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MARCOS AT GROUND ZERO: TREE CUTTING TO BLAME

STORY BY JEROME A

The President says it was clear in his mind that had mountains

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not been denuded above Barangay Kusiong, which

was nearly wiped off the face of the map by landslides and flash floods

last week, the tragedy would not have happened. A2



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Marcos at ground zero: Tree cutting to blame

FROM A1

By Jerome Aning @JeromeAningINQ

President Marcos on Monday said trees should be planted in the denuded uplands of the two Maguindanao provinces to prevent a repeat of last week's deadly landslides after seeing for himself what environmentalists for years had been warning the government on what would happen not only in Mindanao but also in other parts of the country.

Mr. Marcos, accompanied by Maguindanao del Sur Gov. Bai Mariam Sangki-Mangudadatu, flew over the areas devastated by the landslides and flash floods that followed heavy rains brought by Severe Tropical Storm "Paeng" (international name: Nalgae).

"I was pointing out to the governor that in all those places where there are trees, the ground did not move. All the damage that you saw on the mountains, it's because they were bald," Mr. Marcos said.

"We know and we've been hearing this over and over again, but we continue cutting trees, so what happens are landslides like those," he said.

After his aerial inspection, the President and his party landed at Datu Odin Sinsuat, capital of Maguindanao del Norte, where he met officials of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM).

Almost wiped off map

The town includes Barangay Kusiong, which was nearly wiped off the map by tons of mud, rocks and boulders that came crashing down on the village on Friday last week.

The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) reported on Tuesday that of 61 who died in the floods and landslides in BARMM, 42 were from Datu Odin Sinsuat.



RELIEF President Marcos leads the distribution of relief assistance to "Paeng" victims taking shelter at Broce Central Elementary School of Peace at Datu Odin Sinsuat, Maguindanao province, on Tuesday. —MALACANANG PHOTO



I was pointing out to the governor that in all those places where there are trees, the ground did not move. All the damage that you saw on the mountains, it's because they were bald

Ferdinand Marcos Jr. President

Kusiong lies at the foot of the 446-meter Mt. Minandar.

Rescuers on Monday waded through thigh-deep mud in the village using long pieces of wood to search for bodies buried under the rubble.

Twelve of the dead in Kusiong, including seven from one family, were buried on Monday in two mass graves dug by a backhoe.

Mourners, who survived the landslide, laid flowers and candles at the site.

Flood control planning

"We have shifted our operation from search and rescue to retrieval because the chances of survival after two days

are almost nil," said BARMM Interior Minister Naguib Sinarimbo.

The President told officials of BARMM, which includes Maguindanao del Sur and Maguindanao del Norte, that tree planting should be included in their long-term flood control projects.

"If there had been trees up there, in Kusiong, that would not have happened," Mr. Marcos said. "That's unfortunate ... I am very clear in my mind that that (tree planting) is something we could have done."

He said he could refer them to "plenty" of nongovernmental organizations that could help in the reforestation. He

did not mention which groups. He also did not say what measures would be taken to stop people from cutting down trees in fragile forests.

He said the Department of Environment and Natural Resources would also assist them in making tree planting sustainable, adding that during disasters, folks whose crops were destroyed would often resort to logging to make ends meet.

"The new way to do it is to make the locals themselves the owners of the trees, so that they will take care of them," he said.

'Strange'

Reacting to the President's remarks about the denuded forests, Jon Bonifacio, spokesperson for the environmental group Kalikasan, told the Inquirer that it was "strange that it seems like it's only now he's come to appreciate the benefits provided by well-conserved watersheds."

"Let's also not forget the massive deforestation that took place under his father's rule," he added.

Worsened under Marcos Sr.

"As Marcos Jr. just found out, environmental destruction has deadly consequences—and, if the government is serious at all about climate change, it needs to put a stop to the destructive mining, reclamation and reclamation projects that are cutting down the very forests he's worried about," Bonifacio said.

In a column published by the Inquirer in 2011, former Kalikasan spokesperson Marjorie Pamintuan said that deforestation "further worsened" during the dictatorial regime of the President's father and namesake.

"The logging industry was controlled by foreign companies and the local elite, some even holding public offices. Timber licensing agreements were given out by the Marcos regime to loyalists. From 1965 to 1986, the Philippines lost 7 million ha of forests," she said.



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MARCOS AT GROUND ZERO: TREE CUTTING TO BLAME

FROM A2

She wrote the column six months before Severe Tropical Storm "Sendong" (international name: Washi) caused massive floods that rampaged through the cities of Cagayan de Oro and Iligan in December 2011, killing

more than 1,000 people.

Due to deforestation and the large amount of rainfall then in the highlands of Bukidnon, the floodwaters easily rushed down to low-lying areas.

In December the following year, Typhoon "Pablo" (international name: Bopha) also caused deadly landslides in mountainous areas in Davao de Oro, which

were blamed on mining and logging activities that denuded the once-forested slopes of the towns of New Bataan and Monkayo. Nearly 1,000 people died.

Better coordination

Aside from reforestation, the President also said the regional government should establish its own public works

and highways district offices to quickly repair damaged infrastructure during calamities.

These offices should be on standby to quickly repair damaged or destroyed bridges and roads, he said.

The President raised the need for improved coordination between the BARMM regional government and its local govern-

ments units (LGUs) in times of disasters and emergencies

"And then the [coordination] procedures. I know that you are just drawing up your procedures now, but you can see why this is so important," he said.

The President said that he also noticed that the regional government and LGUs do not have joint operations, which could

maximize the use of their assets.

"In BARMM areas or LGUs with bigger populations, you should join forces [with local leaders] so that we can maximize. The coordination [among yourselves] should be enhanced," Mr. Marcos said.—WITH REPORTS FROM MARIEJO S. RAMOS, KRISTIA SUBINGSUBING, FRANCES MANGOSING AND APPI NG



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PBBM: Deforestation behind Maguindanao floods, slides

By SAMUEL P. MEDENILLA
@sam_medenilla

PRESIDENT Ferdinand “Bongbong” R. Marcos Jr. said deforestation worsened the flash floods and landslides in Maguindanao when it was hit by tropical storm “Paeng” (international name Nalgae) during the weekend, leaving over 60 people dead in the southern province.

To mitigate future flooding in Maguindanao, he is now pushing for a comprehensive flood control in the province, to include tree-planting activities.

Marcos made the remark after his aerial inspection in flood-hit areas in Maguindanao during a situation briefing with local executives on Tuesday.

“I noticed all the mountains with landslides were deforested,” Marcos said in Filipino.

“So we have to include tree planting in our flood control,” he added.

Catch basin

MAGUINDANAO Governor Bai Mariam Sangki-Mangudadatu said the areas of Upi, Barira, Matanog, South Upi, Datu Blah Sinsuat, Datu Odin Sinsuat, Talayan, Guindulungan and Northern Kabuntalan suffered severe flooding from the rains brought

about by Paeng.

