

Headline: Why PH needs a green-minded president

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We seldom hear politicians outrightly campaign for environmental policies.

In the recently concluded CNN Philippines presidential debates at our university (University of Santo Tomas), I cannot help but be alarmed that the questions posed to the candidates did not even touch on environment-related platforms. On top of this, green policies are not reflected in the candidates' major campaigns.

It is high time that environmental policies should be part of the mainstream agenda for the next president of the Philippines. The absence of green policies has ramifications on ordinary people's lives. Although not seen in plain sight, the change in climate contributes to armed conflicts across the world as states vie for limited resources.

The Philippines is ravaged by typhoons, earthquakes, and landslides every year. People living in poverty are the most vulnerable and bear the disastrous impacts of these catastrophes. Yet, every year, it's always the same news—deaths, destroyed houses, damage to agriculture, crowded evacuation centers. Should this always be the fate of the Filipino people?

What is toxic about this is that survivors of disasters are always praised for their resilience when the government could have put in place safeguards that protect and prepare them for such calamities. This is why it's crucial that the country's next president should have unwavering support and participation in green policies, and honor commitments to international treaties. As the Latin legal maxim says: *salus populi est suprema lex*, the welfare of the people is the supreme law.

A president for the environment is a president for the people.

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