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IN THE NEWS

Strategic Communication and Initiative Service



Seaweed farming helps empower women in Palawan

STORY & PHOTOS BY JONATHAN L. MAYUGA [@jonlmayuga](#)

FOR more than 20 years, women in a small fishing community in Quezon, Palawan, felt empowered. Thanks to seaweeds, which they have been farming to earn extra income. They are not only able to help put food on the table but send children to school, some of whom have already finished college.



CHERISH Fisherfolks Association members check the dried seaweeds at the solar drier.



MEMBERS of Cherish Fisherfolks Association interact with members of the media during a Protect Wildlife Project visit at project sites in Southern, Palawan



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Cherish Fisherfolks Association President Mardy Montaño, 48-year-old, native of Negros Occidental, found her way in Sitio Balintang, Barangay Isugod in Quezon, Palawan, when she got married 20 years ago.

As a fisherman's wife, Montaño felt she had to help bring food on the table. Thus, she found seaweed farming an endeavor she can rely on.

Speaking in Filipino, some of the group's members narrated how seaweed farming gave them self-worth and the drive as empowered members of their community.

"Most of our members here were able to send their children to school. Whenever our children would send text messages reminding us of tuition or boarding-house obligations, we will immediately go out and harvest seaweed," said Montaño, proudly claiming to have one of her children as among the first to graduate in college.

Her daughter Jaira Faith R. Montaño recently passed the licensure examination for Agricultural Engineering.

Seaweed or sea vegetables are algae that grow in the sea. A food source for ocean life—as well as human with a distinct taste for "exotic" seafood—seaweed grows along rocky shorelines around the world.

Seaweed is commonly eaten in Asian countries, including the Philippines, where it is being farmed in coastal areas.

As seaweeds are also a source of carrageenan, a substance used as an emulsifier in food products and cosmetics, seaweed farming is in high demand.

The fisherfolk in Quezon town have their respective buyers in their barangays, who, in turn, transport the dried seaweed to a consolidator in Puerto Princesa City. The consolidator in Puerto Princesa then supplies the dried seaweeds to food companies or factories to extract and process the carrageenan from the dried seaweeds.

Aileen Ramadan, 41, a member of the group, said seaweeds are a blessing to their community.

"With seaweed farming, we don't have to borrow money from loan sharks because we have a source of income when the fishing season is off," she said.

As fishermen who live in a coastal community, sometimes they have to stop fishing during the typhoon season for safety reasons.

They then resort to seaweed farming, which requires capital that most fishermen lack.

"We need capital every time we start seaweed farming," she said.

In the earlier days, the fishermen were compelled to borrow money from moneylenders who are often loan sharks who charge high interest rates.

Not anymore. Today, members of Cherish Fisherfolks Association with 22 women and 66 men, have found reliable partners to boost their income from seaweed farming and make their small industry flourish. Thanks to Protect Wildlife, a United States Agency for International Development-funded project in southern Palawan.

The project being implemented by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and its various development partners, Protect Wildlife Project promotes biodiversity conservation in the rural areas.

Environment Undersecretary Jonas R. Leones for Foreign-Assisted Projects said Protect Wildlife has been making inroads on wildlife conservation in the rural areas.

"Aligning conservation policies with on-the-ground action and enforcement is very much called for in the face of growing threats facing the country's biodiversity resources. The DENR most especially regards the livelihood intervention on seaweed farming in Quezon, Palawan, as added boost that would ultimately address poverty and conservation issues,"

Leones, also the DENR's undersecretary for policy, planning and international affairs, said.

Through Protect Wildlife, the group was able to access microfinancing through Lutheran World Relief (LWR) and Ecumenical Church Loan Fund (Eclof), and now has a legal status to be recognized by the Quezon, Palawan, local government unit (LGU).

Lawrence San Diego, communications manager of Protect Wildlife in southern Palawan, said Cherish Fisherfolk Association's linking with partners, such as LWR and Eclof, ensures microfinancing for its members.

Through the USAID-LWR partnership with Eclof as the microfinance organization, Protect Wildlife was able to cover five LGUs in southern Palawan, specifically

targeting upland communities in and near the Mount Mantalingahan Protected Landscape and coastal communities to improve their agriculture, aquaculture and fisheries-based livelihoods.

For the association, Eclof started its lending in April 2018, Johnel Cinco, Eclof area manager in southern Palawan said. To date, he said Eclof has released close to P1 million to members of the group, who are responsible clients.

"What I can say is, here at Cherish, I never encountered payment delays. They are always up to date with their obligation as they pay on time," he said.

The loan program enables the members of the group to continue seaweed production, thus, reducing threats of illegal fishing activities or even illegal wildlife



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CHERISH Fisherfolks Association President Mardy Montaño shows dried seaweed farmed by members of the association in Quezon, Palawan.

trade, San Diego said, adding that some of the islands in Quezon and nearby towns are known nesting sites of the endangered *pawikan* (sea turtles).

For its part, the Municipal Agriculture Office, through their Agri-Fishery Technologist, provides technical assistance to the association members to improve their harvest.

Through the partnership of USAID-LWR with Eclof, the association was able to receive a grant of a land-based seaweed dryer and an additional grant of a floating seaweed dryer, which the members said have been helping them improve their products.

"What we are targeting now is to buy the seaweed our members produced and directly sell them to buyers. This will allow us to earn while our members get the most from their produce," said Montaño, who is also a member of the Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Management Councils (FARMC) in Quezon, Palawan, another feat for a woman who was picked to represent a male-dominated sector.

"Maybe women are empowered by seaweed farming. Because I would have not been elected president or chosen as a representative of FARMC if they don't believe in me," she said.

Mary June Calubag, Protect Wildlife Project Community Enterprise Development associate, said seaweed farming, a viable source of livelihood as it provides profit within a short period of time, contributed to the development of positive changes in the attitudes and behaviors of the farmers.

"Unlike in other areas, starting the project here at Cherish was a lot easier because Cherish is already organized and established. What we did was help to obtain their legal status and be recognized by the local government," she said.

The seaweed farms in Quezon gradually develop to be a conducive environment for marine life to thrive, while the interaction

between human and marine life has become a common occurrence in the farms, which have become nurseries for fish, squid, crabs, lobsters and other crustaceans, as well as grazing sites for dugongs and sea turtles.

More important, members of the group have now been actively supporting the Bantay Dagat (sea watchmen) in their municipality by voluntarily monitoring their coastal waters for illegal-fishing activities.

The same association from Isugod has also advocated the total ban on the use of fertilizers on seaweeds. The seaweed farms have become a nursery of siganid fish, krills, anchovy, squids and lobster eggs.

Seaweed farming has also been proven to be the most viable and sustainable source of income, because the supply of propagules can easily be replenished from cuttings, without depleting the natural marine resources.

So far, Cherish Fisherfolks Association has established a system that allows its members to earn additional income by renting out the seaweed dryer and motorized boat to members and nonmembers who would like to use the association's assets for planting, harvesting and drying of their seaweeds.

On top of increase and a steady source of income, seaweed farming benefits the community as additional people, particularly women and children from non-permittees needing money are hired to help prepare seaweeds for planting and harvesting which is the most labor-intensive stage in the whole production cycle.

Seaweed farming also gives the women an opportunity to contribute significantly to the family income as they join the men in becoming family breadwinners. Indeed, the women—the wives, mothers and daughters in this small coastal community in Quezon, Palawan—are empowered by seaweed.



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AMONG the first order of business for Manila Mayor-elect Francisco "Isko Moreno" Domagoso come the 30th of June is to jump-start the rehabilitation of Manila Zoo's sewage system.

ALFONSO PADILLA

It's lonely out there

Manila Zoo employees raring to reopen facility

By Jennie Bonajos

Manila Zoo employees have expressed hope that the facility will be reopened to the public this year following its closure five months ago to fix its drainage system found dumping untreated sewage into a tributary of the Manila Bay, the Estero de San Antonio Abad.

In a report by a television network, the employees said while they enjoy the calm brought about by the closure ordered by outgoing Manila Mayor Joseph Estrada, they, nonetheless, miss the crowd that enjoyed the sights and sound of the wild.

Mid of his second term, Estrada was pilloried by some sectors over plans to permanently close the zoo, purportedly so a shopping and residential center can be built in the land it occupies.

Mayor-elect Francisco "Isko Moreno" Domagoso vowed to keep Manila Zoo open while ensuring the welfare of the animals under its care.

He reiterated that he will not sell the zoo and the Arroceros Park, where Estrada planned to build a sports stadium for a city college.

"Manila Zoo will be maintained. We'll not sell it. All animals will be protected and I will

really look into their conditions, especially concerning feeding them," he said

Accustomed to visitors, elephant Mali surrounded by zoo employees during mealtime to simulate a crowd.

Among Domagoso's campaign promises was keeping the zoo and the park as properties of the city so residents and visitors alike from outside Manila can enjoy them.

A visit to Manila Zoo, closed since January, will have to wait though as its gates have remained padlocked after being tagged by the Department of the Environment and Natural Resources as being among the polluters of the Manila Bay.

The DENR and other government agencies made respondent by the Supreme Court in a Writ of Kalikasan are in the midst of cleaning up the bay famous for its blazing sunset.

Zoo employees interviewed by ABS-CBN said that with the election, all purchases relating to its operations and to fixing its

sewerage system came to a grinding halt, thus it may take awhile before the facility reopens its doors to the public.

The animals may be missing the visitors too, according to the interview which quoted animal keeper Boy Tabiong as saying that they noticed the lone elephant Mali was somehow sad with the lack of human interaction.

To remedy the situation, Tabiong said they gathered around the elephant during feeding time to simulate visitors when the zoo was still open.

Born in Sri Lanka but a mainstay in the Manila Zoo for over four decades now, Mali had been at the center of moves by environmentalist and animal rights advocates for the zoo's closure and the return of the animals to the wild.





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Ilocos Norte to restrict single-use plastics

By **FREDDIE G. LAZARO**

LAOAG CITY, Ilocos Norte – Provincial officials in Ilocos Norte want to regulate single-use plastics as concern about plastic pollution in the province grows.

Last week, Sangguniang Panlalawigan approved on second reading Draft Provincial Ordinance No. 2019-05-074 sponsored by exiting Senior Provincial Board Member and Governor-elect Matthew Joseph Manotoc.

Under the ordinance, violators

face a fine of from ₱200 to ₱5,000 and the cancellation of their business permit.

“The ordinance aims to reduce if not totally eradicate certain uses of plastics and provide penalties,” said Manotoc, who is calling the use of alternative packaging materials such as woven bags and other recyclable materials.

Manotoc said the implementation of the anti-plastic ordinance shall be strictly monitored by the Environment and Natural Resources Office (ENRO) in coordination with the lo-

cal government units and national government line agencies based in the province

He said the ordinance will boost the anti-littering law passed earlier.