Meanwhile, areas affected by landslides include Barangay Kusiong in Datu Odin Sinsuat; Barangays Romonggaob and Loooy in South Upi; Barangays Maagabo Bayanga Sur, Upper Bayanga Sur Norte and Kabugaw Sapad of Matanog.

Mangudadatu urged the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) to prioritize the completion of flood control projects in the provinces located in the upstream of Maguindanao since it will also benefit their province.

“Maguindanao is a catch basin. So I am appealing to our honorable secretary of DPWH to fast-track the [completion of the] flood control in South Cotabato, North Cotabato and Sultan Kudarat since if those are completed, there will be minimal flooding in our areas,” Mangudadatu said.

Marcos said he will make sure that flood control systems in these areas will not be substandard, lamenting what he has observed in other areas.

“Those [flood control projects] which I have seen in other areas

were really substandard. [They] probably made use of only one layer of hollow blocks so it was not very sturdy,” Marcos said.

Life preservation

GUARDING as well the surrounding areas of Maguindanao will help to greatly reduce the incidents of floods and landslides caused by typhoons in the province, the President said.

While the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and non-government organizations could help in reforestation efforts in Maguindanao, it will be up to local communities to preserve the planted trees.

“The new way to do it is by making the locals owners of the trees so they will be the ones to take care of them,” Marcos said.

“I know people think that it is just to save the environment, no, it's to save lives. It will really save lives,” he added.

Mangudadatu said the storm affected 124,501 families or 622,505 individuals in Maguindanao. Of these, 61 died, 40 were wounded, and 17 went missing.



DOLE and DENR pact taps TUPAD beneficiaries for forest protection

BY JOVEE MARIE N. DELA CRUZ

[@joveemarie](#)

THE chairman of the House Committee on Labor and Employment revealed over the weekend that the government is set to tap beneficiaries of the Tulong Panghanapbuhay sa ating Disadvantaged/Displaced Workers program (TUPAD) as forest rangers to implement the country's national greening program.

In a news statement, Rizal 4th District Rep. Fidel Nograles said the Departments of Labor and Employment (DOLE) and Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) recently signed a memorandum of agreement to mobilize TUPAD beneficiaries as forest rangers.

"This is an excellent program that not only helps address our shortage of forest workers, but also provides our TUPAD beneficiaries with meaningful and noble work that will directly benefit their communities and the whole country," Nograles said.

"The MOA is a creative solution to our need for more forest workers, and hopefully with this we can better monitor and protect these areas, especially in the face of continued [forest] encroachment," Nograles added.

Under the DOLE-DENR accord, TUPAD beneficiaries will serve as

forest patrollers. They are also tasked with seedling production, establishing plantations and assist on forest protection activities in support of the greening program.

According to DOLE, it would set aside funds for payment of the prevailing daily minimum wage in the region where the TUPAD workers are assigned, and to cover the administrative cost for personal protective equipment and group personal accident insurance of workers who will be hired.

The Technical Education and Skills Development Authority or its accredited training institutions will provide appropriate skills training and education on environment-related laws, rules, and regulations.

Nograles acknowledged the potential impact of the training that TUPAD workers will undergo in "instilling a green consciousness" among the people.

"*Hindi ito dead-end job, hindi boring, at maraming matututunan.* This is an opportunity to empower our TUPAD workers, and to instill in them a green consciousness that they can pass on to their families and friends," the lawmaker said.

Nograles also expressed hope that the MOA would be "only the first step in our efforts to revitalize our forests and mitigate the effects of the climate crisis."



Tree planting binuhay ni BBM

Iniyos ni Pangulong Ferdinand Marcos Jr. sa mga ahensya ng gobyerno na isama ang tree planting sa mga programa para makontrol ang mga pagbaha sa iba't ibang lugar sa bansa.

Inihayag ito ng Pangulo sa situational briefing sa Maguindanao matapos ang ginawang pag-inspeksyon nitong Martes sa mga lugar na tinamaan ng landslides at baha.

Sinabi ng Pangulo na napanin nito sa ginawang aerial inspection ang mga kalbong bahagi ng bundok na naging dahilan para magkaroon ng landslides sa mga kabahayan.

Ang pagputol aniya ng mga puno sa kabundukan ang isa sa epekto ng climate change na nagdulot ng matinding pinsala sa mamamayan.

"So we have to include tree

planting in our flood control, dapat kasama 'yan. Kung gagastos tayo sa flood control kailangan may tree planting," anang Pangulo.

Marami aniyang non-government organizations na tutulong para magtanim ng mga punongkahoy na magliligtas ng buhay lalo na ngayong matindi ang ipinakitang epekto ng climate change hindi lamang sa bansa kundi sa buong mundo.

"Mag-isip tayong mabuti doon sa tree planting. Hindi maliit na bagay 'yan. I know people think that is just to save the environment, no it's to save lives. Kung may kahoy sa itaas hindi mangyayari 'yan. I am very clear in my mind that that is something we could have done," dagdag ng Pangulo. **(Aileen Taliping)**



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'There is climate change'

Marcos pushes for tree planting to prevent future flooding

By JOSEPH PEDRAJAS

Following the onslaught of Severe Tropical Storm Paeng that took the province of Maguindanao by surprise, President Marcos acknowledged the threats of climate change.

During a situational briefing he presided over in the province on Tuesday, Nov. 1, Marcos realized how unexpected the wrath of nature could be, including those

expressed by typhoons.

He said areas that were not prone to flooding in the past are now being inundated while typhoons no longer follow

their usual path.

"That's the problem today. Talagang may (There is really a) climate change. It's undeniable," the President said.

As of Tuesday, 61 people were

reported as casualties of Paeng in Maguindanao.

After conducting an aerial ocular inspection in the province, Marcos

'I know people think that [tree-planting] is just to save the environment. No, it's to save lives.'

said he noticed that those areas badly hit by Paeng were the ones that had been deforested.

So, on top of building flood-control facilities, he also recommended tree-

planting activities as part of a long-term solution against flooding.

"We have been hearing this over and over again, pero patuloy pa rin tayo nagpuputol ng kahoy, 'yan ang nangyayari nagkaka-landslide ng ganyan (But we keep on cutting down trees, so landslides happen)," he said. "Mag-isip tayo ng mabuti doon sa tree planting. Hindi maliit na bagay yan (Let's think about that tree planting. It's no small thing). I know people think that it is just to save the environment. No, it's to save lives."



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Marcos sinisi landslide sa mga kalbong bundok

INATASAN ni Pangulong Ferdinand 'Bongbong' Marcos Jr. ang mga opisyal ng Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) at iba pang ahensya ng pamahalaan na paigtingin ang search and rescue operations sa Maguindao pati na ang pamamahagi ng relief goods upang matulungan kaagad ang mga biktima ng landslides at

matinding pagbaha.

Sa situation briefing sa pangulo sa pag-inspection sa Maguindanao kahapon ay ini-report sa kanya ang lawak ng pinsala at bilang ng mga naapektuhang mamamayan dahil sa kalamidad.

