

16 September 2023 Saturday



**DENR**

# **NEWS ALERTS**

# **NEWS CLIPPINGS**

**STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE**





## EDITORIAL

# Cleaning up the coasts

The Philippines joins the world in marking International Coastal Cleanup Day today as 22 reclamation projects in Manila Bay remain on hold on orders of President Marcos amid concerns about their long-term destructive impact on the environment.

The projects, all of which were approved during the Duterte administration, went against a Supreme Court writ of continuing mandamus issued on Dec. 18, 2008, ordering 13 government agencies to clean up, rehabilitate and preserve Manila Bay to make the water fit for swimming, skin-diving and other forms of contact recreation.

This year, portions of Bulacan have been submerged in floodwaters almost throughout the entire typhoon-monsoon season. Classes are being held in flooded school rooms. Fisherfolk are complaining that their fish catch has dropped dramatically because of reclamation activities along coastal communities in the province and neighboring Pampanga.

Apart from reclamation activities, coastal areas in this archipelago of over 7,600 islands suffer from indiscriminate waste disposal and pollution. In Manila Bay, the pollution is highlighted on the

artificial off-white dolomite beach constructed in the city of Manila – another controversial project of the previous administration, which will again be a focus of today's coastal cleanup activities.

Tons of trash wash up on the shores of the bay after a typhoon or even a monsoon-induced downpour, with the garbage coming from coastal communities as well as the numerous waterways that open out into the bay. In marking International Coastal Cleanup Day, there will be special focus as usual on plastic waste. But all sorts of garbage as well as toxic industrial waste end up in waterways all over the country. The problem has long called for more efficient waste management as well as a change in people's trash disposal habits.

In many communities, indiscriminate garbage disposal has led to clogged drainage and siltation in waterways, which aggravate flooding. Recycling efforts have been ongoing for decades but have achieved slow progress. On this special day, people can renew their commitment not only to keep coastal areas clean but also to promote efficient waste management and proper garbage disposal, both at home and in public places.



## Loyzaga pushes fight vs. plastic pollution

AHEAD of the 37th annual International Coastal Clean-up on September 16, Environment Secretary Antonia Loyzaga underscored the importance of engaging all sectors in the fight against plastic pollution.

The Secretary urged businesses to comply with the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) Law.

She said the government alone cannot solve the problem of plastic pollution through EPR law on plastic waste.

"This is a whole-of-society and whole-of-government effort. It cannot be achieved by the DENR alone," Loyzaga said.

Republic Act 11898 or the EPR Act serves as the environmental policy approach and practice that requires producers to be environmentally responsible throughout the life cycle of a product, especially its post-consumer or end-of-life stage. This requires large companies to adopt and implement policies for the proper management of plastic packaging wastes, including single-use plastics.



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Department of Tourism Secretary Christina Frasco joins DOT employees, divers, local officials, representatives from various national government agencies and tourism stakeholders in a coastal cleanup drive organized by DOT-Region 7 at the beachfront of the Mactan Shrine in Lapu-Lapu City yesterday as part of activities of the 1st Philippine Tourism Dive Dialogue. **EDD GUMBAN**





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# Manila Standard

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## COASTAL CLEANUP.

Tourism Secretary Christina Garcia Frasco (center) and Department of Tourism employees join divers, local officials, and tourism stakeholders in a coastal cleanup drive organized by the DOT-Region 7 at the beachfront of the Mactan Shrine in Lapu-Lapu City, Cebu on Friday, September 15, 2023.

Norman Cruz





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**THE BIG CLEANUP.** Environmentalist group Earth Island Institute Asia-Pacific leads a coastal clean-up at the Las Piñas-Paranaque Critical Habitat and Ecotourism Area as part of a collective effort to protect and preserve the country's oceans and coastlines. This initiative is attuned to the annual International Coastal Clean-up Day and echoes this year's theme, #SeaThe Change. This yearly event serves as a strong call to action, urging the world to address the worsening plastic pollution crisis. **Norman Cruz**





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PROJECT CARBON NEUTRAL

## HOW LASALLIANS BOOST ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS IN PH

With the aim to raise awareness on environmental protection, the Lasallian Earth Day (LED) leads the community into leading an eco-friendly and sustainable lifestyle.

Observed every first Friday of each month, LED was launched by the De La Salle Philippines to heighten the Lasallian commitment across several schools, colleges and universities to adapting earth-friendly measures.

It aligns with the institutions' Project Carbon Neutral, an initiative that shifted the schools into using energy-efficient materials to lessen the carbon emissions that contribute to global warming.

