

DATE : 13 JUN 2019

DAY : Thursday

**DENR**

**IN THE NEWS**

Strategic Communication and Initiative Service



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THE EXPONENT OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS  
SINCE 1900  
**MANILA BULLETIN**  
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER



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# Gov't agency reactivates Task Force Water Hyacinth

The Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission (PRRC) reactivated its Task Force Water Hyacinth group to ensure that the quick proliferation of water hyacinth will not cause inconvenience to the riding public of Pasig River Ferry Service.

PRRC's public advisory stated that with the onset of rainy season comes the bloom of water hyacinth plants, which have now started to spread across the Pasig River all way from Laguna Lake.

The coming of water hyacinths to

the Pasig River is an indication that the water level in Laguna Lake is getting higher than Manila Bay's mean sea level (MSL).

"We would like to educate the public that water hyacinths are a blessing from God. We use them in removing heavy metals from the Pasig River and its tributaries," said PRRC executive director Jose Antonio E. Goitia.

"We also use them as raw materials in our handloom weaving livelihood program. We help poor families in BASECO convert water hyacinths

into table runners, fans, slippers and bracelets," he added.

For the past two months that the lake level in Laguna fell below the MSL, PRRC hurdled controlling not the intrusion of the seawater, but the backflow of more than 300,000 kilos of garbage from Manila Bay.

PRRC is a government agency conferred by the International River Founda'tion with the Inaugural Asia River Prize, the highest award for river restoration efforts in Asia Pacific.



The rise of the number of water hyacinths in Pasig River this rainy season is no cause for an alarm according to PRRC who harnesses the plants' useful purpose.



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**CLEANUP DEADLINE**

**SOLVE GARBAGE WOES IN A WEEK,  
DENR ORDERS BULACAN EXECS**

CITY OF MALOLOS—Officials of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in Central Luzon on Tuesday gave local governments in Bulacan province a week to collect and dispose of the garbage that had piled up in at least 15 towns and a city in the province.

Lormelyn Claudio, Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) director in Central Luzon, designated the EMB monitoring staff to ensure that the uncollected garbage in Bulacan would be taken to different landfills in nearby provinces.

On Monday, Claudio met with local government representatives to discuss the stalled

collection of garbage after landslides prevented dump trucks from reaching the Wacuman sanitary landfill at Barangay San Mateo in Norzagaray town.

**Find solution**

Claudio asked the Department of the Interior and Local Government, the Bulacan provincial government and local public health offices to also come up with solutions to the looming garbage crisis.

The local governments committed to send their garbage to other landfill areas in nearby provinces until next week, Claudio said. —CARMELA REYES-ESTROPE INQ



## Angat water level still low

The Angat Dam continues to inch toward critical levels anew despite the almost daily afternoon rains being experienced in many areas in Luzon.

In a report released on Wednesday, the water level at Angat Dam – which supplies water to 90 percent of Metro Manila households – was at 164.92 meters. Critical level is at 160 meters.

According to PAGASA senior hydrologist Danilo Flores, the recent rains have had little effect to the dams in Luzon, noting that it's still not the season of rain in the country.

Because of this, Manila Water said water distribution may be affected, while the National Water Resources Board (NWRB) explained that, to keep water supply from Angat Dam at 46 cubic meters per second, they had to open the "low level

outlet" although it may result in poor quality water distribution as the outlet was last used in 2010.

NWRB director Seville David Jr., on the other hand, said there may be operational changes when the low water level has been reached but assured the public that a water release requirement of 46 cubic meters to supply domestic use in Metro Manila would be generated.

Water release was increased to 48 cubic meters in March, April and May to supply domestic needs. However, water for irrigation was suspended when Angat Dam hit the operational low level of 180 meters in April.

David also appealed to the public to conserve water, to maximize use and to help Angat Dam recover.

**ENManuel**



## Water level at Angat continues to dip

THE water level at Angat Dam, the main source of water in Metro Manila, continues to recede and is near its low level mark of 160 meters, the weather bureau said.

As of Wednesday, the water level at the dam was 164.48 meters.

Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Sciences Administration (Pagasa) Hydrologist Sonia Serrano said they expect the water level to dip despite the occasional downpour that drenches some parts of Luzon.

National Water Resources Board Director Sevillo David Jr. said operational changes would be implemented when the low water level is reached.

But, he assured the public that Metro Manila would continue to get sufficient water supply. He explained that the dam would release 46 cubic meters for Metro Manila.

