

Headline: Put right people in charge of science, education

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In the letter titled “Healthy climate good economics” (Inquirer 10/17/11), the author says “No amount of adaptation... can restore an ecosystem.” Then he says, “We need to restore the world’s ecosystems.” He says we need... We need... We need... But he doesn’t say how.

The inevitable destruction expected from climate change within this century will be much more devastating than what we have seen in recent typhoons, floods, landslides, etc. And it will take more planning than enumerating statistics or seriously considering “building houseboats.” (Inquirer, 10/14/11)

Climate change will impact on biodiversity, agriculture and fisheries, human settlements, infectious diseases, and cause more public misery in poor countries. High population density and, foremost, widespread poverty make the Philippines even more vulnerable.

Some climate scientists believe that with the greenhouse gases already in the atmosphere, global warming will continue even if carbon emission is cut to currently-proposed levels.

The world is concerned with two things—mitigation and adaptation. Let us stop all talk about mitigating climate change. There is nothing we can do to stop or even reduce it. Instead, let us concentrate on adaptive measures to minimize and survive its effects. These need technological knowhow, which can only be addressed through improved scientific research and higher education.

The first step should put the right people in Department of Science and Technology, the Commission on Higher Education and the National Science and Technology Academy (NSTA). There is hardly any better alternative. The easiest way to assess if a person has made any major contributions to one’s field—to merit a top position in science or education—is with the (ISI) Institute for Science Information database called Web of Knowledge. This database gives a list of published works in best cited journals and their citations, which measure their quality and impact.

The Philippines should radically change its approaches in solving problems to ensure the achievement of its objectives. Selecting the right people for positions in science and education is crucial. For more on climate change and the Philippines, Google or Yahoo search “Adapting to climate change through research and education.”

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