In particular, the De La Salle-College of Saint Benilde (DLS-CSB) has implemented several sustainable practices within all its campuses. The college currently organizes experiential and educational activities, to include tree planting programs, as well as waste segregation campaigns through color-coded trash bins.

DLS-CSB likewise enforced a complete ban on all forms of single-use plastics such as bags, cutlery, plates, cups, straws, stirrers and bubble wraps. Meanwhile, polyethylene terephthalate or PET bottles and plastic lid containers are highly discouraged beginning academic year 2023-2024.



A person sorts the plastic bags



Stacked newspapers and other materials

Students, professors and associates are urged to use their own reusable items. They are enjoined to embrace healthier food options that

may incline them to prepare homemade snacks and beverages, decreasing their dependence on processed and packaged meals.

Three drop-off points have been set up for recyclable materials, located at the Miguel Febres Cordero Building, Design + Arts and Angelo King International Center Campuses.

Through this project and the support of the community, 26,966 kilograms of recyclable waste were gathered from Sept. 1, 2022 to June 25 this year. These were sold to a private recycler company for P114,366.

The proceeds will be continually used to provide more opportunities to Benildean scholars.





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## GREENOVATION

By NAT T. RICHTER

**E**mbarking on a "green" journey offers numerous avenues for those who wish to make a positive impact on our planet. One option is to join eco organizations where you can connect with kindred spirits who share passion for environmental conservation. Joining such groups enables you to collaborate with like-minded individuals dedicated to the noble cause of saving our planet.

**Bamboo toothbrush**  
Materials found in traditional toothbrushes won't break down even after so many years. Switch to bamboo toothbrushes for biodegradability and lower carbon footprint.

**Reusable glass containers**  
Reusing glass containers help minimize single-use plastic storage that just often ends up in the ocean.

**Biodegradable trash bag**  
This can minimize harm to wildlife and reduce plastic pollution. This has a significantly lower environmental impact than traditional plastic bags.

**LED light bulb**  
Did you know that LED lights consume 75 percent less energy and last much longer than incandescent bulbs? That's enough info for you to switch to this kind of lights ASAP.

**Tote bag**  
Equip yourself with a versatile tote bag, which can be used for grocery shopping, waste reduction, and even fashion!

**Stainless-steel straw**  
It's more than just saving the turtles. Secure a stainless-steel straw in your pack to get rid of plastic straws and promote conscious consumption.

**Reusable water bottle**  
You hit two birds with one stone: you develop an eco-friendly habit of reducing usage of single-use plastic water bottles while being cost-effective over time.

**Beeswax wraps**  
An eco-friendly alternative to plastic wraps for food storage, beeswax wraps also reduce the consumption of non-renewable resources.

Furthermore, don't underestimate the power of your individual efforts. Each person has the potential to be an eco-warrior in their own right. To fully embrace this role, however, it's essential to be well-prepared, just as a knight would never enter the arena without a sword. Here are eight "must-haves" — part of a starter pack — to equip yourself with, as you embark on your journey to becoming a full-fledged eco-warrior.

# KNOW THE ECO-WARRIOR STARTER PACK



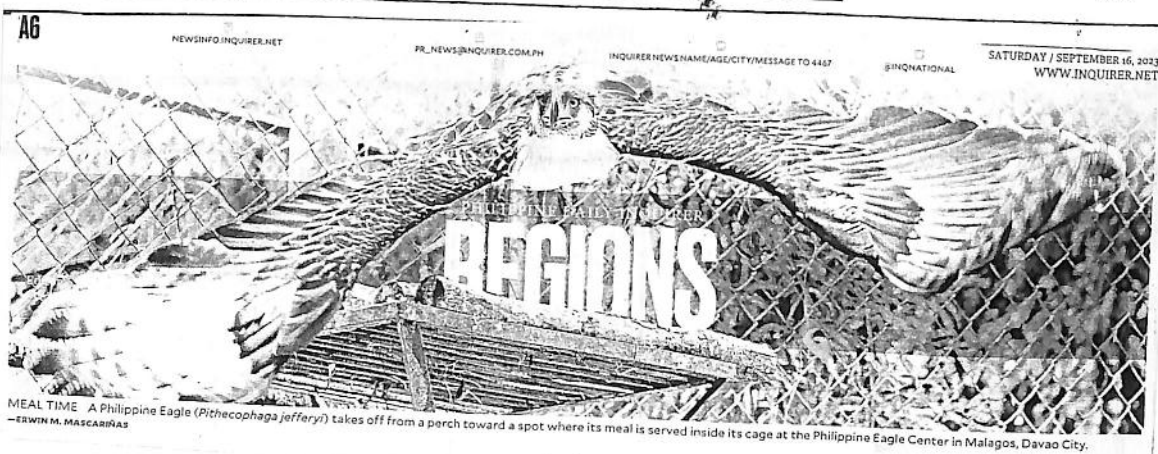




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AFTER DEATH OF 'GEO' IN SINGAPORE

