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By: Raphael Bosano

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[Opinion] Climate justice is no longer an aspiration but a legal duty
By: Marcella Ribeiro and María Luisa Gómez

In recent months, both the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (IACHR) and the International Court of Justice (ICJ) issued advisory opinions that constitute unprecedented legal milestones for global climate justice. They called on states to act urgently to guarantee the right to a healthy environment, including a healthy climate, to prevent significant damage to the climate, and to provide comprehensive reparations for damage already caused, when applicable.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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MANILA BULLETIN

PH–Germany partnership powers systemic climate and ecological transformation through TRANSCEND Project

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PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

Empowerment of young women as leaders of climate resilience pushed

The Climate Change Commission (CCC) has underscored the critical need to empower girls and young women as leaders in climate action.

Information and Knowledge Management Division

ABS CBN

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Politics and health are not the only areas where disinformation thrives. In an era of rising temperatures and extreme weather, false narratives disguised as “advocacy” or simply, climate disinformation, are spreading fast and wide.

According to the 2024 United Nations Global Risk Report, climate change inaction ranks as the top global threat, followed closely by misinformation and disinformation. Both, experts warn, are already having significant effects on public awareness and policy.

For the first time in the history of the UN climate conference, 13 countries — including Brazil, Canada, Chile, Denmark, France, Germany, Spain, and Sweden — signed a Declaration of Information Integrity on Climate Change.

The declaration recognizes the need to combat the spread of false or misleading information that undermines scientific consensus and weakens climate action

At a press conference on Wednesday, Kate Cell, Senior Campaigner of the Union of Concerned Scientists, said that to “truly make this COP the COP of truth,” countries must put up safeguards against climate misinformation.

Among those fueling these false narratives, she added, are fossil fuel companies.

“Today we’re on track to surpass the science-informed 1.5°C benchmark because the fossil fuel industry and its allies have chosen profit and lies over truth and transformation,” she said.

J. Timmons Roberts of the Climate Social Science Network at Brown University described climate disinformation as pervasive, sophisticated, corrosive, and rapidly evolving, making it an effective tactic to delay progress.

“The fossil fuel industry spends about ten times as much as the environmental and renewable sectors combined on lobbying. They spend about nineteen times more on public relations. They do this to preserve their social license to operate,” he said.

Roberts added that disinformation isn’t spread by fossil fuel interests alone but also by law firms, think tanks, political organizations, social media influencers, and even governments.

According to ClientEarth, a team of lawyers and policy experts advocating for environmental justice, disinformation doesn’t just distort debates but even more so harms people in real time.

“We are seeing extreme weather events, floods, fires, heatwaves impacting millions,” said Pierre Cannet of ClientEarth

“Online, we’ve seen false information spreading across social media. These narratives can hinder governments and first responders from providing emergency assistance.”

A problem at home

In the Philippines, climate disinformation is just as rampant.

Charles De Luna, a youth and climate advocate from Bohol, is attending COP for the first time to observe discussions. He said climate falsehoods have taken root even in communities directly hit by disasters, including Typhoon Odette (Rai) in 2021.

A week before COP30, they were also hit by Typhoon Tino (Kalmaegi) which gravely devastated Cebu in Central Philippines.

“Yung siyensya sa klima, isa siyang consensus ng pinakamagagaling na mga scientist ng IPCC. Nakikita natin na may ebidensiya. Ang Pilpinas, sobrang dami nating bagyo na nararanasan. Pero marami ang ang nagsasabi na hindi ito dulot ng fossil fuel emissions kundi indibiwal na aksyon,” he said

(Climate science is a consensus of some of the best scientists of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. We see the evidence. The Philippines is battered by so many typhoons, but there are still some who say that these aren’t caused by fossil fuel emissions but rather individual actions

De Luna warned that disinformation not only divides communities but may also weaken the political will of negotiators at global climate talks.

“Ito’y ay nagke-create ng divide at confusion sa ating mga community at naweweaken nito ang political will ng ating negotiators. Dapat yung negosasyon natin ay nakabase sa best available science at sa katotohanan lamang.”

(This creates a divide and confusion among communities and it can weaken the political will of our negotiators. Negotiations should be based on the best available science and on truth alone.)

