Masungi as a protected environmental sanctuary. As long as everybody is cooperative, and acts according to their recognized rights and responsibilities, I am optimistic that this matter will be timely resolved," he said in a statement. **INQ**



Editorial

Govt inaction on Masungi invasion is inexcusable

FOR nearly three weeks, an armed invasion of land belonging to the Republic of the Philippines has been ongoing, and the government has done virtually nothing to stop it. This is an utterly shameful abrogation of responsibility to the people on the part of the agencies concerned — the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the Philippine National Police (PNP) in this case — right up to and including the Office of the President, which has so far ignored calls to intervene to put a stop to the act of brazen criminality.

On September 3, the first reports were received from stewards of the Masungi Georeserve about the arrival of a large group (about 30) of armed men in the area. The group established an encampment along Kilometer 48 of the Maharlika-Infanta Highway on the periphery of the georeserve. The members of the group — which for the sake of comparison is about the size of a standard infantry platoon — refused to identify themselves or explain their purpose, and threatened anyone attempting to document their presence in the area; unsuccessfully, as it turned out, as extensive video footage and photos of the incident were swiftly shared to social media and relevant government agencies by the Masungi Foundation and others.

It was soon established that the armed band are purportedly employees of a certain Sinagtala Security Services Inc., and were dispatched to the area by one Biatriz Sonquival to enforce a land claim by that individual over part of the property of the georeserve. As of this writing, neither the armed group nor anyone has been able to provide documentation lending any credence whatsoever to the supposed land claim, and "Biatriz Sonquival," if that is indeed a real person, has not surfaced to provide an explanation.

As of September 21, the group is still at the location, with the only actions being taken so far having been a vague statement from the DENR that it is investigating the incident, and a visit from PNP officers over the weekend that resulted in the seizure of some unregistered firearms, but no arrests. That unsatisfactory action — possession of an unlicensed firearm is illegal, and subject to immediate arrest and charges — along with other puzzling non-responses from the PNP in the area prompted the PNP command to announce that it was investigating whether police officers were involved with the armed group. The results of the inquiry are still pending; otherwise, the PNP has only said that it is "coordinating" with the DENR over the ownership issue.

The Masungi Georeserve comprises about 46,300 hectares of upland, most of it located in Rizal province, with parts extending into Bulacan, Laguna and Quezon. It was created by President Ferdinand E. Marcos with Presidential Proclamation 1636 in 1977, and has been a protected area since 1969, when it was declared part of the Kaliwa Watershed Forest Reserve. Protection of the area was further reinforced by the National Integrated Protected Areas System Act of 1991, which emphasizes that any occupation, construction or business activity on the land is prohibited.

Thus, any "coordination" on the "ownership issue" should be completed in an instant; barring an act of Congress, no one can claim any part of the critical ecological reserve. As soon as the presence of the armed band was reported, the PNP and DENR should have swiftly moved to arrest or otherwise eject them from the area.

And under any circumstances, there should be no instance in which a platoon-sized group of armed men gathering anywhere should be tolerated, unless they are members of the PNP or armed forces on official business.

Environment Secretary-designate Antonia "Toni" Yulo-Loyzaga has not yet been confirmed by the Commission on Appointments. If the lack of concern and unwillingness to take the necessary corrective action in the Masungi incident is an indication of how the DENR might perform under her watch, then her appointment should be firmly rejected. The country needs an environment secretary who will actually defend the environment, not sit on her hands while bandits seize protected lands with impunity.

Whether the DENR or PNP decides to belatedly carry out their duties, or it takes a direct order from the president, this appalling situation needs to end, now.



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EDITORIAL

An endangered success story

With several international awards for ecotourism and environmental protection, the Masungi Georeserve has been one of the few success stories in environmental conservation in this country. Possibly because of this success, the conservation area in Baras, Rizal now faces the risk of armed violence. Before this happens, authorities should intervene decisively.

The trouble started last week, when the non-profit foundation engaged in conservation work at the 400-hectare geological heritage site within the Sierra Madre mountain range reported spotting about 30 armed men encamped by the roadside of Kilometer 48 along the Marikina-Infanta Highway.

On Sept. 20, the Philippine National Police said its members who responded to the report confiscated 12 shotguns and three pistols from several men, who turned out to be employees of a security agency. But no arrests were made, and the guns turned out to be covered by proper licenses, the PNP said yesterday.

Trustees of the georeserve foundation said the guards of the Sinagtala Security Agency in Tanay, Rizal claimed to hold a survey plan in the name of a certain Beatriz Sonquival, which was signed in the early 2000s by a director

of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

The foundation said the contested area, which the "invaders" reportedly want to take over and sell to third parties, is part of the Kaliwa Watershed protected area, which has been legally titled to the Republic of the Philippines since the 1950s. The foundation said the conservation project is being undertaken under a joint venture agreement in 1996 between the founding organization, Blue Star, with the government.

The georeserve is home to 60-million-year-old limestone formations in Baras, and serves as a sanctuary among others to over 70 species of birds and 47 species of snails. The foundation, which does not receive funding from the government, has 100 local geopark rangers and counts as its partners over 200 schools, NGOs, business enterprises and local government units.

The PNP, pointing out that its task is merely to maintain peace and order in the area, is urging the DENR to settle the controversy. President Marcos, who made a pitch for climate change mitigation efforts at the United Nations General Assembly, should heed the appeal of the foundation to step in and give priority to the settlement of this issue.



DENR asked to intervene in Masungi Georeserve dispute

Saying the role of the Philippine National Police is limited to maintaining peace and order, PNP spokesperson Col. Jean Fajardo said the dispute at the Masungi conservation site should be settled by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

"We are calling for the intercession of DENR. *Alam natin na* the DENR also exercises enforcement functions," she told a press conference at Camp Crame yesterday.

Fajardo said the PNP has started its probe on the Sinagtala Security Agency. She said the agency may be held administratively liable after the security guards accused of invading the conservation site failed to present the licenses of their firearms.

Six guards of the security agency reportedly camped along the Marikina-Infanta Highway in Barangay Cuyumbay in Tanay, Rizal.

Fajardo said the 12 shotguns and three .38 caliber revolvers of

the security guards were found registered with the PNP Firearms and Explosives Office.

