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Pasig River rehab gains momentum with the First Lady's timely support

The Pasig River holds a special place in the hearts of Filipinos. This waterway is steeped in historical significance that even Dr. Jose Rizal immortalized it in his novels, recognizing its vital role as a conduit for trade and commerce.

Over the years, however, urbanization and pollution have transformed the Pasig River into a symbol of government neglect, tarnishing Manila's image as urban decay sets in. Various administrations have made attempts at rehabilitating the river, from the establishment of the Pasig River Task Force during former President Fidel V. Ramos's administration to private sector initiatives like "Piso Para sa Pasig." Even the previous administration initiated a ferry system along the river, aimed at helping ease traffic in the metro. Despite these commendable efforts, much work remains before we can declare the mission accomplished.

To further this vital rehabilitation effort, President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. has constituted the "Inter-Agency Council for the Pasig River Urban Development (IAC-PRUD)" as a crucial step toward revitalizing the Pasig River and enhancing the quality of life along its banks.

Executive Order (EO) No. 35, issued on July 25, 2023, and signed by Executive Secretary Lucas Bersamin, outlines the council's mandate, which includes "facilitating and ensuring the full rehabilitation of the banks along the Pasig River water system and nearby water systems."

The council, chaired by the Secretary of the Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development, and vice chaired by the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority chairperson, comprises 13 member agencies. Recently, it garnered support from a very significant figure — the First Lady, Liza Araneta-Marcos.

The First Lady turned her attention to the Pasig River, just outside the Palace, which she sees every day. Until today, the busy river that flows in several cities and towns in the metropolis is still an image of improper management with its murky water and plastic debris.

President Marcos has tasked the IAC-PRUD with the goal of improving the water quality of the Pasig River to approximate Class C standards, making it suitable for fish and marine resources.

During the council's meeting on Aug. 23, Housing Secretary Jose Acuzar welcomed the First Lady's commitment to support the cleanup and rehabilitation efforts through a project titled "Pasig Bigyan Buhay Muli (PBBM)." Mrs. Marcos shared her support on Instagram with the caption, "Para sa Pasig River natin!" as the IAC-PRUD unveiled its master plan for the extensive rehabilitation of the river. Mrs. Marcos hopes that the council would be able to transform the Pasig into a tourist attraction like the Thames in England or the Seine in France — a commerce, lifestyle, tourism and culture hub, and drawing visitors from home and overseas.

The IAC-PRUD has identified eight key areas for people-centric improvements, including jogging paths and bike lanes spanning from Manila to Rizal province, traversing major cities in the metropolis. Additionally, plans are in motion to create a Central Park at the Laguna de Bay mouth of the Pasig River, featuring installation art.

Great ideas will only remain on paper if the government does not have the resources to implement them. Now, with the support of both the President and First Lady, this substantial redevelopment along the Pasig River becomes a clearer possibility. We look forward to witnessing the day when the river's beauty is fully restored, much like how Rizal once beheld it.



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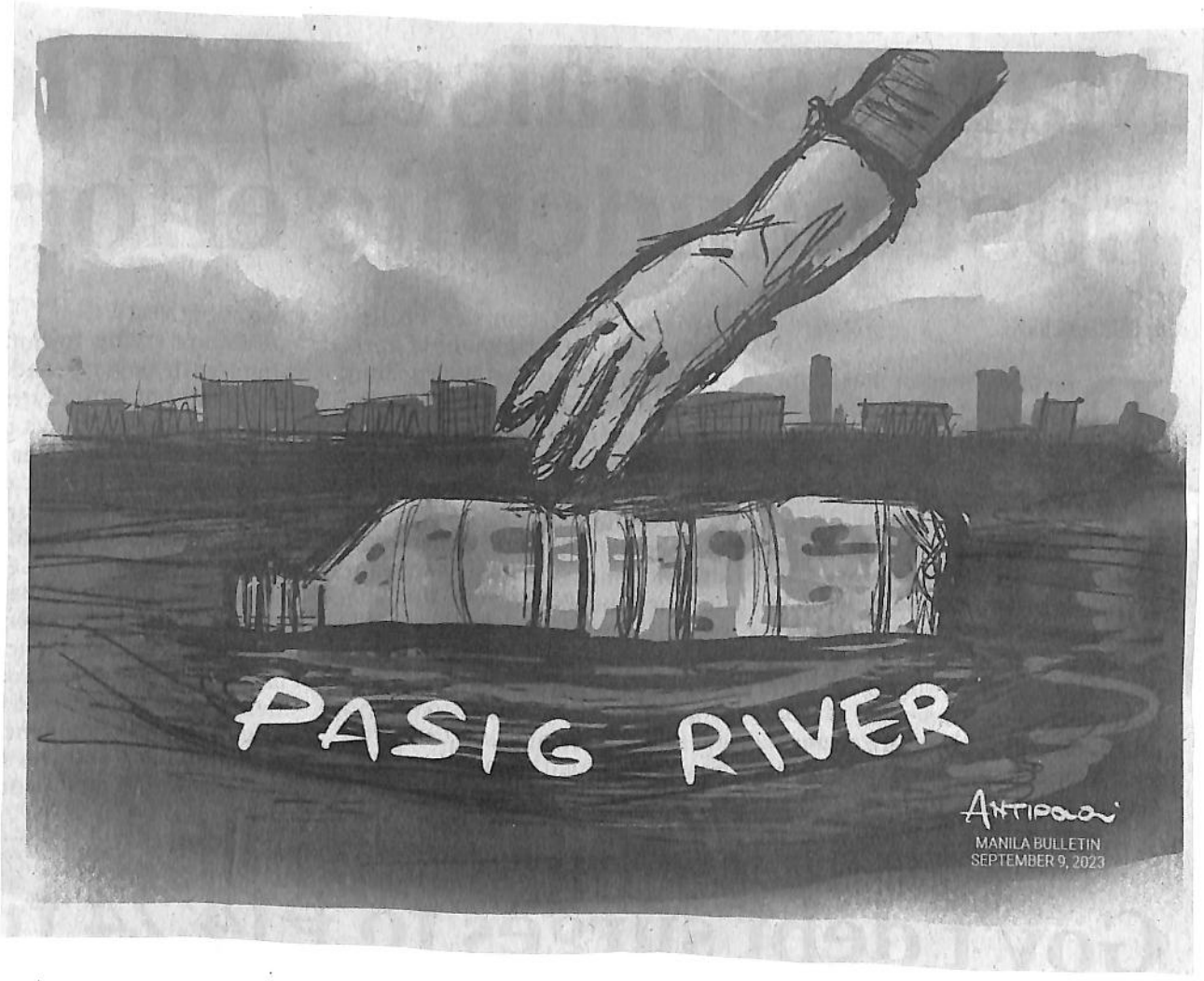
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'Smog' observed in Metro Manila, nearby areas

Thick fog, or "smog", hovered over Metro Manila and nearby areas on Thursday afternoon, September 7, 2023, in what an official of the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical, and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) said was a meteorological phenomenon called "temperature inversion".