As temperatures rise and typhoons grow stronger and more destructive, the battle for truth in climate and risk communication becomes even more urgent. However, experts say solutions to climate disinformation exist and the need to dispose of it is urgent to stop it from reaching and impacting even more people.

For young advocates like De Luna, countering disinformation is not just about setting the record straight. It’s about ensuring a safe future.

The integrity of climate information will undoubtedly determine not only how the world responds to this crisis but also how the next generation lives through it.

AL JAZEERA

[Opinion] ASEAN can't let Trump's America set the pace on climate action
By: By Nik Nazmi Nik Ahmad

America's renewed scepticism, and even hostility under Donald Trump's second administration, does not for one moment alter the fact that climate change is real.

Neither does it negate the reality that the Global South — including the almost 700 million-strong Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), virtually all of which are tropical countries — is on the front line of the climate crisis.

Typhoons Tino and Uwan, which recently struck our region, especially the Philippines, are the latest proof of this and a reminder of the urgent need for climate justice.

What the Global South needs from summits like COP30 has been stated time and time again. It really boils down to four things.

The developed world needs to listen
On the one hand, developed countries need to listen to developing and less developed countries on how climate change should be addressed.

A rigid approach to the various facets of climate action, including technology, energy transition and biodiversity conservation, will ultimately frustrate the sincere, proactive measures that many Global South countries, including Malaysia and several of its ASEAN partners, are taking towards these goals.

More flexibility on the part of the Global North would go a long way towards ensuring that the war against climate change is won.

This is not an attempt to water down or deflect anything. The right to live in a sustainable environment is arguably a fundamental human right.

Israel's devastating war in Gaza has also resulted in widespread ecocide that Western nations have remained strangely silent on, but whose ramifications — not only for the Middle East but for the wider world — will last for decades.

There should therefore be no doubt that sustainability and human rights go together. Supporting the former, especially in ASEAN and the Global South, is a means of upholding the latter.

Developed countries should bring their chequebooks

At the risk of putting things crudely, money talks. The various climate finance commitments — especially those for vulnerable nations — must not only be fulfilled, but also increased.

Projections from the United Nations Global Policy Model estimate that developing countries will need around $1.1 trillion in climate finance by 2025 and some $1.8 trillion by 2030.

The chair of the COP30 UN Climate Change Conference, Brazil, has rightly said that it hopes the meeting in Belem will be remembered as “the COP of Adaptation Implementation”. This is astute because, while I do not share the view that it is too late to act, it should be painfully clear that climate action can no longer be about setting lofty goals. Rather, the time has come to deliver.

The Global South can lead on climate change

Admittedly, the absence of the United States — as the world’s superpower and largest economy — looms over the COP and any international efforts to protect the environment. But the absence of the US is not a reason to retreat from climate action, or any other international cause; rather, it is an opportunity to reaffirm and strengthen multilateral cooperation.

Although it would be nice to have the US involved, the world can act without America. As has been widely reported, China’s carbon dioxide emissions have either flatlined or fallen over the past 18 months.

Moreover, the Tropical Forest Forever Facility (TFFF), proposed by Brazil’s President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, is an important part of the solution.

With the World Bank as its trustee and interim host, the TFFF seeks to support lasting conservation strategies and protect crucial tropical ecosystems through global, public and private partnerships.

With a medium-term goal of achieving a $125bn fund, the TFFF Launch Declaration has been endorsed by 53 countries and 19 sovereign wealth funds. Among them are 34 tropical forest countries, covering 90 percent of the tropical forests in developing nations.

It has been reported that Norway, Brazil, Indonesia, Portugal, France and the Netherlands have already made financial commitments. So far, $5.5bn has been announced — an encouraging, albeit modest, start to what will be a long journey.

Nevertheless, the TFFF shows that the Global South has the potential to build initiatives of its own, including on existential global challenges such as climate change.

Again, this is something the Global North must support. It arguably owes a “debt” to tropical countries for the huge carbon sinks they provide.

This must be achieved not through prescriptive policies, but through equitable, transparent climate reparations to ensure that the burden of conserving irreplaceable biodiversity does not come at the cost of education, jobs or dignity for the people of these countries.

