GREENPEACE

Earth day election agenda

Ngayong Earth Day 2025 at sa paparating na eleksyon, sa panahon ng lumalalang krisis sa klima, paano mo ipaglalaban ang kinabukasan ng mga Pilipino?

Itong tanong ay hindi lang para sa mga botante--para din ito sa mga kandidato.

This year, we celebrate Earth Day in the lead up to the country's 2025 midterm elections. With so much at stake for the Philippines in a world ravaged by climate change, this is the best time to get involved and put climate justice front and center of the policy agenda.

What we know:

- 2024 was the hottest year on record and the first year whose annual average temperature exceeded 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels.[1] 2024 is also the hottest year in the Philippines since official monitoring started in 1951.[2]
- The Philippines experienced an unprecedented six typhoons within 30 days, from October to November 2024, "supercharged" by climate change.[3]
- The country constantly ranks among the top 10 most affected by extreme weather events. It ranked 10th place in the latest Climate Risk Index (by Germanwatch) which looks at the most affected countries in the past 30 years.[4] Germanwatch also said that these events have caused the country trillions of pesos in losses, and that the Philippines regularly ranks among the most affected countries because of the "continuous threats from climate events."
- Costs of climate impacts have been rising. Data from the Department of Finance (DoF) in 2021 pegged costs of climate-related losses and damages at PHP 506.1 billion (about USD 10 billion) or an annual average of PHP 48.9 billion.[5]
- Swiss RE[6] ranked the Philippines as the most economically exposed to climate risk among 36 countries, potentially losing 3% of its GDP annually. This is on top of human and social costs that are difficult to quantify but are still part of the losses and damages experienced by communities.

Climate change creates lasting and deeply felt impacts on top election issues:

- **Food security** - Typhoons and drought devastate farms and make it harder to grow crops. Along with warming seas, these also affect fish stocks and coral reefs. These are all directly related to reduced food sources and more difficult access to food.
- **Health** and general physical and mental wellness - Typhoons and floods increase the risk of death, diseases and health emergencies. Extreme heat exposes more and more vulnerable populations to heat stroke. Climate change also increases the incidence of dengue and other vector-borne diseases. Climate anxiety is now a leading cause of mental and emotional distress, mainly among the youth.

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[1] https://wmo.int/news/media-centre/wmo-confirms-2024-warmest-year-record-about-155degc-above-pre-industrial-level

[2] https://www.abs-cbn.com/news/weather-traffic/2025/1/23/2024-is-hottest-year-in-philippines-pagasa-1717

[3] https://www.worldweatherattribution.org/climate-change-supercharged-late-typhoon-season-in-the-philippines-highlighting-the-need-for-resilience-to-consecutive-events/

[4] https://reliefweb.int/report/world/global-climate-risk-index-2025-enarde

[5] https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1158484

[6] https://www.swissre.com/press-release/Economic-losses-set-to-increase-due-to-climate-change-with-US-and-Philippines-the-hardest-hit-Swiss-Re-Institute-finds/3051a9b0-e379-4bcb-990f-3cc8236d55a1

- **Education** - In the Philippines, extreme heat and intense typhoons are a major cause of school closures and shortened class hours, reducing school children's access to education and deepening the country's education crisis.
- **Poverty** - The constant cycle of super typhoons and extreme drought is pushing more people into poverty and debt, increasing vulnerability to climate impacts.
- **Livelihoods** - Farmers and fishers, already among the poorest in Philippine society, stand to lose the most as the warming climate impacts livelihood activities. Climate change is also driving biodiversity loss and is disrupting the health of ecosystems on which people depend for their livelihoods and well-being.

Greenpeace believes that climate justice must be a priority election agenda.

Champion climate justice: a 5-point agenda for candidates

1. **Champion communities: Help build climate-resilient communities**
   Filipino communities bear the brunt of the climate crisis. Many communities suffer the impacts of typhoons several times a year, every year. Candidates must prioritize policies that help strengthen community resilience.

   What this looks like:
   Ensuring community resilience starts at the local level, and entails creating and opening spaces for people participation in local policy making. Local officials must engage communities in identifying challenges as well as identifying existing practices that can be further supported and strengthened by policies, or new strategies that can help secure communities during, and strengthen them between, disasters.

