

Headline: Property firms urged to help address climate change

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The operator of an online real estate marketplace operating internationally urged stakeholders in the Philippine property sector to help address climate change issues by building more resilient and sustainable communities.

During a recent forum, officials of Lamudi—which markets properties over the internet in 34 countries—said climate change was a global issue that should push local policymakers to address the country’s weak spots while harnessing its strengths.

In particular, Lamudi CEO Bhavna Suresh said that though the country might be facing a challenging situation, “there is plenty to be done in response to climate change, from big, industrial efforts to small, household changes.”

“All of these inequalities that exist in the world today are getting heightened because of global warming,” he said.

Particular focus in this regard should be given to property developments in coastal areas, many of which are moving toward greater urbanization.

According to Angela Ibay, who heads the World Wide Fund for Nature’s climate and energy program, “most coastal municipalities want to be cities eventually.”

“How do we push them towards not just sustainability but also push them to also look at measures that will make them resilient as well?” she asked.

In a country that is dotted with high-rise, mixed-use buildings and small coastal homes, the effort to save the environment goes together with measures developers can take like planting trees to encourage the growth of foliage that relieves some of the urban heat being experienced by built-up cities today.

During the forum, the issue of water supply was also highlighted as it remains a constant threat despite the steady stream of typhoons that affect the country each year.

According to former Manila Water Co. Inc. CEO Ferdinand dela Cruz, the matter was particularly urgent for the Philippine capital’s growing population.

“It’s up to us to make hard choices for us to be resilient,” he said. “There are no easy choices at this point. For us to make that, we need to have a constructive dialog and without the misinformation.”

He also mentioned the disparity in the supply and demand for water, saying the road map of policymakers to address supply shortages were being hampered by execution issues.

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Long-term solutions to water shortage and climate change are further hampered by the lack of initiative at the individual level. According to Dela Cruz, people forget about the problem once they have water, but it quickly resurfaces when another water shortage is felt.