ASEAN must do its part

The tropical countries — including those in ASEAN — cannot shirk their responsibilities, either.

It was disappointing that climate change did not feature more prominently during the recent 47th ASEAN Summit in Kuala Lumpur, which was chaired by Malaysia's Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim, despite the 2025 chairmanship's theme of "Inclusivity and Sustainability."

To be fair, the Chair's Statement commendably noted that the regional bloc had "adopted the ASEAN Joint Statement on Climate Change" at COP30 and "welcomed the ASEAN Pavilion", as well as "looked forward to the development of the ASEAN Climate Change Strategic Action Plan (ACCSAP) to further advance climate action in the region".

The ASEAN Declaration on the Right to a Safe, Clean, Healthy and Sustainable Environment was also adopted during the summit in Kuala Lumpur, following several years of diplomacy among member states.

We must also not forget that the ASEAN Summit saw the historic accession of Timor-Leste to our ranks and progress on the ASEAN Power Grid.

These are all commendable achievements, but they still fall short of the proactive posture the developing world often urges the developed world to take. We must do as much — if not more — than we expect of others.

Some may argue that ASEAN lacks the financial capacity to act alone. But 2025 summits have shown that it has the credibility and influence to connect disparate blocs — including China, the BRICS coalition of economies, the Gulf Cooperation Council, the European Union, Africa and Latin America.

How far does the ASEAN Joint Statement on Climate Change go in recognising that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) lists Southeast Asian countries among those that will be hardest hit by climate change?

Without action, words remain just words. This leaves ASEAN — which has a proud record of neutrality — vulnerable to accusations of pandering to Trump (who, as we know, was briefly present at the summit) even in the face of climate-related disasters affecting our people.

What ASEAN — and indeed the rest of the Global South — needs is bold, decisive multilateral action in partnership with like-minded regions.

The urgency that ASEAN demonstrates in defending its geopolitical agency and advancing economic integration must now manifest in stronger, more vocal climate leadership.

More can and should be done. It is still not too late for both the developed and developing worlds to win the fight against climate change.

BUSINESS WORLD

Climate response infrastructure-heavy, channeling funds to DPWH — report

By: Vonn Andrei E. Villamiel

The Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) accessed a major portion of the climate mitigation budget over the past five years, channeling it to flood control and drainage projects, Aksyon Klima Pilipinas (AKP) said in a report.

AKP said between 2020 and 2025, physical infrastructure was a major spending item in the Philippines' climate-mitigation effort, with funding was channeled into flood mitigation systems, road rehabilitation, and re-silient-building construction works managed by the DPWH.

In 2025, 31.8% of the P1.15-trillion climate budget was allocated to address the "water sufficiency" goal of the National Climate Change Action Plan (NCCAP), with P354.1 billion earmarked specifically for flood control and drainage projects.

The Philippines tracks climate-related spending through Climate Change Expenditure Tagging (CCET), a system that classifies government projects aligned with the NCCAP, the roadmap for climate adaptation and mitigation.

While the budget allocation for CCET-tagged projects surpassed P1 trillion for the first time in 2025, AKP National Coordinator John Leo Algo said in a briefing that the focus on infrastructure left other critical climate priorities underfunded.

"From the perspective of communities affected by the impacts of the climate crisis, at first glance, we might consider that the administration is fulfilling its promise to make the climate crisis a priority. But we need to look at the quality, not just quantity," Mr. Algo said.

The DPWH accounted for 75% of all climate-related expenditure between 2020 and 2023, with nearly all of the agency's projects tagged as climate adaptation measures.

The report said the heavy infrastructure focus sidelined other critical items such as agriculture, freshwater resources, and renewable energy.

"Only a small percentage of the climate budget goes to critical agencies for adaptation, like the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, and an even smaller portion goes to na-ture-based solutions like ecosystem restoration and protection," Mattie Balagat, training and community services coordinator of the Center for Environmental Concerns-Philippines, said.

In 2025, programs for "ecosystems and environmental stability" received just 1.8% of the budget given to flood control infrastructure. Projects for the rehabilitation of degraded watersheds and forests were allotted only P3.4 million.