PAGASA weather specialist Ana Clauren-Jorda, in an interview on Friday, Sept. 8 explained that temperature inversion occurs when warm air traps the cooler air containing aerosols or air pollutants.

"Kapag mayroon po tayong temperature inversion, yung warm air po ay tinatrap niya 'yung cooler air. Iyon po ang nangyari kahapon. 'Yung hangin po kahapon since nata-trap po siya so mayroon po siyang kasamang kumbaga tinatawag po nating mga aerosols (When we have temperature inversion, the warm air traps the cooler air. That is what happened yesterday, Since it was trapped, it was compounded with what we call as aerosols," Clauren-Jorda said.

She said the temperature inversion occurred 1.3 kilometers from the surface, and was visible around 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. in Metro Manila, Bataan, and other nearby areas.

"Yung mga dumi sa hangin na kung saan malapit po sa lupa 'yung inversion po na iyon, pwede po siyang malanghap ng mga tao, 'yung may mga problema po sa respiratory ay posible pong magkasakit dahil po doon (The dirt in the air, which is close to the ground because of that inversion, people can inhale it, those with respiratory problems can get sick because of that)," Clauren-Jorda added.

She noted that temperature inversion is a usual occurrence, especially during the northeast monsoon or "amihan" season.

Clauren-Jorda advised wearing face masks, especially for those with respiratory problems, and for drivers to "not travel or stop first until the smog disperses" when there is low visibility to avoid accidents. (Lizst Torres Abello)



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Coca-Cola PH commits to sustainability with 'World Without Waste'

Major step to support a circular economy via 'May Ikabobote Pa'

By MAT T. RICHTER

In the Philippines, 2.7 million tons of plastic waste is produced annually, with roughly 20 percent ending up in the ocean. This leads to severe environmental degradation and adverse ecological consequences, affecting habitats and marine life.

Despite the gray canvas, Coca-Cola PH paints the town green with its "World Without Waste" program, refreshing its sustainability efforts by introducing Coca-Cola 190ml and 390ml, Wilkins Pure 500ml, and Sprite 500ml bottles as 100 percent recycled (excluding cap & label).

Coca-Cola with PETValue

Coca-Cola PH has partnered with PETValue, the country's first food-grade, bottle-to-bottle recycling center equipped with nine-step green technology, to gradually improve the beverage company's bottle-recycling efforts.

"By 2030, we aim to collect and recycle a bottle or can for every one we sell, and use at least 50 percent recycled materials in our packaging. We call this initiative 'World Without Waste.'

[...] This is our way of walking the talk toward a vision of a world without waste," shared Antonio Del Rosario, president of Coca-Cola Philippines.

Across the country, Coca-Cola PH has already established more than 2,800 collection drop-off points, where consumers can recycle their used and clean plastic bottles.

"We also believe in using the power

of our brands to engage consumers and how they can contribute and make a difference," added Antonio, highlighting the role of customers in establishing a greener future.

Meanwhile, PETValue's nine-step green technology consists of de-baling, sorting, flaking, float sinking, washing, rinsing, and drying, flake sorting, melting, extruding, and pelletizing, super

cleaning, and lastly, bottle making, to ensure a full-recycled plastic bottle while leaving no waste behind.

From sari-sari stores to collection hubs

In the Philippines, Coca-Cola has partnered with sari-sari stores and wholesalers to collect used clear PET (polyethylene terephthalate) plastic bottles, promoting a circular economy for this packaging material.

PET is highly recyclable; thus, collected PET can be repurposed for new bottles or other applications. These outlets have already participated in programs like Tapon to Ipon, Basta Klaro, Panalo!, and Tindahan Extra Mile to facilitate recycling.

"Our consumers can continue to enjoy our refreshing beverages with family and friends and then return those bottles back to us, so we can give them a new life," shared



Coca-Cola PH family strikes a pose for 'World Without Waste'; (Right photo) Coca-Cola PH President Antonio Del Rosario tackles sustainability.

Gareth McGeown, CEO and President of CCBPI.

Simply put, the initiative's aim is to recycle collected Coca-Cola bottles at the PETValue Philippines facility, which is located in General Trias, Cavite.

"Coca-Cola has been in the Philippines for over 110 years, and it has always been our priority to do our part in building a better world for the communities we serve by operating and growing our business sustainably," added McGeown.

Start your eco-journey today

As companies like Coca-Cola dominate the sustainability scene, the power to make a lasting environmental impact also rests firmly in the consumers' hands. This serves as an invitation for customers to engage in greener actions to preserve the world we live in.

On the other hand, the government will promote social inclusion in the EPR implementation by improving waste pickers' livelihood, partnering with LGUs for financial literacy programs, and enabling sectors to implement a strong data tracking system.

"It is estimated that over 100,000 people in the Philippines work informally collecting, segregating, and selling waste for a living. These groups, referred to as the informal waste sector, include families, women, and children that work either on dump sites or collect waste from households or garbage collectors," shared Atty. Juan Miguel Cuna, DENR Undersecretary for Field Operations - Luzon, Visayas, and Environment.

In essence, each person, whether a producer or consumer, plays a crucial role in achieving a greener tomorrow. With that said, a sustainable Philippines is within reach with collective efforts; by joining hands with initiatives like Coca-Cola's, we can wake up to a greener future.



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LIMA Water renews DENR recognition as testing lab

The laboratory unit of LIMA Water, a water business unit of Aboitiz InfraCapital, has successfully renewed its recognition as an environmental testing laboratory of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), which means it is authorized to conduct testing and analysis of water and wastewater to ensure the quality adheres to national standards.

Committed to upholding the highest standards in effluent testing and analysis, it has obtained the DENR's approval to expand its scope of services, now including additional recognized effluent parameters such as ammonia, nitrate, and color.

Effluent refers to treated wastewater discharged into a natural body of water. To protect the environment and public health from the adverse effects of pollution, the government has established effluent standards and

regulations to limit the amount of pollutants and contaminants permissible for discharge into the environment.