Water release was increased to 48 cubic meters in March, April and May to supply domestic needs. However, no water had been released for irrigation since Angat Dam hit the operational low level of 180 meters in April.

David appealed to the public to conserve water, maximize water usage and help Angat Dam recover for its irrigation and power supply purposes.

**DIVINA NOVA JOY  
DELA CRUZ**



## GCash to help WWF Philippines on reforestation of Ipo watershed

**By Vincent Mariel P. Galang**  
*Reporter*

MOBILE money platform GCash has committed to help reforest 300 hectares of the 7,236-hectare Ipo watershed in Norzagaray, Bulacan.

On June 10, GCash signed an agreement with World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) Philippines for the reforestation, protection, and management of the adopted area.

GCash will be sponsoring the planting of trees in the area. For three years, WWF Philippines will monitor and report the status of these trees, which is the average period in order to see in an area being rehabilitated or reforested.

"As a company, we are constantly looking for ways to help build a better, stronger, more environ-

mentally secure nation. Through this project, we hope to contribute to water security, as well as the creation of sustainable cities and communities in the Philippines," Anthony Thomas, president and chief executive officer of Mynt or Globe Fintech Innovations, Inc., said in a statement.

Mynt is the operator of GCash.

The Ipo watershed was declared by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) as a protected area, but its forest cover has drastically dropped to 40% from 85% for the past years due to illegal activities such as illegal logging, charcoal-making, and slash-and-burn farming.

If these activities continue, a water crisis may likely occur. Ipo is part of the Angat-Umiray-Ipo watershed system, which supplies 98% of Metro Manila's water.

Watersheds need trees since they absorb rainwater which it channels into streams, rivers, and dams where people source their water.

The reforestation of the watershed will also involve the DENR and the Biodiversity Finance Initiative (BIOFIN) Philippines. More details about the partnership will be announced on June 25, which is noted to be the first in the Philippines.

"The most important aspect on the partnership with GCash is their platform. Millions of Filipinos use their platform, and since it's a financial platform it can make it a lot easier for people to help us in our work for the environment," Paolo B. Pagaduan, project manager of WWF Philippines, told *BusinessWorld* after a forum by GCash on Tuesday.

"Primarily, one is providing the funds, but the platform that will be launched in raising awareness and educating the people, and eventually, tracking the progress of what they are donating," Mr. Pagaduan said.

Anabelle E. Plantilla, project manager of BIOFIN, told *BusinessWorld* that BIOFIN's partnership with GCash raises awareness on biodiversity conservation.

"At the same time, (the partnership with GCash) mobilizes resources for priority actions indicated in our Philippine Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan. The results of this partnership will contribute to the Philippine commitment to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals 15 (Life on Land) and 17 (Partnerships for the Goals)," she said.

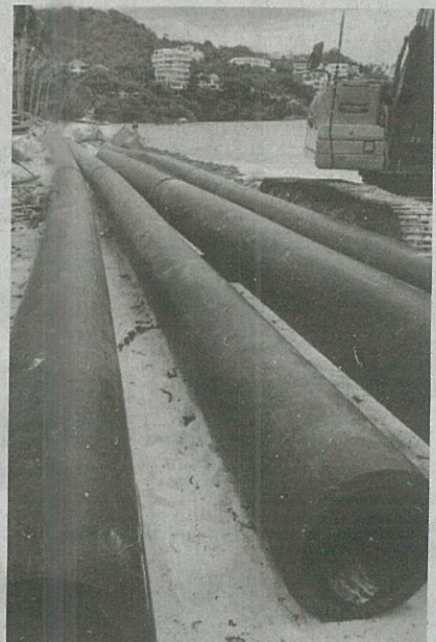


# Boracay environmental rehab continues in 2019

The role of the Tourism Infrastructure and Enterprise Authority (TIEZA) in rehabilitating Boracay and addressing the perennial flooding in the island tops the agency's accomplishments in 2018. In 2019, it continues its role in helping rehabilitate the island even though it is already open to tourists.

"We are proud that TIEZA is helping make Boracay a sustainable tourism destination. Through this, generations of tourists will benefit from a cleaner and waste-free island," TIEZA COO Pocholo Paragas said. "We are fully committed to complete long-term engineering solutions which will permanently address the problems that beset Boracay."

The agency has invested more than ₱1 billion to address the flooding problem in Boracay when they implemented Phase II of the Boracay Water Drainage Project.



