

Climate change to affect 25M kids in 2050

\$7B to ease temperature rise impact on poor

CLIMATE change will cause the malnourishment of 25 million more children in 2050, according to a report by the Washington-based International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) and e-mailed to media outlets worldwide.

This study, the most comprehensive assessment to date, compares the number of malnourished children in 2050 with and without climate change.

"This outcome could be averted with \$7 billion per year of additional investments in agricultural productivity to help farmers to adapt to the effects of climate change. Investments are needed in agricultural research, improved irrigation, and rural roads to increase market access for poor farmers. Access to safe drinking water and education for girls is also essential," said Gerald Nelson, IFPRI senior research fellow and report lead author.

The study, "Climate Change: Impact on Agriculture and Costs of Adaptation," was prepared by IFPRI for inclusion in two separate reports from the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank, both released today in conjunction with international climate change meetings in Bangkok.

Without new technology and adjustments by farmers, climate change will reduce irrigated wheat yields in 2050 by around 30 percent in developing countries compared to a no-climate change scenario. Irrigated rice yields will fall by 15 percent.

Even without climate change, food prices will rise, but climate change makes the problem worse. Without climate change, 2050 wheat prices will increase globally by almost 40 percent. With climate change, wheat prices will increase by up to 194 percent. Rice is projected to increase 60 percent without climate change, but it will go up by as much as 121 percent with climate change. 2050 maize prices will be more than 60 percent higher without climate change, but they will be up to 153 percent higher with climate change.

The first of its kind, this study combines climate models that project changes in rainfall and temperature and a crop model to capture biophysical effects with IFPRI's economic model of world agriculture. The latter projects changes in the production, consumption, and trade of major agricultural commodities.

The modeling does not include: the effects of increased variability in weather due to climate change; the loss of agricultural lands due to rising sea levels; climate change-induced increases in pests and diseases; and increased variability in river flow as glaciers melt.

All these factors could increase the damage of climate change to agriculture.

Developing countries will be hit hardest by climate change and will face bigger declines in crop yields and production than industrialized countries, the study finds. The negative effects of climate change are especially pronounced in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. Compared to the average biophysical effects of climate change on yields in the industrialized world, the developing countries fare worse for almost all crops.

"Agriculture is extremely vulnerable to climate change, because farming is so weather-dependent. Small-scale farmers in developing countries will suffer the most," noted Mark Rosegrant, director of IFPRI's Environment and Production Technology Division and report co-author.

"However, our study finds that this scenario of lower yields, higher prices, and increased child malnutrition can be avoided."

In addition to increased funding for rural development, IFPRI recommends more open agricultural trade to ensure that food will reach the poorest populations in times of crises.

"If governments and donors begin now to invest seriously in adaptation for poor farmers, we can avert this bleak future," said Rosegrant. (*Inquirer.net*)

GSIS allotting P5B for emergency loans

THE Government Service Insurance System (GSIS) is allotting P5 billion in emergency loans to victims of Tropical Storm "Ondoy" (international codename: Ketsana), GSIS president Winston F. Garcia announced.

The GSIS said members could apply for emergency loans starting Oct. 1.

The emergency loan—worth P20,000—is available to eligible members in areas declared by the National Disaster Coordinating Council in a "state of calamity."

The areas include Metro Manila, Mountain Province, Ifugao, Benguet, Pangasinan, La Union, Ilocos Sur, Isabela,

Quirino, Nueva Vizcaya, Aurora, Nueva Ecija, Zambales, Pampanga, Bulacan, Tarlac, Bataan, Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal, Quezon, Occidental Mindoro, Oriental Mindoro, Marinduque, Catanduanes, Camarines Norte and Camarines Sur.

The emergency loan can be availed of in any GSIS Wireless Automated Processing System kiosk or G-WAPS kiosk. Qualified members can apply for emergency loans from 8 a.m. to 8pm. They have to bring their eCard Plus when applying through the kiosks.

Meanwhile, the Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. group of companies said that

it had given P10 million of aid to victims of Ondoy since Sunday.

Volunteer employees from the PLDT Group are now fanning out to areas like Marikina, Cainta, Pasig, Malabon, Quezon City, San Mateo and Pampanga to provide much-needed relief goods and medical help.

Doctors and nurses from PLDT and Metro Pacific sister companies Makati Medical Center and Cardinal Santos Medical Center were in Marikina Tuesday and will go to Cainta Wednesday to help the sick.

PLDT also sent helicopters to airdrop food in waterlogged Cainta. (*Inquirer.net*)

Petitioners vs poll automation project file Motion for Reconsideration

by SANDY ARANETA
Philstar.com

LAWYER Harry Roque recently filed a Motion for Reconsideration (MR) at the Supreme Court seeking to nullify the earlier decision denying his petition to junk the Commission on Election's (Comelec) 2010 poll automation project, which was awarded to the joint venture of Total Information Management Inc. (TIM) and Smartmatic International Corp. (Smartmatic).