"Having received the DENR's recognition and approval to broaden our scope of services, we are now equipped to extend our laboratory services to other companies, assisting them in ensuring that their effluent adheres to government standards and promotes environmental preservation. With our expanded capabilities, we aim to contribute even more significantly to environmental conservation, water resource management, and sustainable practices," said LIMA Water GM Hazele Manalo.

The renewal of DENR recognition affirms LIMA Water's unwavering dedication to maintaining a robust quality system, technical expertise, advanced equipment and instrumentation, as well as ensuring the consis-



LIMA Water has been authorized by the DENR to expand its services to include the testing and analysis of additional effluent parameters such as ammonia, nitrate, and color.

tent delivery of precise and accurate test effluent data.

"With the recent renewal of LIMA

Water's DENR recognition and the expansion of our laboratory services, we are steadfastly advancing the cause of environmental protection. These milestones hold exceptional significance as we serve a diverse range of companies within the LIMA Estate. Ensuring that the wastewater effluent quality meets the regulatory standards is an important measure to avert water contamination," said Aboitiz InfraCapital Head of Water Business Anna Lu.

LIMA Water is the sole water and wastewater services provider for LIMA Estate, a premiere smart and sustainable industrial development in Calabarzon, hosting more than 150 locators with over 65,000 employees. Operating two wastewater treatment facilities with a combined treatment capacity of 26 million liters of wastewater daily, LIMA Water was able to treat more than 2 billion liters of wastewater in 2022.



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WORLD BITS

■ First phase of Fukushima water release to end Monday

TOKYO, Japan (AFP) — The first phase of releasing treated waste water from Fukushima that has angered China will end on Monday as planned, the stricken Japanese nuclear plant's operator said. TEPCO added that levels of radioactive tritium in tested seawater samples near the plant in north-east Japan were within safe limits, according to a statement late Thursday. Japan began on August 24 discharging into the Pacific some of the 1.34 million tons of waste water that has collected since a tsunami crippled the facility in 2011. Japan insists that the discharge is safe, a view backed by the UN atomic agency, but China banned all seafood imports from its neighbor, accusing it of treating the sea like a "sewer." Announcing the end of the first phase of releasing 7,800 tons of the water on September 11, TEPCO gave no date for the start of the second discharge. "After completion of the first discharge, we will conduct an inspection of (the) entire ... water dilution/discharge facility and review the operational records from the first discharge," it said. It added that a "leak alarm" sounded on Wednesday in a waste water transfer line, but that no leak was detected.



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Time to 'tap' to help the planet

By MAT T. RICHTER

As reported by the Forest Management Bureau (FMB) of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the Philippines is witnessing a distressing annual loss of 47,000 hectares of its precious forest cover.

Let's face it — when we think of environmental work, our minds often conjure images of planting trees, engaging in cleanup projects, and undertaking physical tasks to picture a greener world. This can be daunting, especially for those new to eco-consciousness.

But in today's tech-driven world, advancements offer alternatives to traditional outdoor environmental actions. In fact, you can now form a significant environmental impact without leaving your digital space, even planting

virtual trees!

With that said, here are some tips to help the environment virtually:

GForest

GForest, a feature within the GCash app, enables users to actively participate in reforesting the Philippines, tree by tree. Each time you engage in a Globe transaction, conduct transactions via the app, consistently log in, and undertake eco-conscious activities, you accumulate green energy points within the dedicated GForest section.

These green energy points can then be redeemed to plant trees, which represent real trees to be planted in Philippine reforestation zones.

"Our environmental conservation and awareness efforts extend toward giving back further with GForest. This also doubles as a reward system influencing our users to practice more green habits," said GCash president

and CEO Martha Sazon.

The app has already planted over two million trees nationwide, aiming to reach five million in 2025 — and it's never too late for you to join the movement of virtual planting.

Ecosia

Ecosia is an eco-friendly search engine that funds global tree-planting projects with its ad revenue. This green search engine promotes transparency by regularly publishing financial reports, displaying revenue and trees planted from user searches.

Additionally, they employ renewable energy and energy-efficient technologies to reduce their carbon impact.

"We need to plant billions more trees. If we don't do it, we won't be able to stop climate change, but fortunately, it's something very concrete that we can already get started on," shared Ecosia CEO Christian Kroll,

highlighting the imperative role of tree planting.

It stands out by dedicating 80-85% of its profits to global tree planting, focusing on ecosystem restoration, deforestation prevention, biodiversity conservation, and climate change mitigation. Ultimately, over 181 million trees have been planted since its inception.

Oroeco

Oroeco is a sustainability platform that empowers users to track and reduce their carbon footprint and adopt eco-conscious lifestyles by offering tools and minimizing environmental impact — even through gamification.

Here, users can also set personal sustainability goals and get guidance for reducing emissions and adopting eco-friendly behaviors.

"I believe the combination of life cycle sustainability science, information technology, climate-positive finance, corporate responsibility, and citizen engagement has tremendous potential to reengineer our global economy for sustainability," said Oroeco CEO and Stanford University lecturer on renewable energy and climate change Ian Monroe.

For more than a decade, Oroeco has pioneered technology tools that transform climate action into an enjoyable and rewarding experience.

All in all, to tackle the Philippines' environmental challenges like deforestation and climate change, we need innovation and collective action. The digital era provides accessible alternatives, such as virtual tree planting and online sustainability efforts.

These tech-driven initiatives prove that eco-actions can be effective and engaging, with each little effort contributing to a greener, secure future.

G for a Greener Future Every Day

Activate GForest today!



GForest aims to reach five million trees by 2025 (Photo from GCash website).

ECOSIA



The eco-friendly search engine has already planted 181,840,260 trees (Photo from Ecosia website).



Oroeco has been serving communities for over a decade (Photo from Oroeco website)



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THE CLIMATE REALITY
PROJECT PHILIPPINES

As the extraction and processing of natural resources cause half of global emissions and over 90 percent of biodiversity loss according to the United Nations, shifting to a circular economy is essential to achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement in limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius — the agreed climate threshold by 2100.

For us at The Climate Reality Project Philippines, a circular economy aligns very well with the global and national agenda on climate resilience and sustainable growth. It rectifies our traditional and backward notions and approaches and our hyper-consumeristic behavior and attitude toward development—especially on the aspects of consumption and production where greenhouse gas emissions are mainly concerned.

A report released a few months ago by the United Nations Environment Programme (UN Environment) revealed that we can address plastic pollution using existing technologies and solutions. Here are our key takeaways from the report:

Society is already equipped with tools to reduce plastic pollution dramatically, with the potential for an 80% reduction through the utilization of existing technologies.