Sinabi ng pangulo na naobserbahan niya sa aerial inspection na lahat ng mga nagkaroon ng landslides ay wala nang puno

at nakalbo na ang bundok na dahil ng trahedyang.

"Noong nasa helicopter kami ni Bai Mariam, na-notice ko lahat ng gumuho, kalbo ang bundok. That's the problem," anang Pangulo.

Inalam ng pangulo sa BARMM officials ang sitwasyon ng mga bakwit sa mga evacuation center. **(Aileen Taliping)**



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Marcos, pinuna ang kalbong kabundukan sa Maguindanao na nagka-landslide

Pinuna ni Pangulong Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. ang mga lugar sa Maguindanao na kalbo na ang mga bundok na naging dahilan sa pagbaha at pagguho ng lupa.

Sa isang situation briefing kasama ang mga local executive sa Maguindanao, tinalakay ni Marcos ang kanyang mga obserbasyon sa isinagawang aerial inspection sa mga pinsala sa lalawigan.

"Noong nasa helicopter kami ni [Maguindanao Governor] Bai Mariam, na notice ko lahat ng gumuho kalbo ang bundok. Iyan ang problema. And I was pointing

out to the Governor, sabi ko sa kanya: Tingnan mo 'yung may kahoy hindi gumalaw 'yung lupa, lahat nung sugat na makita mo sa bundok dahil kalbo," ani Marcos.

Ayon kay Maguindanao Governor Bai Mariam Sangki-Mangudadatu, ang mga landslides ay nangyari sa Barangay Kusiong sa Datu Odin Sinsuat; Barangay Romonggaob at Loooy sa South Upi; Barangays Maa-gabo Bayanga Sur, Upper Bayanga Sur Norte at Kabugaw Sapad ng Matanog.

Kasunod ng insidente, inatasan ni Marcos ang mga tanggapan ng gob-

yerno na isama ang mga tree-planting activities sa mga flood control projects.

"Kaya kailangan nating isama ang tree planting sa ating flood control. Dapat kasama 'yan. Kung gagastos tayo sa flood control, kailangan may tree planting," ani Marcos.

"So that's one thing that we need to do. But that one alam na natin 'yun, we have been hearing this over and over again, pero patuloy pa rin tayong nagpuputol ng kahoy, 'yan ang nangyayaring nagkaka-landslide ng ganyan," dagdag ni Marcos. (Malou Escudero)



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2 NAMUMUTOL NG KAHOY, NASAKOTE

PALAWAN—Dalawang illegal loggers ang dinakip ng pulisya nang mahuli sa aktong namumutol ng mga puno sa kabundukan ng Bgy. Tarusan, Bataraza.

Kinilala ang dalawang suspek na sina Arnie Puntas, 59-anyos at Junjun Ramtab, 25-anyos, kapwa nakatira sa nabanggit na bayan.

Ayon sa ulat, may nag-tip sa mga awtoridad na may dalawang lalaking namumutol ng punong kahoy sa kabundukan ng nasabing bayan kaya't agad rumesponde ang mga operatiba at dinakip ang mga suspek.

Hindi naman nanlaban ang mga suspek nang dakpin sila ng mga awtoridad.

Nakapiit na ang mga suspek na nahaharap sa kasong paglabag sa PD 705 o Revised Forestry Code of the Philippines.



'Paeng' deaths, devastation revive call for speedy passage of natl land use act

By JOVEE MARIE N. DELA CRUZ

@joveemarie

ALAWMAKER has called for the urgency of instituting a national policy that would ensure the efficient and sustainable use of the country's land and physical resources as a means to provide long-term safeguards to communities vulnerable to climate change.

This developed as the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) reported that severe tropical storm "Paeng" has left 110 dead from flooding and landslides, which also displaced hundreds of thousands of residents.

About 2.4 million individuals were affected, including 866,000 forced to flee homes in one of the most destructive storms that hit the country, the NDRRMC said on Tuesday. Agriculture losses, on the other hand, were estimated at P1.3 billion, while the cost of damaged to infrastructure was about P760 million, it said. The death toll has risen from 98 reported on Monday.

Davao City Rep. Paolo Duterte, in a news statement, said the recent destruction wrought by Paeng in Maguindanao, which resulted in scores of deaths caused mostly by landslides, demonstrated the direct impact of proper planning and use of land resources on sav-

ing people's lives.

Along with Benguet Rep. Eric Yap and two other lawmakers, Duterte has filed House Bill (HB) 3956 which aims to establish clear parameters on the utilization of all land and physical resources in the country by institutionalizing a National Land Use Policy.

The bill outlines land use policies to determine areas allocated for agricultural production, housing and settlements, energy development, industries and other economically productive sites and protected zones for environmental sustainability.

Duterte said the bill and other similar measures filed in Congress seek to "end the current degradation of the country's land resources, and optimize balanced development."

He said one key aspect of passing the National Land Use Act (NLUA) that has often been understated or overlooked is its importance in protecting communities from the destructive effects of climate change.

"We often mention the National Land Use Act in the context of ensuring food security by, for one, preventing the conversion of agricultural lands to housing and commercial projects. But the rational and efficient planning and use of our land resources is also vital in ensuring that we get to identify high-risk and danger-prone locations in our com-

munities," Duterte said.

HB3956 states that "priority shall be given to life and safety, and thus to identifying hazard prone areas and corresponding risk reduction measures as part of the DRR [disaster risk reduction] and CCA [climate change adaptation] objective."

"Given the country's approximate land area of 300,000 square kilometers, there is a need for a comprehensive and responsive land use policy to address the impact of deforestation and urbanization on food, housing, business, health and the environment," the bill's authors said.

Duterte said the bill and other similar measures should be approved at the soonest possible time by Congress to protect future generations of Filipinos, and enable them to adapt better to climate change and respond to the growing needs of the population for food, shelter and jobs.

He recalled that the passage of the NLUA has been certified as urgent by the previous administration of his father, former President Rodrigo R. Duterte, who had said the law "will address our competing land requirements for food, housing business, and environmental conservation."

On top of addressing these needs, the Davao City lawmaker said a national land use policy would also assist local government units (LGUs) in mapping out their climate-resil-



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call for speedy passage of natl land use act

ient development plans.

The bill also mandates the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and other concerned government agencies and bodies to delineate and continuously update the mapping of hazard prone and vulnerable areas in the country.

"These maps shall be shared and disseminated to LGUs, which shall subsequently guide them in the preparation of their own hazards-constrained development and physical framework and land use plans," the bill states.

HB 3956 also calls for the creation of National Land Use Policy Council (NLUC), which will serve as the highest policy-making body in all matters pertaining to land use and management.

The NLUC, which will be chaired by the Secretary of the National Economic and Development Authority (Neda) is authorized under the bill to resolve land use policy conflicts. It is also tasked to integrate efforts and monitor developments relating to land use and the evolution of policies.

Several versions of the NLUA have been filed in the 17th and 18th Congresses. The current administration has also urged Congress to swiftly pass the NLUA.