**Left: Construction of an efficient drainage system. Right: Massive pipes were installed along Bolabog beach to improve the island's drainage system.**

The construction period was shortened to two years instead of the original seven years. The implementation of Phase II is expected to be completed by end of 2019.

TIEZA continues to align its projects to the thrusts of Boracay Inter-Agency Task Force (BIATF) to protect and preserve the island as a prime tourist destination. The TIEZA chief asserted their full support to the efforts of the Department of Tourism (DOT) to promote sustainable tourism and rehabilitate not just Boracay but other major tourist destinations in the country.

As of October last year, TIEZA has already designated five flagship tourism enterprise zones (TEZs) which is projected to generate one million jobs in a span of 10 years while eight private TEZs with tourism enterprises will create 52,000 jobs during the construction and operation stage, and estimated investments amounting to ₱80 billion.

Paragas explained that since they assumed leadership in 2017, Asset Rehabilitation Program has been the priority of its Board of Directors to improve the agency's owned and managed properties' marketability and performance.

There were short-term repairs conducted and long-term rehabilitation plans laid down for the following six operating assets: Banaue Hotel and Youth Hostel, Club Intramuros Golf Course, Light and Sounds Museum, Balicasag Island Dive Resort, Zamboanga Golf Course and Beach Park and Gardens of Malasag Ecotourism Village.

Paragas remarked that this is the first major rehabilitation program in a decade.

TIEZA reported the completion of 26 projects in 2018, with 112 undergoing construction.

In 2018, the agency also installed floating docks to ensure safety and convenience in embarkation and disembarkation on the shores of Palawan, specifically in El Nido and Honda Bay. These were turned over to the respective local government units for proper maintenance and sustainable use.

It will soon highlight big ticket projects such as the Lighting of the San Juanico Bridge in Leyte and Samar and Rehabilitation of the Banaue Rice Terraces in Ifugao Province which aim to spur tourism development within communities and preserve eco-cultural heritage.



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## EDITORIAL

### **BORACAY HUWAG BABUYIN!**

HINDI dapat babuyin ang isla ng Boracay hindi lang sa usapin ng kalinisan kundi sa droga.

Dahil sa paglilinis sa isla, muling nanumbalik ang likas na ganda nito.

Subalit dahil sa pagbabalik ng maraming turista, meron namang mga nagsasamantala upang sirain ang pangalan nito na nakakabit na rin sa pangalan ng ating bansang Pilipinas bilang isang sentro ng pandaigdigang turismo.

Ang pagpapalaganap ng droga ang isang kasuka-sukang pagsasamantala hindi lang dahil isa itong krimen kundi nagbubunga rin ito ng maraming hindi kanais-nais na kalagayan.

Karaniwang kakambal ng droga ang pagpapalaganap ng mga krimen gaya ng pagpatay, pagnanakaw at iba pa sa loob ng mga tahanan at komunidad at napapasama ang kalagayan ng mga mamamayan at turista.

Karaniwan ding kakambal ng droga ang prostitusyon at nakatatakot-isiping daan ito para lumaganap naman ang mga sakit sa pakikipagtalik gaya ng syphilis, gonorrhea at iba.

Sa katunayan, may naitala nang mga kaso ng human immunodeficiency virus o HIV sa Boracay na tiyak na hahantong sa walang gamot at nakamamatay na acquired immuno-deficiency syndrome o AIDS.

Ang pagdakip kay Jade Deang Castro, alyas "Jack," 45, na kilalang tulak sa lugar ay magsisilbi sanang aral sa lahat ng mga nagtatangkang magpalaganap ng kasamaan, droga lalo na, sa isla na ating pinangangalagaan alang-alang sa mga mamamayan sa lugar at dangal ng ating bayan.





## Valenzuela students make school furniture using trash

By MARC JAYSON CAYABYAB

Students of Lingunan National High School inserted some 1,156 kilos of shredded plastic into bottles to make over 40 pieces of furniture, in their bid to make something out of single-use plastic.

The "ecobrick" furniture were among those showcased in the "May Balik sa Plastic" program organized by the Valenzuela City government and Nestlé Philippines at the People's Park last Monday.

Jai Eugenio, the high school students' science teacher, said the project started last year when the Department of Environment and Natural Resources posted on Facebook the idea of making ecobricks out of plastic bottles and materials like straws and sachets.

Since November 2018, his students have made 19 chairs, eight tables, seven couches, five barricades, two fences and a Christmas tree, using over 1,700 ecobricks sealed together with silicone.