Following the DPWH corruption scandal, President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. canceled all new flood control projects in the proposed 2026 national budget. They were initially allocated P983.8 billion, about 15% lower than in 2025.

AKP said that the CCET system must be strengthened to guarantee that government-funded programs, projects, and activities genuinely support the NCCAP and the Philippines' climate commitments.

"More public funds should go towards environmental protection and conservation, and genuine climate actions, especially nature-based solutions. They are more cost-effective and even have co-benefits," Mr. Lago said.

The group is also calling on the government to improve climate risk assessment and proactively investigate greenwashing and corruption in physical infrastructure projects beyond flood control.

ECO BUSINESS

[Opinion] Climate justice is no longer an aspiration but a legal duty
By: Marcella Ribeiro and María Luisa Gómez

In recent months, both the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (IACHR) and the International Court of Justice (ICJ) issued advisory opinions that constitute unprecedented legal milestones for global climate justice. They called on states to act urgently to guarantee the right to a healthy environment, including a healthy climate, to prevent significant damage to the climate, and to provide comprehensive reparations for damage already caused, when applicable.

Both decisions were the result of unprecedented legal and civil society participation that reflects the need to recognise the causes and consequences of the climate emergency, and to clarify the obligations of states in this regard, as well as those of private actors.

In the process leading up to the IACHR's advisory opinion, published on 3 July, hundreds of Indigenous peoples, local communities, civil society organisations and human rights defenders participated through public hearings and written observations. For its part, the ICJ's advisory opinion, issued on 23 July, was prompted by Vanuatu and supported by more than 130 countries.

Together, these opinions consolidate a more comprehensive international legal framework and open the door to the structural transformations that our societies and ecosystems demand. They recognise that climate change is "an existential problem of planetary proportions" that threatens "all forms of life" as well as the "effective enjoyment of all human rights". Given the gravity of this situation, they confirm that states have legal obligations that include prevention, mitigation, adaptation and reparation for climate damage.

The courts affirmed that states must cooperate in the face of the climate emergency. The ICJ maintains that all states, including those that are not party to climate treaties, have an obligation to prevent significant damage to the climate under customary international law.

For its part, the IACHR affirmed that states have a reinforced duty of due diligence to prevent foreseeable climate damage, even beyond their borders. It also delved into the need to adopt gender-sensitive, intersectional and participatory approaches in all climate policies, as well as to take specific measures in situations of particular vulnerability, such as those faced by children, Indigenous, tribal and Afro-descendant peoples, and peasant and fishing communities.

Without disregarding the richness and breadth of the contributions of both opinions, there are two fundamental aspects of these decisions that we wish to delve deeper into, elements which seek to guarantee the rights of those who are experiencing the most serious consequences of the climate crisis.

Reparation for damage caused by the climate crisis

Both courts made it clear that repairing climate damage is a specific, enforceable and multidimensional legal obligation. With slight nuances in their reasoning, they affirmed that states have a duty to repair the damage resulting from their failure to fulfil their climate obligations – by action or omission – with measures of ecological restitution, rehabilitation, compensation or redress, and guarantees of non-repetition that strengthen the resilience of territories.

One of the most significant contributions of the IACHR opinion is the recognition of comprehensive reparation as a fundamental pillar of climate action, alongside mitigation and adaptation. This is a response to the historical demands of the Global South in the face of a significant omission in the international climate regime: the exclusion of legal responsibility in Article 8 of the Paris Agreement, which has left millions of people affected by climate loss and damage without access to effective reparation.

Although the Loss and Damage Fund, put into motion during the 2023 UN Climate Change Conference (COP28), represents a political advance in the recognition of responsibilities for the impacts of climate change, it is clearly insufficient from the perspective of climate justice and international law.

As the Inter-American Court of Human Rights pointed out in its opinion, this mechanism does not guarantee full reparation for the damage and losses attributable to states, does not ensure a fair distribution of the climate debt, nor does it replace the international obligations of reparation arising from their responsibility for actions or omissions that aggravate the climate crisis.

Consequently, although the fund may serve as an instrument of immediate relief, it does not respond to the structural demands for reparation, accountability and justice that the climate crisis requires. The IACHR's recognition opens the door to demands for its reform, direct legitimisation by affected communities and the adoption of rights-based criteria.