Last week, Neda called on Congress to immediately pass the

Marcos administration's priority measure, the proposed NALUA.

During the first briefing of the House Special Committee on Land Use, Neda Undersecretary Carlos Abad Santos reiterated the need to harmonize various policies on land use, such those in agriculture, agrarian reform, ancestral domain, protected areas, and housing and urban development.

"By harmonizing these various policies we will be able to have proper allocation of land and reduce disaster risk to proper land use planning and various development," he said.

According to Abad Santos, the 13 NALUA bills filed in the lower chamber have similar components with the Neda Board-approved version.

Three of these 13 bills, he said, are similar to the Neda Board-approved version—House Bill 420 of Albay Rep. Joey Salceda, HB 3611 of Ilocos Sur Rep. Kristine Singson Meehan and HB 3956 of Davao Rep. Paolo Duterte.

Abad Santos said proposed NALUA seeks to address urban sprawl or uncontrolled development that encroaches on prime agricultural lands and other fragile areas.

He said it would also address indiscriminate conversion of prime agricultural lands to non-agricultural uses, which has an impact on food security. *With Bloomberg*



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Lawmakers file 20 bills for department of resiliency

By SHEILA CRISOSTOMO

At least 20 bills were filed at the House of Representatives seeking the creation of the Department of Disaster Resilience, citing the country's vulnerability to all forms of disasters such as typhoons, volcanic eruptions and earthquakes.

House Bill 2786, authored by Quezon City 5th District Rep. Patrick Michael Vargas, cited that the Philippines is the third "most exposed country in the world to tropical storm with approximately 20 typhoons a year."

The measure stated that despite government's efforts to prepare for calamities through the National Disasters Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC), countless people and properties are still affected by extreme natural events.

The bill seeks to create a Department of Disaster Resiliency and Alertness Management which shall be composed of the NDRRMC, Office of Civil Defense and other related offices.

"This new department will drastically reduce, if not eliminate, the bureaucratic red tape which has caused many delays in the delivery of immediate assistance needed by the victims," it stated.

The other bills were filed by House Speaker Martin Romualdez and Yedda Marie Romualdez and Jude Acidre of Tingong Sinirangan partylist; Lani Mercado-Revilla, Jolo Revilla and Bryan Revila of the 1st and 2nd districts of Cavite and Agimat partylist, respectively; Joey Salceda of Albay 2nd district; Ma. Rene Ann Lourdes Matibag of 1st District Laguna; Jurdin Jesus Romualdo of Camiguin; Alan I Ecleo of Dinagat Island; Michael Romero of 1-Pacman partylist; Mario Vittorio Mariño of Batangas 5th district; Khymer Adan Olosa of Zamboanga City 1st district; Anthony Rolando

Golez of Malasakit@Bayanihan partylist; Jonathan Clement Abalos III of 4Ps partylist; Marivic Co-Pilar of 6th district Quezon City; LRay Villafuerte Jr., Miguel Luis Villafuerte, Tsuyoshi Anthony Horibata of 2nd, 5th and 1st districts of Camarines Sur, respectively; Lorenz Defender of Iloilo rd district; Gus Tambunting of Parañaque City 2nd district; Gerville Luistro of Batangas City and Paolo Duterte of Davao City 2nd district, Jeffrey Soriano, Edvic Yap and Jocelyn Tulfo of ACT-CIS partylist and Eric Go Yap of Benguet and Quezon City 2nd District Ralph Wendel Tulfo; Richard Gomez of 4th district Leyte; Bernadette Herrera of BH partylist; Edwin Olivares of 1st district Parañaque City; and Jonathan Keith Florez of 2nd district Bukidnon, among others.

Climate financing

Following the impact of Severe Tropical Storm Paeng, non-government organization Oxfam Pilipinas urged the international community to provide vulnerable countries like the Philippines with more substantial and quality climate financing.

Oxfam yesterday released its report assessing the state of climate finance in Asia, particularly in countries that are most vulnerable to the impact of climate change.

"The Philippines, like many other Asian countries, ranks really high in terms of climate vulnerability and really low when it comes to climate readiness, according to our 'Climate Finance in Asia' report," said Oxfam Pilipinas country director Lot Felizco.

"Even though we are working on measures to improve our preparedness, every time we are hit by extreme weather events such as Paeng, we have to deal with further loss, making it even harder to be ready for the climate crisis," she added.

The Philippines ranked 10th

among the 18 Asian countries included in the report in terms of vulnerability and preparedness to climate change.

Globally, the Philippines ranked 113 out of 182 countries for 2020, far from more other highly vulnerable but prepared countries such as Singapore and Japan, which rank 6th and 19th, respectively.

The report found that Asian countries only received 25 percent of the reported global climate financial flows each year, with \$113 billion going to 18 countries, including the Philippines, from 2013 to 2020.

It said only a third of Asia's climate finance went to help countries adapt and cope with climate-induced harm, while two-thirds went to mitigation initiatives, particularly into the huge Asian transport and energy sectors.

A majority of climate financing to Asia countries also came as loans, it added.

Oxfam described the current levels as "woefully inadequate," noting that said Asian countries need \$1.3 trillion a year from now to 2030 or \$371 billion a year, without factoring in China, to meet their estimated climate needs.

Among the Asian countries surveyed by Oxfam, the Philippines ranked fifth in terms of the amount of climate financing received from 2013 to 2020.

However, most of the \$7.8 billion received by the country were from debt instruments, the report said.

"Of the annual average of \$972 million worth of climate finance received by the Philippines, more than half or \$528 million are from concessional debt instruments while \$364 million are from non-concessional debt instruments," Oxfam said.

Sunil Acharya, Oxfam's Asia regional policy and campaigns coordinator, said countries vulnerable



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department of resiliency

to climate change do not need more debt that divert funds for social services.

"We are forced to look rather cynically at the climate financing of the multinational institutions because the majority of their money is winding up as Asian foreign debt. It's difficult for Asian countries to maintain health and education budgets when they're taking on more debt to pay for climate damage that they did little to cause," he said.

Nat'l Land Use bill

Four administration lawmakers are pushing for the approval of the National Land Use bill, which they filed in the House of Representatives and aims to prevent further damage and protect local communities from the wrath of typhoons and disasters.

The objective of HB 3956 is to institute a national policy that would ensure the efficient and sustainable use of the country's land and physical resources as a means to provide long-term safeguards to communities that are vulnerable to climate change.

"We often mention the National Land Use Act (NLUA) in the context of ensuring food security by, for one, preventing the conversion of agricultural lands to housing and commercial projects," Davao City Rep. Paolo Duterte, the bill's primary author, said.

"But the rational and efficient planning and use of our land resources is also vital in ensuring that we get to identify high-risk and danger-prone locations in our communities," the son of former president Duterte explained.

Duterte made the remarks in light of the recent destruction brought by Paeng in Maguindanao, which resulted in nearly a hundred deaths caused mostly by landslides, which demonstrate the direct impact of proper planning and use of land resources on saving lives.