Ann Adeline Dumaliang, Masungi Georeserve co-founder and managing trustee, said the DENR should be more proactive to ensure that the conversation site is secured.

"The DENR needs to step up. It needs to put its foot down... This should not be happening," she said.

Dumaliang said the Masungi Geopark project is around 2,000 hectares. The reforestation site, where there is an ongoing dispute, has a land area of around 400 hectares.

The Masungi Georeserve administration had earlier called on President Marcos, Environment Secretary Ma. Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga, Interior Secretary Benjamin Abalos Jr. and PNP chief Gen. Rodolfo Azurin Jr. to step in and address what it described as illegal occupation of the conservation site.

- Emmanuel Tupas



PNP: Courts should resolve Masungi land dispute

BY VICTOR REYES

THE PNP yesterday said it is up to the courts to address the dragging land dispute at the Masungi Georeserve in Rizal, where armed men are encamped and allegedly planning to take over portions of the conservation area.

In a press briefing at Camp Crame, PNP spokeswoman Col. Jean Fajardo said the police force will stay visible in the area to maintain peace and order.

Fajardo made the remark a day after Masungi urged President Marcos Jr and other government officials, including PNP chief Gen. Rodolfo Azurin Jr, to cause the arrest of the armed men from the Sinagtala security agency.

“Right now, we are calling for the intercession of DENR. We know that DENR also exercises enforcement functions,” said Fajardo.

“If there are issues with respect to ownership, since the adverse claimant is occupying an area and even hired a security agency, I think its best that it be decided by the proper court for jurisdiction,” added Fajardo.

Meanwhile, Fajardo said the PNP will maintain high visibility in the area to ensure peace and order.

“On the part of the PNP, we are just limited in the maintenance of peace and order and security in the area. That’s why we’re maintaining high police visibility in the area up to now,” said Fajardo.

Masungi has said some 30 security guards from the Sinagtala Security Agency have been encamped at Km 48 since last week, preparing to take over huge tracts of land in the protected area.

Sinagtala personnel have supposedly claimed they have a survey plan under the name of one Beatriz Sonquival that was reportedly issued by Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) regional office in the early 2000s.

Masungi said the survey plan is not a proof of ownership.

On Monday, policemen seized 12 shotguns and two cal. 38 revolvers from the security guards after they failed to present documents for the weapons, but no arrests

were made.

Upon verification with the PNP Firearms and Explosives Office, Fajardo said the 14 firearms were registered until 2024.

But still, she said the security agency will still be asked to explain why its personnel were not carrying supporting documents for the firearms, in violation of rules and regulations.

He said the PNP Regional Civil Security Unit-Calabarzon has commenced proceedings to determine the administrative liability of the agency.

“The security agency will be made to explain how come their security officers failed to bring with them the firearms registration,” he said.



Phl wants 5 sites included in marine protected areas

The Philippines is pitching five sites to be part of a marine protected area (MPA) management project in the ASEAN to be implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

These sites include the Tubataha Reefs Natural Park (TRNP), the Ticao-Burias Pass Protected Seascape (TBPPS), Agoo Damortis Protected Landscape & Seascape (AD-PLS), Bani-Bolinao-Burgos-Infanta, Dasol-Agno MPAN (MPA Network); and Turtle Islands Wildlife Sanctuary (TIWS).

The list was formed after the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) convened stakeholders of the project, Effectively Managing Networks of Marine Protected Areas in Large Marine Ecosystems (LME) in ASEAN or (ENMAPS).

This is to gather and consolidate data as it is scheduled to submit its project proposal to its funder – the Global Environment Facility (GEF) by March 2023.

The sites being chosen for ENMAPS are biodiversity-rich sites that also face threats of environmental degradation. Beneficiaries of the project are Indonesia, Philippines, and Thailand.

Other ASEAN Large Marine Ecosystems (LME) sites under

the project are the Gulf of Thailand/ Andaman Sea of Bay of Bengal, Indonesian Seas, and South China Sea.

ENMAPS aims to develop and improve the management of networks of MPAs and marine corridors within selected LMEs in the ASEAN region. It aims to conserve globally significant biodiversity and support for sustainable fisheries for people's livelihood and other ecosystem goods and services.

The ASEAN ENMAPS project will also be executed by the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB) in collaboration with the DENR's Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB).

It also includes national technical working groups from DENR's Foreign Assisted & Special Projects Services (FASPS); Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, National Fisheries Research & Development Institute, and PEMSEA (Partnerships in Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia).

The Coastal and Marine Biodiversity of ASEAN is known to have 20 percent of the world's seagrass beds, a third of world's mangrove forests with 45 to 75 true species, and a third of the world's coral reefs with more than 75 percent of species of coral and 40 percent of fish species.

The GEF has been concerned that the world's oceans have been reaching their ecological carrying capacity, a limit to their ability to produce fish for food.

"More than 75 percent of world fish stocks are already fully exploited, over exploited, depleted or recovering from depletion," according to the GEF website.

GEF has supported sustainable governance of 23 LMEs involving collaborative work of many countries. The world's oceans are known to be divided into 66 LMEs. This area covers 7.7 million square kilometers with 173,000 km of coastline.

LMEs are huge marine areas extending beyond boundaries among countries which is why collaboration is important here. ENMAPS has a cost of \$77.596 million. Of this, \$12.548 million consists of GEF grant.

UNDP's procedure aligns with the Social and Environmental Standards or SES. This means that the project will integrate SES principles as it undertakes the project. Such principles include human rights protection, gender equality, and environmental sustainability. It will assess social and environmental issues to address risks.

- Danessa Rivera



Concrete plans on use of fossil fuels sought

BY JED MACAPAGAL

THE Center for Energy, Ecology and Development (CEED) said the Department of Health (DOH) must improve its stance towards the use of fossil fuels in the country.

Avril De Torres, CEED deputy executive director, said in a statement the DOH only lobbies for a national plan against the minimal use of fuel in the country, despite expressing support for the call made by the World Health Organization (WHO) and other health groups for the phasing out of fossil fuels.

"The existence of fossil fuel projects highlights the health disparity that communities exposed to such projects are subjected to. In a 2020 study that reveals the cost of air pollution from fossil fuels, the number is disconcerting: an estimated 27,000 premature deaths are attributed to fossil fuel air production in the Philippines," De Torres said.