The Inter-American Court further stated that comprehensive reparation must address "the structural causes that aggravate the vulnerability of certain persons, peoples and ecosystems". It also established that reparation cannot be limited to economic compensation and must be transformative, participatory, culturally relevant and designed based on the best available science and knowledge.

Participation, justice and protection for defenders

The ICJ opinion, meanwhile, recognised that treaties on access to information and public participation are relevant to addressing climate change. By emphasising the duty of cooperation, good faith in state action and special protection for the most vulnerable populations, its decision reinforces the need for states to establish transparent, accessible and inclusive decision-making processes as an indispensable condition for legitimate and effective climate action.

For its part, the IACHR takes up the standards of the Escazú Agreement – Latin America and the Caribbean's regional treaty on environmental rights – devoting a substantial part of its opinion to developing the idea that access to environmental information, effective participation in climate decisions and access to environmental justice are essential conditions for guaranteeing human rights.

It established that states must produce useful and accurate information, combat misinformation, allow meaningful participation (with a real capacity to influence the content and final outcome of decisions) from the earliest stages of a decision, and guarantee accessible, effective and adequate resources for those affected by the climate crisis. This includes adaptations for Indigenous peoples, children, persons with disabilities and other historically excluded communities, such as fishing communities.

In line with the above, the IACHR opinion recognised the high levels of violence faced by environmental defenders and reaffirmed the reinforced obligation to protect them, as well as to prevent, investigate and punish any form of persecution against them, taking into account the differentiated risks faced by certain groups.

Furthermore, it advises that states must review regulatory frameworks that have been illegitimately used to criminalise those who carry out this important work for democracy and the rule of law.

Climate justice as an urgent legal duty

The legal and political power of both the ICJ and IACHR decisions is due in part to the fact that they come at a historic and critical moment for humanity. Social movements have at their disposal multiple international jurisdictions – including the 2024 decision of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea and the forthcoming opinion of the African Court on Human Rights – to build a new international climate law anchored in the protection of human rights and nature.

In the face of the climate emergency, these opinions constitute clear legal mandates that can help end climate impunity and demand the transformation of the structures that perpetuate harm.

The standards developed by both courts must now be rooted in territories, strengthening social mobilisation and guiding judicial decisions, legislative reforms and public policies. Because if they make one thing clear, it is that climate justice is no longer just an aspiration – it is an urgent legal duty.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

PH ranks among countries most affected by climate-related disasters

By: Gavin Martinez

The Philippines, long known for its exposure to natural calamities, continues to bear the brunt of the world's worsening climate crisis.

With its location along the Pacific Ring of Fire and its proximity to the Pacific Ocean, the country regularly experiences devastating typhoons and earthquakes.

In recent weeks alone, Typhoon Tino and Super Typhoon Uwan struck one after another, leaving widespread destruction in their wake.

A new report by Germanwatch places the Philippines as the seventh most affected country by extreme weather events in 2024, underscoring the nation's ongoing struggle with climate-related disasters.

The latest Climate Risk Index – unveiled during the 30th United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP30) in Belém, Brazil – highlights how storms, floods and heat waves continue to exact a heavy toll on the archipelago.

According to the report, the Philippines suffered 371 extreme weather events between 1995 and 2024, resulting in more than 27,500 deaths and over $35 billion in economic losses.

Globally, the report documented over 9,700 extreme weather events, causing around 832,000 fatalities and $4.5 trillion in damages over the same period.

"Countries such as Haiti, the Philippines, and India – all of which are among the 10 most affected countries – face particular challenges," said Vera Künzel, co-author of the study. She explained that these nations are struck by floods, heat waves, or storms so frequently that "entire regions can hardly recover from the impacts until the next event hits."

Künzel emphasized that discussions on loss and damage funding at COP30 must focus on these vulnerable nations, noting that without sustained international support and stronger climate adaptation measures, they could face "insurmountable challenges" in the years ahead.