The furniture were distributed in student lounges, corridors, guidance councilor's office and library, furnished with glass tops and foam to make them look presentable, according to school principal Domingo Lozande.

"To make up for our lack of chairs, the students made the furniture with ecobricks, so we don't need to buy monoblocs," Lozande told **The STAR**.

They chose not to paint over the ecobricks so that fellow students can see that it is possible to make something out of trash, said Emie Sabado, a Grade 10 student.

Nestlé Philippines chairman and CEO Kais Marzouki said the partnership with Valenzuela City is its pilot test in addressing the plastic pollution contributed by single-use plastic in the Philippines.

In a report by the Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives (GAIA), Nestlé and Unilever were identified as the top sources of plastic pollution in the Philippines, where 164 million pieces of sachets are used daily, or 59.7 billion sachets yearly.

The Filipino uses an average of 591 pieces of sachets, 174 shopping bags and 163 plastic *labo* bags yearly, the report said.

"We are increasing our efforts to find solutions to the plastic challenge. We are trying to develop the packaging of the future by reducing or removing our packaging and finding alternatives," Marzouki said.

The company also promised to raffle off gift certificates in exchange for sachets and beverage cartons to be collected by public school students in Valenzuela.



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## Plastic recycling program inilunsad ng Valenzuela City

INILUNSA ng Valenzuela City Government ang "May Balik sa Plastik" na kauna-unahang citywide residual waste collection program na naglalayong mag-recycle at mabawasan ang mga basurang plastik at mga karton na nakaimbak sa Valenzuela landfill.

Katuwang ng city government ng Valenzuela ang Nestlé Philippines, Department of Education (DepEd) at Green Antz Builders, Inc., kasama ang Sangguniang Kabataan Federation, Liga ng mga Barangay, City Street Sweepers, public school students, teachers at mga magulang na nagkaisa para maisulong ang kalinisan sa lungsod na ginanap sa Valenzuela People's Park Amphitheater, Lunes ng umaga.

Ayon kay Kais Marzouki, Nestlé chairman and CEO, malaki ang kanilang naging commitment para sa waste management dahil alam nilang istrikto ang Valenzuela City pagdating sa waste segregation system na kung saan mayroon din silang mga model schools na nageenganyo at nagbibigay ng magandang halimbawa pagdating sa plastic recycling at environmental awareness.

Ibinida naman ni Mayor Rex Gatchalian ang programa na magbibigay ng aral

sa mga kabataan na ilagay sa nararapat ang mga plastic wastes at hindi ang pagban ng plastics kundi dapat na i-recycle ito at muling gamitin.

Dagdag pa ni Marzouki na gumagawa na sila ng innovative packaging solutions para mabawasan ang mga plastik na basura upang ma-recycle na kung saan ang ilang paaralan naman ay gumagawa na ng kanilang istilo na gamitin ang mga plastic para maging mesa at upuan.

Inilunsad na ang tatlong paraan ng pagtatapon ng plastic, una ay ang public school-based plastic wastes and cartons collection, ikalawa sa barangay-based plastic wastes and cartons collection, at ang informational activities na nagsusulong ng kaalaman at pagbabago.

Sa ilalim ng programa, ang mga mangongolekta at magbibigay ng plastic wastes at beverage cartons ay makakakuha ng insentibo mula sa Nestlé at sa local government ng Valenzuela.

Habang ang mga street sweepers na nag-segregate ng mga basura ay makakatanggap din ng regalo mula sa Nestlé.

Ang mga public school students at mga guro na magdadala ng plastic waste ay makatatanggap din ng tseke sa isasagawang lingguhang raffle. (Vick Aquino)





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## Sulat kay Editor Mapagpalaya sa kaplastikan

Dear Abante,

Isang mapagpalayang araw mga ka-Abante! Kahapon ay idinaos ang Araw ng Kalayaan. Bagama't tapos na ang araw na ito, hindi naman dapat kalimutan ang iba pang puwedeng palayain. Ang Pilipinas ay isa sa mga maraming tambak na basura (kahit nga basura ng ibang bansa ay nasa atin). Sana'y matuldukan ang isyu na ito, bago pa man sa pangkalahatan, ay simulan na natin sa ating sarili.