As the main public health agency of the country, the DOH's statement provides "a critical turning point" in pushing for the fight against fossil fuels to improve

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public health, she added.

"DOH must put forward concrete curtailment of fossil fuels that have been globally established as a health hazard," De Torres further said.

According to CEED, the responsibility to protect communities from the harmful effects of fossil fuels is not on the DOH alone as the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) is the main

government agency tasked to implement the Philippine Clean Air Act.

De Torres said the DENR has failed to update the country's air quality guidelines based on the new WHO air quality guidelines and the latest scientific findings, apart from the lack of enough ambient air quality monitoring systems and the availability of such information to stakeholders.

Earlier, the Department of

Energy said the moratorium on building new coal-fired power plants will continue under the current administration.

Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla said such decision is also supported by current market sentiments especially by banks and insurers, but he noted the need for the transition to be managed and orderly as the country needs all power available from different sources.



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DOH STRESSES FOSSIL FUEL IMPACT ON PUBLIC HEALTH

By Kathleen de Villa
@kdevillaINQ

The Department of Health (DOH) has called for the creation of a national action plan against the use of fossil fuel, which the country relies on for power generation, due to its detrimental effects to the respiratory health of the population.

Maria Rosario Vergeire, officer in charge of the DOH, on Tuesday echoed the call of nearly 2,000 health organizations worldwide, including the World Health Organization (WHO), to adopt a framework for the phase-out of fossil fuel, which includes coal, crude oil and natural gas.

WHO chief Tedros Ghebreyesus said last week that the "modern addiction to fossil fuels is not just an act of environmental vandalism," but also an "act of self-sabotage" from the health perspective.

Asked to comment on this statement, Vergeire said the DOH was "one with the WHO in the campaign for us to be able to have an action plan or a national plan against the minimal use of fossil fuels in the country."

The WHO is among the

signatories of the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty, a framework for a legally binding global plan to end further expansion of fossil fuel production and infrastructure to cap global temperature to 1.5 degrees Celsius and curb the health risks associated with fossil fuel.

According to Vergeire, the country has been seeing the rise of respiratory illnesses due to air pollution, of which fossil fuel is a major contributor.

She said common clinical consultations include asthma among children and chronic pulmonary disease, which is exacerbated by air pollution, among the elderly.

Based on the latest data from the Philippine Statistics Authority, chronic lower respiratory diseases are the ninth leading cause of death in the country from January to May this year.

The country mainly relies on coal for power generation, followed by renewable sources of energy and natural gas, according to the 2020 statistics of the Department of Energy. The burning of coal, natural gas or oil to generate energy results in the emission of greenhouse gas, which in turn traps heat in the atmosphere. INQ



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DIRTY WATER PROMPTS CEBU GOV TO BAN SWIMMING OFF CORDOVA TOWN

CEBU CITY—Cebu Gov. Gwendolyn Garcia has banned swimming and other water activities in Cordova town after a test done by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) confirmed the presence of fecal coliform in the waters off Barangay Catarman.

Although the test was confined only to Catarman, Garcia said her swimming ban would cover all areas in Cordova's coastline.

"There is an urgent need to immediately prohibit public swimming and similar activities found within the coastal

waters of Cordova ... delineated by the technical descriptions," she said in an executive order.

The high level of fecal coliform was found in the area where fixed and floating cottages for visitors were built.

Garcia asked owners of these cottages to remove their structures until Oct. 4. Those still standing after the deadline would be demolished by the local government.

The governor said the Philippine National Police Maritime Group, Philippine Coast Guard, Philippine Navy and the Cordova municipal government would

help enforce the provincial government's demolition order.

Garcia earlier ordered owners of floating and fixed cottages in Cordova to stop their operations after high levels of coliform were detected in municipal waters.

Illegal operation

"When I saw these illegal cottages, I told myself they should not be allowed to operate again," she said during a meeting with local officials and cottage owners at Cordova Sports Complex on Tuesday.

Garcia said the cottages had

been operating without restrooms and proper waste management systems. Owners, she said, also failed to secure the necessary permits or clearances from the local government.

If floating cottages continue their operations, Garcia said this would practically "kill the goose that lays the golden egg," referring to the income brought by local tourism. She described the situation in Cordova as a "marine disaster waiting to happen."

On Aug. 15, Cordova Mayor Cesar Suan announced that the level of coliform in the town's waters had increased, making it

unsafe for swimming, citing a report from the Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) of the DENR.

Water quality tests conducted by the EMB in the past two months showed that the coliform level in the seas of Cordova reached 1,300 most probable number per 100 milliliters.

For bodies of water to be safe for swimming, the coliform levels should only be at 100 MPN per ml.

The Department of Health earlier warned that swimming in waters with high fecal coliform bacteria levels can lead

to various diseases, such as typhoid fever, hepatitis, gastroenteritis and dysentery.

"You should know that the cottages in Cordova are illegal, and you cannot just do what you want," Garcia said.

The provincial government would give each of the 73 owners of floating cottages and 54 operators of fixed structures a P10,000 financial assistance.

Suan said the municipal government would set aside a separate P5,000 aid and a sack of rice for those whose cottages would be demolished. —DALE

ISRAEL INQ



Garcia bans swimming in coastal

By CALVIN D. CORDOVA

waters of Cordova, Cebu

CEBU CITY – Cebu Gov. Gwendolyn Garcia has issued an Executive Order (EO) prohibiting swimming and similar activities in the coastal waters of Cordova, Cebu.

Garcia issued Executive Order No. 35 on Tuesday, Sept. 20, weeks after the Department of Health-Central Visayas (DOH 7) warned the public against swimming in the town's coastal waters due to high levels of fecal coliform.

The high-level of fecal coliform was discovered in Barangay Catarman where several fixed and floating cottages have been mounted.

DOH 7 cautioned the public that fecal coliform is a known cause of water-borne diseases once a person accidentally drinks or ingests contaminated water.

Garcia noted that despite the DOH 7's warning, swimming and similar activities continue in the area.

She added that a verified and

scientific ambient coastal water sampling showed that the coastal waters in Barangay Catarman were not maintained in safe and satisfactory conditions.

An inventory by the Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office showed that public swimming and other similar activities have been conducted without necessary permits and clearances from the municipality in violation of Presidential Decree No. 856 (The Sanitation Code of the Philippines) and Republic Act 9275 (The Philippine Clean Water Act of 2004).