The release of this report comes at a critical time, as the Philippines once again faces the harsh reminder of its climate vulnerability through back-to-back typhoons.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

Developing nations asked to seek grants from Loss and Damage Fund; Philippines on board

By: Dominique Nicole Flores

As countries convene in Brazil for COP30, developing nations may now apply for financial support from the Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage (FRLD), where the Philippines serves as a board member.

The fund has opened its first call for requests to help implement planned interventions for climate-vulnerable countries during the 20th United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP30).

In a statement Thursday, November 13, the FRLD said its start-up phase — the Barbados Implementation Modalities (BIM) — is now accepting applications to support developing nations in addressing losses and damages caused by climate change.

With an initial pool of $250 million (~P14.8 billion), the fund is set to back climate and disaster response programs from 2025 to 2026, targeting nations most vulnerable to climate-induced damage.

“The Board has allocated $250 million in initial grants for the BIM. Developing countries are invited to submit funding requests aligned with their priorities,” FRLD Co-Chair Jean-Christophe Donnellier said.

The BIM was established to provide grants ranging from $5 million to $20 million to vulnerable nations, particularly in the Global South, where extreme weather events such as floods, droughts, rising sea levels and temperatures have caused severe casualties and economic losses.

The FRLD said the start-up funding follows a bottom-up, country-led approach, allowing nations to design their own responses to climate loss and damage. The goal, it added, is to ensure that interventions reflect each country’s social, economic, and cultural realities instead of being dictated by external groups.

For the long-term. Since the BIM is still a start-up, Donnellier said the first proposals would serve as a test to help shape the fund's long-term model.

"Innovation is key: for example, the FRLD will leverage entities already accredited by other funds, avoiding duplicate processes and accelerating FRLD operational readiness while promoting coordination and coherence," she added.

COP30 has provided the FRLD a platform to promote the BIM, which allows partners, crucial stakeholders and organizations to come up with a plan as to how often money can be requested and what criteria countries will need to meet to apply for funding.

Countries can submit their applications starting December 15. It will run for six months.

The loss and damage fund was first agreed upon in 2023 during COP27 and established in 2024, with 2025 marking the first call for funding requests, which the board calls a "testament to the global solidarity" in support of combating the effects of climate change.

“This call, while significant, reminds us of the need for significantly more resources to meet the vast scale of need on the ground. As we operationalize the BIM, we will also be working to mobilize additional resources to support our long-term ambitions," FRLD Executive Director Ibrahima Cheikh Diong said.

Negotiations. COP30 is currently underway in Belém, Brazil, from November 10 to 21, with more than 190 countries holding weeks of talks and negotiations on how to curb global warming. The annual summit stems from a treaty that led to the Paris Agreement, where nations pledged to keep temperature rise below 2°C above pre-industrial levels — and ideally within 1.5°C.

The United Nations has since warned that the 1.5°C target is slipping out of reach as countries fall behind on climate action.

At last year’s COP29 in Azerbaijan, nations agreed to raise USD 300 billion in annual climate financing by 2035, with a long-term goal of mobilizing USD 1.3 trillion.

CCC IN THE NEWS

DAILY TRIBUNE

When calamity meets corruption
By: Ed Lacson

The Philippines reels from typhoons, floods, volcanic eruptions, earthquakes and other climate-related disruptions. Yet the whole country seems absorbed in the ongoing investigations into the corruption in flood control projects.

Watching some official responses to this dual calamity of graft and natural disaster is like viewing a predictable bunch of Netflix series where the plot never changes, the actors are the same, and the final scene never seems to unfold.

Floods swallow up entire cities after just an hour of rain, leptospirosis spreads, schools close, travel halts despite supposed mega flood control projects.

For decades, the Philippines has been listed among the world's five most climate-vulnerable nations. But despite warnings, expert studies, international pledges, and a trillion pesos in climate mitigating projects, the response remains muted.

Disasters still catch us unready, casualties keep rising, evacuations come too late, repairs too slow while life surreally goes on. We are always reacting instead of anticipating, comforting instead of protecting communities, and rebuilding inferior structures that will inevitably be destroyed again.

The human toll rises not only from natural forces but from ignorance, neglect, and false hopes. After each disaster, officials visit evacuation centers and deliver their usual prepared speeches about resilience, then pose beside sacks of relief goods for future political campaigns. But resilience is not only standing up after a fall, it is preventing the same fall from happening again and again.