Chief executives in the 21 towns and two cities of Ilocos Norte will be authorized to deputize apprehending officers other than police officers to implement the ordinance.

Laoag City’s commercial establishments started using environmentally-sound or recyclable packaging materials following the approval of the city’s anti-plastic ordinance.



Public warned on leptospirosis, other diseases during the rainy season

By **CHITO CHAVEZ**

With the onset of the rainy season, the Department of Health (DOH) and various cause-oriented groups have called on the public to practice the "seal up, trap up, and clean up" scheme as deterrent to leptospirosis and other similar diseases.

The method calls for the sealing up of holes inside and outside the homes to prevent the entry of rodents.

The group also said that the pests should be trapped to reduce their population, adding that rodent food sources

and nesting sites should be cleaned out to help decrease their population.

EcoWaste Coalition has strongly pushed for ecological management of discards as the number of leptospirosis cases in some regions continues to soar.

It pressed the country's barangay officials to adopt waste prevention and reduction measures to avoid garbage from piling up and to avert flooding caused by trash-choked waterways.

The Department of Health (DOH) in the previous year reported a rise in leptospirosis cases as

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uncollected garbage further aggravated flooding due to continuous rains.

"Poor waste management attracts rodent infestation and increases the risk of human exposure to the leptospirosis-causing bacteria transmitted through rat urine," said Daniel Alejandro, Zero Waste campaigner, EcoWaste Coalition.

"Rats thrive in filthy surroundings such as garbage dumps where they go to find food, rest, and hide. Improper trash disposal can also obstruct canals and rivers, causing flooding, which forces rats to flee floods and seek shelter on higher ground. This makes wading and swimming in flooded areas very dangerous as floodwaters may be contaminated with *Leptospira* bacteria from infected rats," he added.

Alejandro said it is imperative for barangays to enforce Republic Act 9003, the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act, which aims to protect public health and the environment from mis-

managed discards.

RA 9003 requires the more than 42,000 barangays in the country to develop an ecological solid waste management program, promote waste segregation, implement a segregated collection for biodegradable and non-biodegradable discards, and set up Materials Recovery Facilities (MRFs) in every barangay or cluster of barangays.

"Ecological solid waste management can help not only in preventing leptospirosis, but also in preventing cholera, dengue, gastroenteritis, typhoid fever, and other common diseases during the rainy season," he added.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), "leptospirosis can be transmitted to humans through cuts and abrasions of the skin, or through the mucous membranes of the eyes, nose, and mouth with water contaminated with the urine of infected animals."
(Chito A. Chavez)



Recyclers

KAMIKATSU – Plastic, paper, metal? In Japan's Kamikatsu, sorting rubbish isn't that simple. Residents face a mind-boggling 45 separate categories for their garbage as the town aims to be "zero-waste" by 2020.

And that's not all: there isn't even trash collection. The 1,500 residents of the town in western Japan have

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Recyclers

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to transport their waste themselves to a local facility.

"Yes, it's complicated," said Naoko Yokoyama, a 39-year-old resident who had brought her trash to the town's waste center.

"But I have become more environmentally conscious since I moved here a year ago," she told *AFP*.

The categories cover everything from pillows to toothbrushes as the town aims to recycle all its waste, sending nothing to incinerators, by next year.

The process can be onerous – not only are there dozens of separate categories, but items like plastic bags and bottles must be washed and dried to facilitate recycling.

At the town's waste facility, there are dozens of different boxes for each category. If the parts of an item fall into different categories for recycling, residents are expected to take them apart and send each bit to the right container.

One man who had brought in a shelf had to use a hammer to pry the wood apart from the metal, while elsewhere workers chopped up a thick, long rubber tube so it would fit into a sorting box.

Many parts of Japan already require separation of rubbish, but most areas have just a few categories, with the bulk of household waste going to incinerators.

Kamikatsu was not much different until an ultimatum: in 2000, the town was ordered to shut down one of its incinerators because it no longer met stricter emissions standards.

That left the town with just one incinerator that couldn't handle all of Kamikatsu's waste, and there wasn't enough money for a new one or to pay a neighboring town for use of theirs.

"We thought, 'If we can't burn waste in the town, then let's recycle.' It's cheaper to recycle waste than burn it," said town official Midori Suga.

Kamikatsu is already close to achieving its goal, recycling about 80 percent of the 286 tons of waste it produced in 2017, far more than the national average of 20 percent.

The remainder, like most waste in Japan, is incinerated, as the country's mountainous terrain considered unsuitable for landfills.

Still, not all residents think the initiative could work elsewhere.

"It would be difficult in a big town with a larger population," she added, because authorities would struggle to enforce it.

AFP



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Villar upcycles used campaign tarpaulins

By Macon Ramos-Araneta

INSTEAD of disposing the tarpaulins used during the election campaign, re-elected Senator Cynthia Villar has tapped women in Dasmariñas, Cavite to make bags out of them.

"We are very glad that we have now a way for the proper disposal of these used tarpaulins," said Villar, who has been pushing for livelihood programs in poor communities across the country.

Through this initiative, the senator said they were not only able to recycle the tarpaulins into something useful,

but were also able to help women earn additional income for their families.

Villar, chair of the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources in the previous Congress, said the recycling project benefits a small tailoring business, which employs mothers as sewers.

The finished product from the

election campaign material has a dimension of 12 x 18 x 4 inches. It is white with the printed side of the tarpaulin made as the inside of the bag.

The senator said tarpaulin bags are more durable and environment-friendly substitutes for plastic bags.

The bags are distributed for free by the camp of Villar to further promote her advocacy for plastic recycling.

The tarpaulins collected by her staff were delivered to the shop owned by Cristina Ferrer and were made into bags for P16 a piece.

Ferrer said her four sewers are mothers who live nearby. One of her sewers has to look after a baby so Ferrer loaned one of her machines so

the mother could work from home.

Ferrer, who has to look after two kids aged 10 and 7, said she appreciates Villar's initiative to provide a source of additional income for mothers like her.

The Nacionalista Party senator earlier initiated a plastic recycling project which turns plastic wastes into school chairs.

Through a plastic factory she built in Las Piñas, 20 kilos of soft plastics such as food wrappers were recycled into a plastic chair with changeable parts and a life span of 20 years.

These chairs were donated to different public schools all over the country.



World without waste



... about 20 percent of which, or half a million tons, ends up in the ocean. Experts have attributed this to a couple of factors. First is the so-called sachet economy, or the widespread, seemingly unstoppable use of single-use plastic sachets in practically every facet of daily life. The second is a little more complicated, to some extent a combination of lack of political will and corruption. The

Philippines has a nearly 20-year-old landmark law that in a perfect world would have solved the problem. The Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000, or Republic Act (RA) 9003, mandates the implementation of a

national systematic, comprehensive, and ecological solid waste management program that will "ensure protection of public health and the environment." It is a landmark law, ahead of its time and comprehensive.

It seeks to "emphasize the need to create the necessary institutional mechanisms and incentives, and imposes penalties for acts in violation of any of its provisions." In particular, it mandates local government units to adopt a viable solid waste management program.

Vision is nothing with no sound implementation, however. And by and large RA 9003 was hounded by a number of issues, from administrative and management to economic and even technical. The success of the law in local communities, for instance, is largely dependent on the political will of local chief executives, many of whom

either carry a negative attitude about solid waste management or just lack the necessary initiative to carry out its provisions. The lack of any cost-sharing grants or financing for local governments to fully implement the law also hinders its implementation, while most also do not possess any technical capability to create a ten-year solid waste management plan, another provision of the law. A possible game-changer in the scene is a planned P1-billion

investment in a pioneering food-grade recycling facility by Coca-Cola Philippines. It's the company's first major investment in a recycling facility in the whole of Southeast Asia, which it says represents its commitment to a "World Without Waste." It is anchored on the concept of

the circular economy, in which a recycling facility collecting, sorting, cleaning, and washing post-consumer PET plastic bottles and turning them into new bottles using advanced technology. "Our Coca-Cola bottles and cans are 100-percent recyclable and have value as a recycled material," said Gareth McGeown, President and CEO of Coca-Cola Beverages Philippines, Inc (CCBPI), the bottling arm of Coca-Cola Philippines. "Our aspiration with this facility is to close the loop on our packaging by helping turn old bottles

into new ones. This facility is a testament to our resolve in making our World Without Waste vision a reality across the country, with a real

positive impact not just across our value chain, but also in the communities where we be

long," Gareth said. The initiative to work toward a bottle-to-bottle closed loop is a model for companies and communities to help contribute to solving the monstrous packaging waste problem in the world in the long term. It is specifically relevant in a country like the Philippines, which can see its waterways drowning in plastic and other waste

if something does not change. The bottling subsidiary also intends to use an average of 50-percent recycled content in its packaging, including PET bottles. All this is part of its global commitment for a World Without Waste, in particular its aim to collect and recycle the equivalent of every bottle and can it sells by 2030. The use of solar panels in

the company's manufacturing facilities is also in the works. While recycling is certainly not new, CCBPI's plan upgrades it to what it calls a "total economic system" instead of a "band-aid solution" as some people see it as. Its circular economy model or "zero waste production," seeks to guarantee that things are designed, consumed, and recycled with

"These are the horrors of plastic use."

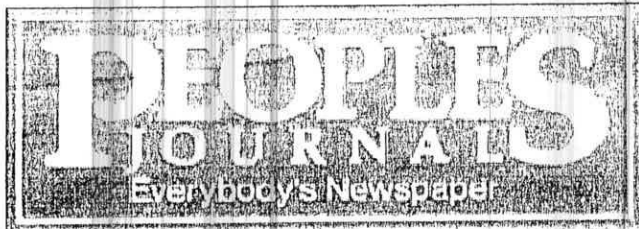
outwaste as an end in mind. This includes introducing more sustainable packaging innovations, such as the Viva Eco-bottle, the country's first beverage bottle made from 100 percent recycled plastic.

Under the model, too, the recycling process does not end with just recovering recyclable material or curbside collection. With the help of consumers and other key players in the waste materials value chain, the goal is to help boost and power "an endless loop of recycling," which will eliminate the harmful practice of having

waste as an end-product. Considering the utter magnitude of the problem, the Coca-Cola company, said Winn Everhart, president and general manager of Coca-Cola Philippines, can be "uniquely positioned to help lead the industry in finding solutions to help address the issue." Big initiatives of the private sector to help solve serious environmental problems should be encouraged by government with "Green Projects" being one of the areas of activities of the Investment Priority Plan under the mandate of the Board of Investments. This will mobilize the resources and technical expertise of the big enterprises to take a lead role in environmental stewardship instead of penalizing them with bans and taxes that ultimately burdens the consumers. Even so, the horror of plastic waste is a planetary problem and all businesses big and small must do their share. But while the technological know-how to manage plastic waste might be ahead, changing behavior might be trickier. No matter how robust our waste management systems become, the people component must also be present. ECONOMIC development, especially if it were to be inclusive, requires conscientious planning in which time is of the essence. Coming out of the summer months, the series of yellow, and even some disquieting red alerts in the Luzon grid over April and May ought to call attention to a problem that requires immediate attention



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Indonesia does a PH, sends garbage back to US

JAKARTA -- Indonesia has returned five containers of rubbish to the United States and will not become a "dumping ground", officials said Saturday, the latest Southeast Asian country to return imported waste.