With the findings of the various government agencies, Garcia said there is an urgent need to immediately prohibit swimming and similar activities in the town's coast waters.

She urged the local police, Maritime Group, Coast Guard, the Naval Forces Central, and Maritime Industry Authority to help ensure the strict implementation of the EO.



Ang baho! Pabrikang tokwa sa Pasay ipinasara

IPINAG-UTOS ni Pasay City Mayor Emi Calixto-Rubiano ang pagpapasara sa isang tokwa factory nitong Setyembre 20 na nauna nang inireklamo ng katabi nitong establisimyento sa lokal na pamahalaan dahil sa nagdudulot ito ng masangang na amoy.

Sa kautusan ni Calixto-Rubiano na nilagdaan ni City Administrator Cresalita Rey ay sinalakay ng mga tauhan ng lokal na pamahalaan na armado ng closure order ang Loli Bends Trading factory na matatagpuan sa Hobbies of Asia, Macapagal Boulevard, Pasay City dahil sa hindi nito pagsunod at paglalagay sa tama ng mga paglabag na nakita ng Pasay City Environmental Sanitation Service

(ESS) sa kanilang naunang isinagawang inspeksyon noong Agosto 30.

Kasabay nito ay inirekomenda naman ng City Health Office (CHO) sa Business Permit and Licensing Office (BPLO) ang pagpapawalang bisa ng business permit ng naturang factory ng tokwa.

Sinabi ni Calixto-Rubiano na bago pa man maipasara ang nabanggit na establisimyento ay nakatanggap ng reklamo ang CHO sa isang naggangalang Dondon Andres, empleyado ng King and Queen International KTV Bar, sa tulong ng kanilang abogado si Atty. Myrwin Brena tungkol sa di-umano'y hindi magandang amoy na nangagaling sa tokwa factory.

Agad namang umaksyon

ang CHO kung saan naging tungo ang ESS team sa factory ng tokwa nitong Agosto 30 at nakita ang mga paglabag na kailangang ayusin at sundin.

Muling nagsagawa ng panibagong inspeksyon ang ESS team nitong Setyembre 3 at 9 hanggang sa binigyan na lamang ng huling pagkatakataon at binigyan ng deadline ang naturang establisimyento na ayusin ang mga paglabag na nagawa nito ng hanggang Setyembre 13 ngunit hindi ito nakapag-comply kung kaya't napilitang mag-isyu ng closure order ang lokal na pamahalaan laban sa establisimyento.

Napag-alaman din ng ESS team na ang nakadeklara sa business permit ng nabanggit na factory ay bilang isang retailer at hindi bilang isang food manufacturing na gumagawa ng tokwa.

JAMES I. CATAPUSAN



DENR: Over 130k bamboo seedlings, native trees planted on PBBM's bday

By Joel dela Torre

MORE than 130,000 bamboo culms and native tree seedlings of different species were planted during the simultaneous tree planting activity across the country to mark President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr.'s 65th birthday last September 13, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) said yesterday.

According to Secretary Maria Antonia Yulo Loyza-ga, the nationwide event was a symbol of the new administration's direction and na-

tional commitment to address climate change, mitigate its effects and alleviate the risk of vulnerable communities and ecosystems.

No less than President Marcos led the kickoff ceremonies in an old sanitary landfill in Barangay Pintong Bocaue, San Mateo, Rizal just within the Upper Marikina River Basin Protected Landscape was closed in November 1089.

With the theme "Buhay-inang Pangangalagang Kalikasan," the government planted at the said site 1,613 seedlings including various species of bamboo and fruit bearing trees.

The tree planting activi-

ties were also simultaneously held in 111 sites in the country covering an aggregate area of 681.5 hectares planted mostly with bamboo culms and indigenous timber tree seedlings such as agohe, kalumpit, yakal, molave, narra, bignai, and banaba.

It was also in line with the celebration of Philippine Bamboo Month pursuant to Presidential Proclamation No. 1401, series of 2022, and in support of the President's directive to boost the resilience of the country to natural disasters by expanding forest cover and accelerating efforts towards forest protection.



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Gov orders review of quarry operations

BY GABRIEL CARDINOZA

LINGAYEN, PANGASINAN: Gov. Ramon Guico 3rd has ordered a review of quarry operations in the province and urged operators to practice systematic sand and gravel extractions to protect the rivers.

Guico observed that operators had not been quarrying properly, turning some stretches of the rivers into giant "sungka" boards.

Sungka is a popular traditional game, which involves dropping small stones or shells into large

holes on a long canoe-shaped wooden board.

"There should be a quarrying methodology. They cannot quarry anywhere they want," Guico said.

Under the Philippine Mining Act of 1995, permits for sand and

gravel extractions for an area of five hectares and below are issued by the governor through the provincial mining regulatory board.

For areas over five hectares, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources issues the permit to an operator.

Among the requirements before the issuance of a permit is an environmental compliance certificate, which sets the conditions in the quarry operation, such as limiting the extraction to a uniform depth of one meter from the original riverbed.

Washing of quarry materials within the riverbed is also prohibited to avoid siltation and turbidity of water, and no stockpile shall be left at the riverbed during extraction to avoid obstruction of water flow.

But Guico said that these are not followed by some quarry operators because he saw a crushing plant right in the middle of a river.

Last week, Guico met with Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) regional director Socrates Gaerlan, who gave the governor an overview of the quarry operations

in the province.

Gaerlan said that Pangasinan used to have the highest revenue collections from sand and gravel extractions in Region 1 (Ilocos Region).

But he said this is no longer the case now because since 2010, the province still charges P16 for every cubic meter of sand and gravel, while the other provinces in the region now collect from P25 to P30 per cubic meter.

Guico also warned illegal quarry operators, saying they should stop their operations now to avoid legal consequences.

A team from the provincial government's environment and natural resources office had been inspecting different quarry sites in the province.

"I don't have the exact number of quarry operators. But there are many," Guico said.

He added that there is nothing wrong with many quarry operators as long as they do it properly for them to help desilt the rivers.

In 2011, the MGB suspended quarry operations along the Bued River in San Fabian town for eroding farmlands and irrigation canals.



Ano ang kinalaman ng kalikasan sa kalusugan?

