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Headline: Simple things we can do as citizens to help mitigate the adverse effects of climate change

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Yearly, the Philippines experiences about 20 typhoons because the country is located near the equator where the ocean water is warm, which typically forms storms. For the past 10 years, due to global warming, we've experienced super typhoons which destroy lives, properties, and infrastructure. This is an alarming environmental issue that we should address before its effects become irreversible.

According to the United Nations, the earth's temperature is about 1.1 degrees Celsius warmer than in the late 1800s. Based on records, the last decade from 2011 to 2020 was the warmest so far. The increasing temperature is the result of climate change. Climate change is attributed mostly to human activities such as the creation of landfills, deforestation, and the burning of fossil fuels.

Landfills, where our garbage is dumped, produce methane, one of the greenhouse gases that contribute to global warming. Deforestation meanwhile means less trees to absorb carbon dioxide. When old trees are chopped down, they release into the atmosphere all the carbon dioxide they've absorbed for years. Finally, the burning of fossil fuels to produce electricity contributes largely to carbon dioxide emissions that increase greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. These gases allow sunlight to pass through; however, they also prevent heat from sunlight from leaving the atmosphere, thus resulting in global warming.

Global warming has serious effects on our lives. Intense heat on earth causes the melting of polar ice caps, rising sea levels, the formation of strong typhoons, and long droughts. With these destructive natural disasters, we cannot afford to be complacent and just shrug our shoulders while we witness fellow Filipinos' houses and agricultural crops submerged by floods after heavy rains. We cannot just stay in the comfort of our own homes, deaf to the desperate cries of other people suffering from disasters caused by climate change.

How then can we address this problem? We cannot just depend on government, but must also do our part—mainly through mitigation and adaptation. Mitigation means reducing the harmful effects of climate change by lessening our carbon footprint, by a reduction in our electrical consumption, participating in the community's tree planting project, following the government's mandate of reusing and recycling plastic bags, and minimizing food leftovers that produce methane gas when they are thrown into trash bins and eventually, into landfills.

Adaptation, according to the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, means "adjusting to actual or expected future climate." If your family is planning to buy property for your own house, make sure that the place is not flooded nor located near a shoreline. If you have a farm, identify which crops can be planted considering the changing climate in our country so that you can expect a plentiful harvest. During summer, to avoid the harmful effects of heat waves, avoid going out from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Wear light clothes during summer and drink water more often to avoid dehydration.

Mother Earth gets depleted each year and cries for environmental protection through people's collaborative efforts at restoring our forests and reducing carbon emissions in the atmosphere.

Unless we work together in reducing our carbon footprint, the earth will continuously get warmer and its effects might be irreversible. If we don't do our share, sooner or later, human life may no longer be sustainable.

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