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Headline: Manage water wisely, ex-gov't official warns

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A former environment secretary said on Friday Filipinos should be “very concerned” in light of global warming.

“Global warming has led to climate change. We now have more extreme weather, intense and longer droughts, and higher temperatures. Because molecules of the sea are expanding, we have rising sea levels. For Filipinos, we should be very concerned. The highest sea level monitored in the whole world is in the Philippines,” Elisea Gozun, secretary of the environment and natural resources in the Arroyo administration, said at the 2016 Rotary International Presidential Conference on Water, Sanitation and Hygiene in Schools.

The two-day conference—at the Marriott Hotel in Pasay City—was aimed at rallying stakeholders around the “critical global problem of water,” Rotary International said in a statement.

Gozun said the effects of climate change had “major consequences for water management.”

“Flooding can wash away our pipes and other water systems. There will be changes in water supply, rain variability.”

She said that as a result, “we can’t go on consuming water, living the way we do.”

“Otherwise, water will be at greater risk...we should work on this, government, and all other groups all over the world. This is our shared responsibility. We need to work and plan together,” she said.

Each individual, she said, “should go on a low-carbon diet” and conserve water.

“We should make sure we protect the watersheds. We should get involved in protecting watersheds, prioritize the protection of those that are already standing,” she said.

Gozun said that apart from these “mitigating measures,” there was a “need to adapt.”

“Let’s stop paving every single place. We should shift to using pavers. We should promote water management which is making the most of water,” she said.

“The world has changed, so too should we. Let’s remember that the actions you and I take have a cumulative impact on our water resources. The future is in your hands.”

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