Reps. Eric Go Yap (Benguet), Ed-

vic Yap and Jeffrey Soriano of party-list ACT-CIS also co-authored HE 3956, that aims to establish clear parameters on the utilization of all land and physical resources in the country by institutionalizing a National Land Use Policy law.

The bill outlines land use policies to determine areas allocated for agricultural production, housing and settlements, energy development, industries and other economically productive sites and protected zones for environmental sustainability.

"Given the country's approximate land area of 300,000 square kilometers, there is a need for a comprehensive and responsive land use policy to address the impact of deforestation and urbanization on food, housing, business, health and environment," they stated in the bill.

The bill mandates the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and other concerned government agencies and bodies to delineate and continuously update the mapping of hazard prone and vulnerable areas in the country.

"These maps shall be shared and disseminated to LGUs which shall subsequently guide them in the preparation of their own hazard-constrained development and physical framework and land use plans," the bill stated.

The NLUA bill has been certified as urgent by the previous administration, where the elder Duterte said the law "will address our competing land requirements for food, housing business, and environmental conservation." The measure didn't pass, however.

HB 3956 also calls for the creation of National Land Use Policy Council, which will serve as the highest policy-making body on all matters pertaining to land use development and management. - **With Delon Porcalla, Janvic Mateo**



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Proper land planning and use urged

DAVAO City Representative Paolo Duterte underscored the urgency of instituting a national policy that would ensure the efficient and sustainable use of the country's land and physical resources as a means to provide long-term safeguards to communities vulnerable to climate change.

Duterte said the recent destruction wrought by severe tropical storm "Paeng" in Maguindanao, which resulted in scores of deaths caused mostly by landslides, demonstrate the direct impact of proper planning and use of land resources on saving people's lives.

Together with Benguet Rep. Eric Yap and two other lawmakers, Duterte has filed House Bill (HB) 3956 which aims to establish clear parameters on the utilization of all land and physical resources in the country by institutionalizing a National Land Use Policy.

The bill outlines land use policies to determine areas allocated for agricultural production, housing and settlements, energy development, industries and other economically productive sites, and protected zones for environmental sustainability.

Duterte said the bill and other similar measures filed in Congress seek to "end the current degradation of the country's land resources, and optimize balanced development."

He said one key aspect of passing the National Land Use Act (NLUA) that is often understated or overlooked is its importance in protecting communities from the destructive effects of climate change.

HB 3956, of which ACT-CIS Party-list Representatives Edvic Yap and Jeffrey Soriano are also principal authors, states that "priority shall be given to life and safety, and thus to identifying hazard prone areas and corresponding risk reduction measures as part of the DRR (disaster risk reduction) and CCA (climate change adaptation) objective."

"Given the country's approximate land area of 300,000 square kilometers, there is a need for a comprehensive and responsive land use policy to address the impact of deforestation and urbanization on food, housing, business, health and the environment," the bill's authors said.

Duterte said the bill and other similar measures should be approved at the soonest possible time by Congress to protect future generations of Filipinos, and enable them to adapt better to climate change and respond to the growing needs of the population for food, shelter and jobs.

He recalled that the passage of the NLUA has been certified as urgent by the previous administration of his father, former President Rodrigo Duterte, who had said the law "will address our competing land requirements for food, housing business, and environmental conservation."

On top of addressing these needs, the Davao City lawmaker said a national land use policy will also assist the local government units (LGUs) in mapping out their climate-resilient development plans.
Jester Manalastas



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LETTERS

'GENUINE' LAW TO HELP IPS PROTECT THEIR ANCESTRAL LAND NEEDED

A RECENT study showed the many problems and issues associated with the ancestral land of the indigenous people (IP). Some of these are Philippine laws, declarations, and administrative orders that conflict with the IPs' needs and practices. The recognition and protection of indigenous peoples' rights are one of the struggles that have been carried out avidly for countless years today.

As the struggle continues, our government should uphold the rights of indigenous peoples by crafting a policy for the full recognition and inclusion of IPs in the national and local agenda. Instead of blocking them for many years, national policies that protect and uphold their rights should be consistent and strengthened.

The policy brief, "The Struggle Continues: Uphold the

Rights of Indigenous Peoples," published by Konrad Adenauer Stiftung in 2011, stated: "In the Philippines, the passage of the Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act (Ipra) on October 29, 1997, caused similar jubilation that reverberated even from the farthest outskirts of the Philippine society, home to approximately 14 to 15 million indigenous peoples sub-divided further into 110 ethnolinguistic groups. The common understanding then was finally a national law to protect and uphold the rights of the indigenous peoples has come at last."

Ipra enabled the establishment of the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP), which under the law is mandated to "protect and promote the interest and well-being of the ICCs/IPs with due regard to their beliefs, customs, traditions, and institutions."

However, on at least one occasion, the NCIP has disregarded an IP protest and played loud music instead. NCIP's action and use of IP's instrument to distract the protest were not welcoming, and led to questioning Ipra's implementation: Is the law even effective? IPs themselves have demanded the abolition of Ipra as it does not provide protection against unlawful procedures.

The IPs need good governance and legitimate laws that will ensure their hold on ancestral lands and domains, not those that offer false hope only. Among the bills filed to protect IPs and rights to their lands is House Bill No. 639 or the proposed Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities Conserved Areas Act. Among others, the bill aims to strengthen IPs by recognizing their contribution to biodiversity conservation and

establishing the national indigenous community conserved areas registry. The Tagbanuas' ancestral territory in Palawan is an example of such an area, and they honor its importance to them by only using traditional fishing methods.

Now, more than ever, the government must recognize the role of indigenous communities as partners in the conservation of protected areas. Aside from abolishing Ipra, the immediate passing of genuine laws protecting their ancestral lands should be prioritized. We should not let foreign capitalists and dominant powers exploit their resources. Let's listen to them and give IPs the chance to speak for themselves.

ABDUL HAFIZ T. MALAWANI,
Mindanao State University
Marawi



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NAMRIA, Nippon-GEBCO ink accord for Seabed 2030 project

By JONATHAN L. MAYUGA

@jonlmayuga

THE Nippon Foundation-GEBCO Seabed 2030 project has entered into a memorandum of understanding with the National Mapping and Resource Information Authority (NAMRIA) of the Philippines to work together on global understanding of ocean science.

Seabed 2030 is a collaborative project between The Nippon Foundation and GEBCO to inspire the complete mapping of the world's ocean by 2030, and to compile all bathymetric data into the freely available GEBCO Ocean Map.

GEBCO is a joint program of the International Hydrographic Organization (IHO) and the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) and is the only organization with a mandate to map the entire ocean floor. Seabed 2030 is formally endorsed as a Decade Action of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development.

An attached agency of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, NAMRIA is mandated to provide the public with mapmaking services and to act as the central mapping agency, depository, and distribution facility for natural resources data in the form of maps, charts, texts and statistics. Through its Hydrography Branch, the agency conducts hydrographic surveys to analyze oceanographic data used primarily in navigation, research, and marine management.

