

DENR urges more climate investments

By [Eireene Jairee Gomez](#)
November 28, 2020

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has called for more private- and public-sector investments to strengthen the country's preparedness for calamities caused by extreme climate events.

“[The] Covid-19 (coronavirus disease 2019) and the recent climate disasters have shown that we must step up investment in preparedness now, instead of waiting for the next crisis to hit. The choice is clear, either delay and pay or plan and prosper. We know that investing in natural disaster preparedness is worth it, both in human lives and economic returns,” said Environment Undersecretary for Finance, Information Systems and Climate Change Annaliza Rebuelta-Teh during the Pilipinas Conference 2020 virtual forum hosted by Stratbase ADR Institute on the theme, “Towards Green Economic Recovery: Designing Climate Resilient and Sustainable Communities.”

She highlighted the long-term benefits of effective pre-disaster planning that allows a comprehensive and integrated understanding of community-based objectives. These efforts, Teh noted, result in resilient communities with an improved ability to withstand, respond to and recover from disasters.

“One of the important things that the government could do, today, is investing in better collection and analysis of data of the disaster risk that the country will face. Simply having a 24 hours’ notice of the storm can cut the resulting losses by 30 percent, while spending \$800 million on early warning systems in developing countries could actually save \$16 billion a year,” Teh explained.

“Community resilience must be at the heart of a green recovery, and it requires integrating sustainable measures in government policies, programs, and plans to achieve transformational changes in health, climate, environment, and eradication of poverty,” the DENR official added.

Currently, Teh said there is a strong need for the government to “rethink” its strategies and science. “We need to analyze our responses” that will in turn pave way for significant government policies and important changes in behaviors among Filipino communities.

In light of Covid-19, Teh said some mitigating measures Filipinos can contribute to reducing the country’s greenhouse gas emissions include cutting down food wastes and reducing non-essential consumption. “We need that to alter our recovery. We need to alter our lifestyle,” she added.

Meanwhile, Cavite Second District Rep. Elpidio Barzaga Jr. chairperson of House Committee on Natural Resources, stressed the role of public sector in promoting green investments and developments. He said his committee remained determined to institutionalize relevant environmental laws such as the Sustainable Forest Management Act and Wildlife Conservation Act.

The act, Barzaga said, entails the formulation of strategies and ways in protecting the country's forestlands as well as utilization of forest developments.

“It also creates community based forest law enforcement teams. The forest management agreement [meant] for exploration, development and utilization of forestlands and forest resource is also introduced. Forest developmental fund for projects proposed by qualified forest managers,” he said.

The Wildlife Conservation Act, on the other hand, calls for stiffer penalties and escalation of fines against those convicted of illegal wildlife trading. “It also expands the existing list of illegal activities attempting to trade illegal wildlife,” Barzaga said.

The execution of these laws lies in the hands of public officials, particularly mayors and governors, who, Barzaga lamented, are the ones who are directly

involved in illegal wildlife and environmental activities. “Perhaps it’s the time for these public officials to be persecuted.”

“We don’t have to anticipate the problem because we have experienced that for a long time. Next year, we can expect that what we experienced now will happen again,” Barzaga added.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2020/11/28/business/green-business/denr-urges-more-climate-investments/802183/>