   At both local and national level, it is important to mainstream rights-based climate action and climate justice across government policies and programs, for example, in city planning, infrastructure projects, permits for large-scale industrial activities, and fisheries and agricultural policies, among others. Coherent strategies beyond disaster response must be put in place, and these should also address long-term vulnerabilities, not just disasters. Adaptation programs must be consistent with the aim of protecting human rights, while forging solutions sensitive to local realities that would reduce, if not prevent, environmental risks to communities.



2. **Demand accountability: Make climate polluters pay**
   Losses and damages from climate impacts costs the country tens of billions every year. This cost is shouldered by the national government and local government units, and is paid for by Filipino taxpayers. Meanwhile, the companies most responsible for the climate crisis have not only failed to contribute any payment, but continue to rake in profit by the trillions of dollars while continuing their climate-damaging activities. Candidates must have the courage to confront the fossil fuel industry and exact corporate accountability for climate impacts.

   What this looks like:
   At the national level, Congress Representatives and Senators must champion the Climate Accountability Bill or CLIMA Bill, which aims to establish a national framework for climate loss and damage in the Philippines. The bill intends to: institute policies and systems to address climate change; protect communities from climate change-induced losses, damages and human rights harms; and provide mechanisms for accountability and reparations from those responsible for worsening the climate crisis—including corporate interests such as the fossil fuel industry.

   Elected officials can also call for the Philippine government to take corporate climate polluters to court, following through with the Commision on Human Rights' final report on the National Inquiry on Climate Change,[7] as well as the government's statements at the separate proceedings on Advisory Opinions relevant to climate change at the International Tribunal of the Law of the Sea[8] (2019) and at the International Court of Justice[9] (2024), which both recognized the duty of states to ensure the responsibility of both public and private entities under its jurisdiction. At the local level, local governments can use local resolutions to spur action on pursuing climate accountability mechanisms such as initiating legal action against carbon intensive companies, or supporting the passage of the CLIMA Bill.



[7] https://www.greenpeace.org/static/planet4-philippines-stateless/2024/02/6c24f95b-nicc_report.pdf
[8] https://www.itlos.org/fileadmin/itlos/documents/cases/31/Oral_proceedings/verbatim_records_rev/ITLOS_PV23_C31_12_Rev.1_E.pdf
[9] https://www.icj-cij.org/sites/default/files/case-related/187/187-20240321-wri-10-00-en.pdf

3. **Support the Just Energy Transition: Ensure clean and just energy for all**
   Despite the imperative to switch to renewables, the Philippines' energy mix continues to be dominated by fossil fuels, particularly coal. Recently passed legislation is fast-tracking the development of fossil gas, which will lock the country to at least 40 years of more fossil fuels. Meanwhile, at the House of Representatives, proponents are railroading bills in support of dangerous nuclear energy, distracting lawmakers from much-needed policy shifts for a Just Energy Transition. At the same time, the global energy transition is driving a sharp demand for critical minerals like nickel, opening new mining sites and compromising the livelihoods and natural support systems of communities and indigenous peoples. Candidates must enable a fossil fuel phase out and firmly close the door on nuclear and gas, while supporting the 10 principles for a Just Energy Transition as laid out by Philippine CSOs and people's organizations.

   What this looks like:
   At the national level, Congress Representatives and Senators must support a renewables-focused, climate aligned, people-centered, and rights-based just energy transition. They must support a holistic and systemic approach that puts the welfare of people and the environment first, and ensure that the transition does not create more environmental problems. They also must not support the passage of any bill promoting nuclear energy. They must stand firm on the coal moratorium, and ensure there will be no new gas facilities. At the local level, local government executives can issue resolutions declaring their localities as fossil fuel-free, and take steps to support local renewable energy (RE) development utilizing decentralized, flexible grids.



