



APCEL IN CONVERSATION – COP27: THE KEY TAKEAWAYS

On 9 December 2022, APCEL held its last webinar of the year on the key takeaways from the 27th Conference of the Parties (COP27) on climate change. During this webinar, three experts shared details and insights about what was agreed on at COP27 and what this means for different regions, countries, and communities.

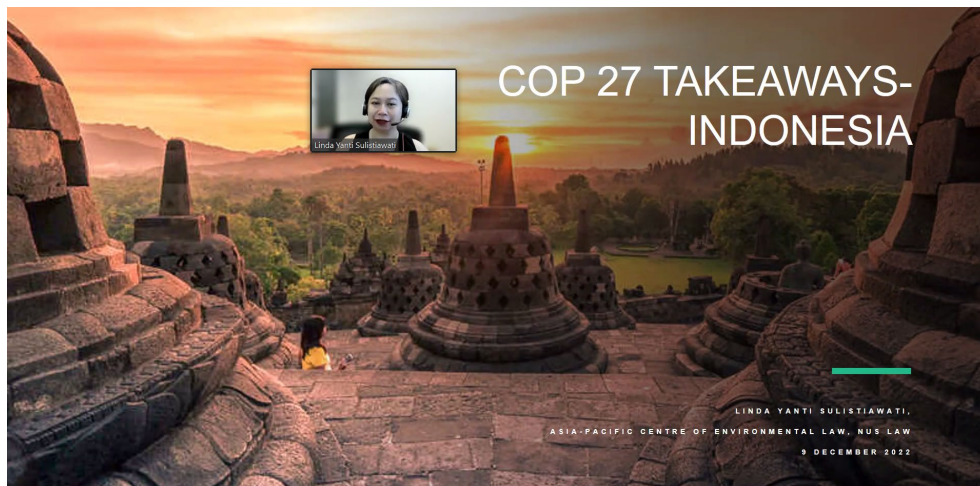
Dr Jolene Lin (Director, APCEL), the moderator, began the session by introducing each of the panellists: Dr Linda Yanti Sulistiawati (Senior Research Fellow, APCEL); Dr Rose-Liza Eisma Osorio (Professor, Collage of Law, University of Cebu); and Dr Beatriz Garcia (Senior Lecturer, Western Sydney University).

As the first presenter, Dr Sulistiawati spoke about the key takeaways from COP, particularly for Indonesia, her home country. She opined that progress made at COP27 cannot be considered generally as a significant improvement. This was especially apparent in the lack of clear, concrete commitment to fossil fuel phase-out. That said, there was a positive point: the Loss and Damage (L&D) fund was finally established this year. Nevertheless, this L&D mechanism still stands as an empty promise, given that no details about fundamental issues about the composition, structure, and operationalisation of the fund. With reference to the precarious state that our 1.5degC temperature limit target, Linda highlighted that despite lacklustre commitment at COP27, country leaders did strongly reaffirm commitment to that target at the G20 Summit, which took place during the same period as COP27. One of the significant implications of COP27 specific to Indonesia was developmental and financial support for the transition away from coal, as they had been offered USD\$20 billion to transition away from coal in the hopes of decreasing emissions by approximately 30%. In addition, Linda explained Indonesia's net zero transition plans in relation to decreasing reliance on gas and deforestation.

Next, Dr Eisma Osorio shared her thoughts on progress made in COP27 and the implications on the Philippines. She agrees that while L&D could be seen as a breakthrough, overall COP27 failed to deliver on more ambitious, collective actions. She also highlighted the danger of fossil fuel lobbying and the dominating influence they hold over climate negotiations and energy transition plans. Specifically, fossil fuel companies have turned to framing natural gas as an environmentally sustainable, clean form of energy – this is not true. There are severe consequences to this, especially for developing countries with growing energy needs, including the Philippines, where more natural gas energy production sites are being built. This is environmentally damaging, both for the climate and for biodiversity, especially where such sites are built in natural areas that ought to be conserved. The Philippines' natural environment is not the only thing being compromised in the wake of these developments – the country has been suffering from the physical impacts of climate change, which are projected to get worse and more frequent as climate change progresses. The Philippines needs greater support from developed countries to increase its climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies, including for renewable energy options.

Our third speaker was Dr Garcia, who shared about developments in forestry conservation. In particular, she highlighted how the changing administration in Brazil signals potential for greater protection for the Amazon rainforest; and also the new fund established for the conservation of the Amazon rainforest. She then shared about the structure and potential of carbon markets, and the impacts of these developments on local and/or indigenous communities involved in carbon market projects. She shared about the information disjunction that exists between these communities and carbon market project developers, and emphasised the need for more outreach and safeguarding efforts to protect the rights of local communities, as well as the environmental integrity of such projects.

After the three presentations, Dr Lin returned to facilitate a Q&A session with all panellists. Questions were on issues including the difficulties of establishing the L&D fund; the contentiousness of liability implications of L&D; the impacts of Indonesia's Omnibus Law on forestry conservation efforts; how COP28 should consider and protect the rights of children; and accountability mechanisms for the use of environmental funds.



Dr. Linda Yanti SULISTIOWATI (Senior Research Fellow, APCEL) presenting



(From top left: Jolene Lin, Linda Yanti Sulistiawati,
From bottom left: Rose-Liza Eisma Osorio, Beatriz Garcia de Oliveira)