The containers were supposed to contain only paper scrap, according to the customs documents. Instead they were loaded with other waste including bottles, plastic waste, and diapers, said senior environment ministry official Sayid Muhadhar.

"This is not appropriate and we don't want to be a dumping ground," Muhadhar told AFP.

The five containers -- owned by a Canadian company -- were shipped from Seattle in the United States to Indonesia's second biggest city Surabaya in late March, Muhadhar said.

It was not immediately clear where the rubbish originated from. Indonesia is currently examining several other containers in

Jakarta's port and the city of Batam on the island of Sumatra.

It is the latest country to return imported rubbish after neighboring Malaysia vowed to ship back hundreds of tons of plastic waste last month.

The Philippines has ordered tons of garbage dumped in the country to be shipped back to Canada, sparking a diplomatic row between the two countries.

For years China received the bulk of scrap plastic from around the world, but closed its doors to foreign refuse last year in an effort to clean up its environment.

Huge quantities of waste have since been redirected to Southeast Asia, including Malaysia, Indonesia and to a lesser degree the Philippines. Around 300 million tons of plastic are produced every year. Much of that ends up in landfill or in the seas, according to the Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF).

AFP



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BACK TO KOREA Environmental group EcoWaste Coalition welcomes an agreement reached by the governments of the Philippines and South Korea for the repatriation of 5,177 tons of wastes. PNA PHOTO





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PAGBABALIK NG BASURA NG SOKOR OKEY SA ENVIRONMENTAL GROUP

MAGANDANG balita para sa Ecowaste Coalition ang pagbabalik ng natitirang mahigit 5,000 toneladang basura mula sa South Korea na nadiskubre sa Mindanao Container Terminal noon pang 2018.

Ayon kay Aileen Lucero, national coordinator ng grupo, narapat lang ito alinsunod sa Basel Convention kung saan parehong parties ang Filipinas at South Korea.

Sa bisa ng kasunduan, nire-regulate ang

movement ng hazardous waste sa mga bansa partikular upang maiwasan ang paglipat ng basura mula developed countries patungong developing o less developed countries.

Nitong Linggo, nagpulong ang mga

kinatawan ng Filipinas at South Korea upang ma-plantsa ang pagbabalik ng basura, bagay na ayon kay Lucero ay dapat pangatawanan ng dalawang bansa.

Enero nang maibalik sa South Korea ang isang batch ng basura.

Nahaharap naman sa mga kasong paglabag sa Toxic and Hazardous Waste Act at Customs Modernization and Tariff Act ang Verde Soko na importer ng mga basura mula South Korea.

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Duterte dismayed by sluggish work of civilian gov't workers

President Duterte is dismayed by the sluggish work of some civilian workers in the bureaucracy.

The President admitted that civilian sector tend to be "slow" and "legalistic," prompting him to appoint former military men to do the job instead.

"Why do I prefer the military? This is not to derogate or to belittle the services of the civilian sector. What I don't like about the civilian sector

is...It is ever so slow and legalistic and they aren't able to produce any output," Duterte said during his visit to General Santos City Thursday. "Sometimes, but not all, would run out of money when that happens," he added.

The President noticed the slow work rendered by some civilian employees after serving in government for many years. "I was the mayor of Davao City for

the last 23 years. Then I became a congressman for three years, then I became a vice mayor for my daughter and then I became President," he said.

Duterte highlighted how efficient former military men in the Cabinet follow his orders and get the job done fast.

He cited that former military chief now Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Roy Cimatu managed to lead the cleanup of Boracay drive in six months as directed. "So just like the military, I told Secretary Año, 'Secretary, clean up Boracay in six months,'" he said.

Duterte is also all praises for the integrity and competence of former police officer now Technical Education and Skills Development Authority Director General Isidro Lapeña. He said Lapeña now leads the TESDA that provides skills training and other livelihood aid to Filipinos.

"TESDA is a department that focuses on teaching you livelihood

skills. It's headed by Secretary Lapeña, si Sid. He used to be my chief of police in Davao," he said. "He has all the qualities of a public servant. I appointed him because he's hardworking and he's an honest guy," he added.

Last April, the President hinted that he was inclined to appoint more former military officers to his administration due to integrity and perseverance. Duterte said he has "a special fondness for the military for being fundamentally honest at industrious."

Among the ex-military men in the Cabinet are presidential political adviser Carlito Galvez Jr., Social Welfare and Development Secretary Rolando Bautista, Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana, National Security Adviser Hermogenes Esperon Jr., and Interior and Local Government Secretary Eduardo Año. **(Genalyn Kabiling)**



'Kaligkasan' program, inilunsad sa Bulacan

INILUNSA ng Bulacan Police Provincial Office ang Kaligtasan at Kalikasan (Kaligkasan) volunteer program na layuning isulong ang proteksiyon at pangangalaga sa kalikasan sa mga dumarayo sa probinsiya.

Pinangunahan ni Police Col. Chito G. Bersaluna ang paglulunsad ng programa, na idinaos sa Hiyas ng Bulacan Convention Center, sa lungsod ng Malolos, sa Bulacan kamakailan.

Pinangunahan din ni Bersaluna ang mass oath-taking ng mga Kaligkasan volunteers na nagmula pa sa iba't ibang munisipalidad at siyudad sa Bulacan, na nangakong iaalay ang sarili upang maging tagapangalaga ng kalikasan.

"The Kaligkasan program is a project of the Philippine National Police (PNP), which taps local volunteers and mobilizes them as force multipliers to complement the existing tourist-oriented Police for Community Order and Protect personnel in the enforcement of the environmental laws in the different tourist destinations in Bulacan," pagbabahagi ni Bersaluna sa seremonya.

Sa kanyang pahayag, sinabi niyang nangako ang mga volunteers na magbibigay ng halaga sa kalikasan at tutulong sa pagbibigay ng seguridad sa mga turista na dumarayo sa probinsiya mula sa iba't ibang bayan at siyudad.

Kabilang sa mga dumalo sa paglulunsad ng programa sina Col. Rhoderick A. Armamento, deputy regional director para sa operation ng Police Regional Office 3 (Central Luzon); Arthur Salazar, assistant director ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources 3; at Elizabeth Apresto, ng Bulacan Environment and Natural Resources Office.

Ayon kay Armamento, ang pangangalaga at konserbasyon sa kalikasan ay isang tungkulin para sa lahat at sama-samang responsibilidad para sa mga ahensiya ng pamahalaan na may tungkuling protektahan at pangalagaan ang mga likas na yaman ng bansa.

"Hand in hand, we endeavor to safeguard Mother Nature so future generations will still be able to experience its beauty and abundance," aniya.



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Seeing through Asia's air pollution problem

Governments strive to address the 'devastating challenge' of bad air quality

By Maarten Wetselaar
@InquirerBiz

Of the seven million people around the world who die prematurely from air pollution every year, four million are in Asia. That is a sobering statistic.

Air pollution is also the main environmental cause of disease. Given the scale of its impact, it is a fitting and timely theme of the United Nations' World Environment Day this year.

Governments in Asia have been trying to address this devastating challenge as their economies have grown exponentially over the last few decades, leading to increased urbanization and rising energy demand.

China's Air Pollution Action Plan, for example, set air quality targets for key cities over the last five years, and this has led to a reduction in harmful pollu-

tants in three of its main industrial areas—the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region, and the Pearl River and Yangtze deltas.

But overall, Asia's air pollution has not improved. Next year, it could even get worse because the region's economies are projected to be larger than the rest of the world combined.

Asia can mitigate this by speeding up its transition to renewables, complemented with natural gas, and curbing its reliance on coal, which emits harmful air pollutants like sulphur dioxide, particulate matter and nitrogen oxides.

It will be a massive task that will depend not only on policymakers but also on businesses, environmental and city experts, as well as many individuals on the ground, working together.

Different solutions

One example of this is the Smart Cities Network.

Set up last year by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean), it will help 26 pilot cities address the societal and environmental challenges faced by rapid urbanization.

As part of this plan, for example, a 42-kilometer industrial estate in Chonburi, a tourism and business hub southeast of Bangkok, will be working with the Japanese city of Yokohama to develop a sustainable urban grid using renewables for electricity.

Asean will need to move quickly. Some 90 million people are expected to move into its cities by 2030 and it has set a target of 23 percent renewables in its primary energy mix by 2025, a hefty 250 percent increase from 2014.

Renewables, however, only solve part of the problem because they chiefly produce electricity, which makes up about 20 percent of the world's final energy use.

Industries like cement, steel, plastics, trucking, shipping and aviation, which cannot be easily electrified yet, still require hydrocarbons.

This is where natural gas, which produces less than one-tenth the air pollutants than coal when burnt for electricity, can play a part.

The good news is many countries in Asia are recognizing this.

In the Philippines, since 2001, the Malampaya natural gas project has been providing Luzon, its largest and most populous island, with some 40 percent of its electricity needs.

And while China still consumes half the world's coal, Beijing has experienced the benefits of switching to gas for heating, with its winter air quality improving by over 70 percent in the last three years.

There are also encouraging signs in India, where there are

plans to phase out older coal-based power plants and convert others to run on natural gas by 2024.

Last year, for the first time, the share of LNG in the country's gas supply mix hit 50 percent. This year, its demand for LNG is expected to grow by 9 to 11 percent, driven by demand from the industrial sector.

The country currently has four LNG terminals and plans to build 11 more in the next seven years. Of these, two are expected to be operational this year.

More work to be done

Gas comprises about half of Shell's total production and is core to our strategy to provide more and cleaner energy to the world. We believe in its benefits. But we also know we need to work harder to make it attractive for all countries.

This includes managing our environmental footprint, including emissions of methane—a potent greenhouse gas. Last year, we announced a target to keep Shell's methane

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SEEING THROUGH ASIA'S AIR POLLUTION PROBLEM

FROM B2-4 emissions intensity, for both oil and gas, below 0.2 percent by 2025.

We also need to make gas more affordable, by cutting costs across the supply chain—from our products, drilling contractors, equipment suppliers and distribution chains.

It is important that we do this as more of the world recognizes its benefits.

Last year, worldwide demand for gas grew at its fastest rate since 2010, and natural gas made up nearly 45 percent of the increase in total energy demand, the highest rise among all fuel types.