Marami sa atin ang hilig kumain sa iba't ibang kainan. Kaya't hindi na bago ang paggamit sa mga plastic utensil, sytro cup, at iba pang uri ng kagamitan na madaling gamitin. Ngunit alam ba natin kung saan napupunta ito? Kung gaano katagal bago matunaw o mawala ang mga ito? Kung anong maaaring maging epekto nito sa kalikasan, kalusugan, maging sa ating katauhan? Malamang ang iba'y alam ito ngunit pilit pa ring hindi sumusunod.

Ang iba'y sinasabing hindi malinis ang mga kasangkapan kung kaya't mas pinipilit nilang gumamit ng mga ito. Sa panahon ngayon, marami ng bagay ang nagawa para maiwasan ang paggamit ng mga plastic. Mayroong mga nabuong package na mayroon ng kutsara, tinidor, at maging straw na gawa sa stainless na maaaring gamitin panghabang buhay. Sana'y tangkilikin natin ang mga ganitong produkto sapagkat pinakamainam ito para sa bayan maging sa ating sarili. Iwasan na ang mga kaplastikan!

Bio ng Mindoro



Department of Environment and Natural Resources  
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION INITIATIVES SERVICE

# Balita

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# Coca-Cola sets up P1B recycling unit

At Coca-Cola, we see our packaging as valuable resource and not waste. It is therefore unacceptable for us that our packaging ends up in places where they shouldn't be

In a bid to curb the proliferation of plastic waste and enforce a more sustainable future, the Coca-Cola Company is investing P1 billion in a proposed food-grade recycling facility.

The new unit is an integral part of the multinational's "World Without Waste" campaign.

With Philippines as third largest producer of plastic in the world's ocean, Coca-Cola's proposed recycling unit is seen to improve the country's polyethylene terephthalate (PET) plastic bottle collection and recycling rates.

In an interview with the reporters, Coca-Cola Philippines president and general manager Winn Everhart said the proposed facility to be located 100 kilometers away from Metro Manila is seen to process 16,000 metric tons of

plastics, covering an estimated 40 percent of the country's entire plastic ecosystem.

Coca-Cola's first recycling venture in Southeast Asia is also seen to generate approximately 150,000 jobs for Filipinos.

"Our aspiration for this facility is to prioritize and close the loop on our packaging by turning old bottles into new ones so they don't end up as waste. This facility is testament to our resolve to create opportunities that will help fuel a more robust approach to leaving a positive impact not just in our value chain, but also in the communities where we operate in," Coca-Cola Beverages Philippines Inc. (CCBPI) president and CEO Gareth McGeown said.

McGeown added the facility will operate with local partners and

will process recyclable products even from other companies.

The beverage firm also launched on Tuesday a comprehensive blueprint of the "World Without Waste" program where they aim to use or sell at least 50 percent recycled content of their packaging by 2030.

Under the campaign, Coca-Cola's bottling arm CCBPI will primarily focus on recycling bottles, cans, caps made from glass, PET plastics and aluminum which make up approximately 85 percent of its packaging.

With the facility set to launch in 2020, plastic bottles will be shredded to transform into other products such as shoes, bags, and wall bricks.

Currently, Coke produces Viva water bottle, their first ever product using fully-recycled resin-free materials that was Food and Drug Administration-approved.