Takeaway #1: We already have the tools to turn the tide on plastic pollution.

Plastic pollution could be reduced by 80 percent by 2040 using existing technologies. To achieve this, the report proposed a systems change scenario focused on accelerating three key market shifts: Reuse, Recycle, and Reorient and Diversify.

1. Promoting reuse and new delivery options can reduce plastic pollution by 30 percent by 2040. The most powerful market

How can the world end plastic pollution and create a circular economy?

A radical change in how we use plastic could save the planet

WE ALREADY HAVE THE TOOLS TO TURN THE TIDE ON PLASTIC POLLUTION

Plastic pollution could be reduced by 80 percent by 2040 using existing technologies. To achieve this, the report proposed a systems change scenario focused on accelerating three key market shifts:

1. REUSE
2. RECYCLE
3. REORIENT AND DIVERSIFY

shift, as we in Climate Reality Philippines has been highlighting, is reducing waste at source. This means eliminating single-use plastics and adopting reuse schemes.

Bans on single-use plastics is necessary to complement pricing policies, such as levies and Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) schemes.

For re-use schemes, the re-

need to establish common design rules and standards, including the reduction of polymers and removal of additives that interfere with recycling economics. This should go hand-in-hand with putting in place efficient waste collection and sorting systems within our communities.

It is also critical to remove existing government subsidies for fossil fuels, which currently makes virgin plastics cheaper

than recycled materials. Doing this would level the playing field for recycling.

3. Shifting to sustainable alternatives to plastic (reorienting and diversifying the market) can lead to a 17 percent reduction in pollution by 2040.

Plastic wrappers, sachets, and takeaway items must be replaced with products made of alternative materials, such as paper, compostable materials, and recycled plastic.

According to the UN Environment, imposing a virgin plastic tax would contribute to improving the economics of alternative materials.

Takeaway #2: Dealing with plastic legacy is a complex problem. But with the right mix of solutions, we can make a difference.

Plastic legacy is defined by the UN Environment as “plastics that cannot be reused or recycled, including plastics that are already in the environment as existing pollution, or are stocked or will enter in the economy.”

Even if we succeed at implementing the three market shifts discussed above, the report warned that we are

still left to deal with an estimated 100 million metric tons of plastics from short-lived products brought into circularity (meaning not yet reduced and substituted by 2040).

To manage plastic legacy, the report highlighted the following actions:

1. We need to prevent microplastics at their source. Private businesses must improve design of garments, ban the use of intentionally added microplastics to personal care products, among others.
2. Governments need to ensure safe collection and disposal of non-circular plastics. This includes assessing disposal facilities and identifying new capacity needs.
3. Plastic waste exports must be eliminated. Disposal of waste in the country where waste is generated is always preferred, except for cases where the better option is exporting to neighboring countries with better capacity.
4. Deal with existing plastic pollution. Financing instruments are needed to improve waste management systems. Plastic credit systems must be implemented with environmental and social safeguard systems.

Takeaway #3: A shift to a circular economy makes economic sense.

Shifting from a linear to circular approach would result in 700,000 more jobs by 2040 than business-as-usual. This is in consideration of the fact that actions needed for the circular economy (collection, sorting, recycling, washing of re-usables) are more labor-intensive than mechanized production of new plastics.

The transition is also estimated to result in US\$1.27 trillion in savings considering investment, operations, and management costs and recycling revenues. A further US\$3.25 trillion is saved from avoided externalities from the adverse impacts of plastic pollution.

EVEN IF WE SUCCEEDED AT IMPLEMENTING THE THREE MARKET SHIFTS, WE ARE STILL LEFT TO DEAL WITH PLASTIC WASTE EQUIVALENT TO ALMOST EQUAL IN WEIGHT TO FIVE MILLION SHIPPING CONTAINERS

When placed end to end, that would stretch for 30,000 km or about a return trip from New York City to Sydney!



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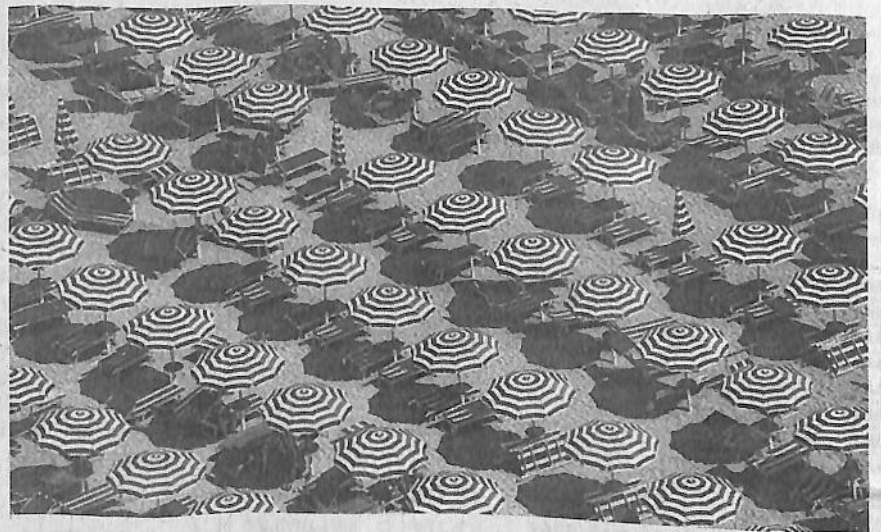
Climate change supercharged this summer's record heat

Record-shattering temperatures that impacted billions of people in the northern hemisphere this summer were given a massive boost by human-caused climate change, an analysis showed.

The new paper by the nonprofit Climate Central group examined the period from June to August 2023, finding that greenhouse gas emissions pumped into the atmosphere since the start of the industrial era made the heat waves that baked Asia, Africa, Europe, and North America far more likely.

Nearly half of the global population — more than 3.8 billion people — were exposed to 30 or more days of extreme heat worsened by climate change, while at least 1.5 billion people lived through such temperatures every day over those three months.

"Virtually no one on Earth escaped the influence of global warming during the past three months," said Andrew Pershing, Climate Central's vice president for science. "In every country we could analyze, including the southern hemisphere where this is the coolest time of year, we



saw temperatures that would be difficult — and in some cases nearly impossible — without human-caused climate change. Carbon pollution is clearly responsible for this season's record-setting heat."

The analysis relied on peer-reviewed methods to determine the likelihood of daily temperatures in each country of the world with and without today's levels of carbon pollution.