But this increase was still not enough to offset demand for coal, especially in Asia, home to half the world's population and growing.

Every year, Asian cities attract 44 million new inhabitants, all searching for a better way of life.

With this prosperity come new luxuries—new homes, new cars, and new appliances. These are the products of the good life which Asia deserves.

But this prosperity will be short-lived if its people do not enjoy good health.

Clean air, after all, is not a luxury. It is a necessity. —CON-

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The author is director for Integrated Gas and New Energies and a member of the executive committee of Royal Dutch Shell plc.



Air pollution malaki kaugnayan sa cancer

MARAMING tao ang nag-iingat sa kanilang kinakain para hindi magkasakit.

Maaaring iwasan ang pagkain para hindi magkasakit, pero paano ka makakaiwas kung hindi mo nakikita ang pwedeng magdala sa iyo ng sakit, gaya na lang ng hangin.

Ayon kay Dr. Mylene Cayetano, Scientist at Founding Head ng Environmental Pollution Studies Laboratory maraming tao ang nagkakasakit dahil sa hangin na kanilang nalalanghap.

"Air pollution is a problem that is not easy to see. Oftentimes, the threat/harm is not perceived important and im-

mediate, because our naked eye cannot see right away the air pollution shrouding us, whether indoor or outdoor," ani Cayetano sa kanyang pagsasalita sa Health Impacts of Climate Change, Plastic and Air Pollution forum na inorganisa ng Health Care Without Harm Southeast Asia.

Ang mobile emission o usok ng mga sasakyang pangunahing pinanggagalingan ng air pollution sa Metro Manila at iba pang malalaking siyudad sa bansa.

Ayon sa emissions inventory ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources, mobile emissions ang pinanggagalingan ng 80-90 pollutants sa mga siyudad.

Kapag nakapasok sa

katawan ang mga pollutants na ito ay maaaring itong magdulot ng sakit.

Paliwanag ni Cayetano ang Particulate Matter na mas kilala natin bilang alikabok ay maaaring makarating sa baga.

Ang PM 10 o particulate matter na may sukat na hindi hihigit sa 10 micrometers ang laki ay mahaharap ng buhok sa ilong pero posibleng makarating sa trachea region.

Ang PM 2.5 o wala pang 2.5 micrometers ang diametro ay maaaring makarating sa baga dahil sa liit nito.

Ang pinakamapanib sa lahat ay ang PM na ang laki ay 100 nanometer na maaaring may taglay na cancerous chemicals at nakararating sa baga.

Ang PM mula sa labas

ay pangsiyam sa mundo at pang-11 sa Southeast Asia na nakapagdudulot ng pagkakasakit ng tao.

Ayon sa World Health Organization ang outdoor air pollution ang nangungunang environmental cause ng cancer death.

Ang indoor at outdoor pollution naman ang pangunahing sanhi ng 7 milyong premature deaths taon-taon.

Sinabi ni Cayetano na ang hangin sa Metro Manila ay maituturing na cancerous dahil sa mataas na label ng carcinogenic compounds nito ayon sa Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons study noong 2016.

Ang Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons (PAHs) ay ang mga compounds na natitira sa



pagkasunog ng diesel o gasolina.

Isa sa PAHs ang benzo[a]pyrene na nasa Group 1 carcinogen sa klasipikasyon ng International Agency for Research on Cancer.

Mataas umano ang

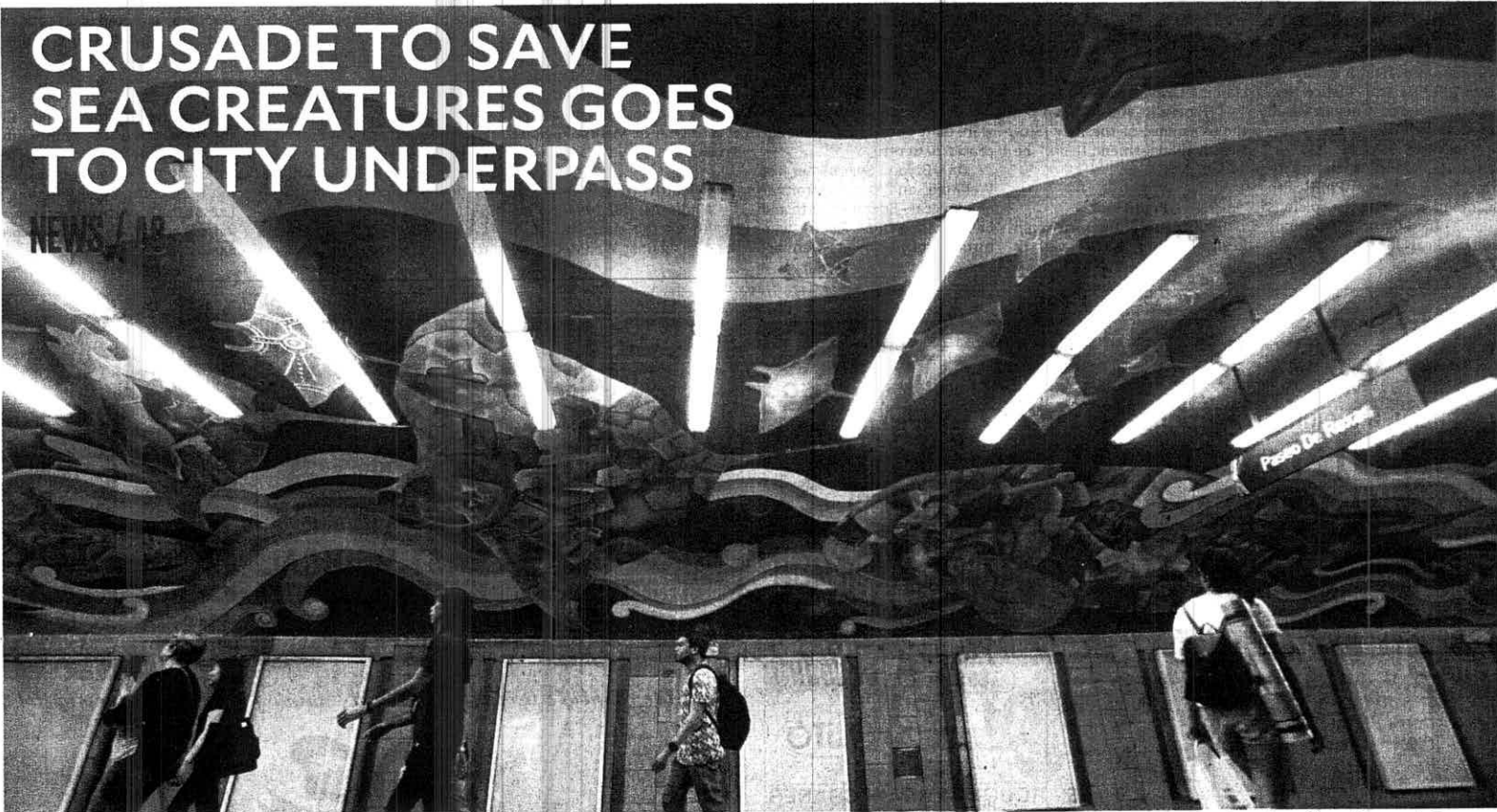
epekto ng air pollution sa mga tao na nakatira 300 hanggang 500 metro sa mga highway o pangunahing lansangan.

"Knowing that air pollution is now the leading cause of cancer deaths worldwide, the problem

is not just environmental; it is environment, health, socioeconomic caused by human activities, hence it can be solved by humans if we work together. Let us all act to clean the air," dagdag pa ni Cayetano. - Leifbilly Begas

CRUSADE TO SAVE SEA CREATURES GOES TO CITY UNDERPASS

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MESSAGE IN MURAL Marine creatures—dolphins, sea turtles, hammerhead sharks, manta rays and sea cows—as well as birds and mammals come alive in a mural on the ceiling of Paseo de Roxas underpass in Makati City, but artist AG Saño clads them in armor for their protection against human threats. —LYN RILLON

Crusade to save sea creatures goes to city underpass

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By Jhesset O. Enano
@JhessetEnanoINQ

Beneath the towering buildings in the country's financial district, pods of dolphins ride the waves with sea turtles and hammerhead sharks, blissfully unmindful of the bustling world above them.

Hundreds of kilometers away from home, these endangered creatures have appeared in one of the busiest underpasses in Metro Manila, hoping to catch even a glimpse of the thousands of passersby that go about their daily lives.

At least, this was what artist AG Saño had in mind when he sought to fill the ceiling of the Paseo de Roxas underpass in Makati City with images of sea and terrestrial animals.

With hues of blue and green, his yet unfinished work offers a striking contrast from the grey concrete and steel overhead.

Clad in metal armor

This time, however, his art came with an unusual touch.

While free to roam the vastness of the pedestrian tunnel, the animals were clad in metal armor, bringing a message that Saño hopes would reverberate across the urban jungle.

Instead of simply depicting animals in their natural habitats, he decided to clad them in armor, a symbol of an artificial protection that the species now seemingly need in order to survive.

"The damage that humans are doing to the oceans and their homes are so severe that their natural defense mechanisms would not be enough to save themselves," he said in an interview with the Inquirer.

"In these drastic times, I want to send the message that we need to do more to help them," he said.

Muralist's mission

In 2010, after he had learned of the mass capture and slaughter of dolphins in Japan for human entertainment, Saño went on a crusade to memorialize every cetacean that had suffered under human hands.

"We embarked on a mission to paint one dolphin for every captured one," said the 43-year-old muralist, who also survived the wrath of Supertyphoon "Yolanda" (international

name: Haiyan) in 2013.

"We ended up painting 35,000 dolphins in 16 countries," he said.

Creating the Dolphins Love Freedom Movement with fellow advocates and volunteers, his works became easily recognizable.

On walls that stretch along the metro's busiest roads to otherwise empty spaces in school grounds, the freedom-loving dolphins swam happily, away from the horrors they face in the oceans.

Human threats

But nearly a decade since, the threats to these endangered animals continue at an unprecedented rate, mostly due to human activities.

A landmark report by the United Nations released in May revealed that a million species may be pushed to extinction in the next few years.

Identified as major drivers of species decline were land conversion, overfishing, poaching, climate change and pollution.

"We are eroding the very foundations of our economies, livelihoods, food security, health and quality of life worldwide," said Sir Robert Watson, chair of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, which conducted the global assessment.

While the Philippines remains a biodiversity hot spot, the man-made threats to its ecosystems remain a daunting challenge for both the government and environmental advocates.

Species only found in the country, including those that Saño painted in the Paseo underpass, are at risk of being wiped out, if not protected.

People's attention

By making them visible in an area where millions pass by every single day, Saño hopes to capture the people's attention to their plight.