"Magtanim ay di biro, maghapon ng kayuko...." sabi sa awitin, idinadaing ang pananakit sa iba't ibang bahagi ng katawan. Ngunit ano nga ba ang kahalagahan ng ating paligid sa ating kalusugan. Ang tanong sa atin ng isang reader ay hindi pa ba sapat na bigyan pansin ang sariling pangkatauhan para sa kalusugan? Bakit kailangan ko pang pansinin ang kapaligiran, ni hindi ko naman mababago, marumi man o maraming polusyon? Isama na natin ang hirap ng buhay ngayon kaya pati ang nakakain ay limitado na lang. Mayroon pa bang maaaring magawa dito?"

Ang kayamanan ng isang bansa ay hindi nakikita sa tunay na yaman nito, kung hindi sa kalusugan ng kanyang mamamayan. Ito'y naring ko sa isang talumpati nu'ng ako'y residente pa at nasa training sa pagiging espesyalista. Ang kalusugan ay hindi lang ang pisikal o mental na kondisyon ng isang tao, kundi, ang pagiging ligtas sa anumang karamdaman o aksidente. May limang nakakaapekto nito ayon sa CDC o Centers for Disease Control and Prevention sa US. Kabilang ang genetics (na ipinasa sa ating ng ating mga magulang), ugali natin, pangangalagang medikal, pakikitungo sa mga iba't ibang tao, at ang impluwensya na pisikal at pangkalikasan. Ayon sa isang artikulo ng Regis College sa Weston, Massachusetts, may walong bagay kung paano makaapekto ang ating kapaligiran sa ating kalusugan. Ito ay ang mga sumusunod:

*Kaligtasan sa mga kemikal.

*Ang polusyon sa hangin.

*Climate change pati na ang mga sakuna na dala nito.

*Mga sakit na nanggagaling sa mga mikrobyo.

*Walang mapuntahang tulong na medikal.

*Mga isyu tungkol sa mga istuktura.

*Mababa o mahinang kalidad ng tubig.

*Pang-buong mundo o global na mga isyu nito.

Kaya hindi lang ang pangkatauhan natin ang dapat natin intindihin, kailangan ang kabuuan, kasama pati ang ating kapaligiran. Ayon sa Stride, Australia, isang pahayagan, may mga maaari tayong gawin para makabuti sa ating paligid. Ang mga

sumusunod ay:

Umpisahan gumamit na mga natural na alternatibo sa ating mga panlinis, lalo na kung nasanay tayo sa mga kemikal.

Linisin ng mabuti ang ating bahay at paligid ng mabawasan ang mga allergens na nagiging sanhi ng pag-ubo, pagbahing, at pagluha ng mga mata.

Mag-ayos ng mga silid sa bahay nang hindi magulo. Nadadamay din kasi ang ating pag-iisip kung magulo ang makikitang paligid.

Magdagdag ng nature sa buhay. Maglagay ng mga tanim sa loob at labas ng bahay, mas maganda kung makapagtanim para may makain sa katagalan, maglakad sa mga park at hardin ng mas maganda ang simoy ng hangin.

Bawasan ang oras sa cellphone, TV, at gadgets lalo na kung nag-work from home, para hindi manlabo ang mata at manakit ang ulo.

Mag-recycle at gumamit ng mga eco-friendly at recyclable na mga gamit.

Gawing stress free ang bahay.

Kaunting payo ngunit malaki ang talagang maitutulong hindi lang sa ating sariling kalusugan, pati na sa ating pamilya, mga mahal sa buhay, at komunidad.

Hanggang sa susunod na Huwebes! Stay Healthy! Stay safe! Get vaccinated! Get Boostered!

J. RYLAN G. FLORES, MD ay isang orthopaedic surgeon, nutrigenomics practitioner at DNA profiler, fellow ng International College of Surgeons at Philippine Academy of Medical Specialists. Siya ay matatagpuan sa De los Santos Medical Center. Speaker sa iba't ibang talakayan (medical man at iba pa, dito at internasyonal). Isang personalidad sa pelikula, telebisyon, radio (mapapakinggan sa Kalusugan Kakabilib sa DWIZ882 at IZTV 23, tuwing Linggo 11am-12nn at Kapitbahay sa DZEC1062 tuwing Huwebes 1pm) at Doc Rylan Facebook Live tuwing Sabado 7pm. Sundan sa twitter@rylanflores, gamitin ang hashtag na #docquestion at Facebook sa Doc Rylan para sa mga komentaryo at katanungan.



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COMMENTARY

KHEVIN YU

PH energy transition: Where to?

After hearing President Marcos Jr.'s first State of the Nation Address, most people are bound to think that we are on the road to expanding renewable energy (RE). On the contrary, what is apparent is the planned expansion of dangerous and climate crisis-inducing energy sources such as fossil gas and nuclear energy. While there were pronouncements calling for more RE, the actual marching orders were to speed up the approval of policies favoring these two sources of energy. Unfortunately, these interventions are false solutions that will exacerbate the problem.

This development comes at the heels of a decade-long expansion of the use of coal. Based on data from the Department of Energy (DOE), the installed capacity of coal energy in 2011 was 4,917 megawatts (MW), which reached 11,689 MW in 2021. The expansion contributed to worsening air pollution in the Philippines, costing as much as 1.9 percent of the gross domestic product and 27,000 premature deaths annually. Moreover, the expanded use resulted in too much reliance on rigid base load energy plants, whose unscheduled maintenance intervals and breakdowns affected large areas. This explains the yellow and red alert status from the grid energy supply shortage experienced in 2020.

Like coal, fossil gas will not help in the DOE's efforts to attain energy independence. Meanwhile, introducing nuclear energy will be deadly and costly for the Philippines. We have no experience dealing with the risks—even the bare minimum will be beyond the current capacity of the government and private sector in the country.

The economics are also unsound. Fossil gas and nuclear fuel are now far more expensive than renewable energy. Based on the report from Lazard in 2021, the levelized cost of energy (or LCOE, a method used to compute and compare energy generation costs) are as follows: utility scale solar ranges from \$30-\$41/MWh (megawatt hour); wind is at \$26-\$50/MWh, while gas and nuclear costs more than thrice as much, at \$151-\$196/MWh and \$131-\$204/MWh, respectively.