In addition to its Hydrography Branch, NAMRIA also comprises other technical branches, including the Mapping and Geodesy Branch (MGB), Resource Data Analysis Branch (RDAB), and Geospatial Information System Manage-

ment Branch (GISMB). MGB is in charge of national geodetic reference frame development and topographic base map production.

RDAB manages land and coastal resource mapping, land classification, and thematic mapping activities; and GISMB oversees the sharing and dissemination of data which help create essential base maps.

"We want to see the Philippines become a geospatially empowered nation," NAMRIA Administrator, Undersecretary Dr. Peter N. Tiangco, was quoted as saying in a news release.

"NAMRIA strives to become a centre of excellence not only in support of this national aspiration, but also to help progress the global effort, led by Seabed 2030, to expand our understanding of the ocean. We acknowledge the vital role a complete map of the ocean floor plays in helping us protect the planet—the blue planet—and we are delighted to join this endeavor," he said.

Seabed 2030 Project Director Jamie McMichael-Phillips said, "Our partnership with NAMRIA is a significant development for the project. As a founding member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the Philippines has become the first member state to sign up to Seabed 2030, demonstrating its commitment to developing our understanding of ocean science, and working towards Sustainable Development Goal 14: to conserve and sustainably use the oceans. "We look forward to working with colleagues at NAMRIA to progress our goal of 100 percent of the ocean floor mapped by the end of the decade."

All data collected and shared with the Seabed 2030 Project is included in the GEBCO global grid, which is free and publicly available.



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Editorial

DENR should wait on proposed mining changes

ALTHOUGH it was presumably not what it intended, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) seems to have caused alarm among stakeholders and others impacted by the mining industry with a recent announcement that it is pursuing amendments to the 1995 Mining Act. The proposal is even more concerning because no details were offered about what those changes might be.

As a matter of fact, the statement by Environment Undersecretary Jonas Leones at a meeting of the Philippine Mining Club may have even overstepped his own boss' plans. In a statement just days earlier, Environment Secretary Maria Antoniya Yulo-Loyzaga said that the department was starting work on creating a natural capital accounting system to better assess priorities and "apply a climate-risk lens" to the work of the DENR. The secretary's remarks certainly seemed to imply that the natural capital accounting system was a prerequisite to any significant policy changes.

In his comments to the mining stakeholders, Mr. Leones said: "In fact, all environmental laws need revision. These are laws existing for 20 years already, so there might be a need to revisit the mining laws — not to make it difficult for the mining or investment for the mining sector but basically, we need to identify some other technologies that can enhance our cooperation in mining areas."

Leones added, "Whatever the outcome of the revision will also be beneficial to the industry."

To be fair to the undersecretary, there is not necessarily anything wrong with reviewing and reassessing existing laws, but by the same token, suggesting a direction for that — in this case, finding ways to improve the business environment for mining — before overall priorities have even been identified is at best putting the cart before the horse.

We have always maintained that mining is an important economic sector for the Philippines, given its abundant mineral resources, and that the country should seek to maximize its benefits. However, this effort must be undertaken with the understanding that mining is unavoidably environmentally and socially disruptive, and that the resources are finite. Therefore, it can only be carried out under conditions where negative environmental impacts can be prevented or repaired, where affected communities, especially Indigenous communities, can benefit rather than be disrupted or displaced by it, and where added downstream value can be captured.

Clear, consistent policies

Even within those strict bounds there are still many opportunities for mining investment and development. In spite of frequent calls to liberalize restrictions on foreign investment, investors here and elsewhere around the world have indicated that clear and reliably consistent policies are more important to their investment decisions than ownership limits. It does not matter so much what the bounds are, as long as the prospective investor can count on them remaining constant. This is especially important in the mining industry, where any significant investment can take years or even decades to generate returns.

From the point of view of the mining industry, the proposal to amend the Mining Act only indicates that the investment environment continues to be uncertain, and perhaps too risky. Even though it was signed into law in 1995, the Mining Act was really only in force for about six years, between 2005 and 2011; it was tied up in court challenges for nearly 10 years after its passage, and then was subsequently suspended by an executive order of former president Benigno Aquino 3rd, who wished to rework the revenue-sharing aspects of the law. That was finally accomplished by the Duterte administration, but a lengthy and disruptive — albeit necessary — review process for mining operations and then the Covid-19 pandemic intervened. Little wonder then that the counter-suggestion of the mining stakeholders was that the law's implementing rules and regulations should be reviewed and revised, rather than the law itself; despite being 27 years old, the Mining Act has never quite been fully implemented.

It may very well be that, once all the factors are considered, a new mining law or significant changes to the existing one are needed. But now is not the time; the DENR should focus on the path described by Secretary Yulo-Loyzaga, and first lay the proper groundwork for a review of the Mining Act.



Editorial

Bundok ng basurang plastik

HANGGANG ngayon, hindi pa rin natututo ang mga taong bumibisita sa sementeryo. Wala pa rin silang disiplina sa pagtatapon ng kanilang mga basura. Kahit malinaw na nakalagay sa mga gate ng sementeryo na huwag iiwanan ang basura sa mga bibisitahing puntod, hindi rin ito nasunod at naging basurahan na naman ang mga sementeryo kahapon.

Maraming sementeryo sa buong bansa ang namulaklak sa plastic na basura at nakaamba ang lalo pang paglubha ng plastic pollution. Dalawang taon na namahinga ang mga sementeryo dahil bawal ang pagtungo nang maraming tao sa mga sementeryo upang makaiwas sa COVID-19. Pero ngayon, balik na naman sa dating nakarimirim na tanawin ang mga sementeryo.

Karaniwang mga single-use plastics ang basurang nakakalat sa mga sementeryo—sachet ng 3-in-1 coffee, plastic cup ng noodles, plastic wrapper ng biskuwit at iba pang pagkain, shopping bags at mga plastic cover ng bulaklak. Nagmistulang malaking basurahan ang mga sementeryo. Kung kailan lilinis ang gabundok na basura sa mga sementeryo ay walang makapagsabi.

Kapag ang mga basurang plastic sa sementeryo ay inabutan ng panibagong Bagyong Queenie, at nagkaroon na naman ng pagbaha, tiyak na sa ilog at mga sapa aanurin ang mga ito at saka hahantong sa dagat. Maraming maaapektuhan kasama na ang mga lamandagat.

Sinabi minsan ni President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. ang problema ng Pilipinas ukol sa plastic pollution kung saan, ika-10 ang Pilipinas sa nag-aambag ng mga basurang plastic sa karagatan. Sinabi ni Marcos na tutulong ang Pilipinas sa paglilinis sa mga basura na nasa karagatan. Hindi umano tatalikuran ang responsibilidad sa basura sa karagatan.

Ipinanukala naman ng Department of Finance na buwisan ang single-use plastics para kumita ang pamahalaan. Malaki umano ang kikitain kapag ipinatupad ito. Wala pang linaw kung magkakaroon ng katuparan ang panukala.