## STRONGER INT'L EFFORT NEEDED TO SAVE PH EAGLE, SAYS PEF

By Erwin M. Mascariñas  
@InqNational

BUTUAN CITY—The Philippine Eagle Foundation (PEF) has pushed for increased international cooperation in captive breeding of the critically endangered Philippine Eagle (*Pithecophaga jefferyi*) to strengthen the conservation effort for the world's rarest raptor.

"The lessons of the pandemic should give us insight for the need to secure our eagle species. That's why we need to loan them to have a genetic bank outside the Philippines in case our local population of eagles get decimated," said PEF executive director Dennis Salvador.

He made the call amid the recent death from an infection of male eagle "Geothermica" while on breeding loan in Singapore's Mandai Wildlife Reserve.

Fondly called "Geo," the raptor was being paired with female eagle "Sambisig" or "Sam." The pair was brought to Singapore in 2019, based on an agreement between the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and Mandai.

They were the first breeding pair of Philippine Eagles to be sent outside the country as part of a recovery plan in case the captive-breeding population in PEF's Davao facility would be hit by a disease like bird flu.

### 'Insurance'

Loaning the eagles to a facility in another country, according to Salvador, "is a much-needed insurance and we hope that there will be other areas where our eagles can be kept out of harm's way."

"The avian bird flu has the potential to wipe out entire populations," he cautioned.

"What happened to [Geo] was very unfortunate, but

these things happen in any institution, in any species. What we are trying to do and I am sure this is also what Mandai Wildlife Reserve did, is really to take care of the eagles. In fact, when they noticed that Geo refused to eat, they did everything they could to bring him back," Salvador said.

"The veterinarian crew of Mandai and their animal hospital [are] really top notch; one of the best in the world," he added.

PEF, in a statement, said it was deeply saddened by Geothermica's passing, "but rest assured that we will not lose heart in our mission to foster international cooperation to save this global jewel."

Mandai said that with Geo gone, the reserve's staff were focusing their attention on Sam, making sure she would adjust well without Geo.

Philippine Eagles are very hard to pair, Salvador said. "We selected Geo and Sam because they showed promising behaviors in our care. They showed signs of possible compatibility as they were not aggressive to each other," he explained.

Mandai veterinarians noted that prior to his illness, Geo "began displaying behaviors indicating interest to mate with Sambisig."

"We are not yet sure of the next step; that would be the decision of the Philippine government. But talks will be underway soon regarding the program. I want to underscore that this incident should not [deter] us [from continuing] to loan eagles to other reputable institutions because we really need to secure the species. We only have 392 pairs left," Salvador said.

Geo was born on Jan. 7, 2004, at the Philippine Eagle Center in Malagos, Davao City. His care had been supported by the Energy Development Corp. INC



# 16,000 propagules start Bamboo Month

BY LEANDER C. DOMINGO

**T**O kick off the Philippine Bamboo Month celebration; more than 16,000 bamboo propagules and Indigenous species were recently planted by around 3,000 volunteers in Region 2 (Cagayan Valley).

According to Carolyn Annang-Tumamao, Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Region 2 information officer, the planting activity, which was spearheaded by the DENR Region 2 in partnership with One Movement Inc., was simultaneously held in 17 sites in the region.

These sites can be found in the following towns: Ivana in Batanes; Baggao, Camalaniugan, Sanchez Mira, Solana, Gattaran and Tuguegarao City in Cagayan; Dinapigue, Palanan, Quirino, Ramon, Naguilian, San Guillermo and Cabagan in Isabela; Diffun in Quirino; and Bambang in Nueva Vizcaya.

Planted in these sites were bamboo and Indigenous tree species such as bayog, kawayan tinik, kawayan kiling, narra, molave, kalumpit, ipil and dao.

Presidential Proclamation 1401 was signed on June 27, 2022 which declared September as Philippine Bamboo Month while September 26 is annually celebrated as Save Sierra Madre Day by virtue of Proclamation 413 signed in 2009.

Tumamao said the activity is part of a simultaneous nationwide

bamboo and tree-planting activity in support of the socioeconomic and environmental development agenda of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. tagged as "LAB for All: Lingap at Alagang Bayanihan," which was also done in time with the President's birthday celebration.