A similar approach has allowed

scientists to identify the climate influence, or "fingerprint," of extreme weather events, including recently the fire prone weather conditions that led to this year's wildfires in Quebec.

Climate Central has developed a Climate Shift Index (CSI) that ranges from -5 to 5, with positive levels indicating temperatures that are becoming more likely due to climate change.

A CSI of level 0 means climate change had no detectable influence, while level 3 indicates it made the

odds of recording a specific temperature in a given time and place three times greater.

According to the team's calculations, 48 percent of the world experienced 30 days during June-August with a CSI level of 3 or higher, while 1.5 billion people had such heat over the whole summer.

"There really is this divide between the countries that have been the most responsible for climate change for the pollution that is driving the heat that we're experiencing right now," said Pershing.

The world's least-developed nations and small island states, he said, are experiencing heat that is three to four times more climate-supercharged than G20 countries with the largest economies.

Global exposure meanwhile peaked on Aug. 16, 2023, when 4.2 billion people worldwide experienced climate-caused extreme heat.

"A big part of what we're trying to do with this analysis, is to really come up with ways to try to localize that climate, that experience that individuals are having with climate change," said Pershing. (AFP)



PH advocacy groups join Asia-wide protests ahead of G20 Summit

By Ronald O. Reyes

FILIPINO advocacy groups joined the Asia-wide protest actions against climate and debt crises ahead of the Group of 20 (G20) Summit hosted in New Delhi, India, on September 9-10.

"We demand that the G20 govern-

ments commit to bolder measures to address the multiple crises, including mobilizing much-needed resources through inclusive debt cancellation, adoption of wealth taxes for spending on urgent economic and climate action, and the rechanneling of public funds away from fossil fuel subsidies towards

renewable energy systems," said Lidy Nacpil, coordinator of Asian Peoples' Movement on Debt and Development (APMDD), on Friday.

Similar protests were held in Jakarta, Dhaka, Kathmandu, Karachi, Lahore and Colombo.

The groups maintained that G20 coun-

tries together contribute to 75 percent of global trade and almost 85 percent of the world's gross domestic product, while they also account for 80 percent of world power sector emissions, with per capita CO2 from coal power at 1.6 tons in 2022, up from 1.5 tons in 2015 and significantly higher than a global average of 1.1 tons.



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Split G20 off to India; Modi pitches for unity

BY AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
WITH A REPORT FROM JAVIER JOE ISMAEL

DIVIDED G20 leaders will descend on New Delhi from Friday, with host Prime Minister Narendra Modi seizing a chance to occupy the geopolitical center stage and hammer home India's growing diplomatic clout.

Around the summit table, there will be a few notable absences — with Chinese leader Xi Jinping and Russia's Vladimir Putin both opting to stay at home.

Deep disagreements on Russia's war in Ukraine, the phasing out of fossil fuels, and debt restructuring will make any agreements at the end of the two-day meeting difficult to come by.

But sensing an opportunity to burnish his credentials as a statesman ahead of a re-election tilt early next year, Modi has thrust himself into any void left by Xi or Putin.

Sumedha Dasgupta, senior Asia analyst with the Economist Intelligence Unit, believes that "India will try to be a credible voice that can facilitate dialogue between the global north and south."

On Thursday, Modi repeated his desire to expand the bloc into the "G21" with the "inclusion of the African Union as a permanent member."

Tackling climate change

Modi has tried to use the G20 to build consensus among key economies to reform global multilateral institutions like the United Nations to give a greater say to developing countries such as India, Brazil and South Africa.

But with China represented by Premier Li Qiang rather than Xi, it is far from clear what, if anything, can be agreed upon.

Representatives from 20 leading economies are gathering in the Indian capital at a time of intense trade tensions between the world's two largest economies, China and the United States.

The grouping is also split over Russia's invasion of Ukraine, with many developing members more concerned with high grain prices than joining diplomatic condemnations of Moscow's behavior.

Modi's efforts to urge G20 leaders to sidestep deep divisions to address critical global issues — including global debt restructuring and commodity price shocks following Russia's invasion — have been unsuccessful in ministerial meetings ahead of the summit.

A G20 energy ministers' meeting in July failed to agree on a roadmap to phase down the use of fossil fuels — or even mention coal, the dirty fuel that remains a key energy source for economies like India and China.

Xi's absence will also impact Washington's bid to keep the G20 the main forum of global economic cooperation, and its efforts to make a financing push for developing countries.

"Without China being on board ... issues may not really see the light of day or reach any logical conclusion," said Happymon Jacob, a politics professor at India's Jawaharlal Nehru University.

World is one family

Amid apparently irreconcilable differences among G20 leaders, presiding PM Modi has latched on to an "all-embracing outlook that would spur member-economies to progress as one universal family, transcending borders, languages, and ideologies."

In a statement sent to the *Manila Times* through the Indian Embassy in Manila, PM Modi also stated that during India's G20 presidency, this outlook has

translated into a call for human-centric progress.

"As One Earth, we are coming together to nurture our planet. As One Family, we support each other in the pursuit of growth. And we move together towards a shared future — One Future — which is an undeniable truth in these interconnected times," Modi said.

Modi emphasized that the post-pandemic world order is very different from where it was before, citing three vital shifts in mindset, including the growing realization that a shift away from a GDP-centric view of the world to a human-centric view is needed; the recognition of the importance of resilience and reliability in global supply chains; and the collective call for boosting multilateralism through the reform of global institutions.

Modi said that India's G20 presidency has played the role of a catalyst in these shifts.

"In December 2022, when we took over the Presidency from Indonesia, I had written that a mindset shift must be catalyzed by the G20. This was especially needed in the context of mainstreaming the marginalized aspirations of developing countries, the Global South and Africa," he said.

He said that the Voice of Global South Summit in January 2023, which witnessed participation from 125 countries, was one of the foremost initiatives under India's Presidency.

Democratizing climate action

Modi explained that in India, living in harmony with nature has been a norm since ancient times, and we have been contributing our share toward climate action even in modern times.

"Many countries of the Global South are at various stages of development, and climate action must be a complementary pursuit. Ambitions for climate action must be matched with actions on climate finance and transfer of technology," he said.

"We believe there is a need to

move away from a purely restrictive attitude of what should not be done, to a more constructive attitude focusing on what can be done to fight climate change," he further stated.

Modi cited that democratizing climate action is the best way to impart momentum to the movement. Just as individuals make daily decisions based on their long-term health, they can make lifestyle decisions based on the impact on the planet's long-term health.

Inclusive technology

PM Modi noted that technology's transformative capability is immense, but it needs to be made inclusive.