Kikita ang pamahalaan sa pagbubuwis sa single-use plastics subalit walang malinaw na nakikita kung paano masosolusyunan ang plastic pollution. Tiyak na patuloy ang produksiyon ng plastic kahit pa taasan ng buwis. Dapat magkaroon din ng kampanya ang pamahalaan kung paano maitatapon nang maayos ng mamamayan ang mga plastic upang maiwasan ang pagkasira ng kapaligiran. Ibawal ang pagtatapon sa kung saan-saan at ipatupad ang recycling ng basura.



Bruised, not clobbered

JUST a superficial wound, not a serious injury.

Considering previous destructive onslaughts of extreme weather disturbances, call Paeng's sweep of certain areas of the country as "just a scratch".

There is no extensive devastation approximating a national calamity.

The damage has so far been located and identified in local areas, no concentrated in a vast region.

Therefore, no need to declare a national state of calamity after Severe Tropical Storm Paeng ravaged different parts of the country.

President Marcos has assessed the damage as "highly localized".

Paeng weakened into a tropical storm status on Sunday but re-intensified into a severe tropical storm on Monday as it continues to move over the West Philippine Sea, according to Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration.

The President made this remark a day after the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council announced on Sunday that it has submitted a resolution recommending a declaration of a national state of calamity which would trigger a price freeze and allow the release of emergency funds.

"I don't think it's necessary. I came to that conclusion in consultation with DENR [Department of Environment and Natural Resources]. They said it wasn't extensive. The damage is highly localized," he told reporters in a press briefing in Noveleta, Cavite.

Citing government reports, he said only three provinces -- Quezon, Cavite, and Maguindanao -- suffered the most damage to infrastructure.

"We're talking about the east coast Quezon, dito sa Cavite, and then Maguindanao. Those are the areas. It does need to have...like in the Visayas there's no need for a national calamity. For Region 1, 2, it doesn't warrant a national calamity," he said.

The President said it was enough for the NDRRMC to implement the state of calamity status in specific areas only.

"I think we will focus better if we stay with the calamity status as we have now," he added.

On Sunday, the NDRRMC declared a state of calamity in 55 areas in the Bicol (Region 5), Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, and Soccsksargen (Region 12).

These areas were heavily devastated by Paeng which brought massive flooding and landslides that resulted to casualties.

As of posting time, the NDRRMC said the number of damaged houses stood at 4,188 worth around P12.415 million, 37 damaged infrastructure that costs P757.841 million, and agricultural damage was pegged at over P435.464 million.



NEED TO SET UP PERMANENT
EVACUATION CENTERS

EDITORIAL

A wake up call

WITHOUT doubt, good lessons can be learned from the series of natural disasters that claimed the lives of people and destroyed billions of pesos worth of property and agricultural crops.

And with the worsening of climate change, typhoons, storms, flooding, landslides, long drought are likely to continue terrorizing Filipinos and the rest of the people throughout the globe.

The Philippines is one of the world's countries most vulnerable to climate change conditions.

Acknowledged as a wake-up call, the series of calamities, including a strong earthquake that rattled Abra and surrounding provinces, ravaged agriculture and infrastructure.

The natural disasters rendered homeless thousands of people, mostly farmers and fishermen, living in low-lying areas and other flood and landslide-prone communities.

Concerned government authorities have been stating, quite clearly, that there's a need to evacuate residents to safer ground before strong winds and heavy rains batter their communities.

"Huwag nating hintayin na sapilitan tayong alisin sa ating mga bahay kung tayo'y nakatira malapit sa mga daanan ng tubig at paanan/gilid ng bundok," according to a barangay official.

Likewise, it appears urgent on the national government to now establish permanent fully-equipped evacuation centers throughout the Philippines, particularly in flood-prone barangays.

Utilizing public school buildings as temporary evacuation centers adversely affects the education of our children.

With the widespread devastation wrought by Tropical Storm Paeng, intensifying the campaign to mitigate the impact of climate change is a move in the right direction.



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CITO BELTRAN

**Project NOAH
or Noah's ark**

In the face of real climate change, Filipino leaders, from the national down to local executives, now have to make a choice: go with Project NOAH and its menu of programs for disaster mitigation and avoidance or live and let live on different versions of Noah's ark.



While doing some research on typhoons that have struck the Philippines, I listed all the major or destructive typhoons that hit the country. For those of you who were around on Nov. 14, 1970 to be exact, I'm certain that you will never forget the rainmaker called Typhoon Yoling that ripped through the Greater Manila area. We were all unprepared for the never before experienced "super typhoon" which dumped so much rain that many kilometers of the only existing "National Highway" went underwater and only amphibious vehicles and US Army 6x6 surplus trucks were usable going north.

Since then the Philippines has been victimized by numerous typhoons and, beginning from 2009, things have gone progressively worse as typhoons went from average to super storms. In 2009, Typhoon Ondoy sunk the eastern part of Metro Manila where flood waters reached up to the second floor of many homes, washed away hundreds of cars and destroyed business establishments. In 2011 Typhoon Sendong arrived just before the Christmas holidays hitting Cagayan de Oro, Iligan, etc. It was mud everywhere, pitch black at night and for weeks people were still trying to find loved ones after the great mudslide. In December 2012 Typhoon Pablo struck with super typhoon strength, with most of the damage caused by strong winds. On Nov. 8, 2013 the unforgettable mother of typhoons Yolanda hit the Visayas and killed thousands upon thousands of Filipinos by way of a storm surge that many now call a tsunami.

On July 14, 2014 Typhoon Glenda registered as only one of the three super typhoons on record in the South China Sea and hit the eastern seaboard of the Philippines and crossed over all the way through the Calabarzon region and Palawan. Then came Lando in 2015, followed by Ramil in 2017, Ompong in 2018, Rolly in 2020 which was so destructive they retired the name from the roster of typhoons. Last year, 2021, at the height of COVID we experienced Typhoon Odette, and just last weekend we all got soaked, flooded and muddied or buried by Typhoon Paeng! The typhoons I listed here are only those that left high death tolls or physical destruction.

Typhoons are a part of life in the tropics but unlike 40 years ago, today's typhoons feel like they come out of the Marvel Galaxy. Oftentimes their impact is incomprehensible. But the thing is, if we only learned to prioritize science and technology over political fiction and conflict, we could spare ourselves so much misery.

Yesterday, I got to interview Dr. Mahar Lagmay, executive director of Project Noah and the UP Resilience Institute to find out if they have anything that could help President Bongbong Marcos in addressing the challenge brought about by apparent climate change and the super disasters that come with them. Yes, they do, and it has long been available, except politics sidelined the project's value and usefulness.

As the story goes, after the massive destruction caused by Typhoon Sendong in 2011, president Noynoy Aquino called for the government and scientists to come up with a disaster prevention and mitigation system in the Philippines. Various departments and agencies and members of the Philippine scientific community got together and formed a program that not only studied weather disturbances but also studied locations, geography, geology, population, environment, etc. By combining different inputs, the program could simulate different scenarios and impacts. By 2012, the program was launched and put through its initial phases and presumably would undergo further improvements over time and as more events and data are recorded.