"We just don't plant trees and bamboo, we grow them. Growing connotes maintenance and protection," said DENR Region 2 Executive Director Gwendolyn Bambalan.

Officials and representatives from the national government, including law enforcement agencies, municipal and barangay local government units, people's organizations, civil society organizations, mining companies and other partners, also participated in the activity.

Bambalan also emphasized that it is the responsibility of the volunteers to ensure the survival of the seedlings. She said the One Movement Inc. intends to plant trees within the 10 provinces covering the Sierra Madre Mountain range that include Cagayan, Isabela, Quirino and Nueva Vizcaya.



■ DENR Region 2 (Cagayan Valley) spearheads the planting of bamboo and trees on the Philippine Bamboo Month kickoff. **FAGEBOOK PHOTOS FROM DENR REGION 2**



■ About 3,000 volunteers did tree planting in 17 sites in Region 2.



■ Future tree-planting plans will include the 10 provinces covering the Sierra Madre Mountain.





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## Editorial

### ADB project a significant boost to flood resilience

**T**HE Asian Development Bank (ADB) this week gave its final approval to a \$303-million loan to the Philippines to reduce flood and climate risks in three major river basins in the country. While some may find the amount of the new loan sobering given the focus in recent months on the government's already high level of debt, the generous terms of the funding and the sweeping scope of the project place this in a different class, an investment with almost incalculable long-term economic benefits.

The Integrated Flood Resilience and Adaptation Project Phase 1 is primarily aimed at upgrading and expanding flood protection infrastructure in the Abra river basin in Northern Luzon and in the Ranao-Agus and Tagum-Libuganon river basins in Mindanao. In addition to construction work, the planned upgrades include a significant number of "nature-based" solutions, including restoring natural river channels and reinforcing riverbanks with mangroves and other vegetation.

To further upgrade flood resilience, the project will provide flood risk management training for government officials, new equipment for weather and river flow monitoring, and early flood warning, and introduce an asset management information system, according to a statement from ADB. Besides officials and personnel from national-level agencies, the program will also focus on capacity building at the local level, supporting 22 local government units and about 150 barangay (villages) in updating their climate and disaster risk assessments, integrating flood risk management in local development plans and climate change adaptation.

The bulk of the loan, \$250 million, is being provided by ADB, with the remainder sourced from the Agence Française de Développement. It carries an annual interest rate of just under 6 percent and has a repayment term of 12 years, according to the loan agreement disclosed by ADB. The project bridges two key ADB programs, the Climate Change Action Program and the Competitive and Inclusive Agriculture Development Program.

*The generous terms of the funding and the sweeping scope of the project place this in a different class, an investment with almost incalculable long-term economic benefits.*

The three areas targeted by the project are all agriculturally productive areas that unfortunately likely do not live up to their full potential due to weather- and climate-related risks. They also support sizable at-risk populations. Thus, we see three clear benefits to the program that make it an important investment for the country.

First, the combination of better flood control to reduce flood hazards, and better monitoring and warning systems to prevent or significantly mitigate harm when floods do occur will significantly reduce the costs of disaster response and recovery. Those costs are enormous, much bigger than people realize, because any natural calamity has a large multiplier effect; not only are there costs involved in the immediate response, care for affected people and the cleanup, but there is a substantial and long-lasting opportunity cost from businesses that cannot reopen, workers who become permanently dislocated and the diversion of resources that could otherwise be used for development.

Second, as the program complements ongoing agricultural development programs, agricultural productivity in the target areas will improve, which will, in turn, contribute to better overall food security in the country. Not only will potential agricultural losses from calamities be reduced, but better monitoring of risks will allow for more secure planning on the part of farmers so that they can maximize their land and resources.

Third, the program will provide a great deal of knowledge transfer. There are numerous other areas of the country where what is learned and developed in the three river basins can be applied. After all, this is a key goal of this or any other development project, whether it is supported by ADB, the World Bank or other agencies such as the Japan International Cooperation Agency. Ensuring that whatever lessons emerge are well-learned and shared with other communities is one responsibility of the government; but before that, the government must take care that the funds are properly applied and that the project is carried out transparently.



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# Marcos can't attend UNGA; Manalo to lead PH delegation

By JOSPEH PEDRAJAS

**P**resident Marcos is skipping this year's United Nations (UN) General Assembly at UN Headquarters in New York, and will, instead, be represented by Foreign Affairs Secretary Enrique Manalo.

In a statement, Manalo said he will articulate the country's statement during the general debate on behalf of the President. It will focus on calls for the rule of law and climate action.

The Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) did not provide the reason behind Marcos' absence in the gathering of world leaders.