Coal and fossil gas prices are now so high that even energy generating companies—which have always been incapable of meeting the country's energy needs—are asking to increase electricity rates. Recently, SMC Global Power said it lost almost P15 billion from 2021 to date, due to the high prices of fuel from their Ilijan fossil gas and Sual coal plants.

The company is now asking the Energy Regulating Commission for temporary relief by increasing consumer rates to cover its financial losses. Again, private companies are passing on the burden to consumers, who are already suffering from the combined weight of oil price hikes and food shortages.

Clearly, the Philippines' coal expansion in the past decade has resulted in reliance on imported fuel, higher prices, unreliable energy sources, and, more importantly, environmental and health impacts. Fossil gas and nuclear energy plants will only serve to exacerbate these problems.

Yet, 26 gigawatts (GW) of fossil gas projects are still in the pipeline, with the government approving this week two new fossil gas terminals. Meanwhile, nuclear energy is being pushed in Congress with the obvious support of the administration.

Historically, when coal and other energy sources expand, the share of renewable energy shrinks. This is the case with our recent energy mix at the end of 2021. We now have a measly 28.9 percent share of RE compared to 32 percent in 2016. Adding insult to injury, the current ambition is to increase RE share to just 35 percent by 2030—a figure sorely lacking in ambition.

What is available and easily accessible within our shores are renewable energy sources. According to a study by the DOE and the US Agency for International Development, the Philippines is estimated to have around 808 GW of untapped renewable energy. Our current electricity peak demand is only 16 GW.

Renewable energy, which the President himself is proud to have utilized in his home province in Ilocos Norte, has proven itself more than capable of providing constant energy to the grid, without the risk of price volatility in the international market.

Newly appointed DOE Secretary Raphael Lotilla stated in his first press briefing that his department will "accelerate and expand the development of our indigenous energy resources." Ironically, coal, fossil gas, and even uranium are primarily being imported.

Renewable energy is indigenous, competitive, can provide more than we need, and can have the least impact on our environment and climate.

On the other hand, as ordinary citizens, are we willing to accept the risks of higher prices, worsening climate impacts, and various uncertainties associated with fossil gas and nuclear energy, when we have a cheaper, reliable, and safer choice in renewables? For me, the answer is a resounding no.

Khevin Yu is the energy transition campaigner of Greenpeace Philippines, who previously worked for the Philippine Movement for Climate Justice. He graduated from De La Salle-College of St. Benilde in 2008 with a degree in consular and diplomatic affairs.



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'World in big trouble, needs collective action' — UN chief

UNITED NATIONS (Xinhua) — UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said on Tuesday that the world is in big trouble and needs collective action across the board.

"Our world is in big trouble. Divides are growing deeper. Inequalities are growing wider. And challenges are spreading farther," Guterres said while addressing the UN General Assembly before the opening of the General Debate.

"We need action across the board," he said.

At the same time, he warned that the international community is gridlocked in colossal global dysfunction, saying it is "not ready or willing to tackle the big dramatic challenges of our age."

He said crises like the conflict in Ukraine, climate emergency and biodiversity loss, and the dire financial situation of developing countries threaten the very future of humanity

and the fate of the planet.

Progress on all these issues and more is being held hostage to geopolitical tensions, he added.

"Geopolitical divides are undermining the work of the Security Council, undermining international law, undermining trust and people's faith in democratic institutions, undermining all forms of international cooperation."

"We cannot go on like this," he said.

Even the various groupings set up outside the multilateral system by some members of the international community have fallen into the trap of geopolitical divides, like the Group of 20 (G20), he said.

"At one stage, international relations seemed to be moving toward a G2 world; now we risk ending up with G-nothing. No cooperation. No dialogue. No collective problem-solving," said Guterres. "But the reality is that we live

in a world where the logic of cooperation and dialogue is the only path forward. No power or group alone can call the shots. No major global challenge can be solved by a coalition of the willing. We need a coalition of the world."

This coalition of the world must urgently overcome divisions and act together. It starts with the core mission of the United Nations — achieving and sustaining peace, said Guterres.

"We are seeing the threat of dangerous divisions between West and South. The risks to global peace and security are immense. We must keep working for peace in line with the United Nations Charter and international law," he said.

At the same time, conflicts and humanitarian crises are spreading. The funding gap for the UN Global Humanitarian Appeal stands at 32 billion U.S. dollars, the widest ever, he said.

Upheaval abounds — in Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo,

the Horn of Africa, Haiti, Libya, Iraq, Israel and Palestine, Myanmar, the Sahel, Syria. The list goes on, he noted.

Meanwhile, nuclear saber-rattling and threats to the safety of nuclear plants are adding to global instability. Last month's review conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty failed to reach consensus and a nuclear deal with Iran remains elusive, he added.

"We need much more concerted action everywhere anchored in respect for international law and the protection of human rights. In a splintering world, we need to create mechanisms of dialogue and mediation to heal divides," said Guterres. "We are committed to make the most of every diplomatic tool for the pacific settlement of disputes, as set out in the United Nations Charter: negotiation, inquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration and judicial settlement."

"There is another battle we must end: our suicidal war against nature," he said.

The climate crisis is the defining issue of our time. It must be the first priority of every government and multilateral organization. And yet climate action is being put on the back burner, despite overwhelming public support

around the world, he lamented.

Global greenhouse gas emissions need to be slashed by 45 percent by 2030 to have any hope of reaching net-zero emissions by 2050. And yet emissions are going up at record levels — on course to a 14 percent increase this decade, he noted.

"We have a rendezvous with climate disaster," warned Guterres. The hottest summers of today may be the coolest summers of tomorrow. Once-in-a-lifetime climate shocks may soon become once-a-year events.

The climate crisis is a case study in moral and economic injustice. The G20 emits 80 percent of all greenhouse gas emissions. But the poorest and most vulnerable — those who contributed least to this crisis — are bearing its most brutal impacts. Meanwhile, the fossil fuel industry is feasting on hundreds of billions of dollars in subsidies and windfall profits while household budgets shrink and the planet burns, he said.

Guterres called on all developed economies to tax the windfall profits of fossil fuel companies, and re-direct the funds to countries suffering loss and damage caused by the climate crisis and to people struggling with rising food and energy prices.



Enrile favors amending Charter through Con-Ass

By MARIO B. CASAYURAN

Former Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile, now a legal adviser of President Marcos J favors a move to amend the 1987 Constitution.