Good governance requires foresight, planning, implementation, and stewardship.

The public, however, sees our climate response as confused, fragmented, and driven more by rhetoric than resolve.

Agencies overlap, responses are conflicted, and billions fill the pockets and houses of the Discayas and other ghost project contractors.

The Climate Change Commission lacks enforcement power and is flooded with empty and symbolic vision. Floods submerge cities, crops are lost, and coastal villages vanish under rising seas and the poor who contribute least to carbon emissions suffer the most.

The climate disasters expose the fragility of our institutions and the disconnect between leadership and science. Governance is often too myopic and politically motivated, dictated by election calendars rather than the rhythms of the seasons. Disaster funds become tools of patronage rather than instruments of prevention. Infrastructure budgets rarely include climate-proofing, and even basic measures like drainage maintenance and green urban planning are mismanaged or deprioritized, unless they can be used for photo ops and the usual “praise-releases” all with a view to the next election.

We treat climate change as an act of God rather than an act of man requiring conscience and accountability. Every choice in land use, transport, energy, or urban development is a climate decision. The true test of leadership is whether officials can plan beyond their terms, serving a future they may never see.

Government must move from reactive relief to proactive risk reduction. Budgets should prioritize flood control, reforestation, renewable energy, and climate-resilient agriculture, not merely relief distribution and photo opportunities. Local governments should be incentivized more toward prevention and less toward emergency response.

Transparency requires that local and foreign climate funds must be traceable and free from political discretion. The whole of society should be watchdogs to ensure “green projects” are not repackaged pork barrel funds.

Environmental awareness should be integrated in all levels, from grade school to executive programs, and climate literacy must be made common among business leaders, barangay captains and policymakers.

Finally, resilience must be redefined. It should not be a slogan for endurance but a mandate for justice, protecting the vulnerable while preventing the powerful from plundering the wealth of the nation.

The climate crisis tests our infrastructure, moral fiber, and foresight, compelling us to place science above politics and greed. Passing this test will determine our struggle for survival and renewal.

Unless we take control of the air we breathe, the water we drink, and the land we live on, we will perish as a nation.

MANILA BULLETIN

PH–Germany partnership powers systemic climate and ecological transformation through TRANSCEND Project

The partnership between the Government of the Philippines (GPH) and the Government of Germany continues to drive transformative climate and biodiversity action through the Transformative Actions for Climate and Ecological Protection and Development (TRANSCEND) Project — a joint initiative that strengthens climate governance, empowers communities, and protects ecosystems.

During the 2nd Project Steering Committee (PSC) Meeting, the Climate Change Commission (CCC) underscored the need to turn climate projects into lasting systems and institutional reforms that sustain impact beyond project cycles and empower communities to take climate action that endures.

“The Philippines’ climate response must move beyond isolated pilot projects toward coherent systems that sustain impact beyond budget cycles,” said CCC Vice Chairperson and Executive Director Robert E.A. Borje, speaking before partners from the Government of Germany, the United Nations, other government agencies, and non-government organizations.

“Our partnership must move beyond pilots. It must translate innovation into institutional practice, and good practice into national policy,” he added.

Jointly implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH, the CCC, and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), the TRANSCEND Project embodies the Philippines–Germany partnership’s shared commitment to climate and ecological transformation. It aims to strengthen the country’s capacity to integrate climate and biodiversity priorities into planning, investment, and policy — ensuring that climate action and ecosystem protection advance hand in hand.

Borje highlighted the CCC’s initiatives to integrate climate resilience into regular government operations by strengthening policies and financing mechanisms that link plans, budgets, and outcomes. These include scaling up Local Climate Change Expenditure Tagging (LCCET) to improve transparency in public spending, accelerating the People’s Survival Fund (PSF) for community- and nature-based adaptation projects, and integrating climate criteria in procurement to make green and resilient practices standard across agencies.

He noted that sustainable resilience depends on “systems that align, financing that rewards outcomes, and institutions that endure,” adding that these principles guide President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.’s administration in pursuing systemic, evidence-based, and inclusive climate governance.

