

## A BETTER PLACE TO LIVE IN

By: Marvin Ray Florendo, AE Memorial Science High School  
Zamboanga City, Philippines

As a student, we have learned that the Philippines has only two weather conditions, the dry and the wet seasons. The dry season comes in summer during the months of March, April and May and sometimes goes further through June. Usually the start of classes in June coincides with the start of the rainy season. However, the Philippines has a fairly good weather condition, the warm days interspersed with rain.

In the past years, however, we have experienced a totally different kind of weather. It goes through the extremes – when it is dry, it is at its driest too, what experts now call el niño. During this time, the temperature is at its hottest. This invariably affects our vegetation. Thus, during this period of extreme heat it is usually also a time of scarcity of food as the farmers are the ones most affected by the unusual increase in temperature.

When it is the wet season too, the past years have proven in extreme as we have experienced strong storms after strong storms. This is called by experts as la niña. Flooding becomes a usual occurrence during this time. And, while we have had strong storms in the past, those experienced during current times are, perhaps, the strongest ever experienced in our country. During this time, the storms come in one after another. Even before a particular place can recover from the last storm a new and stronger one comes along devastating further the places in the Philippines most affected by it.

We are but lucky in this part of the country because we are only at the tail end of the storm. Yet we feel the effects and are aware of the devastation it can bring our country.

Scientists have concluded that the cause of these extremes is global warming.

Global warming, according to experts, is the increase in the average temperature of the earth's near-surface air and oceans since the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century and its projected continuation. According to the 2007 Fourth Assessment Report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), global surface temperature increased  $0.74 \pm 0.18^\circ\text{C}$  ( $1.33 \pm 0.32^\circ\text{F}$ ) during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Most of the observed temperature increase since the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was caused by increasing concentrations of greenhouse gases, which results from human activity such as fossil fuel burning and deforestation.

This phenomenon we now call global warming has no one magic solution. Instead, scientists ask a hundred questions that need to be answered in order to create an overall Earth plan that will develop our planet wisely and save it from devastation. On a personal level, aware now of the causes and effects of global warming, we also ask ourselves our contribution to global warming and what we can do to at this time to help abate the further destruction of our planet. Individually, perhaps, we can change our habits, things that we do daily to live that we

may consider as part of building each of our carbon footprints. On a larger scale, we can also support social and governmental structures in their urgent call for environmental protection.