"In the past, the benefits of technological advancements have not benefited all sections of society equally. India, over the last few years, has shown how technology can be leveraged to narrow inequalities, rather than widen them.

"For instance, the billions across the world that remain unbanked, or lack digital identities, can be financially included through digital public infrastructure (DPI).

"That India is the fastest-growing large economy is no accident. Our simple, scalable and sustainable solutions have empowered the vulnerable and the marginalized to lead our development story.

"From space to sports, economy to entrepreneurship, Indian women have taken the lead in various sectors. They have shifted the narrative from the development of women to women-led development.

"Our G20 Presidency is working on bridging the gender digital divide, reducing labor force participation gaps and enabling a larger role for women in leadership and decision-making.

"For India, the G20 Presidency is not merely a high-level diplomatic endeavor. As the Mother of Democracy and a model of diversity, we opened the doors of this experience to the world," PM Modi said.



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Climate gridlock feared at G20 summit

BANGKOK, Thailand (AFP) — G20 leaders meet this weekend during what is likely the hottest year in human history, but hopes are slim that the divided grouping can agree ambitious action on the crisis.

Geopolitical tensions that have seen Russian President Vladimir Putin and Chinese leader Xi Jinping skip the talks mean the group is unlikely to even achieve the traditional final communique, let alone robust climate pledges.

That sets up a "potentially catastrophic" failure by nations that account for 80 percent of global power sector emissions, Amnesty International warned Thursday.

And it could lower expectations ahead of crucial COP28 climate talks that begin in November.

Three key climate issues will be on the table in New Delhi: a push to triple global renewable energy capacity by 2030; weaning economies off fossil fuels — particularly coal; and finance for the green transition in developing countries.

The build-up to the summit suggests a difficult path to progress on any of those.

In July, G20 energy ministers failed to even mention coal in their final statement, let alone agree a phase down roadmap, and there was no progress on the renewables goal.

"The communiqués that have come out are woefully inadequate," UN climate change chief Simon Stiell told AFP this week.

The backdrop to the talks could hardly be starker: the EU's climate monitor this week said this year is likely to be the hottest in human history, with UN chief Antonio Guterres declaring: "climate breakdown has begun."

"Our climate is imploding faster than we can cope," he warned.

Evidence of that has been abundant, with devastating flooding, record heat and ferocious wildfires across much of the world in recent months.

G20 countries account for 85 percent of global GDP and a similar amount



OFF TO G20 SUMMIT — US President Joe Biden is welcomed by Colonel Angela Ochoa, 89th Air Wing, as he arrives to board Air Force One at Joint Base Andrews in Maryland on September 7, 2023. Biden is traveling to the G20 Summit in New Delhi, before making stops in Hanoi, Vietnam, and Alaska. (AFP)

of global climate warming emissions, making action in the forum crucial to real progress.

Climate finance demands

But per capita coal emissions have risen across the G20 since 2015, research showed this week, despite transition efforts by some members.

The nine percent hike was largely driven by increases in countries including host India, Indonesia and China.

That coal dependence, along with geopolitical fault lines on Russia's Ukraine invasion and disputes with Beijing, will make agreement on a phase down tricky.

"At the minimum, I hope they will include lines from Bali on coal phase

down," said Madhura Joshi, a senior associate at climate think E3G, referring to last year's summit, where members committed to "accelerating efforts" on a "phasedown of unabated coal power, in line with national circumstances."

Another key sticking point may be financing for the energy transition.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who has tried to position himself as the voice of the "Global South", insisted ahead of the meeting that climate ambitions "must be matched with actions on climate finance and transfer of technology."

Wealthy nations have already failed to deliver on a pledge to provide \$100 billion a year in climate finance to poorer nations by 2020.



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Human-centric globalization: Taking G20 to the Last Mile, leaving none behind

By NARENDRA MODI
Prime Minister of India

Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam – these two words capture a deep philosophy. It means ‘the world is one family.’ This is an all-embracing outlook that encourages us to progress as one universal family, transcending borders, languages and ideologies. During India’s G20 presidency, this has translated into a call for human-centric progress. As One Earth, we are coming together to nurture our planet. As One Family, we support each other in the pursuit of growth. And we move together towards a shared future – One Future – which is an undeniable truth in these interconnected times.



The post-pandemic world order is very different from the world before it. There are three important changes, among others.

First, there is a growing realization that a shift away from a GDP-centric view of the world to a human-centric view is needed.

Second, the world is recognizing the importance of resilience and reliability in global supply chains.

Third, there is a collective call for boosting multi-lateralism through the reform of global institutions.

Our G20 presidency has played the role of a catalyst in these shifts.

In December 2022, when we took over the presidency from Indonesia, I had written that a mindset shift must be catalyzed by the G20. This was especially needed in the context of mainstreaming the marginalized aspirations of developing countries, the Global South and Africa.

We believe there is a need to move away from a purely restrictive attitude of what should not be done, to a more constructive attitude focusing on what can be done to fight climate change. Ambitions for climate action must be matched with actions on climate finance and transfer of technology.

The Voice of Global South Summit in January 2023, which witnessed participation from 125 countries, was one of the foremost initiatives under our presidency. It was an important exercise to gather inputs and ideas from the Global South. Further, our presidency has not only seen the largest-ever participation from African countries but has also pushed for the inclusion of the African Union as a permanent member of the G20.

An interconnected world means our challenges across domains are interlinked. This is the midway year of the 2030 Agenda and many are noting with great concern that the progress on SDGs is off-track. The G20 2023 Action Plan on Accelerating Progress on SDGs will spearhead the future direction of the G20 towards implementing the SDGs.

In India, living in harmony with nature has been a norm since ancient times and we have been contributing our share towards climate action even in modern times.

Many countries of the Global South are at various stages of development and climate action must be a complementary pursuit. Ambitions for climate action must be matched with actions on climate finance and transfer of technology.

We believe there is a need to move away from a purely restrictive attitude of what should not be done, to a more constructive attitude focusing on what can be done to fight climate change.

The Chennai High-Level Principles for a Sustainable and Resilient Blue Economy focus on keeping our oceans healthy.

A global ecosystem for clean and green hydrogen will emerge from our presidency, along with a Green Hydrogen Innovation Center.

In 2015, we launched the International Solar Alliance. Now, through the Global Biofuels Alliance, we will support the world to enable energy transitions in tune with the benefits of a circular economy.

