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Deadly typhoon: 50 people fast in solidarity with Philippines

Warsaw, Poland (PANA) - Fifty people, including activists, members of faith-based groups and scientists, are currently fasting in solidarity with Yeb Sano, head of the Filipino delegation at the current UN Climate Change Conference session in Warsaw, Poland, PANA reported Wednesday.

On Monday, Sano announced he was starting the fasting following the devastating super typhoon which hit the country on 8. Nov., leaving thousands dead.

Sven Harmeling, Climate Change Advocacy Coordinator, CARE, told a press conference here Wednesday that the number of individuals fasting in solidarity with the people of the Philippines has risen to 50, and that the mood at the conference is that of finding the right responses to the adverse effects of climate change.

He said the devastating typhoon had changed the dynamic of negotiations in Warsaw on the loss and damage mechanism in vulnerable countries.

"The session on loss and damage yesterday (Tuesday) was remarkable. There is a momentum and understanding of what loss and damage is all about. Loss and damage came up on high level agenda and most countries came up in solidarity with the Philippines," Harmeling stated.

In his speech at the opening session of the conference on Monday, Sano disclosed he would stop eating until delegates make "meaningful" progress, describing as 'madness' what his country was going through as a result of extreme climate event.

There is a mandate in Warsaw to establish institutional arrangements to address climate change-related loss and damage. It is expected that the conference makes progress on climate finance for the people most at risk, to save lives in the countries which are most vulnerable to climate impacts.

Meanwhile, a new research report released by the UN University's Institute for Environment and Human Security, focusing on the loss and damage, says despite adaptation efforts, vulnerable communities are experiencing loss and damage that are threatening their most fundamental needs, livelihood and food security.

"Our research findings clearly shows that current levels of adaptation and mitigation efforts are insufficient to avoid negative impacts from climate stressors. Policy responses are needed now," Koko Warner, Scientific Director of the Loss and Damage Initiative at the university, said.

Despite applying a variety of coping and adaptation measures to mitigate the damage caused by climate change, 96 percent of households surveyed in selected districts in Ethiopia, 78 percent in Nepal, 72 percent in Burkina Faso and 69 percent in Mozambique still experienced severe negative impacts on their household budgets, the report says.

"Following a severe flood in Ethiopia in 2007, 94 percent of respondents reported that their crops were severely damaged or entirely destroyed. Large-scale destruction of crops also lead to higher food prices, which made staple foods such as maize unaffordable," said Fatima Denton, Coordinator of the Addis Ababa-based African Climate Policy Centre, a partner for the African case studies.

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