

Headline: Dev't of more renewable energy sources urged

Byline: Charles E. Buban

Published Date: 01:00 AM June 07, 2014

Section: business

Word Count: 3481

Content:

The Philippines is third in the list of countries most vulnerable to storms, floods, earthquakes, droughts and sea-level rise, with the South Pacific island nations of Vanuatu and Tonga ranking much higher.

The report came from the United Nations University's Institute for Environment and Human Security and the German Alliance Development Works that analyzed a country's exposure to natural disasters as well as estimated its susceptibility to damage based on the state of its economy and infrastructure, and the country's ability to respond to these disasters through preparedness measures and early warning systems.

The Philippines' 24.32-percent disaster risk landed the country in third place. Such vulnerability was recently accentuated when the country got ravaged by Supertyphoon "Yolanda," the strongest on record to make landfall in world history. This single storm claimed more than 6,000 lives and inflicted \$14 billion (P320 billion) in economic damage.

"Climate disasters are a reality that millions of Asians have had to face early. How much carbon Filipinos emit is beside the point: stronger and more frequent storms will assail their homes regardless," World Wildlife Fund international president and World Economic Forum cochair Yolanda Kakabadse said during the World Economic Forum on East Asia 2014 held recently in Manila.

The WWF is one of the leading organizations helping Filipinos adapt to climate change and calling for a shift to renewable energy. It warned that if the planet heats up beyond 4 degrees, up to 30 percent of all known plant and animal species will die while at the same time, intense storms, drought and other climate effects will be nearly unmanageable for less-developed nations.

This is why the Department of Energy (DoE), Climate Change Commission and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) of Germany have launched efforts to raise awareness and push for the development of renewable energy in the Philippines.

"Beyond the country's contribution to global efforts in limiting climate change impacts, leapfrogging past highly pollutive growth stages directly to a low-carbon national economy will also be financially sound in an increasingly climate-defined global economy," the WWF-Philippines stated.

The Philippines has now a total renewable energy installation of 5,521 megawatts in capacity, which the energy department targets to triple by 2030.

According to the WWF's 2007 Power Switch! study, the Philippines already has the capacity to develop 1,200 MW of geothermal, 2,308 MW of sustainable hydro, 235 MW of biomass and 7,404 MW of wind power generation capacity by mid-2020s, which will raise the share of indigenous renewables in the country's power mix to 50 percent.

The November 2013 ravaging of Yolanda has demonstrated the benefits of renewables in terms of adapting to the impacts of climate change. Majority of disaster-stricken areas experienced power shortages, which has taken months to restore.

The WWF believes if only solar energy has been harnessed in these areas, power could have been restored much faster. Besides, using renewable energy has also been proven to temper some of the impacts of prolonged and severe drought, as most of its types, such as solar and wind, require less water in producing electricity than fossil fuel.

Subscribe to our daily newsletter

By providing an email address. I agree to the Terms of Use and acknowledge that I have read the Privacy Policy.