

Headline: Fight to conserve our planet

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I recently visited Davao and was surprised to find it extremely hot and humid.

The greenery was still there, a sight always to be cherished, along with the marvel of our highest peak, Mount Apo, caressed by clouds.

But while walking around one night, I felt extremely uncomfortable and began to perspire. I rushed back to the hotel and lo and behold, it began to rain cats and dogs. In a matter of minutes the roads of downtown Davao near the Ateneo were flooded.

The next day I rode a taxi and the driver and I talked about the rains. To my surprise, he said the effects of climate change were upon us. I was happy to hear that he was reasonably informed about climate change.

And why should I feel so perplexed about the weather? Only in December, Tropical Storm "Sendong" devastated the cities of Cagayan de Oro and Iligan, which had seldom experienced weather disturbances. Weeks ago, parts of Australia were underwater, and parts of Europe were turning into ice, resulting in a number of deaths.

The effects of climate change have no boundaries, striking anywhere and anytime.

That's it for the normal practice of agriculture. There are no regular planting and harvesting periods anymore. No forecast. And yet the world powers have no consensus on the ways to mitigate greenhouse gases and win the battle against climate change, a manmade disaster triggered by greed, oil and gold.

And for what and for whom? Already, the world's economy is in shambles. The poor are poorer, the hungry even more. There are no jobs and unemployment is rising. Population is increasing and our forests are still being cut, our mountains continue to be mined. Our natural capital is fast being depleted.

What good is it if both the ecology and the economy are in disarray?

We need a drastic change and we need it fast. We cannot wait for any UN agreements for they may take forever. Let us do it ourselves. Lower our carbon footprint, go to renewable energy (more than 70 percent of the new sources of energy in the UK are renewable, like wind and solar), go organic, reforest.

Let us fight to conserve our planet.

—ANTONIO M. CLAPAROLS, president, Ecological Society of the Philippines,

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