4. **Advocate health and well being: Promote health-focused climate policies**
   In 2023, at the UNFCCC COP 28 in Dubai, 40 million health workers demanded bold health and climate action.[10] Among their primary calls was for the phase out of fossil fuels, which can secure a liveable future for people, and save millions of lives affected by air pollution from fossil fuels. The phase out of fossil fuels must also include a call to drastically reduce plastics: microplastics, which is

10 https://www.who.int/news/item/02-12-2023-over-40-million-health-professionals-demand-bold-health-and-climate-action-at-cop28

now the air we breathe, the food we eat and the water we drink, pose serious health risks. In the Philippines, people suffer health risks from heat, drought and typhoons. Extreme weather exacerbates health conditions such as cardiovascular diseases. Cases of dengue, a vector borne disease, are also rising. Lack of access to food and proper nutrition due to damaged crops and poverty contribute to malnutrition. For communities and youth, climate-related trauma and anxiety are becoming common. Candidates need to acknowledge that ambitious climate action presents significant health benefits.

What this looks like:
In addressing climate change, future policy makers and local executives must prioritize addressing people's health and well-being. At the national level, ensuring a fossil fuel phase-out will result in better air quality and reduce the risk of death and illness from pollution. A national policy banning single use plastics and promoting reuse and refill will also help lessen human exposure to microplastics in the environment. Local policies to build community resilience and preparedness for extreme weather events, climate resilient health systems, and disaster reduction plans that include holistic pre- and post-disaster support can help people prepare for and cope with climate impacts better.



5. **Put climate justice and climate action at the center of policymaking**
Climate change is closely linked to many of today's societal challenges, including issues that are in the top ten priorities of voters[11]: food security, health, jobs and livelihoods, education and poverty. However, despite numerous pronouncements from past and present administrations on climate justice and climate action, the Philippines still lacks a coherent plan that can effectively address climate change.

Filipinos are already suffering from climate impacts and it will get worse. The climate crisis impacts very fundamental issues: food, water and energy security, poverty, injustice, health, migration, security and our fundamental rights to life, health, among others. To secure all these and ensure Filipinos are able to live decent lives free from fear or want, means that climate needs to be the primary lens in government policy making and implementation.

[11] https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1245157

Climate change is a development issue: it has long been impacting government efforts on poverty reduction and economic development. Current environmental crises (pollution and biodiversity), and social crises (such as poverty, conflict, unemployment, as well as economic and education crises) are happening against the backdrop of, and are interacting with, the escalating climate crisis. The climate crisis is already impacting ecosystems, biodiversity, agriculture and our oceans. But the crisis is not just about climate but also about societal issues that in turn magnify problems such as poverty and conflict. Future policy- and decision-makers need to understand that the climate agenda is a development agenda, and ensure that climate is the primary lens for government policy and decision-making.

What this looks like:
At the national level, this would include aligning the Philippine Development Plan with a climate justice agenda, and ensuring coherence with all other plans and policies such as (but not limited to) the Philippine Energy Plan, the Philippines' Nationally Determined Contributions, the National Climate Change Action Plan, and the National Adaptation Plan. All projects and initiatives being planned must reshape the economy and society towards climate justice and resilience. No environmentally destructive infrastructure projects should be approved. This includes foreign investments, public-private partnerships and the like. The government must use this opportunity to shift to forward-looking investments that do not harm the environment and peoples' health and well-being.

At a local level, the government has the opportunity to create dignified, localized green jobs that pay a living wage and sustain a healthy, thriving economy of care, while simultaneously designing new community-centered, public infrastructure and systems that we can all access and participate in building and sustaining, so we can live well and get around. City infrastructure planning should institutionalize inclusive green public spaces and safe, accessible and efficient active mobility and mass public transport systems over private motorized vehicles, developed through the full informed participation, input, consultation and consent of residents, including the urban poor. Investments in government, education and hospital facilities should focus on retrofitting/construction to reduce their environmental and climate footprints and to ensure they are climate-proofed. Local officials should also ensure investment goes to building and strengthening local economies and livelihoods, and favors community-oriented/directed business models (rather than investment supporting big businesses, and that is being driven towards export-oriented industries) and foster cooperatives that work for communities, including for farmers, fisherfolk, health workers, subsistence /land based communities, day care and other vital sectors.