Manalo will also highlight the Philippines' "achievements and aspirations as a middle-income economy with an important voice in global affairs."

"I will lead the Philippine delegation to the 78th Session of the United

Nations General Assembly (UNGA78) High-Level Week (HLW) from 18 to 26 September 2023 at the UN Headquarters in New York City, USA," Manalo said in a statement.

In his first term as the President, Marcos attended the assembly, where he called on the 193 UN member states to resolve disputes "through reason and right."

Marcos also presented the Philippine vision for the United Nations and the country's role in fostering international cooperation to address pressing global challenges.

Manalo will be joined by Environment Secretary Maria Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga, Health Secretary Ted Herbosa, and other officials from the Department of Finance (DOF) and the National Economic and Development Authority.

The diplomat said the participation of three Philippine Cabinet members in the UNGA "underlines

the high significance that the Philippines attaches to its role as a responsible and engaged global citizen fully supporting the UN Charter and convinced of the enduring power of diplomacy, dialogue and multilateralism to promote the peaceful flourishing of nations."

Manalo said the Philippine delegation is looking "forward to a busy and productive week in New York, which will include important and simultaneous meetings such as the SDG Summit, Climate Ambition Summit and the High-Level Dialogue on Financing for Development."

"Other major events include the Preparatory Ministerial Meeting of the Summit of the Future, which aims to map the elements of a post-2030 global development and peace and security agenda. There will also be many high-level climate-, health-, finance-, development-related meetings and side-events," he added.

- A side event on "Skilling, Upskilling, and Reskilling for a Resilient Workforce"

Manalo said he will also sign the new Agreement under the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of The Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ) or "High Seas Treaty."

"I look forward to bilateral meetings with foreign ministers from a number of countries and with key UN officials. I will sign a number of MoUs establishing political consultation mechanisms with a number of bilateral partners, and discuss a broad range of matters of mutual interest at these meetings," he added.

Other events the Philippine delegation will organize and attend are as follows:

- Ministerial Roundtable on Migration, Environment and Climate Change in the Asia Pacific Region
- High-Level Event Promoting the Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty





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Protesters lie in front of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources main office in Quezon City yesterday. Tens of thousands of climate activists around the world marched and called for an end to the burning of planet-warming fossil fuels as the globe continues to suffer dramatic weather extremes and heat records are toppled.

MICHAEL VARCAS





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## Mental health consequences: the 'often-unseen' impact of climate change

MORE than a year after the passage of Republic Act 11036, also known as the "Mental Health Act," a global study showed that 92 percent of young Filipinos were frightened about their future. At the same time, 84 percent were very to extremely worried about their future under climate change.

The global study, entitled "Young people's voices on climate anxiety, government betrayal and moral injury: a global phenomenon," manifested the deep anxiety of young Filipinos about climate change.

I was glad that the National Youth Commission (NYC) launched the NYC Online Youth Mental Health Wellness Peer-to-Peer Counseling at the height of the Covid-19 pandemic. With the noble objective of providing an online support system for the youth who have concerns, strengthening and boosting awareness of their mental health, the initiative now called NYC Mental Health Youth Hub has produced 98 youth coaches after conducting four batches of training.

Many studies established that human health is threatened by the impact of climate change. The 2017 Lancet Countdown on Climate Change and Health reported: "The human symptoms of climate change are unequivocal and potentially irreversible — affecting the health of populations around the world today."

Mental health, the authors said, refers not just to mental illness, mental problems and mental disorders, but also includes states of mental wellness, emotional resilience and psychosocial well-being. The mental health consequences are the "often-unseen" impacts of climate change.

Together with youth coaches Brian de los Santos, Alfredo Lorenzo Sablay, Don Carlo Bravo Cuya and over 200 participants, I had the opportunity to discuss the relationship of climate change and mental health during the webinar on "Green Minds, Healthy Hearts: Nurturing Mental Health and Sustainability" held last Saturday.

### Impacts of climate change on mental health

The impacts of climate change on mental health are either direct or indirect. These include:

#### Direct mental health



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LUDWIG FEDERIGAN

#### effects from extreme weather events

Climate change is associated with an increase in the frequency and severity of extreme weather events such as hurricanes, wildfires, floods and heat waves. These events can lead to trauma, grief and post-traumatic stress disorder among those directly affected. Witnessing or experiencing the destruction and loss of life during these events can have long-lasting psychological effects.

#### Indirect effects through displacement

Rising sea levels, changing weather patterns and environmental degradation can lead to forced migration and displacement of communities. This can result in a loss of social support networks, cultural dislocation and increased stress, anxiety and depression among affected individuals and communities.