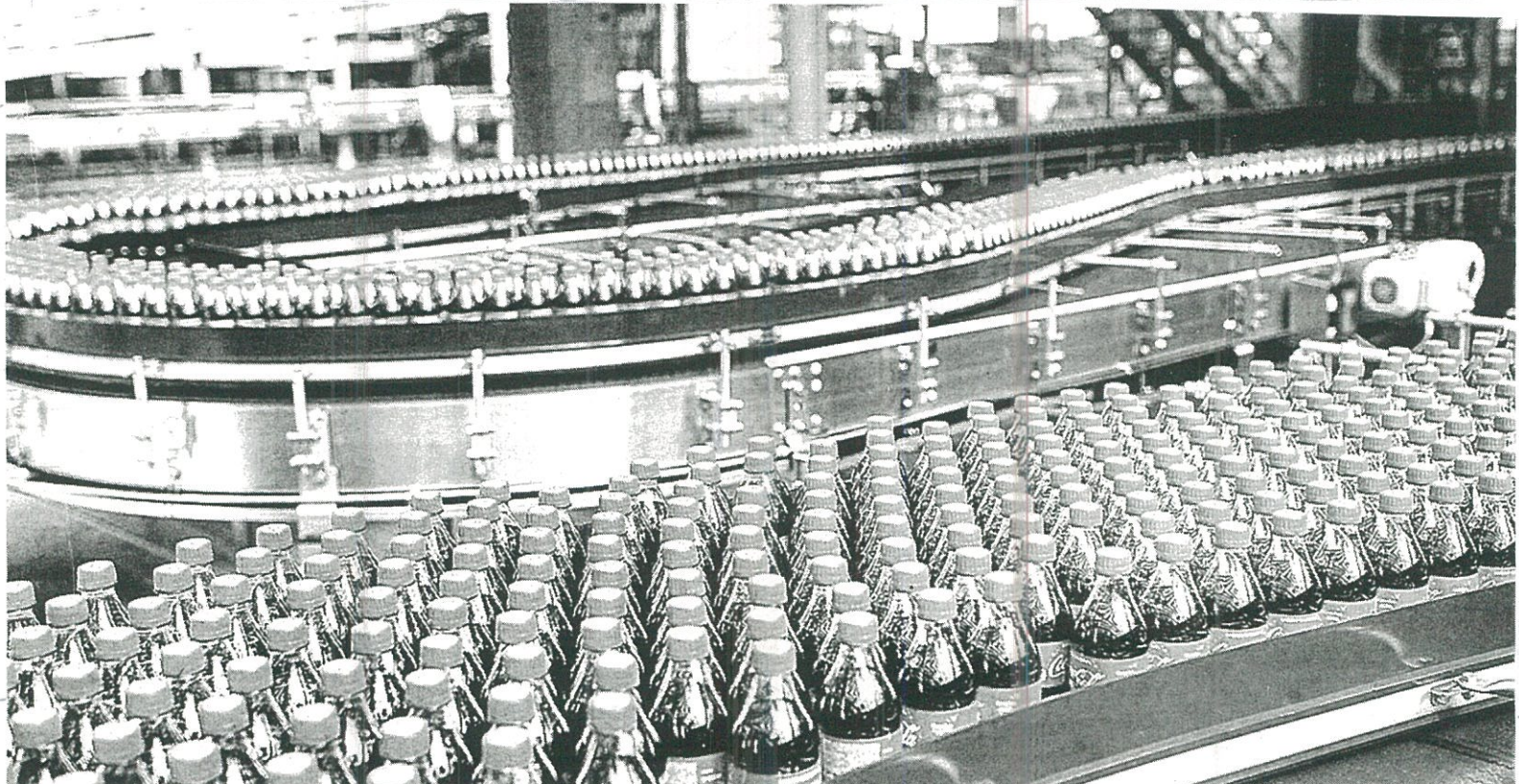
"At Coca-Cola, we see our packaging as valuable resource and not waste. It is therefore unacceptable for us that our packaging ends up in places where

they shouldn't be. With our primary packaging in the Philippines being 100 percent recyclable, we see the potential of capturing its value by creating new and better approaches towards processing and recycling recyclable materials," Everhart said.

**Coca-Cola's first recycling venture in Southeast Asia is also seen to generate approximately 150,000 jobs for Filipinos.**

To help improve recycling rates, Coke will continue to tap local communities, non-government organizations and industry partners to help educate the consuming public how and when to recycle bottles.

"As a company that has been part of the Filipino communities for over 100 years, our goal in everything we do is to continue strengthening the foundations of our business and the communities we serve so that we can all grow and thrive long into the future of a litter-free Philippines," McGeown said.



COCA-COLA Philippines is building a recycling facility outside Manila to help turn an estimated 16,000 metric tons of plastic into something useful again. Projected to generate employment for thousands of Filipinos, the facility will



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**A BOOST FOR RECYCLING - Coca-Cola's World Without Waste underscored the importance of seeing value in recyclable materials beyond their initial use. At the event launching are (from left) Congresswoman-elect Lani Cayetano, Coca-Cola Philippines President and General Manager Winn Everhart, US Ambassador to the Philippines Sung Yong Kim, Senator-elect Cynthia Villar, and Coca-Cola Beverages Philippines, Inc., President and CEO Gareth McGeown.**





## PH next big thing in cruise tourism

THE Philippines could be the "next big thing" in cruise tourism with the Manila Hotel, Intramuros Administration and Corregidor Foundation working to bring out the country's colonial and pre-colonial past, the Department of Tourism (DoT) said on Wednesday.

The partnership was pilot tested on June 12 through the Visita Intramuros, where participants were given a four-hour tour of Manila Hotel and Intramuros' landmarks.