Democratizing climate action is the best way to impart momentum to the movement. Just as individuals make daily decisions based on their long-term health, they can make lifestyle decisions based on the impact on the planet’s long-term health. Just like yoga became a global mass movement for wellness, we have also nudged the world with Lifestyles for Sustainable Environment (LiFE).

Due to the impact of climate change, ensuring food and nutritional security will be crucial. Millets, or *Shree Anna*, can help with this while also boosting climate-smart agriculture. In the International Year of Millets, we have taken millets to global palates. The Deccan High Level Principles on Food Security and Nutrition is also helpful in this direction.

Technology is transformative but it also needs to be made inclusive. In the past, the benefits of technological advancements have not benefited all sections of society equally. India, over the last few years, has shown how technology can be leveraged to narrow inequalities, rather than widen them.

For instance, the billions across the world that remain unbanked, or lack digital identities, can be financially included through digital public infrastructure (DPI). The solutions we have built using our DPI have now been recognized globally. Now, through the G20, we will help developing countries adapt, build and scale DPI to unlock the power of inclusive growth.

That India is the fastest-growing large economy is no accident. Our simple, scalable and sustainable

solutions have empowered the vulnerable and the marginalized to lead our development story. From space to sports, economy to entrepreneurship, Indian women have taken the lead in various sectors. They have shifted the narrative from the development of women to women-led development. Our G20 presidency is working on bridging the gender digital divide, reducing labor force participation gaps and enabling a larger role for women in leadership and decision-making.

For India, the G20 presidency is not merely a high-level diplomatic endeavor. As the Mother of Democracy and a model of diversity, we opened the doors of this experience to the world.

Today, accomplishing things at scale is a quality that is associated with India. The G20 presidency is no exception. It has become a people-driven movement. Over 200 meetings will have been organized in 60 Indian cities across

the length and breadth of our nation, hosting nearly 100,000 delegates from 125 countries by the end of our term. No presidency has ever encompassed such a vast and diverse geographical expanse.

It is one thing to hear about India’s demography, democracy, diversity and development from someone else. It is totally different to experience them first-hand. I am sure our G20 delegates would vouch for this.

Our G20 presidency strives to bridge divides, dismantle barriers and sow seeds of collaboration that nourish a world where unity prevails over discord, where shared destiny eclipses isolation. As the G20 president, we had pledged to make the global table larger, ensuring that every voice is heard and every country contributes. I am positive that we have matched our pledge with actions and outcomes.

★



Climate change: The young people are always part of the equation

WHEN a group of 16 young people, ages 5 to 22, won a case on climate change in the State of Montana in August of this year, climate activists believed that the landmark decision would reverberate around the world.

Amid the hottest months, the judge ruled that the failure of the state to consider climate change or greenhouse gas emissions when approving fossil fuel activities was unconstitutional. Under the state's 1972 Constitution, "[T]he State and each person shall maintain and improve a clean and healthful environment in Montana for present and future generations."

According to a report by The New York Times, the judge acknowledged Montana for its natural beauty, diverse wildlife and abundance of natural mineral resources: the state has "5,000 gas wells, 4,000 oil wells, four oil refineries and six coal mines." The judge added, "Montana is a major emitter of greenhouse gas emissions in the world, in absolute terms, in person terms, and historically."

Greta Thunberg is the most recognized climate activist worldwide. She started leading strikes every Friday in her home country of Sweden at age 15 and is now a global phenomenon who has inspired many young people to protest against climate change.

During the COP24 (24th Session of the Conference of Parties of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change) in Katowice, Poland in 2018, Greta said: "[T]he year 2078, I will celebrate my 75th birthday. If I have children, maybe they will spend that day with me. Maybe they will ask about you. Maybe they will ask why you didn't do anything while there still was time to act."

"You say you love your children above all else, and yet you are stealing their future in front of their very eyes. Until you start focusing on what needs to be done rather than what is politically possible, there is hope. We cannot solve a crisis without treating it as a crisis," continued Greta.

In the local scene, I have always considered Marinel Ubaldo as the foremost Filipino young climate activist. As a fellow member of the Board of Directors of Climate Tracker Asia, Marinel organized the first youth climate strike and led the first Local Conference of Youth in the Philippines.

When asked what young people could do to help fight the climate crisis, Marinel shared: "[I]f you can already register to vote, one simple way of doing climate action is to select the best leader who is an ally for the environment. If the government or the people in power actually take our demands seriously, then we are moving forward with our agenda, which is to prioritize climate action."

In my decade of climate work, the young people are always part of the



equation. "I have given over a-quarter-of-a-thousand climate talks, mostly with young people, and I have never doubted that the Filipino youth are key partners in climate action."

Learn. Experience. Nurture. Inspire. (L.E.N.I.) Framework

A few days ago, I took a 12-hour bus trip to Camarines Norte, one of the six provinces in the Bicol Region, to grace the Bicol Young Leaders Congress 2023. Tasked to deliver the inspirational message, I shared the L.E.N.I. Framework on Youth Climate Leadership. With the theme, "Journeying toward creating impacts," and with no intent to provide any political dimension, I endeavor that these four components can contribute to effective youth climate leadership.

Learn. Continuous learning is a hallmark of great young leaders. Young climate leaders must be open to acquiring new knowledge, skills and perspectives. They need to seek and understand the changing landscape, the needs of their team, and the broader societal and global trends that may impact their organization. Learning fosters adaptability, innovation and the ability to make science-based and risk-informed decisions.

Experience. Leadership experience, both successes and failures, shapes a leader's abilities. Real-world challenges provide opportunities for young climate leaders to develop problem-solving skills, resilience and a deep understanding of the complexities of their roles. Experienced climate leaders draw upon past situations to navigate new chal-



■ The author sharing his L.E.N.I. Framework on Effective Youth Climate Leadership with the delegates to the Bicolano Young Leaders Congress 2023 in Vinzons, Camarines Norte. PHOTOS FROM LUDWIG FEDERIGAN

lenges more effectively.

Nurture. A process of caring for and developing the people within the leader's sphere of influence. Effective young climate leaders understand the importance of creating a supportive and inclusive environment for their team. They mentor, coach and empower their team to grow, excel and reach their full potential. Nurturing relationships within the team fosters trust, loyalty and a sense of shared purpose.

Inspire. Inspiring climate leadership involves motivating and guiding others toward a common vision. Climate leaders inspire by setting a compelling example, sharing their passion and enthusiasm, and demonstrating a strong commitment to the organization's values and goals. Inspirational climate leaders communicate a clear vision, articulate the "why" behind their actions and encourage others to contribute their best efforts.