#### Economic impact

Climate change can disrupt economies, leading to job loss, financial stress and economic insecurity. These stressors can contribute to mental health problems like anxiety and depression.

#### Health effects

Climate change can also lead to health problems such as heat-related illnesses, respiratory issues from air pollution and the spread of vector-borne diseases. These physical health problems can, in turn, impact mental health by increasing stress and anxiety related to health concerns.

#### Psychological distance

Climate change is often seen as a distant threat, and the gradual nature of its impacts can make it difficult for people to perceive as an immediate threat. This psychological distance can lead to a sense of powerlessness and eco-anxiety, where individuals feel overwhelmed by the scale of the



The webinar the author attends discussed the relationship of climate change and mental health. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

problem and the lack of effective action.

#### Environmental grief

As people witness the loss of natural landscapes, ecosystems and biodiversity due to climate change, they may experience a sense of grief and loss. This can manifest as ecological grief, which can contribute to feelings of sadness, hopelessness and despair.

#### Conflict and social tensions

Climate change can exacerbate resource scarcity, leading to conflicts and social tensions. These conflicts can result in displacement, violence and the breakdown of social and community structures, all of which can have profound effects on mental health.

#### Inequities and vulnerability

Vulnerable populations, including low-income communities and marginalized groups, are often disproportionately affected by the impacts of climate change. This can exacerbate existing health disparities and increase the mental health burden on these communities.

#### Comprehensive response

The relationship between climate change and mental health is complex and multifaceted. Addressing the impacts requires a comprehensive approach that includes mitigation, adaptation, community resilience, education and support services.

Efforts to mitigate climate change and adapt to its effects can reduce the severity of some of the mental health impacts. This includes reducing greenhouse gas emissions and

implementing strategies to protect communities from extreme weather events.

Building community resilience can help individuals and communities better cope with the mental health challenges posed by climate change. This includes strengthening social support networks, providing mental health services and promoting community cohesion.

Raising awareness about the mental health effects of climate change and providing education on coping strategies and resilience-building can help individuals and communities better prepare for and respond to these challenges.

Advocating for policies that address climate change and its mental health consequences is crucial. This includes policies aimed at reducing emissions, promoting clean energy and ensuring equitable access to resources and support services.

Providing mental health services and support for individuals and communities affected by climate change-related stress and trauma is essential. This may involve training mental health professionals to address climate-related issues and providing resources for affected individuals.

The realities of climate change will deliver chronic and long-term stressors. These conditions will worsen mental health problems. Those who suffer the most are those who are the most vulnerable.

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.





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**HEADS UP** Climate advocates, wearing 'salakot' or native hats made of bamboo, palm leaves or rattan, worn as protection against heat or rain, march at the Quezon City Memorial Circle on Friday, Sept. 15, 2023, as part of an Asia-wide mobilization calling for an end to the use of fossil fuels. PHOTO BY JOHN ORVEN VERDOTE



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# Turning natural waste into treasure

By Patricia Taculao

**A**S MANY gardeners and farmers know, fertilizer is a crucial component in the soil to help their plants or crops grow abundantly. But in urban areas like Metro Manila, soil isn't always a readily available resource, and finding the ideal additives to enrich its composition sometimes comes with chemicals.

On the other hand, Metro Manila is abundant in food waste. According to the Department of Science and Technology Food and Nutrition Research Institute (DOST-FNRI), 1,717 metric tons of food are wasted daily in the Philippines.

Few people know that their food waste can be the gateway to acquiring natural fertilizer to boost plant health because it's a primary factor in vermicomposting.

Vermicomposting, also known as vermiculture, is a practice that uses composting worms to speed up the breakdown of organic matter. It is easier, quicker, and more space-efficient compared to traditional composting. Many find its byproduct a superior fertilizer that reduces a household's food waste.

Marco Adriano, 22, realized the potential of vermicompost as early as 13. He now promotes the practice through Urban Vermicomposting PH, an online platform and small garden space in San Juan, Metro Manila, that aims to provide information, tips, and tricks for the beginner vermicomposter.

As the founder, Adriano is a one-man team at the forefront of encouraging urban residents to venture into the world of vermicomposting—as he did in 2013.

"I read in a book that you can turn food scraps into fertilizer, and I found it pretty interesting," he told *Manila*

Urban Vermicomposting PH offers starter kits, that comes with African nightcrawlers and bedding, to help city dwellers begin their composting journey

*Standard Agriculture.*

Eventually, he turned to YouTube videos to learn more about vermicomposting and began offering his products to raise awareness about the practice's benefits. It surprised him how only a few knew about vermicomposting and some of the prejudice it faced because it involved worms.