"This is the first time a partnership between accommodation industry and the public sector came to be. You can see that tourism is not only the government's role, it is everybody's," Guiller Asido, administrator of Intramuros, said.

Asido said the partnership was the result of the walled city's rebranding.

The tour began at the Manila Hotel, where Gen. Douglas MacArthur once held his residence when he became the military advisor of the Commonwealth government, and made its way to Intramuros — home to Spanish-era landmarks.

"It is important for travelers to know the country they are visiting; where this race came from and what's their history. This is what this partnership aims to strengthen," Joey Lina, president of Manila Hotel, said.

DoT Assistant Secretary Roberto Alabado 3rd said the tourism sector plans to make the tour a two- to three-day affair, with the inclusion of Corregidor Island.

The tour, according to Alabado, would tackle the Philippines' pre-Hispanic history through Binondo, the Spanish era in Intramuros and the American to Japanese occupations in Corregidor.

"Manila conjures something. And this is a good opportunity for us to elevate the experience for tourists coming to the Philippines, for us to present it properly," Alabado told reporters.

Alabado said the DoT, Tourism Infrastructure and Enterprise Zone Authority, and the Tourism Promotions Board plan to make Corregidor the main attraction in the tour through the Corregidor Foundation.

### Cruise ports in Manila Bay soon

Cruise companies and other private companies are onboard with proposals to set up cruise terminals along Manila Bay.

Alabado said establishing the terminals is a must as Manila only had commercial ports.

"With these terminals in mind, they would have [tax-free shops], facilities for Customs and Immigration, bars and parking space. We need to have such terminal to accommodate our passengers," he added.

This would also mean more revenue and jobs in the tourism sector, Lina said.

### Foreign arrivals up

The DoT said tourist arrivals in April reached 662,987, 12.15 percent higher than the 591,137 in the same month last year.

The numbers were propelled by 139,177 Chinese visitors, a 28-percent increase from last year. South Korean visitors numbered 130,707.

They were followed by the Americans with 87,710, Japanese with 57,724 and Australians with 28,683. An increase of 2.5 percent, 18 percent and 13 percent, respectively.

This brings foreign visitor count for January to April 2019 to 2,867,551, or an increase of 8.57 percent over the 2,642,241 of the same period in 2018.

Tourism Secretary Bernadette Romulo Puyat attributed the increase of arrivals to the marketing initiatives of the private sector and travel trade counterparts in various markets.

"With improved connectivity arising from new flights, additional frequencies and expanded capacity brought about by new and upgraded airports, we anticipate more visitors to keep this upward trend sustained," Puyat said in a statement.

"We also attribute increased travel movement and consumption to continued efforts in developing new and existing tourism circuits all over the country in pursuit of sustainable tourism," she added.

**NEIL JAYSON N. SERVALLOS**



# Banks urged to support 'climate- smart' projects

By JANVIC MATEO

**The Climate Change Commission (CCC) has urged financial institutions to ramp up financing of green, climate-smart and sustainable projects that will enable the country to achieve its goals in mitigating the impact of climate change.**

The CCC, in partnership with the United Nations Framework on Climate Change (UNFCCC) secretariat, recently brought together representatives from the government and the private sector to discuss the role of public finance and private sector investments in the implementation of the country's nationally determined contribution (NDC) to the landmark 2015 climate

change agreement.

Climate Secretary Emmanuel de Guzman said the government is addressing the shortage of risk information to entice financial institutions to ramp up financing for climate change adaptation and mitigation projects.

"We are working on the establishment of a National Integrated Risk Information System,

an integrated platform that will converge all available vulnerability and risk information in the country. This will be made accessible to all stakeholders, including the financial and private sector," he said.

"In addition to that, we are also assisting the Office of Civil Defense in developing loss and damage registry and protocols for valuation and validation, which could provide the insurance sector with a better picture of risk prevalence," he added.

Daniele Violetti, UNFCCC director for finance, technology and capacity building, said this year is critical for countries to raise targets ahead of implementation slated next year.

"It is our last opportunity to enhance action in the pre-2020 period. It also hounds the roles of the new rounds of NDCs, making 2019 the year to ensure that these new or updated NDCs reflect the increased ambition needed to meet the objectives of the Paris Agreement," he said.

CCC commissioner Rachel Herrera noted that climate finance is currently limited in terms of availability.

"There is no other recourse but to be strategic in terms of funneling in climate finance from various sources and channeling them to those who need it most," she added.