Running from 2025 to 2029, TRANSCEND aligns with national frameworks such as the National Adaptation Plan (NAP), Nationally Determined Contribution Implementation Plan (NDCIP), and the Philippine Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (PBSAP). The project seeks to institutionalize transformative, evidence-based actions that promote inclusive, nature-positive, and sustainable growth.

DENR Undersecretary Analiza Rebuelta-Teh welcomed the project's role in strengthening convergence between climate and biodiversity efforts.

"This meeting allows us to assess milestones, address gaps, and ensure our actions advance both climate resilience and ecosystem protection," she said.

German Ambassador to the Philippines Dr. Andreas Michael Pfaffernoschke reaffirmed Germany's support, emphasizing that climate change is a shared responsibility requiring collective resolve.

"Our two countries will continue to work as strong and constructive partners in addressing one of the most pressing challenges of humankind," he said.

The ambassador added that the warming of the planet should not be viewed merely as a threat but as a challenge that calls for stronger commitment. He stressed that this should motivate nations to push harder toward ensuring a sustainable and livable planet for future generations.

The 2nd PSC meeting reviewed project progress and ensured strategic alignment for the coming years, including monitoring and evaluation systems to measure tangible outcomes such as reduced risks, restored ecosystems, and improved access to sustainable services.

Among those present were CCC Commissioner Rachel Anne S. Herrera, who facilitated discussions on some agenda items; Undersecretary Henry Yap Sr. of the Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development (DHSUD); GIZ Country Director Dr. Immanuel Gebhardt; and representatives from the DENR, DHSUD, Department of Transportation (DOTr), Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), and other partner agencies and organizations.

Borje concluded that the long-term success of TRANSCEND depends on building coherence across policies, financing, and institutions, ensuring that the project contributes not only to immediate climate and biodiversity goals but also to lasting reforms in public governance.

"If we do our work right — with discipline, courage, and constancy — TRANSCEND will not just transform cities; it will transform governance itself," he said.

Through the TRANSCEND partnership, the Philippines and Germany reaffirm their shared goal of strengthening resilience, accelerating adaptation, and promoting low-carbon and biodiversity-friendly development across the country.

For more information on the CCC's climate mainstreaming programs and partnerships, visit www.climate.gov.ph and www.facebook.com/CCCPhl.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

Empowerment of young women as leaders of climate resilience pushed

The Climate Change Commission (CCC) has underscored the critical need to empower girls and young women as leaders in climate action.

During the Girls Summit 2025 session on Nov. 5, CCC Commissioner Rachel Anne Herrera discussed the impact of climate change on women and girls and outlined the Commission's gender-responsive initiatives.

"Climate change does not affect everyone equally. It disproportionately impacts women and girls, exacerbating existing inequalities and threatening their livelihoods, health, and safety," Herrera said.

"Our policies must integrate gender considerations at every step, from planning and financing to implementation, to ensure we are building a resilience that truly protects and empowers every girl."

She described how climate change acts as a "threat multiplier," increasing risks of gender-based violence, disrupting education, and placing heavier burdens on girls.

Herrera highlighted the CCC's comprehensive approach, which includes mandating the use of sex-disaggregated data in local climate plans and strengthening climate budgeting to track spending that benefits women and girls.

This aligns with broader local government efforts, as emphasized by Quezon City Mayor Joy Belmonte.

"As part of a larger effort to promote gender inclusivity, we are focused on our Gender and Development Framework, with interventions designed to address the full cycle of care, from education and health to social protection and recovery," Belmonte said.

She also called for greater youth involvement, urging girls to claim their seats in decision-making bodies, become advocates for citizen science and early warning systems, and lead community-based adaptation projects.

The event highlighted the intersecting challenges that girls face, a point reiterated by Plan International Pilipinas Executive Director Pebbles Sanchez-Ogang, who emphasized that, "every day, young women across the country are forced to navigate challenges that threaten their safety, silence their voices, and limit their potential."

The Girls Summit 2025 was organized by Plan International Pilipinas, in partnership with the Quezon City Government and the Quezon City Gender and Development Council Office, in

celebration of the International Day of the Girl Child. The event culminated in the handover of The Girls' Agenda, a list of priority rights and calls to action presented to government and private sector leaders.

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