When he began, Adriano admitted to using YouTube videos and other reference materials from the United States because there weren't many sources in the Philippines yet.

"At some point, we put up our website so people can learn about vermicomposting in the Philippines *kasi*, in the US, it's hot, or they use a different type of worm. It [the website] is solving the problem I used to face about maintaining the worm bins in a Philippine setting," he said.

The ideal worm breed for vermicomposting in the Philippines is African Nightcrawlers. Aside from being able to adapt to the country's climate and environment, these also make good food sources and are efficient in breaking down natural materials, making it easier for them to decompose faster.



Marco Adriano, the 22-year-old behind Urban Vermicomposting PH



Adriano promotes vermicompost as a natural fertilizer to boost plant growth and reduce the amount of food waste in the environment

other food waste like scraps, fruit peels, and pieces of vegetables.

As for the bedding, some suitable items are newspapers, cardboard, and coco peat, which Urban Vermicomposting PH offers in their vermicomposting bins.

Urban Vermicomposting PH offers starter kits to help beginner vermicomposters start their journey. It comes with composting worms, bedding, and a compact container. Consumers only need to supply the worms with food scraps for sustenance.

Even though not many people are keen on touching or utilizing worms, Adriano shared that their potential to reduce food waste and provide plants with a natural fertilizer are the unique selling points that capture consumers' interest.

"Not everyone needs to make fertilizer. What people are more interested in now is turning waste into something valuable. That's what we always try to highlight," he said.

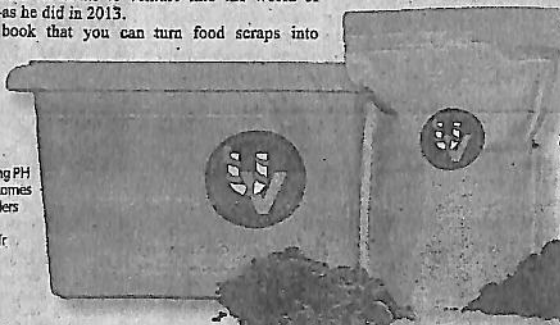
However, vermicomposters must create the ideal environment for their worms using bedding, containers, and food to maintain their compost bin. They must keep themselves from overfeeding the worms and provide holes for breathability and proper drainage.

Some examples of worm feed include leaves, coffee grounds, and

Adriano also uses the website to provide support and insights to customers who need some guidance. Seeing his customers maximize their vermicompost bins' potential and utilizing their benefits gives Adriano much satisfaction because it gives society a new perspective on worms that highlights their relevance in a sustainable ecosystem.

With more people in the metro discovering the advantages of vermicomposting, they're contributing to lessening the amount of food waste in the environment, reducing their carbon footprint, and aiding plant growth. Now that's a can—or box—of worms worth opening.

Learn more about vermicomposting at [www.urbanvermicomposting.com](http://www.urbanvermicomposting.com).



## How to use vermicompost

VERMICOMPOST is the byproduct of vermiculture or vermicomposting, a sustainable practice using worms to break down natural elements, like leaves and food scraps, into compost that can aid plant growth.

Marco Adriano, the 22-year-old founder of Urban Vermicomposting PH, promotes this practice to city dwellers because it helps lessen their carbon footprint while producing natural soil enhancers.

According to Adriano, users can maximize the potential of vermicompost through three approaches. The first is to use solid compost and add it on top of plants.

"It has a lot of nutrients, but the benefit of vermicompost is not in the nutrients  *mismo*. It's more of the good bacteria is more concentrated in the vermicompost. It improves the way plants absorb nutrients," he said.

Compared to inorganic fertilizers, which focus more on augmenting the soil content, the bacteria from the vermicompost break down available soil nutrients while

adding a little more to its composition.

The second method to efficiently use vermicompost is incorporating it in the soil like a potting mix.

Adriano knows the benefits of this approach firsthand because he uses it with his plants in his garden in San Juan, in Metro Manila. Instead of planting them in soil, he uses a mixture of 50 percent vermicompost and 50 percent coco peat.

Lastly, vermicomposters can turn the solid byproduct into vermitea by wrapping it in cheesecloth or an old newspaper before putting it into a bucket of water and adding a teaspoon of molasses.

"Preferable rainwater or aged water because fresh tapwater sometimes has chlorine," Adriano advised. After 15 minutes, users can get the liquid



There are three ways to use vermicompost as a fertilizer to boost plant growth

version of vermicompost, which they can spray on their plants or the soil.