Combining these elements leads to a well-rounded and impactful leadership style. Effective leadership is context-dependent, and there is no one-size-fits-

all formula. Different situations require different emphasis on these elements. Self-awareness and the ability to adapt are key qualities for leaders seeking to integrate these principles into their leadership approach.

Young climate leaders are invaluable resources, and their development is linked to the nation's long-term economic, political and social stability, among other things. The belief is that, given the correct environment and chances, young people are the most significant answer to the climate emergency both on the global and national scale. After all, our life is all about choices.

Ludwig O. Federigan is the executive director of the Young Environmental Forum and a nonresident fellow of Stratbase ADR Institute. He completed his climate change and development at the University of East Anglia (United Kingdom) and an executive program on sustainability leadership at Yale University (USA). You can email him at ludwig.federigan@gmail.com.



■ The author (4th from left, top most row) with the delegates to the Bicolano Young Leaders Congress 2023 at Malignat Integrated Farm in Vinzons, Camarines Norte.



EDITORIAL

Era of 'global boiling'

WE HEARD the chief of the United Nations when he spoke recently in New York where he described the blistering heat across the northern hemisphere as a "cruel summer."

Underlying that climate change, a terrifying episode, is here, United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said, "For the entire planet, it is a disaster," and noted that short of a mini-Ice Age, July 2023 shattered records across the board.

Guterres called for radical action on climate change, stressing the record-shattering July temperatures showed Earth has passed from a warming phase into an "era of global warming."

He added: "Climate change is here. It is terrifying. And it is just the beginning. The era of global warming has ended; the era of global boiling has arrived."

Ahead of the Climate Ambition Summit he is set to host on September 20, Guterres called on developed countries to commit to achieving carbon neutrality as close to 2040 as possible, and for emerging economies as close as possible to 2050.

The Summit would be participated in by governments, business, finance, local authorities and civil society including "first movers and doers" or those who have geared up to address the phenomenon.

We see the Summit represents a critical

Populations that are the least responsible for the climate crisis are suffering from its impacts and need immediate help to adapt and recover from loss and damage

political milestone for demonstrating that there is collective global will to accelerate the pace

and scale of a just transition to a more equitable renewable-energy based, climate-resilient global economy.

Doubtless, climate change is the crucial issue of our time and we are at a defining moment.

From shifting weather patterns that threaten food production, to rising sea levels that increase the risk of catastrophic flooding, the impacts of climate change are global in scope and unprecedented in scale.

The "destruction" unleashed by humanity "must not inspire despair, but action," Guterres said, warning that to prevent the worst outcomes humanity "must turn a year of burning heat into a year of burning ambition."

The latest scientific assessment by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has once more highlighted the urgency to act.

The damage from the climate crisis is extensive, and global greenhouse gas emissions remain at record levels.

The world needs immediate and deep reductions in emissions now, and over the course of the next three decades, to limit global warming to 1.5°C degrees above pre-industrial levels and prevent the worst impacts.

Meanwhile, populations that are the least responsible for the climate crisis are suffering from its impacts and need immediate help to adapt and recover from loss and damage.

As authorities have pointed out, this is an issue of equity and climate justice which requires immediate attention from governments and international financial institutions.



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REGIONAL CLIMATE COLLABORATION Distinguished panelists gathered at the Asian Conference on Climate Change and Disaster Resilience held at the Asian Institute of Management's Fuller Hall: Dr. Olivier Roche, AIM Stephen Zuellig Graduate School of Development Management head; Sec. Robert Borje, commissioner and vice chair of the Climate Change Commission; Dr. Jikyeong Kang, AIM president and dean; Sen. Loren Legarda, Senate president pro tempore; Dr. Marqueza Reyes, ACCCDR convener and AIM professor; Dr. Vinod Thomas, AIM distinguished fellow in Development Management; and Dr. Chad Briggs, research professor of the College of Business and Public Policy at the University of Alaska-Anchorage. According to AIM, the event marked a pivotal step in regional collaboration for climate action and disaster resilience.



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DOE to showcase PBBM admin's nuclear plan at global event

By MYRNA VELASCO

LONDON, England – The Philippines will take center stage at the ongoing World Nuclear Symposium here to apprise global investors of the Marcos administration's plan to venture into nuclear power installations as part of the country's energy mix by the turn of the decade.

Energy Undersecretary Sharon S. Garin will be presenting the nuclear development pathway being cast by the Marcos administration, including pro-pounded deployments of small modular reactors (SMRs) in sites that will be strategically chosen both by the government and the prospective investors.

In an interview here, Garin noted "it's an opportunity for the Philippines to show them that we are serious about nuclear and we need all the assistance from the different investing communities for this technology development."

The Philippines is eyeing initial nuclear power installations of up to 1,200 megawatts capacity by 2032, and while at its inception phase, the country is already being viewed by the global investing community as a prospective newcomer in this technology rollout sphere.

Apart from the Asian nuclear powerhouses of Japan, South Korea, China and India, the Philippines is the only Southeast Asian country invited by the World Nuclear Association to present its investment goal for SMRs and even prospective buildout of conventional reactors.

Apart from the well-known dilemmas of social acceptance, policy and regulation crafting, as well as ensuring safety of nuclear power development and operations, the energy official said other key concerns the government must seriously weigh in are the supply chain and financing concerns.

"On issues of supply chain and financing, that is a totally new ball game for the Philippines, so at least, we're giving word to the global community that we are still navigating these," she stressed.

Supply chain concerns range from uranium production cycle and supply sourcing conversion, and enrichment of fuels. These include the need to avoid those that could be regarded as nuclear weapons-grade enrichment, power plant construction issues that will also cover technical expertise of workers plus the distressing cost overruns, and the concerns on waste management and disposal as well as decommissioning.

Garin emphasized that the common thread of discussion at the global nuclear conference is on project delays precipitated by cost overruns experienced by developers in their projects. Hence, this will be a tough lesson that the Philippine government and even the prospective investors must carefully evaluate moving forward.

"On the financing part, there will be huge capital outlay for nuclear projects; and even developed countries like the UAE (United Arab Emirates) encountered project delays and that entailed additional billions of investments, so it's not that easy probably for us on the financing side," she said.

Garin stressed that "another one that we need to think about is how we will eventually advance on the construction phase of the planned projects, then project management – so that's where we would be needing additional help, to develop expertise on nuclear power plant construction and operations."

Concerning policy milieu, the Department of Energy official said the current nuclear position of the government serves as a good starting point, but for this targeted investment direction to be sustained, the enactment of a law underpinning nuclear power development will serve as the "no-turning back point" for the Philippines.