Roque filed a motion last Sept. 28 urging the Court to reconsider its Sept. 10, 2009 ruling wherein the justices decided by an 11-3 vote to deny the petition of Roque.

In the decision penned by Justice Presbitero Velasco Jr., the Court upheld the poll automation contract and ruled that the Comelec did not commit grave abuse of discretion.

It stressed that the joint venture of Smartmatic and TIM was properly documented.

"Had petitioners only bothered to undertake the usual due diligence that comes with good judgment and examined the eligibility envelope of the Smartmatic-TIM joint venture, they would have discovered that their challenge to and arguments against the joint venture and its JVA (Joint Venture Agreement) have really no factual basis," the Court said.

Concurring were Chief Justice Reynato Puno and Justices Con-

suelo Ynares-Santiago, Renato Corona, Minita Chico-Nazario, Antonio Eduardo Nachura, Teresita Leonardo-de Castro, Diosdado Peralta, Lucas Bersamin, Mariano del Castillo, and Rober to Abad. Justice Antonio Carpio dissented and wrote a separate opinion, which was joined by Justice Conchita Carpio-Morales. Justice Arturo Brion also wrote a dissenting opinion.

Senior Justice Leonardo Quisumbing was on official leave.

Roque said in his latest motion that the award by the Comelec of the elections automation project to TIM and Smartmatic was made with grave abuse of discretion amounting to an excess or lack of jurisdiction, it being in violation of the Constitution, of statutes, and of jurisprudence.

He reiterated his prayer to the SC to permanently prohibit the commission, the Comelec-Special Bids and Awards Committee (SBAC), TIM and Smartmatic from implementing the contract.

Roque also asked the SC to declare the contract null and void for violating the Constitution, statutes, and jurisprudence.

He asked the Court to enjoin all respondents from implementing the contract and the respondent Secretary of the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) from releasing funds for the project.

Aside from Roque, other peti-

tioners are lawyers Joel Butuyan and Romel Bagares, and private citizens Allan Jones Lardizabal, Gilbert Andres, Immaculada Garcia, Erlinda Mercado, Francisco Alcuaz, Ma. Azucena Maceda, and Alvin Peters.

"This patent misrepresentation by respondent Smartmatic-TIM is evidence of bad faith and intent to defraud the government," the petitioners stressed.

The petitioners further argued that the consortium did not include Jarltech as a member of the alleged joint venture even if the Precinct Count Optical Scan (PCOS) machines are to be procured from it, which is a violation of the Court's ruling in ITFP vs. Comelec, which mandated the latter to determine the full identity of the entity it is dealing with.

The group said Smartmatic also did not include Dominion and 2Go Corp. as members of the joint venture even if these companies are responsible for the software and the distribution of the PCOS machines, respectively.

"Since Jarltech, Dominion, and 2Go are not privy to the contract to be entered between Comelec and the alleged Smartmatic-TIM joint venture, these three entities are obviously not jointly and severally liable with respondents Smartmatic and TIM," the petitioners complained. ■

JDV to take Comelec to court

FORMER Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr. will take the Commission on Elections (Comelec) to the Supreme Court for upholding the merger of Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrats and Kabalikat ng Malayang Pilipino (Kampi).

However, the Pangasinan lawmaker will first ask the poll body to reconsider its decision before he goes to the SC.

In a statement, De Venecia—

who co-founded Lakas in 1992 with President Fidel Ramos—said the Comelec disregarded his argument that the Lakas national assembly did not ratify the merger as provided in the party's constitution and bylaws.

"What the merged party submitted to the Comelec was only a declaration of the national directorate of Lakas-CMD which is not the body mandated to make the ratification under

Lakas-CMD's constitution and bylaws," he said.

"Thus, the merger that will result in the dissolution of the Lakas-CMD is not binding on the members of the party," he said.

The Comelec has directed election officers to inspect polling precincts "to determine their availability, accessibility and suitability" in next year's elections. (*Philstar.com*)

while Laguna has 113,625 evacuees. In the metropolis, Quezon City reported the highest number of evacuees at 76,460 followed by Marikina City with 57,965.

Donations pour in

Social Welfare Secretary Esperanza Cabral said that aside from the DSWD's funds, donations from private groups sustained

the department's relief operations.

In the last four days, the DSWD has been distributing 12,500 food packs and 12,500 clothing packs daily.

Cabral said many of the evacuation centers would have to be maintained for seven to 10 more days. ■

Flood crisis...

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The DSWD said 503,273 people remained in 607 evacuation centers in Metro Manila and other affected areas as of Wednesday.

Rizal has 94,021 evacuees

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