Many of Adriano's customers often reside in condominiums in Metro Manila, where they don't have access to garden soil. Through vermicompost, they can have an unlimited supply of natural fertilizer, which they can also utilize to create a high-quality planting medium to make their plants grow happily and healthily. Patricia Taculao





# Libya was hit by a 'medicane' – scientists

## Global warming to worsen 'supercharging' Mediterranean storms

**PARIS:** The flash flood that has killed thousands of people in Libya this week followed a "medicane," a rare but destructive weather phenomenon that scientists believe will intensify in a warming world.

The term is an amalgamation of the words Mediterranean and hurricane. Used by scientists and weather forecasters, it is less well known to the wider public.

Medicanes, which tend to form over parts of the Mediterranean Sea near the North African coast, are similar to hurricanes and typhoons although they can develop over cooler waters.

They can also bear a physical resemblance on satellite imagery as a swirling mass of storm clouds surrounding an eye in the middle.

Fierce winds and rain are unleashed, with Storm "Daniel" dumping approximately 170 millimeters of rain in Libya.

And this is intensifying with global warming, scientists say.

"We are confident that climate change is supercharging the rainfall associated with such storms," said University of Reading professor Liz Stephens.

The Mediterranean cyclones are usually smaller and weaker than their tropical equivalents and have a smaller space in which to develop.

Their peak strength is usually the equivalent of a Category 1 hurricane on the Saffir-Simpson scale, encompassing speeds of 119-153 kilometers (74-95 miles) per hour.

Medicanes tend to form in the autumn when the sea is warm, usually in the western Mediterranean and the region between the Ionian Sea and the North African coast, explained Suzanne Gray, a professor at the University of Reading's meteorology department.

A layer of colder air from higher altitudes forms convections with warmer air rising from the sea that converge around a center of low pressure.

### Rare but deadly

Medicanes form once or twice per year on average, according to the US National

Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

While hurricanes move from east to west, medicanes tend to go from west to east.

Before striking Libya, Daniel pummeled Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey last week.

Three medicanes occurred off Greece between 2016 and 2018, while in 2019 Spanish weather services identified one between the Balearic Islands and the Algerian coast.

A medicane packing winds of up to 120 kilometers per hour, dubbed "Ianos," lashed Greece in September 2020, killing three people in the city of Karditsa and triggering floods, landslides and power cuts.

The Italian island of Sicily was also struck in 2021.

### Rainfall turbocharged

In 2020, French weather monitor Météo-France said it was difficult to work out climate signals from medicanes due to their rarity.

While scientists are increasingly able to unpick the likely effect of climate change on the probability of an extreme weather event happening and its intensity, no such attribution study has yet been carried out on Daniel.

In general, experts say the warming of sea surface temperatures, driven by human-induced climate change, is going to make extreme storms more intense.

Oceans have absorbed 90 percent of the excess heat produced by human activity since the dawn of the industrial age, according to scientists.

Spanish researchers said the Mediterranean reached its highest temperature on record in July as Europe baked under a series of heat waves.

The surface waters of the eastern Mediterranean and Atlantic are 2 to 3 degrees Celsius warmer than usual, which would have turbocharged Daniel.

"The fact that Daniel could form into a medicane ... is likely a result of warmer sea surface temperatures and hence man-made climate change," added climate scientist Karsten Haustein of Leipzig University in Germany.

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**RARE WEATHER PHENOMENON** This image grab taken from Libyan National TV footage aired on Sept. 11, 2023 shows a view of destruction left in the wake of floods after the Mediterranean Storm 'Daniel' hit Libya's eastern city of Soussa.  
AFP PHOTO / HO / LIBYAN NATIONAL TV





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■ **NASA registers  
summer 2023 as  
hottest on record**

LOS ANGELES, United States (Xinhua) — The summer of 2023 was Earth's hottest since global records began in 1880, NASA announced on Thursday. The months of June, July, and August combined were 0.41 degrees Fahrenheit (0.23 degrees Celsius) warmer than any other summer in NASA's record, and 2.1 degrees Fahrenheit (1.2 Celsius) warmer than the average summer between 1951 and 1980, according to scientists at NASA's Goddard Institute of Space Studies in New York. NASA assembles its temperature record from surface air temperature data acquired by tens of thousands of meteorological stations, as well as sea surface temperature data from ship- and buoy-based instruments. The new record comes as exceptional heat swept across much of the world, exacerbating deadly wildfires in Canada and Hawaii, and searing heat waves in vast regions in the world. "Exceptionally high sea surface temperatures, fueled in part by the return of El Nino, were largely responsible for the summer's record warmth," said Josh Willis, climate scientist and oceanographer at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Southern California.