## Stronger community forest rights a weapon vs climate change

Government support and legal recognition of indigenous people's rights have a direct and positive impact on the health of forested areas, aiding in the country's fight against climate change, the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) said.

The world's largest conservation organization believes that the government's support in championing the rights of indigenous people will help reverse the ill effects of heavy deforestation, citing a study from World Resources Institute (WRI).

"Respecting the rights of our indigenous communities not only protects their source of livelihood, but it works wonders for the health of our natural environment as well," said WWF-Philippines president and CEO Joel Palma.

According to the WRI, securing the rights of communities, which depend on forests, is an effective climate mitigation policy, helping resolve the problem of worsening deforestation

and degradation.

As of 2014, 513 million hectares or one-eighth of the world's forests have been recorded to hold approximately 37.7 billion tons of carbon, around 29 times the mass of annual carbon footprint of all passenger vehicles on Earth.

Sadly in the Philippines, roughly 47,000 hectares of forest cover are lost annually, leading to a 24-percent reduction of the total area over the past century. This means that 1.2 million hectares of deforested lands need to be rehabilitated to help the Philippines breathe fresher air.

"Deforestation and degradation majorly disrupts the ecosystem supporting human population. Since these people depend on forests for resources, policies promoting and effectively implementing initiatives to restore and protect forest and watershed resources would protect not just trees but more importantly, lives as well and this is ultimately why

nature matters," Palma said.

Communities have an established interest over protecting forested areas. This goes for most Asian indigenous communities that have managed natural resources through their respective customary laws and practices.

The Dumagats in Norzagaray, Bulacan, for instance, patrol the slopes and forests surrounding Ipo watershed, a vital link in the Angat-Umiray-Ipo systems, which is the source of about 98 percent of Metro Manila's water. Aside from protecting the watershed from illegal activities as "Bantay Gubat" rangers, they also aid in conservation as they go about their patrols, clearing out invasive plants and assisting in the growth of trees and the reforestation of areas previously cleared by illegal activities or natural calamity.

Land rights being basic rights especially in the case of native communities, indigenous people securing the title over their land leads to environmental benefits. These

include improving the role of forests as carbon sinks, reducing carbon dioxide emissions and aiding the fight against climate change.

A report by the WRI and the Rights and Resources Initiative showed that among 14 forest-rich countries in Latin America, Africa and Asia, deforestation in areas with strong state support and recognition is lower than those with weak tenure or those with none at all.

In the Brazilian Amazon, which is considered to be the largest intact forest in the world, deforestation from 2000 to 2012 was measured to be 11 times lower in forest communities whose rights are ensured and observed by the government.

Suggested concrete actions aside from policymaking would include providing technical and financial assistance to indigenous forest communities to promote sustainability and delineating boundaries where commercial institutions can utilize natural resources.



## Negosasyon sa climate change 'wag bitawan

IGINIIT ni Albay Rep. Joey Salceda sa pamahalaan na lalong tutukan at huwag bitawan ang mga negosasyon sa 'climate change'.

Para ito sa kaligtasan ng mga Pilipino at iba pang "matinding praktikal na konsiderasyon," kasama na ang pagkakaroon ng poder sa pondo, teknolohiya at proseso sa pagtatatag ng kakayahan.

Bilang chairman ng House Committee on Climate Change, inihayag ni Salceda ang pakiusap sa Pangulo matapos ideklara ni Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA)

Sec. Teddy Locsin na hindi na padadaluhin ng pamahalaan ang mga opisyal nito sa mga kumpe-rensya kaugnay ng climate change kung sasakay pa sila ng eroplano.

Sa halip ay sasagot na lamang ng 'yes' sa pamamagitan ng internet sa mahahalagang panukala tinatalakay nito.

Bago ito, sumulat na rin si Salceda kay Pangulong Duterte na pag-aralang mabuti ang napipintong panuntunan ng pamahalaan na huwag nang sumali sa mga usaping climate change dahil

wala naman diumanong silbi ang mga ito.

Giit pa ng mambabatas, "nasa kritikal na yugto na ang usapin kaugnay sa implementasyon ng Paris Agreement dahil napakahalaga nito sa bansa kahit mabagal nga ang progreso ng inaasahang mga pagbabago."

"Kung hindi na tayo sasali sa Conference of the Parties (COP), mawawalan na tayo ng boses at karapatan sa pondo, teknolohiya at capacity building concessions," dagdag ng mambabatas.