"I like painting realist or cartoon-style images of nature, but I realized in the past three years that there are more questions raised in artworks done differently," he said.

Commissioned by a local bank that serves as the caretaker of the underpass, Saño and his small team of volunteers

began their work earlier this month, mostly working at nighttime when the rush hour has died down.

Their work in the 740-square-meter ceiling—the biggest one that Saño has worked on—mirrored the conditions when Michaelangelo painted the renowned ceiling of the Sistine Chapel in the 1500s.

Only instead of a quiet church, they dip their brushes and rollers amid the hustle of pedestrians underneath Ayala Avenue.

Despite working during the "graveyard shift" until 4 a.m. on weekdays, a steady stream of people continue to pass through the underpass, many of them young professionals.

Some of them stop momentarily to observe the artists, take a few photos with their mobile phones, before heading back to their routines.

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Donna Madrid, who works at a nearby accounting firm, glanced up at the armored dugong and Irrawaddy dolphin above her, as she headed out toward Ayala Triangle.

A different view

For the past three years, space-themed art had occupied the ceiling, Madrid noted, so she was excited to see the changes in her usual route to work.

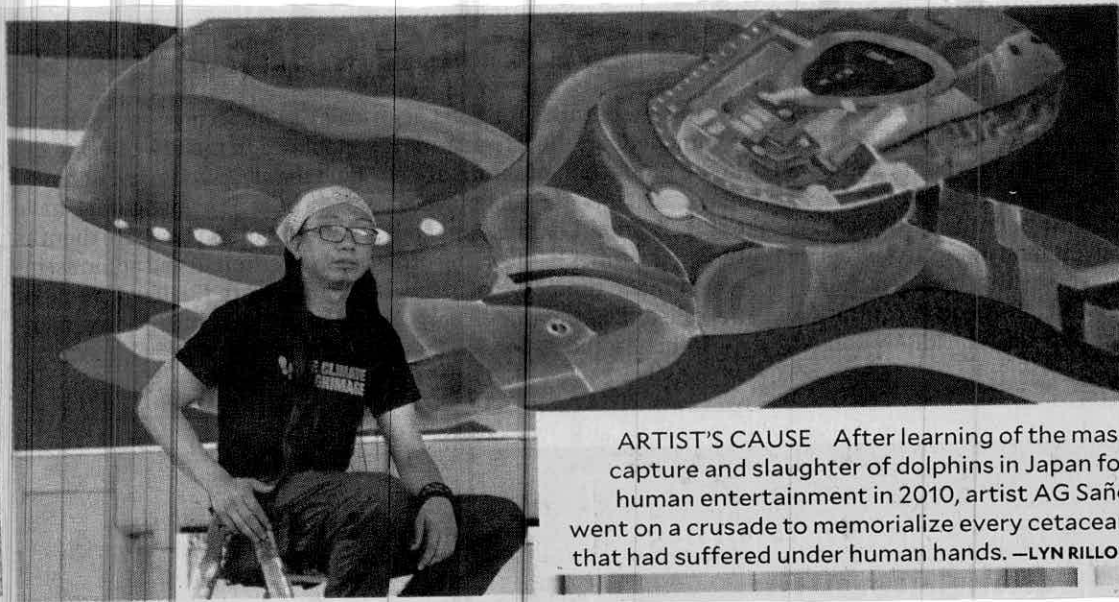
"It's nice to have these kinds of artwork in the city, it's very refreshing to the eyes," she said. "Before I head out back to the sight of the buildings, when I head down here, at least it's a different view."

A life-size humpback whale stretching up to six feet greets those who enter the underpass from the Ayala Triangle side.

Those coming in from the other end are welcomed by a display of birds and mammals, including the "haring ibon," the Philippine Eagle.

Jowee Maglente, a fresh graduate who landed a job in Makati City, said she found the mural attractive, noting that they do not have similar artworks in her hometown in Laguna province.

"I was really at awe at how fast they were able to do this," she said, craning her neck to check the details overhead. "Not only is it nice to look at, but it also raises awareness to save our nature." INQ



ARTIST'S CAUSE After learning of the mass capture and slaughter of dolphins in Japan for human entertainment in 2010, artist AG Saño went on a crusade to memorialize every cetacean that had suffered under human hands. —LYN RILLON



VOLUNTEER divers from Metro Pacific and local dive centers pick up nonbiodegradable trash from the coral gardens in Puerto Galera Bay.

SHORING UP PUERTO GALERA'S MARINE ECOLOGY

PUERTO Galera, one of the country's top diving spots, can expect to have cleaner seas and a more balanced marine ecosystem with the recent partnership sealed by the municipal government and the Metro Pacific Investments Foundation Inc.

The corporate social responsibility (CSR) arm of the MVP Group of Cos., the foundation has committed P1.5 million for three years under its Shore It Up program to provide local Bantay Dagat in the form of technical know-how, monthly allowances, uniforms, and scuba-diving courses and equipment to better protect and conserve the town's aquatic resources.

To be called Marine Protection, Inspection and Conservation Guardians, the volunteers will also be empowered by the municipal government in their marine enforcement and monitoring activities.

The conglomerate made its initial foray into Puerto Galera in 2010 when it pioneered

a comprehensive underwater and coastal cleanup drive, followed up in 2013 by another scuba cleanup and the Junior Environmental Scouts, an education component for public school children.

The recent Shore It Up drew 145 volunteer scuba divers who collected 616 kgs of garbage from various dives spots, while residents conducted a parallel cleanup in the coastal barangays.

Incepted in 2009, the program has mustered over 85,000 volunteers from the Metro Pacific firms, national government agencies, local government units, law enforcement agencies, civil-society groups, dive industry stakeholders and public elementary schools.

A multi-awarded CSR program both here and abroad, Shore It Up has been held in key coastal areas such as Mabini (Batangas), Alaminos City (Pangasinan), Del Carmen (Surigao del Norte), Medina (Misamis Oriental), Panglao (Bohol), Cordova (Cebu) and Subic Bay (Zambales).



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The Manila Times

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G20 to agree on marine plastic pollution accord

TOKYO: The Group of 20 (G20) major economies were set to agree a deal on reducing marine plastic waste at a meeting in Japan Sunday where they also discussed energy security following the oil tanker attacks in the Gulf of Oman.

Japan "proposed a workable framework" on marine plastic waste that involves emerging and less developed countries, and was welcomed by member countries, environment minister Yoshiaki Harada told reporters late Saturday at the G20 environment and energy ministers' meeting.

Plastic pollution has become an increasing international concern, particularly after bans imposed by China and other countries on the import of plastic waste from overseas.

Many countries, including Japan, have seen plastic waste pile up in the wake of the ban.

Among the many concerns is the issue of microplastics, the tiny pieces of degraded waste that are difficult to collect once they enter the water.

Microplastics tend to absorb harmful chemicals and accumulate inside fish, birds and other animals.

The proposal, made at the two-day meeting in the central mountain resort of Karuizawa, would be the first-ever framework to reduce plastic pollution in the ocean, and is expected to be included in a joint communique by the G20 ministers later Sunday.

Under the expected agreement, G20 members would commit to undertaking efforts to reduce the

amount of plastic waste that ends up polluting oceans and to reporting their progress on a regular basis, according to Japanese media.

If an international framework on reducing marine plastic waste is agreed, it would be "the first step toward resolving the issue," Hiroaki Odachi of Greenpeace Japan told AFP.

"But given the critical situation of ocean pollution with plastics, it is urgently needed to set up legally binding action plans with clear timelines and goals," he added.

With only an estimated nine percent of plastics ever produced recycled, campaigners say the only long-term solution to the plastic waste crisis is for companies to make less and consumers to use less.

Japanese industry minister Hiroshige Seko, who is co-chairing the discussions with Harada, said late Saturday that Japan would aim to require businesses to charge for disposable shopping bags by as early as April to help reduce waste.

Many countries in the world already charge for single-use bags or ban them outright.

On energy security, Seko said Tokyo "is watching with grave concerns at the attacks on oil tankers by someone."

"From a viewpoint of global energy security, it is necessary for the international community to jointly deal with the act," Seko told the meeting.

The ministers agreed on the importance of securing stable energy supplies, he said.

AFP



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POSITIVE Mussel samples from the Philippines test positive for microplastic in a study conducted by Dr. Jose Isagani of the De La Salle University in coordination with the Department of Science and Technology. PHOTO BY JOHN ORVEN VERDOTE



Nickel Asia leads in 'plogging' for 2019 World Environment Day

NICKEL Asia Corp (NAC), together with its subsidiaries Cagdianao Mining, Dinapigue Mining, Hinatuan Mining, Hinatuan-Manicani Project, Rio Tuba Nickel and Taganito Mining once again led in "plogging" for World Environment Day 2019 (WED).

It is the second year that NAC conducted this activity simultaneously with its subsidiaries all over the country, with the theme "Healthy Ka Na, Nakalinis Ka Pa." Plogging is jogging while picking up trash. The company meant to teach its employees the value of protecting the environment while conducting activities that promote healthy living.

The United Nations (UN) has declared June 5 of every year as WED, declaring that day as "a special day to draw awareness and encourage actions to pressing environment concerns" such as pollution. This is the second year that NAC as a corporate citizen, participated in this world event celebrated by some 100 countries across the globe.

The NAC-wide plogging was simultaneously conducted today by NAC employees and their partners in their respective communities from the company's mining operations in Surigao Del Norte, in Bataraza, Palawan; in Cagdianao, Dinagat Island; in Dinapigue Isabela; and in Guiuan, Eastern Samar.

In Surigao City alone, some 2,000 kilos of trash, as estimated by Department of Environment and Natural Resources, were collected by 150 joggers who joined this year's NAC-wide plogging.



NAC hopes that this amount of trash "plucked up" from the streets by the joggers will gradually decrease as the company intensifies its campaign on responsible waste management. Ploggers from Surigao City were joined by members of the Surigao Runners Club; REACT Miners; Tri-Sur; Bugsay Marajaw Surigao; Emergency Service Corp. Alumni Association, BJMP, BFP, DENR, Department of Education, Joy FM and other running enthusiasts.

Engineer Robert Francisco, NAC-Taganito Mining's environment manager, said "we are doing this activity every year to get the attention and the support of the communities to get involved in the discourse on environment protection and sustainability. We at NAC take these matters very seriously and

our everyday work involves discussions on issues pertaining to serious environment concerns such as plastic and air pollution and we want everyone on the communities to get in on the game."

The UN also calls WED as a "the people's day for doing something to take care of the Earth" and NAC employees are taking the lead in rallying the people in the communities that the company serves to recommit themselves in our inherent responsibilities as stewards of the environment and natural resources.

"Battling pollution as one way to care for the environment is a rough and tough challenge but not impossible if hurdled collectively as responsible communities," Francisco said.