Appearing before the Senate constitutional amendments committee of Senator Robinhood C. Padilla, Enrile said there is a need to amend the Charter "because it is a source of our problems as a nation and it retards our progress."

"As long as we have the present Constitution we will remain where we are," he said Wednesday, Sept. 21.

The hearing is a continuation of the hybrid hearing of the Padilla committee on resolutions seeking a review and study of the 1987 Constitution.

"Charter change is imperative, it's needed now. But we do not need a Con-Con (Constitutional Commission). That would only cost a lot of money. Congress can do it. Why do we have to hold an election and pay the

salaries of people who may not necessarily understand the problems of the nation because they have not experienced these problems," he said.

While acknowledging that constitutional experts should be consulted, Enrile said he prefers to have a constitutional assembly or public officials elected by the people, "who have to live with the present Constitution and

already have an intimate grasp of problems facing the nation" to amend the fundamental law.

He also supports the retention of the presidential form of government but giving the elected President of the Republic a longer term of office that is to be determined by a constitutional assembly.

Asked as to how Charter change could help curb corruption, Enrile replied: "You cannot change the character of the Filipino through Charter change but you can open up the country to development. The problem of corruption is a question of law enforcement. If you jail the corrupt and seize their ill-gotten wealth, the problem will stop."

'You cannot change the character of the Filipino through Charter change but you can open up the country to development. The problem of corruption is a question of law enforcement. If you jail the corrupt and seize their ill-gotten wealth, the problem will stop.'

Enrile said that some of the provisions of the 1987 Constitution hinder the nation's progress.

"The Constitution actually favors only the rich. It allows them to invest as much as 60 percent in mining, agriculture, transportation, and so on. The rich make lots of money

here but they bring the profits elsewhere," he said.

"We should have an investment policy that will protect not only the rich, but also the poor. We can control the foreigners but not the rich Filipinos who control our politics, the judiciary, the executive branch, and even the police and the military. While the present set-up works to their advantage, the nation suffers," he pointed out.



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Manila Water named among world's climate smart utilities

By DANESSA RIVERA

Razon-led Manila Water Co. Inc. was named as among the world's climate smart utilities in the inaugural Climate Smart Utilities Recognition Program of the International Water Association (IWA).

A total of 42 climate smart utilities across the world were honored at the IWA World Water Congress and Exhibition held recently in Copenhagen, Denmark.

Manila Water is the first water utility company in the Philippines and in Southeast Asia to be recognized in the program.

Sarah Bergado, Manila Water's sustainability head, highlighted the company's climate actions in a workshop

session on exploring framework conditions for utilities to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

"It is imperative for Manila Water to adapt first to climate change because it is here, and its impacts are already felt. Now that a certain level of stability is achieved, then it is time to double our efforts to contribute to mitigating climate change impact through energy efficiency, renewable energy transition, NRW (non-revenue water) reduction, watershed management and wastewater treatment expansion," she said.

Manila Water claimed it is among the first companies in the country to adopt a climate change policy as part of its commitment to climate action.

The company's GI-IG emission reduction programs include its transition to renewable energy (RE) wherein a four percent reduction was realized last year compared to 2020 through onsite solar power generation and RE purchase.

For climate change adaptation, Manila Water addresses raw water quality risk through Nature-Based Solutions, with 2,459 hectares of watershed areas reforested with 1.2 million native trees planted since 2006.

The Climate Smart Utilities Recognition Program aims to inspire utilities and all their stakeholders to embrace climate resilience under three key pillars for action – climate adaptation, mitigation, and leadership.



PHL TRAILS ASIAN PEERS IN FOOD SECURITY INDEX

THE Philippines ranked 67th in the Global Food Security Index (GFSI) 2022, trailing behind half of its Asian peers as the country scored low in terms of food availability and adaptability to the impacts of climate change.

The GFSI index showed that the Philippines, which had an overall food security score of 59.3, placed 67th out of 113 countries included in the Index by Economist Impact and Corteva Science.

In the Asia-Pacific region, the Philippines ranked 13th out of 23 countries, behind Azerbaijan and Thailand. The GFSI index showed that the Philippines had a better food security score than India (58.9), which placed 14th, and three Southeast Asian neighbors—Myanmar (57.6), Cambodia (55.7) and Laos (53.1).

The GFSI index measures four aspects of a country's food security, namely, food affordability, availability, quality and safety, and sustainability and adaptation.

The Philippines scored 71.5 in terms of food affordability, 55.2 in terms of availability, 65.3 in terms of quality and safety and 41.8 in terms of sustainability and adaptation.

The country performs best in Affordability, owing to steady consumer prices, a low proportion of the

population under the poverty line, relative ease of agricultural trade and a good food safety-net programme," the GFSI report, which was published recently, said.

"The country's weakest performance is in the Sustainability and Adaptation category, with its 'weak' score of 41.8 due to exposure risks to the agricultural water supply, land deterioration and threats to marine biodiversity," it added.

The GFSI pointed out that the Philippines "needs" to strengthen its sustainability and adaptation policies "to protect the agricultural sector and natural resources from the negative impacts of climate change."

"The Philippines has implemented environmental-economic accounting measures and adopted disaster risk reduction strategies at the national and local level. However, despite these significant improvements, the overall category score is still considered 'weak,'" it said.

"The country must make greater efforts to improve scores on all indicators and sub-indicators in the Sustainability and Adaptation pillar, particularly those focused on protecting natural resources," it added.

The report indicated that the Philippines's strengths lie in ensuring farmers' access to agricultural inputs and in establishing a foundation of strong farm infrastructure. Furthermore, the country has "strong" nutritional standards that help consumers, according to the report.

The country's highest score was in food affordability as it had "good" to "very good" scores in change in average food scores, proportion of population under the global poverty line, agricultural and food safety-net programs. A score of 70 to 79.9 is considered good while a score of 80 to 100 is very good.

