

Headline: Miss Eco Teen PH Beatriz McLelland says COP27's 'loss and damage' fund proposal 'never enough'

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MANILA, Philippines — At the recent United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP27), member-countries agreed to set up a fund to help poor countries that are more vulnerable to the impact of climate change. But a Filipino teen environmental advocate demanded more from them.

"It will never be enough when it comes to saving the people and the environment. But it's one step closer to having a better future and giving that opportunity to have a better life for the people who are suffering," reigning Miss Eco Teen Philippines Beatriz McLelland told the Inquirer at the sidelines of her send-off press conference at Luxent Hotel in Quezon City on Nov. 21.

"I hope that everybody hears it, and creates more projects, and take that as an inspiration to give more opportunities to the people," continued the country's representative to the 2022 Miss Eco Teen International pageant in Egypt next month.

McLelland also encouraged her fellow youth to be more involved in environmental projects. "I hope that in the future we can work with the COP, and I hope I could meet some of the members when I come to visit Egypt," she said.

If given the chance, she said, she would propose that richer countries explore "eco anxiety" projects. "It's all about the youth having to fear of their future because of the ongoing climate crisis, not only in the Philippines but the rest of the world," she explained.

McLelland said the project aims to inspire hope from that fear. "It doesn't only take stakeholders to do that, it also takes the youth to be part, to be involved, and to raise the concerns, and be able to be involved in projects, and for them to be heard as well," she added.

This is also the reason why, for her, it is still necessary to hold a "Teen" pageant even if the Miss Eco International organization already mounts a "Miss" competition.

"We stand for so many advocacies that we are passionate about, and that we deserve to be heard because young people as well can create change," McLelland explained.

She said the youth is more aware of their surroundings and are not afraid to speak up about causes if given the chance. "I'm really thankful that there are still 'teen' pageants for that, for opportunities to be given to young women like myself," she continued.

McLelland captured her national title at the 2022 Miss World Philippines pageant in June, and will represent the Philippines in the 2022 Miss Eco Teen International competition in Egypt on Dec. 11 (Dec. 12 in Manila).

Her predecessor Tatyana Austria finished second last year, while Roberta Tamondong became the first winner from the Philippines when she won in 2020. EDV

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