LG nurtures ties with the community

OVER the years, companies engaging in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives have become the norm, expected even, in doing business. It's a trend that's happening across the globe.

Consumers as well have become more discerning with regard to a company's advocacies and how it resonates with them. More importantly, consumers have been looking for and demanding authenticity in all areas where CSR is concerned.

This notion of authenticity shows how these programs play an important role in how consumers view companies. CSR nowadays is more than just writing a check, donating a few items, and having a photo op.

One of the pillars of Corporate Social Responsibility is community engagement. One has to reach out and work hard to be embraced by the local community. It shows sincerity, develops relationships, and

inspires loyalty.

LG Philippines has been at the forefront of community engagement. The company has throughout the years, made a firm and unwavering commitment to social responsibility.

From providing assistance and support to the valiant soldiers from Marawi, to furthering culture and education at the National Museum, LG has been a staunch advocate in making a difference.

Just recently, LG Philippines together with the Community Environment and Natural Resources Office (CENRO) partnered up with a public school within the vicinity of its main office. San Joaquin Kalawaan Highschool in Pasig served as the staging point for the company's latest outreach program.

In celebration of World Environment Day, LG donated 3 units of its green dual inverter air-conditioners which has a 70 percent energy saving feature as well as an air purifier.

LG also had volunteers from the school, the company, and the community build a Green Living Wall through a collaborative effort inside the school.

One of LG's global advocacies right now is the goal of becoming carbon neutral by 2030.

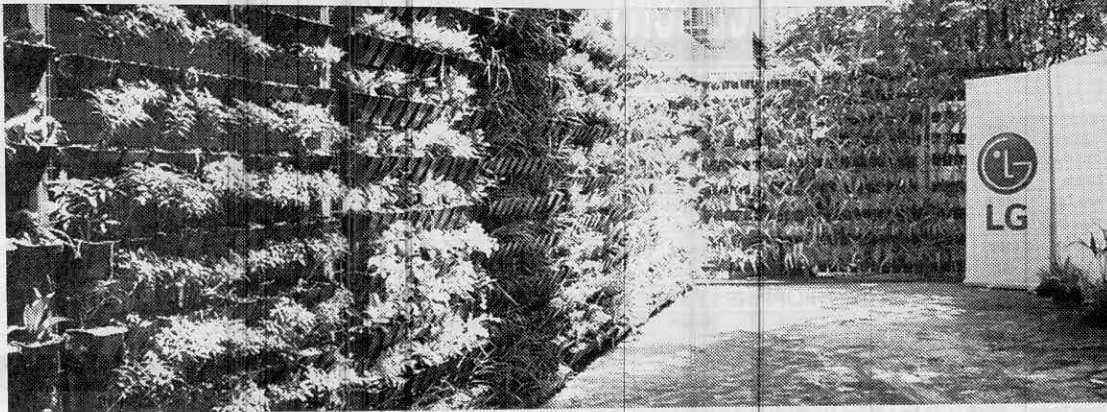
Dubbed as the Zero Carbon 2030 initiative, LG commits as a whole to achieve net-zero carbon emissions from its global operations within 12 years.

While the Green Living Wall project might seem like a drop in the bucket with this goal in mind, it shows LG PH's commitment and alignment to a global objective and more importantly, engages the community at the same time.

Speaking more about LG's commitment to social responsibility and the community, Mr. Inkwun Heo LG Philippines' Managing Director, reiterates: "The most important thing about programs such as these is the authenticity be-

hind it, no matter how small they may seem at the start. By playing an active role in the community and its betterment as well as doing more than what's required, LG is able to plant seeds that lead to better awareness, a better environment, and perhaps even a better future."

LG Electronics Philippines delivers consumer electronics through top-of-the-line home entertainment, home appliances, and air solution products, that prepare Filipinos for their greatest moments.



The Green Living Wall built by LG, San Joaquin Kalawaan Highschool, and Community Environment and Natural Resources Office (CENRO) volunteers and representatives.



LG Philippines' Managing Director Inkwun Heo (center) together with San Joaquin Kalawaan Highschool Principal Lazaro Torres, Jr. and teachers



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Philex awaits ECC permit for \$2-B Silangan project

By **MADELAINE B. MIRAFLORE**

Philex Mining Corp., the country's largest gold producer, is securing another environmental permit for its \$2-B Silangan Mine project as it hurries to get the project on board before its mine in Padcal, Benguet gets fully depleted.

Philex's Padcal mine is moving closer towards the end of its mine life. It is the longest operating mine in the country and currently serves as the listed company's primary source of revenues.

The company has been operating Padcal mine for the last 61 years, employing the underground block-cave method. With Padcal mine now almost depleted, the company is now fast-tracking developments at its Silangan Mine in Surigao del Norte.

Philex Mining President and Chief Executive Officer Eulalio Austin Jr. said in an interview with reporters that the company decided to employ sub-level caving method in Silangan Mine, a move that requires a different Environmental Compliance Certificate (ECC) from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

"It makes more sense to do sub-level caving method rather than block caving for Silangan," Austin said. "We're now working on getting the ECC permit for this method".

The DENR's Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) is currently reviewing the application. The permit should be obtained by the company in two to three months.

Silangan's tenements consist of three deposit areas - Boyongan, Bayugo and Kalayaan, with the latter representing a joint venture with Manila Mining Corporation. The company's focus is on Boyongan.

Austin said that Philex already spent around P16 billion to P17 billion gearing up for the Silangan mine project since it started exploration. All in all, the company requires an initial capital expenditure of \$800 million or about P42 billion to commence the operations of Silangan mine by 2022.

The company is now in the process of securing foreign financial advisers as it scouts for foreign investors for the project.

"It's a challenging task to have this on board before closing Padcal," Austin further said, adding that the company targets to

complete the definitive feasibility study for the project by July this year.

Once approved, Philex Mining, through Padcal mine, will be the first company since the passage of Philippine Mining Act in 1995 to formally implement Final Mine Rehabilitation and Decommissioning Plan (FMRDP).

"The closure of Padcal mine will be opportunity for us to showcase that the end of mine life in the Philippines can be done with dignity," Austin said.

For the entire 2018, Philex Mining saw its net income falling by 63 percent to P608 million from P1.7 billion in 2017 pulled down by its two-year losing streak in its gold and copper production.

"Overall profitability was significantly weighed down by the impact of lower tonnage and head grade that was partially cushioned by lower smelting charges, lower cash costs and better foreign exchange on revenues," the company earlier told the stock exchange.

The company's gross revenues also went down to P8.3 billion in 2018 from P9.9 billion in 2017. This, as its gold production from Padcal mine went down to 61,977 ounces in 2018 from 84,638 ounces in 2017 and 103,304 ounces in 2016.

Austin said that with Padcal mine soon closing down, Philex Mining is not seeing any improvement in its gold output for the entire year.



Multiple agencies regulating mining foster corruption – PIDS

THE regulatory regime for the mining industry creates corruption opportunities because of the need to obtain clearances from multiple agencies, according to government think tank the Philippine Institute of Development Studies (PIDS).

According to a study by consultant Eligia D. Clemente, "Challenges in the Philippine mining industry," she said the need to obtain multiple clearances from agencies ranging from local government units (LGU) and the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) create such opportunities.

"The mixing of agencies assigned to handle mining concerns results in overlapping functions. This creates a venue for cracks, which, interestingly, are filled in by enterprising government employees through illegal means," she noted in the study.

She cited the case of a mining company that operated on the assumption that the permit to operate issued by the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) was

sufficient permission to begin cutting trees for access to roads, but later found that the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) also needed to issue tree-cutting permits.

As a result, it decided to operate "in areas devoid of trees... with the occasional tree allowed to stand... Eventually, the tree died and a permit to removing dead trees was secured, which took less time to process. This type of practice admittedly is more destructive since the cut tree is no longer listed as part of the number of trees to be replaced," she noted.

She also cited clashing interests between the LGU and the MGB in the approval of the mineral production sharing agreement (MPSA).

She said the Local Government Code authorizes LGUs to ensure the "protection of the environment and maintain sustainability of its constituents," a mandate that sometimes leads LGUs to act in a way contrary to miners' interests. — **Vincent Mariel P. Galang**



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17 JUN 2019

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Department of Environment and Natural Resources
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION INITIATIVES SERVICE

Issues pose 'cracks' in PH's mining laws

BY ANNA LEAH E. GONZALES

THE country's mining laws face a number of implementation issues, including the issuance of permits and ordinances of local government units (LGUs) and the declaration of indigenous people (IP) claims, the Philippine Institute of Development Studies (PIDS) said.

In a policy note titled "Challenges in the Philippine mining industry," author and PIDS Consultant Eligia Clemente said the presence of various agencies assigned to handle mining concerns has resulted in overlapping functions.

The agencies include the Department of Environment and Natural Resources as the lead agency, and line bureaus such as the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) that handles administration and control of mining operations, the Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) that monitors and controls environmental conditions, and the Forestry Management Bureau that oversees management of forests

under mining concessions. "This creates a venue for cracks, which are filled in by enterprising government employees through illegal means," Clemente said.

The study added that companies wanting to secure permits have found a way to evade some requirements to avoid additional fees. Contractors also reported facing difficulties when requesting for permits and other documents from LGUs due to contradicting policies of the national government and LGUs for a mineral production sharing agreement (MPSA), it added.

"While the Philippine Mining Act (PMA) allows for an MPSA

between a mining contractor and the government through MGB, the Local Government Code of 1991 gives LGUs the authority to approve operating permits in local areas to ensure the protection of their environment," it said.

Lands under the domain of IP, too, are not exempted from the procedures of securing free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) documents. IP communities have a say on the issuance of operating permits in their areas either through their council of elders or tribal leaders. In return, "any IP in the area benefits through the royalty payments of [a mining] company." The study, however, found that some "tend to abuse the power and responsibility granted to them".

"In some cases, there were talks that the decision is done even before the stakeholders' meeting takes place and that the meeting is just for formality," Clemente said. The author also said there is no formal audit on how a tribal leader uses the royalties paid by a mining company.

Gaps were also seen within the National Commission on Indigenous People (NCIP), thereby affecting its performance. These include inadequate logistics support from the government, as well as the lack of qualified personnel and supervisors to efficiently perform NCIP's mandates and functions, especially in regional offices.

To address differing interpretations of rules and regulations related to mining, Clemente urged the government to establish a common implementing guideline for all offices that might help eliminate personal tendencies to relax rules.

She said the NCIP should also be provided with sufficient staff so it could carry out its tasks timely and efficiently.

On the issue of auditing of payments given to tribal leaders of IP communities, Clemente suggested that "proper preparation and guidance should be given to them prior to the release of funds such that even without a formal audit, disbursements can be tracked" and funds can be properly accounted



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Philex targets environmental compliance certificate for Silangan mine by Q3

PHILEX Mining Corp. is aiming to secure its environmental compliance certificate (ECC) for the Silangan mine project by the third quarter.