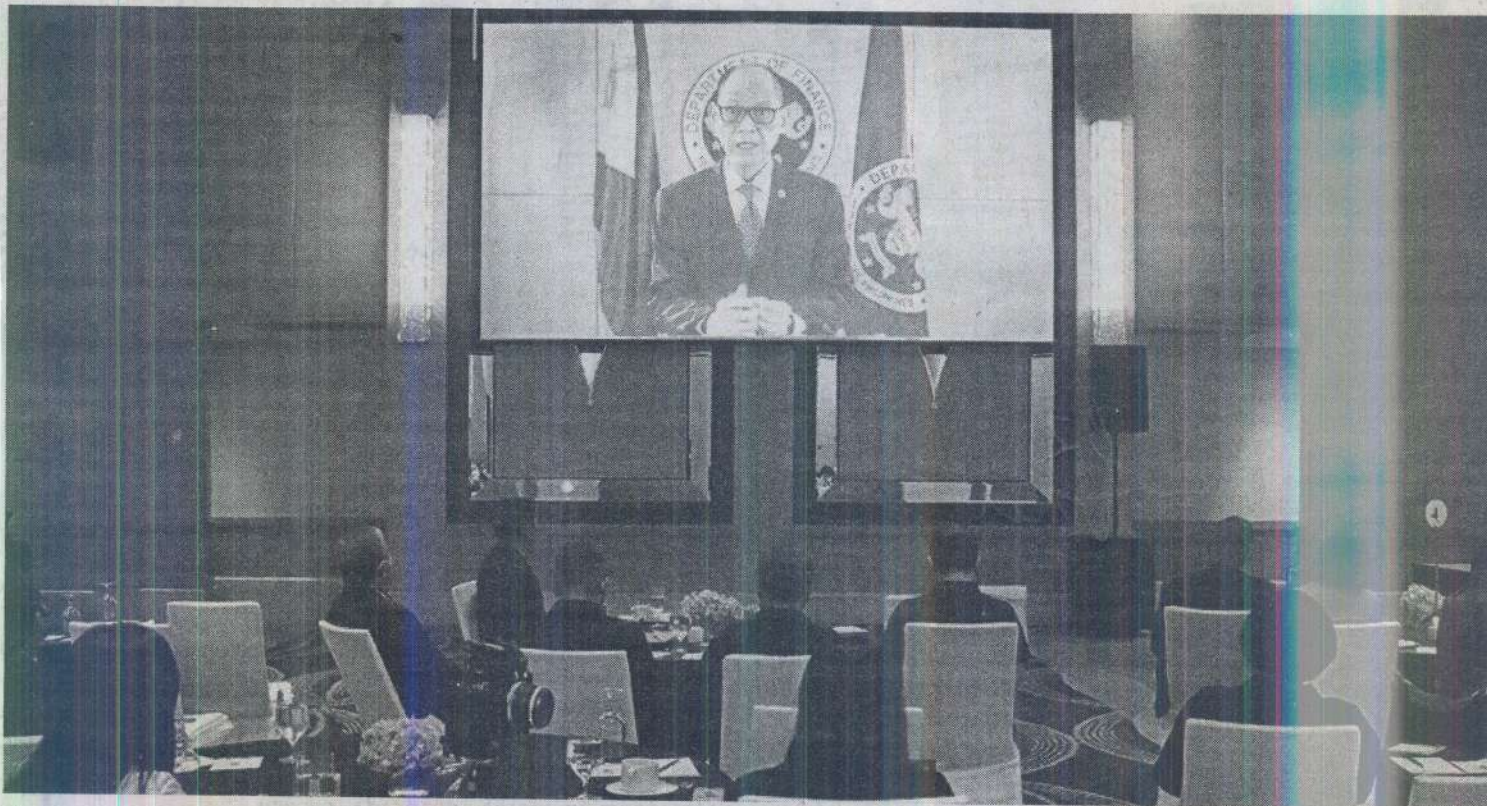
The Philippines scored 74 in change in average food costs, 82.7 in proportion of population under global poverty line, 49.8 in inequality-adjusted income index, 74.7 in agricultural trade, and 73.2 in food safety net programs.

"Price consistency on the consumer side and ease of trade enables food to remain affordable," the report said.

However, the report emphasized that the Philippines lags behind in terms of agricultural research and development. The report also pointed out that the country has "excessive dependency on food aid."

The Philippines ranked 81st globally in terms of agricultural research and development but still falls in the "very weak" score bracket or a score range of 0 to 39.9 owing to declining budget for research and development.

"This is because the country's public spending on research and development has steadily declined since the beginning of the reporting period. In addition, access to agricultural technology, education and resources is low," the report said.



■ Finance Secretary Benjamin Diokno delivers his keynote speech virtually during the 'Sustainable Path to Water Security for the Philippines' forum on Tuesday, Sept. 20, 2022. PHOTO BY J. GERARD SEGUIA

DoF mobilizing funds for water, green projects

THE Department of Finance (DoF) is working to get capital or funds for the government's various green and water security programs.

During the "Sustainable Path to Water Security for the Philippines" forum on Tuesday, Finance Secretary Benjamin Diokno highlighted that the Philippine Water Supply and Sanitation Master Plan (PSWSSMP) is the government's blue print to achieve water security. The Financial Executives Institute of the Philippines, Management Association of the Philippines, Water.org and Accralaw were behind the event.

"As the PSWSSMP will serve as

the blueprint to achieve universal access to safe, affordable, and sustainable water supply and sanitation for the country, the total investment for this plan is over a P1 trillion to achieve universal access to water by 2030," he added.

The PSWSSMP was formally launched in September last year by the National Economic and Development Authority.

Diokno also said that through green finance DoF is pursuing, the water supply and sanitation masterplan can materialize.

The Finance department is also releasing proceeds of the first sustainability global bonds worth \$1

billion and sustainability Samurai bonds worth \$100 million, which will help green efforts in the country.

"Both of these transactions were met with strong demand despite the volatility in the global market. Moreover, our first-ever environmental and social governance bond issuance marks the first-ever sound-off of our efforts to develop the sustainable, market financing in the Philippines," Diokno emphasized.

"Allow me to assure you as chair[man] of the administration's economic team, the DoF stands ready to support all efforts toward our shared goal of achiev-

ing universal clean access to water and fighting climate change for sustainability," he added.

Furthermore, the DoF has managed to put together a policy package that supports the agenda of green finance called the Sustainable Finance Roadmap, which incorporates the "whole nation" approach in mobilizing finance to support the transition to a clean, sustainable and climate-resilient economy.

For its part, the Securities and Exchange Commission also formally launched the sustainability reform guidelines for publicly listed companies.

ED PAOLO SALTING