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For today's column, I am sharing with you the interview I gave to college students from the country's biggest Catholic university.

Question: Can you briefly define climate change?

Answer: According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), a United Nations body created in 1988 by the World Meteorological Organization and the United Nations Environment Program, "climate change refers to any change in climate over time, whether due to natural variability or as a result of human activity."

Moreover, in 1992, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change defined "climate change refers to a change of climate that is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere and that is in addition to natural climate variability observed over comparable time periods."

Although the definition sounded almost similar, perhaps the only difference is the use of the words "or" and "and."

Q: What is weather? Is climate different from weather?

A: Weather, according to the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, is basically the way the atmosphere is behaving, mainly with respect to its effects upon life and human activities. It consists of the short-term (minutes to months) changes in the atmosphere.

Most people think of weather in terms of temperature, humidity, precipitation, cloudiness, brightness, visibility, wind and atmospheric pressure, as in high and low pressure. It can change from minute-to-minute, hour-to-hour, day-to-day, and season-to-season.

The difference between weather and climate is measure of time.

Climate, however, is the average of weather over time and space.

An easy way to remember the difference is that climate is what you expect, like a very hot summer, and weather is what you get, like a hot day.

Q: What man-made or human activities contribute to climate change?

A: Human activities contribute to climate change by causing changes in Earth's atmosphere in the amounts of greenhouse gases. The largest known contribution comes from the burning of fossil fuels, which releases carbon dioxide gas to the atmosphere.

Greenhouse gases affect climate by altering incoming solar radiation and out-going infrared (thermal) radiation that are part of Earth's energy balance. Changing the atmospheric properties of these gases can lead to a warming or cooling of the climate system.

Since the start of the industrial era, the overall effect of human activities on the climate has been a warming influence. The human impact on climate during this era greatly exceeds that due to known changes in natural processes.

Q: Is climate change a global concern?

A: Before I categorically answer this question, let me share with you that scientists have reached a 100-percent consensus on anthropogenic global warming. According to James Powell in his article published in the *Bulletin of Science, Technology and Society* last year, the consensus among research scientists on anthropogenic global warming has grown to 100 percent, based on the review of 11,602 peer-reviewed articles on climate change and global warming in the first seven months of 2019.

After I wrote the two-article series titled "Extreme weather events, climate action failure are biggest global risks" last January 25 and February 1, respectively, a fellow columnist reached out to me with this reaction, to wit: "Despite all the scientifically established evidence of global warming, we still hear or read of detractors claiming that climate change is an issue raised only by 'alarmists.' Among such detractors, unfortunately, are US President Donald Trump — who called climate change a 'hoax' — and a few self-proclaimed 'environmental experts' and amusingly, one of our fellow columnists in this journal.

Although we respect their thinking, we should never for a moment stop, so to speak, just to kick at every dog that barks at us along the way."

As to your question, climate change is obviously a major global concern. It is also a national concern.

In another article titled "Extreme weather, four other global risks could lead to systemic crisis" that I wrote last February 22, I shared that, according to the *Future Earth's Risks Perceptions Report 2020*, climate change is one of the top five global risks. And together with extreme weather, biodiversity loss, and food and water crises, these five risks threaten the continued integrity of the biosphere and its capacity to support itself and human life.

As a major global concern, it is, therefore, extra important that all nations, through their respective leaders, should act collectively in addressing the climate crisis. If we continue to do our ways on the business-as-usual mode, we are headed to an uncharted catastrophic scenario.

Q5: How vulnerable are we — the Philippines?

A: The Philippines is one of the most, if not the most, vulnerable countries to extreme weather events and climate change.

Just look at these reports.

Germanwatch's Long-Term Climate Risk Index found the Philippines as the fourth most affected country due to weather events for the period 1999 to 2018.

Germanwatch's Global Climate Risk Index 2020 found the Philippines as the second most affected country by weather events for 2018.

World Risk Report 2019 Edition identified the Philippines as the ninth riskiest country worldwide as a consequence of extreme weather events.

Global Peace Index 2019 found the Philippines as the country most susceptible to the impacts of climate change.

One said in a public forum that “climate change clearly threatens nothing less than the long-term viability of the Filipino nation.” He continued that people who did the least to cause the problem — especially those living in poverty and fragile areas — are most at risk.

Q: Climate-change awareness is a key component. How do you promote it?

A: I subscribed to the recommendation of the IPCC Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5 degrees Celsius (C) that education, information and community approaches, including those that are informed by indigenous knowledge and local knowledge, can accelerate the wide scale behavior changes consistent with adapting to and limiting global warming to 1.5

C.

In promoting climate change awareness, aside from talks, seminars and workshops that I give counting over 50 sharings a year, my column, “All About Choices” in The Manila Times is also vital as it discusses the environment, latest science of climate change, and sustainability.

I am humbled in giving this kind of interview with students, not only to satisfy their requirement for a subject but to help them as well in understanding climate change, its impacts both on the global and local scale, takeaways of the latest IPCC special reports, and the how they, as individuals, can contribute in addressing the climate emergency.

Q: Can social media be useful in raising awareness of climate change?

A: Indeed, social media is a very powerful medium among our young Filipinos. I am confident it can contribute immensely in raising awareness on climate change.

The “We Are Social’s Global Digital Report 2019” reported that there are 76 million active Filipino social media users — 71 percent of the entire population — who spend an average of four hours a day on different social media platforms, and Facebook takes the lead as most visited with 75 million active Filipino users monthly.

One of the many ways we can use Facebook is simply by sharing a climate change-related post or content. When one does — especially in public mode — it does not only spread to your own friends but also to the friends of your own friends. You may not know it but you make yourself an instrument to influence others to share the same post or content and eventually take action.

The author is the executive director of the Young Environmental Forum. He completed his climate change and development course at the University of East Anglia (United Kingdom) and executive program on sustainability leadership at Yale University (USA). On Sunday (March 8), he will give a pep talk with the pioneering members of the Association of Young Environmental Journalists-Cagayan de Oro City chapter. On March 13, he will be the guest speaker in the Environmental Seminar 2020: Effective Pedagogy in Empowering Youth toward Environmental Sustainability at Olivarez College, Parañaque City. He can be emailed at ludwig.federigan@gmail.com.