"We're trying to work for the ECC approval in two to three months... by third quarter," Philex Mining Chief Executive Officer Eulalio B. Austin, Jr. told reporters after the Philippine

Mining Club's 50th Luncheon held in Makati City.

"Because it's a new project we have to revise the ECC, but what's important there is the public hearing and the endorsements of the people," he added.

Philex Mining has been working with regulatory bodies to facilitate

its compliance with all permitting requirements for the Silangan project.

The Silangan mine in Surigao del Norte has three deposit areas, Boyongan, Bayugo, and Kalayaan, with the latter a joint venture with



Manila Mining Corp. This might be Philex Mining's biggest source of revenue after its 61-year-old Padcal mine in Tuba, Benguet will be closing in 2022.

The operation for Silangan was originally set to begin in 2018, but has been moved to 2022 due to the ban on new

open-pit mining introduced in 2017.

This has prompted Philex Mining to look at a new design that would shift its method to underground mining.

Mr. Austin said the company has so far spent about P16 to P17 billion for exploration in the mining site.

Philex Mining is one of the three local units of Hong Kong-based First

Pacific Co. Ltd., the two other being PLDT, Inc. and Metro Pacific Investments Corp. Hastings Holdings, Inc. — a unit of PLDT Beneficial Trust Fund subsidiary MediaQuest Holdings, Inc. — maintains interest in *BusinessWorld* through the Philippine Star Group, which it controls. — **Vincent Mariel P. Galang**



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Philex Mining eyes Silangan nod by Q3

LISTED Philex Mining Corp. is optimistic about receiving “by the third quarter” of this year the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR)-Environmental Management Bureau’s approval on the environmental compliance certificate (ECC) that it needs to secure before it begins operating its new mining project.

During the Philippine Mining Club 50th Luncheon in Makati City last Friday, Philex Mining President and Chief Operating Officer Eulalio Austin Jr. told reporters that his company was working on key requirements it needed to meet in preparation for its Silangan project in Surigao del Norte province.

The project, which is expected to generate P170 billion in revenues, is seen to replace Philex Mining’s Padcal copper-gold mine in Benguet province, whose mine life is expected to end by December 2022.

“We’re trying to work for the ECC approval in two to three months [or] by the third quarter,” Austin said.

“[We will pursue a separate ECC for Silangan] because the approved ECC for open pit says that it’s for open pit [only], and because it’s a new project, we have to revise the ECC,” he explained.

“But what’s important there is the public hearing and the endorsements of the people there,” Austin said.

Philex Mining earlier said that, for this year, it would continue “to implement operational enhancements to improve its financial performance in the subsequent quarters.”

The company expects its lead technical consultant, Australia-based engineering firm Ausenco, to finish its feasibility studies on Silangan by the end of July because, Austin said, “we have to do geotechnical and hydrogeology studies.”

For the remaining quarters of 2019, the Philex Mining official noted a sustained drop in mineral output for Philex Mining due to the diminishing mine life of Padcal.

“It’s really an inherent part of the mine life that, as you go out of the center of the ore body, you would be dealing with lower quality ore,” Austin said.

Philex Mining and its subsidiaries are into in large-scale exploration, development and utilization of mineral resources.

Shares of Philex Mining added 21 centavos or 7.27 percent to finish at P3.10 apiece last Friday.

EIREENE JAIREE GOMEZ



Mining hounded by permitting issues

The mining sector is hounded by issues on securing permits from local government units (LGUs), as well as in the declaration of indigenous people (IP) claims, according to Eligia Clemente, consultant at the Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS) in her study titled "Challenges in the Philippine mining industry."

Clemente also found institutional issues within the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP).

The presence of various agencies assigned to handle mining concerns has resulted in overlapping functions, according to the study. These include the Department of Environment and Natural Resources as the lead agency, and line bureaus such as the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) that handles administration and control of mining operations, the Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) that monitors and controls environmental conditions, and the Forestry Management Bureau that oversees management of forests under mining concessions.

"This creates a venue for cracks, which are filled in by enterprising government employees through illegal means," the author noted, adding that companies wanting to secure permits have found a way to circumvent some requirements to avoid paying additional fees.

Moreover, contractors reported

facing difficulties when requesting for permits and other documents from local governments due to the contradicting policies of the national government and LGUs in approving a mineral production sharing agreement (MPSA). While the Philippine Mining Act (PMA) allows for an MPSA between a mining contractor and the government through MGB, the Local Government Code of 1991 gives LGUs the authority to approve operating permits in local areas to ensure the protection of their environment.

Lands under the domain of IP, too, are not exempted from the procedures of securing free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) documents. IP communities have a say on the issuance of operating permits in their areas either through their council of elders or tribal leaders. In return, "any IP in the area benefits through the royalty payments of [a mining] company." The study, however, found that some "tend to abuse the power and responsibility granted to them".

"In some cases, there were talks that the decision is done even before the stakeholders' meeting takes place and that the meeting is just for formality," Clemente disclosed. The author also noted that there is no formal audit on how a tribal leader uses the royalties paid by a mining company.



Climate adaptive practices, key to long-term growth of farming, fishing communities

(Second of two parts)

To combat drought that often plague these communities, we helped them identify climate-resilient indigenous crops they could harvest regardless of the season. We established community learning farms, where they can train on sustainable agricultural techniques using new farming tools.

We empowered fishing communities by helping them understand that they are stakeholders in longevity of fishing sites. Through regular coastal clean-up and mangrove reforestation, and by teaching them waste segregation, they built habits on keeping these bodies of water clean to ensure the freshest catch.

Those who formerly practice "dynamite fishing" became a part of "bantay-dagat" (protect-the-sea) initiatives, like zero waste practices, mangrove rehabilitation, and safeguarding spawning areas. They now understand the need for vigilance to continue getting livelihood from the seas.

In 2018, we saw big changes in the communities we've reached, the

biggest of which was the change in their attitude towards increased productivity. The increased volume of produce that they are now slowly harvesting, developing, and marketing has encouraged them to carry on. With this changed mindset and equipped with the adequate technical knowledge, these farmers and fisher folk are facing a better and more sustainable future.

We do realize, however, that our work has just begun.

PhilDHRRA is the Agriculture and Fisheries cluster lead at Zero Extreme Poverty 2030 (ZEP 2030), a collective movement that aims to help one million extremely poor Filipino families nationwide. ZEP 2030 calls on non-profit institutions, corporate foundations, and advocacy groups to join their cause of eradicating extreme poverty in the Philippines by the year 2030. To know more about ZEP 2030 and its activities, please visit <http://zeropoverlyph.net/>. - **CARIDAD CORRIDOR**, Agriculture and Fisheries cluster lead, Zero Extreme Poverty 2030.



Negros youth named 'global changemaker'

By **GLAZYL MASCULINO**

BACOLOD CITY – The international organization, Global Changemakers has given a 21-year-old climate advocate from Bacolod the title “global changemaker” for initiating a solution to address climate change and plastic pollution.

Elmeer Meeynard Calimpos was the only Filipino chosen to represent the Philippines in the week-long Global Youth Summit in Switzerland in July this year.

He was among the 60 young people chosen from 1,294 applicants from different countries in the world to join the network of “global changemakers” comprised of at least 1,000 young leaders whose works have impacted over four million people.

The Global Changemakers is based in Zurich, Switzerland, and maintains a presence in 180 countries.

As a child advocate for climate, Calimpos said he wants his fellow “changemakers” to reach out to the children of their community since it is evident that mortality rate across the globe is rising because of the changing climate.

“I want to attend this summit because I firmly care for my country which is one of the largest polluters of the ocean in the whole world,” he said.

Calimpos started his advocacy after he saw children diving in a degraded sea side full of single-used like diapers, napkins, sando bags, sachets, and feces during his visit to one of the communities in the province in November 2017.

“It was ultimately heart-breaking when my team knew that they were doing such act — competing for trash — just to earn even just a small amount of money,” he said.

Calimpos, who founded the Bacolod Core: Children Optimization for the Revitalization of Environment, is pushing for a multi-step learning process to the children in their formative stage by inculcating values of environmental stewardship through education, experiential learning and exposure for a sustainable and

balanced ecology.

The Bacolod Core: Children Optimization for the Revitalization of Environment formed in February 2018 is a local youth-led organization with a heart for building a community of environmentally conscious children for the children to their children, the nation, and to God.

Calimpos encouraged him to join the Negrosanon Young Leaders Summit Wave 2 and later to form the Ecological Saturdays Initiative, a multi-step learning process for children age 9 to 12 years.



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An uphill road for PH

By Imelda V. Abano

DEVELOPING countries, like the Philippines, continue to face uphill climate challenges. They are at the mercy of fiercer typhoons, droughts, heat waves, flooding, rising seas and increasingly insecure food and water.

Just last week, a global think tank ranked the Philippines as the country with the highest risk of experiencing multiple climate hazards in the world. The INFORM Global Risk Index 2019 of the Australia-based Institute for Economics and Peace said the country is highly exposed to hazards such as cyclones, floods, drought, and rising sea levels. The Philippines was followed by Japan, Bangladesh, Myanmar and five other countries in Asia with an estimated 971 million people who live in areas with high or very high exposure to climate hazards.

Just recently, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report estimated with confidence that there will be a further 1.5 degrees Celsius increase in Earth's surface temperature between 2030 and 2052 with the potential effects such as rising land and sea temperatures in most of the world; extreme highly temperatures in most of the places where people live, with extreme lows at night; extreme rainfall in some places; and droughts in others; and continued sea level rise.

The effects of climate shocks on factors such as resource scarcity, livelihood security and displacement can greatly increase the risk of future violent conflict as well, according to the new report.

With all of these multifaceted challenges, the Philippines must not only effectively combat the threat climate change poses through local solutions on mitigation and adaptation. It must also work with representatives from more than 195 countries to work on a collective action plan to avert some of the worst effects of climate change. These decade-long meetings have been vital to find a global consensus on an issue that require global solutions. Although progress has been much slower than needed, the process has worked to bring all countries, including the Philippines, to take concrete steps such as on reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, climate finance, strengthening resilience, and local climate actions.

Earlier, Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) Secretary Teodoro Locsin Jr. said he would reject all official participation in climate change conferences that would require air travel. This pronouncement also came after President Rodrigo Duterte lamented the lack of accountability for big country polluters and the slow pace of the climate negotiations.

But Albay Representative Joey Salceda, chair of the House committee on climate change, said Locsin is violating the law by banning DFA officials from flying to take part in climate change conferences.

He cited Section 9 of Republic Act 9729 or the Climate Change

Commission Act, which states that the Climate Change Commission (CCC) will coordinate with the DFA in representing the Philippines in climate change negotiations abroad.

