

Headline: Filipino pro-environment groups in Dubai 'disappointed' with COP28

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Filipino environmental defenders stage a protest on December 9 in Dubai to urge the United Nations 28th Conference of Parties (COP28) to demand climate accountability from developed countries. Photo from Pamalakaya.

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MANILA, Philippines — Filipino climate and fisherfolk activists who addressed the United Nations 28th Conference of Parties (COP28) in Dubai expressed disappointment at the result of the two-week summit on Wednesday.

A day after COP28's closing on December 12, the groups aired their dismay over the incompleteness of mechanisms on climate finance.

"Aside from the meager amount pledged by polluting countries to climate finance, the more pressing concern is how it is gonna reach the most vulnerable and most affected communities," Peoples Rising for Climate Justice (PRCJ) said in a statement.

"We haven't seen any mechanisms in regards to how the LDF [Loss and Damage Fund] will be operationalized and allocated," the group added.

PRCJ is pertaining to the climate fund that is set up to help vulnerable countries cope with the costly and damaging impact of climate disasters. It was launched on the first day of COP28 on November 30.

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The group said that at the end of the summit, developed countries have only contributed a total of \$700 million to the LDF – a far cry from the United Nations' estimate of \$387 billion needed annually for the climate change adaptation measures of developing countries, including the Philippines.

PRCJ also assailed the Philippine government's repeated show of intent to host the board of the LDF, calling it "hypocritical" to boast about the country's climate actions while Filipino environmentalists continue to face difficult human rights situations at home.

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On Saturday, Environment Secretary Maria Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga told delegates at the climate summit that the Philippines is "most qualified" to host the LDF board for "being a living testament to the effects of climate change."

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Some Filipino pro-environment groups welcomed the country's proposition while others, including fishers' group Pamalakaya, said that the Philippine government has no "moral ascendancy" to host the board due to its unclear stance on "destructive" reclamation projects in Manila Bay.

For Ivan Enrile of Ibon International, the fight to end the era of fossil fuels is "far from over."

Enrile also lamented the shifting of negotiations from a "clear language on fossil fuel phaseout" to "settling for vague promises of reducing the consumption and production of fossil fuels."

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"We come here in Dubai with a clear demand: fast, fair, and funded fossil fuel phaseout. Anything less is simply playing to the gallery and greenwashing," he said in a separate statement.

Data from the United Nations show that fossil fuels still account for more than 80 percent of global energy production – meaning that the burning of coal, oil, and gas still fuels many nations' economies.

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This prompts many states, including those that import and export oil, to resist the phaseout.