"You are violating the law. Can I remind you that this is in the provisions and functions of the CCC Act," Salceda said in a forum last week with CCC officials, various government representatives and civil society groups. Salceda also stressed that under the General Appropriations Act of 2019, the DFA is mandated to extend necessary technical, legal and logistical support to the Commission on the participation of the Philippine delegation in the climate talks.

“On the UN climate talks and ever-growing climate change worries”

During the forum, CCC Secretary Emmanuel De Guzman, provided updates on the climate change negotiations and the participation of the Philippines in the process.

He said the Philippines, as a leader of developing countries in the negotiation process, contributed to the key elements of the 2015 Paris Agreement on climate change, such as the inclusion of overarching provisions that ensure climate justice and ecosystems integrity in addressing climate change.

As Chair of the Climate Vulnerable Forum in 2015, the Philippines, on behalf of 48 developing countries, led the advocacy for the ambitious global warming threshold of 1.5C as the long-term temperature goal of the Paris Agreement to address the changing climate. He said the country succeeded in retaining the focus on loss and damage and in introducing comprehensive risk assessment and management in the Paris Agreement. The Philippines also succeeded in making sure that scaled-up financial resources must aim for a balance between adaptation and mitigation, De Guzman said. "We advocated for adaptation finance to solely be in the form of grants, and not loans. Prior to the Paris Agreement, it was the Philippines that championed "direct access" modality in the finance negotiations."

As regards commitments of Parties for climate adaptation and mitigation or the national determined contributions (NDCs), the Philippines will assert developing countries' right to development, and promote the accounting of emissions avoidance instead of emissions reduction as most developing countries are only emitting "survival emissions." The country has actively engaged in the discussions in order to ensure the application of flexibility for developing countries and offer options that take into account the country's capacity for NDC planning.

As regards means of implementation, under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), developed countries have the obligation to provide financial resources, including for technology transfer and capacity building, needed by developing countries to meet the costs of adaptation and mitigation. Under the Paris Agreement, they are to biennially communicate, not only the actual support provided, but also indicative support to be given to developing countries by 2020. At the 24th Conference of Parties (COP24) in Katowice, Poland last year, De Guzman said countries agreed to initiate the setting of a new collective quantified climate finance goal from a floor of 100 billion dollars per year by 2020. "The Philippines should be part of this process to continue the call for scaled up and predictable finance flows and enhanced access of developing countries to the means of implementation," he said.

As regards the carbon market mechanism, the Paris Agreement established a new mitigation and sustainable development mechanism that provides the basis for using carbon markets to achieve national emission reduction targets. Finalizing the guidance on cooperative approaches and modalities and procedures for the mechanism is the important remaining work at COP25 or climate talks in Santiago Chile this year to fully operationalize the Paris Agreement.

"The Philippines will continue its call for environmental integrity in the tracking of emission reduction units and ensure that developing countries get a fair share of these units, which they could eventually use in achieving their NDCs. We will also push for a simplified project cycle and an efficient support structure for governance and operation, to significantly reduce transaction costs and processing time," De Guzman said.

On the negotiations arena, De Guzman said there is a need to continue to advance our national interests on the remaining elements of the Paris Agreement Work Programme and its detailed guidelines, and the regular negotiating workstreams on the delivery of the means of implementation.

"With the continued engagement and support of Congress, national government agencies, and the civil society groups, the Philippines will continue to be a strong voice in the negotiations," De Guzman said.

Like other poorer countries, the Philippines, is pleading for the UN climate change negotiations to be ambitious, considering that they face some of the global warming's worst ravages. Indeed, positive outcome to address this global issue lies in the hands of the UN-backed international climate change negotiations to draw up a sweeping pact to combat climate change.

Imelda Abano is the president of the Philippine Network of Environmental Journalists.



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'Wag bitawan ang 'Climate Change' talks

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

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

Bilang 'chairman ng House Committee on Climate Change, inihiyag ni Salceda ang pakiusap sa Pangulo matapos ideklara ni Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) Secretary Teddy Locsin na hindi na padadaluhin ng pamahalaan ang mga opisyal nito sa mga kumprensiya kaugnay ng climate 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 namán 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 pundo, teknolohiya at capacity building concessions," dagdag ng mambabatas.



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Angat's water level continues to decline; ITCZ affects Mindanao - PAGASA

By **ELLALYN DE VERA-RUIZ**

The effect of the southwest monsoon or habagat has temporarily weakened but some light rains may still persist over western Luzon, according to the weather bureau.

The water level at Angat Dam continued to decline due to lack of rain over Bulacan's watershed area.

As of Sunday, Angat Dam's water level was at 162.82 meters, further down from last Saturday's 163.12 meters.

The Philippine Atmospheric, Geo-

physical, and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) had earlier said that Angat Dam could reach its 160-meter critical level for domestic water supply in a few days, should there be no rains and the allocation for domestic supply remains **▶8**

Angat's water level...

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the same.

Light to moderate rains and isolated thunderstorms are still expected over Ilocos Norte, Ilocos Sur, La Union, Pangasinan, Abra, Benguet, Ifugao, Kalinga, Mountain Province, Apayao, and Zambales.

An intertropical convergence zone (ITCZ), which is a breeding ground for low-pressure areas and tropical cyclones, will prevail over Mindanao.

PAGASA said the ITCZ will bring cloudy skies with scattered rain showers

and thunderstorms over Compostela Valley, Davao del Norte, Davao Oriental, and Davao del Sur.

Metro Manila and the rest of the country will have partly cloudy to cloudy skies with isolated rain showers due to localized thunderstorms.

PAGASA warned that rains, especially during severe thunderstorms, could trigger possible flash floods or landslides over low-lying and mountainous areas in the archipelago. (Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz)



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Our fast-growing green energy program

THE Department of Energy has long stressed the need for a balanced energy mix for a reliable, safe, and consistent energy supply for the country at reasonable cost. The Philippines' power supply is still largely provided by coal and natural gas, but there have been major moves in the last few years to develop renewable energy, notably wind, hydro, and solar.

The increased use of renewable energy has also been a major development in many countries around the globe, in line with the effort to reduce the rise in world temperatures due to industrial emissions that have increased world temperatures, causing the polar glaciers to melt, ocean levels to rise, and typhoons and hurricanes to hit countries like the Philippines with greater destructive power.

We thus welcomed the recent announcement by Meralco that it plans to invest in 1,000-megawatt green energy projects in the next five to seven years. Meralco President and CEO Ray C. Espinosa said MGen Renewable Energy, Inc., has been established to serve as the platform for the push to develop renewable energy projects, primarily solar, wind, and run-of-river hydro.

While there is the ongoing requirement for new reliable baseload generation to support the

fast-growing Philippine economy, MGen President and CEO Rogelio Singson said, "we believe the time is right to focus on building our green-energy capacity and we intend to be a key player in this expanding sector."

Significantly, Meralco's announcement of its move to invest in green energy projects was made on World Environment Day early this month. This special holiday has been the United Nations' principal vehicle for encouraging awareness and action for the protection of the environment since 1974.

Meralco is the country's largest electric power distribution company and the largest private-sector utility in the country. It is expanding in power generation, using high-efficiency, low-emission technology to help push the country's growing momentum in economic development.

With its fast-growing population and rapidly expanding economy, the Philippines will be needing increasing amounts of energy in the next few years. Its current energy mix leans toward fossil fuels – coal, natural gas, and oil, but the government has declared a policy to foster renewable energy, including tax holidays and duty-free importation of special technology equipment. Meralco has now moved to take its place in this developing area of safe and reliable renewable energy.



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PAUL ERIC ROCA
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Ang mabilis na umuunlad na green energy program ng bansa

MATAGAL nang ipinanawagan ng Department of Energy ang pangangailangan para sa balanseng enerhiya para sa isang mapagkakatiwalaan, ligtas, at matatag na suplay ng enerhiya sa bansa sa katanggap-tanggap na halaga. Malaking bahagi ng suplay ng kuryente sa Pilipinas ay nagmumula pa sa mga uling at natural gas, bagamat may malalaking hakbang na sa mga nakalipas na taon upang bumuo ng renewable energy, partikular mula sa hangin, tubig at solar.

Ang pagtaas ng paggamit ng mga renewable energy ay isa ring malaking pag-unlad sa maraming bansa sa mundo, na nakaangkla sa hakbang upang mabawasan ang pagtaas ng temperatura ng daigdig na dulot ng mga inilalabas ng industriya, na nagdudulot sa mga polar glacier na matunaw, sa pagtaas ng lebel ng mga karagatan, at paglala at pagiging mas mapanira ng mga bagyong tumatama sa mga bansang tulad ng Pilipinas.

Kaya naman ikinalulugod natin ang inanunsiyo kamakailan ng Meralco, sa plano nitong pamumuhunan sa 1,000-megawatt green energy project sa susunod na lima hanggang pitong taon. Sinabi ni Meralco President at CEO Ray C. Espinosa na itinatag ang MGen Renewable Energy, Inc., upang magsilbing pundasyon para sa pagsusulong ng pagbuo ng renewable energy project, pangunahin ang solar, wind, at hydro mula sa ilog.

Bagamat kasalukuyang may mga pamantayan para sa bagong mapagkakatiwalaang baseload generation upang suportahan ang umuunlad na ekonomiya ng bansa, sinabi ni MGen President at CEO Rogelio Singson na, "we believe the time is right to focus on building our green-energy capacity and we intend to be a key player in this expanding sector."

Makabuluhan na inanunsiyo ng Meralco ang hakbang nito na pamumuhunan sa green energy project kasabay ng World Environment Day ngayong unang bahagi ng buwan. Ang espesyal na araw na ito ay ang naging pangunahing behikulo ng United Nation upang humikayat ng kaalaman at aksiyon para sa proteksiyon sa kalikasan mula noong 1974.

Ang Meralco ang pinakamalaking kompanya na nagsu-suplay ng kuryente bansa at pinakamalaking pribadong sektor sa utility sa bansa. Pinalalawak nito ang power generation gamit ang mga high-efficiency, low-emission technology upang maisulong ang lumalagong pagkakataon ng bansa sa ekonomikal na pag-unlad.

Sa mabilis na lumalaking populasyon at umuunlad na ekonomiya, kinakailangan ng Pilipinas ng dagdag na enerhiya para sa mga susunod na taon. Ang kasalukuyan nitong enerhiya ay nakasandal sa fossil fuel – uling, natural gas at langis, bagamat idineklara na ng pamahalaan ang polisiya upang paunlarin ang renewable energy, kabilang ang tax holidays at duty-free importation ng mga espesyal na technology equipment. Sinimulan na ng Meralco ang nakabang nito sa pagpasok sa umuunlad na sektor ng ligtas at mapagkakatiwalaang renewable energy.