Aside from having weather related functions, the program was capable of evaluating certain locations, its stability in the face of increasing human traffic, development and environmental impact, threats or hazards. More importantly, the program can evaluate scenarios based on different threat levels or data below or greater than observed or recorded historical information. This way, decision makers don't rely merely on the past, because climate change has made much of it obsolete if not irrelevant.

I recall that just before COVID came about, one of the biggest concerns was the geological instability of mountainous areas in the Cordilleras. It gained national attention when miners seeking shelter were buried alive after heavy rains and from then on, public attention was drawn to how unstable the highland areas up north were due to mining, vegetable farming and residential growth. Even the governor of a province below the Cordillera area complained that the flooding in their province was not locally generated but due to the loss of forest cover, farming and logging in provinces above them. Since then we have all heard about areas declared as Red Zones or highly unstable and subject to landslides.

After so many people were buried in the landslide or mudslide in Maguindanao, no less than President Bongbong Marcos wants answers about climate change, mudslides, etc., and rightly so because all the flooding and mudslides won't be solved or managed in a few years but by using the Program Noah for starters, PBBM can at least separate science from fiction, politics from solutions.

According to Dr. Lagmay, an updated version could be developed in six months if all the ingredients are on the table, as well as funding. I hope PBBM also looks into the impact of new roads and highways that end up becoming unforeseen canals for flood waters due to poor planning and research as well as establishment of safer townships. The President can now be the unifying force that will call together the best and brightest minds in the Philippines to address disaster prevention and management.

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NATIONWIDE ROUND-UP

House reps renew push for bills relating to climate change in typhoon's aftermath

LAWMAKERS on Tuesday renewed calls to fast-track the passage of bills that are seen to help mitigate the impact of changing weather patterns, including measures on land use and the creation of a department on disaster management.

House Bill 3956 or the proposed National Land Use Act of the Philippines seeks to establish parameters on land utilization and physical resources to protect vulnerable communities from climate change-related disasters.

"The bill outlines land use policies to determine areas allocated for agricultural production, housing and settlements, energy development, industries, and other economically productive sites, and protected zones for environmental sustainability," Davao City Rep. Paolo Z. Duterte, one of the authors of the bill, said in a statement.

"The rational and efficient planning and use of our land resources are also vital in ensuring that we get to identify high-risk and danger-prone locations in our communities," he said.

The proposed law is included in the priority measures listed by President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr.

Manila Rep. Joel R. Chua, meanwhile, said the aftermath of tropical storm Nalgae, locally named Paeng, underscores the need to create a department focusing on disaster management.

He noted that the House of Representatives in the previous Congress approved a measure for the establishment of Department of Disaster Resilience (DDR).

A counterpart bill was not passed by the Senate as several legislators questioned its practicality and the funding required to set up another department.

"The House has been approving DDR bills, those bills are later met by stiff but baseless opposition," Mr. Chua said.

Ang Probinsyano Party-list Rep. Alfred C. Delos Santos, for his part, pushed for House Bill 1915, which seeks the inclusion of evacuation policies for livestock and work animals in disaster response.

"The government lacks guidelines on this. There should be efforts to evacuate livestock and work animals because families and enterprises especially in the provinces will depend on these animals'

post-disaster for their livelihood," he said in a statement. — **Matthew Carl L. Montecillo and Kyanna Angela Bulan**



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PH must be compensated for climate change impact

By Jester Manalastas

A lawmaker said the Philippines has the right to claim loss and damage compensation from international groups due to the onslaught of Typhoon Paeng.

According to Albay Representative Joey Salceda, chairman of the House Committee on Ways and Means, countries like the Philippines must continue to push for acknowledgment and compensation for "loss and damage" as he pointed out that Typhoon Paeng wasn't supposed to be that strong, and yet killed several dozens of people due to stronger than expected floods.

"Climate change kills. There is loss and damage. And countries like the Philippines that are the most at-risk due to its impacts have a moral responsibility and the moral ascendancy to fight for the principle of loss and damage," Salceda said.

Loss and damage, in international climate law, refers to the permanent loss or reparable damage caused by climate change, including extreme weather events like typhoons, as well as slow-onset events such as sea-level rise.

Salceda, who was formerly the Co-Chair of the United Nations Green Climate Fund, will be part of the Philippine delegation to the Conference of Parties (COP) 27, or the 2022 United Nations Climate Change Conference, set in Egypt this year.

"International aid and green financing are not enough. There has to be some form of compensation to the most vulnerable and affected countries," he said.

Due to climate risks, we are now the most at-risk country in the world according to the 2022 Global Risk Report.

"Arguably, nobody is more affected by climate change than we are. If we are soft on this position, we throw other climate-vulnerable countries under the bus. So, we have to be strong on loss and damage," Salceda said.

"Paeng isn't even that strong, as far as typhoons in the October-November season go. Some 45 people dead during a 'normal' storm is no small matter. It's the climate problem manifesting itself in the death toll," he added.

The typhoon didn't even hit Mindanao, as far as landfalls go, but most of the dead is from Mindanao. More communities are becoming vulnerable to the effects of stronger weather events."



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DRIVING FORCE

YOUTH URGED TO LEAD FIGHT VS CLIMATE DISINFORMATION

By **Mariejo S. Ramos**
@MariejoRamosINQ

As world leaders gather next week to take action against climate crisis, the country's former chief climate negotiator called on young people to take the lead in combating climate disinformation and correcting "decades of neglect" on critical issues affecting the planet.

Speaking in an online forum ahead of the 2022 UN Climate Change Conference, Naderev "Yeb" Saño, executive director of Greenpeace Southeast Asia, said the youth are a "driving force against disinformation and misinformation" fueled by persistent campaigns of climate polluters.

He cited the fossil fuel industry has been historically known to spread false information on the connection of fossil fuels and climate change.

'Digital natives'

"Because young people are digital natives, it is easier for them to understand and engage with these issues. They are leading the action to tear down false myths and broken narratives surrounding fossil fuels and climate change," Saño said during the sixth episode of the "Stories for a Better Reality" talks on Oct. 28 of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the Climate Change Commission and other groups.

He said the youth as the biggest segment of the population should be given the power to lead the calls for climate justice as "inheritors of both problems and solutions."

Aware of the "problems and deceptions brought by corporations and governments who value money and profit over

people and climate," Saño urged young climate activists to "lead the calls for a return to valuing life and life-forms, human rights, the environment and justice."

The Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change said the world is set to reach the 1.5 degrees Celsius warming limit in just two decades.

'Window is closing'

Saño said "only the most drastic cuts on carbon emissions could halt this."

"Until now, more public and private funds go to fossil fuels instead of climate solutions. Abolishing fossil fuel subsidies alone would lead to emissions reductions of up to 10 percent by 2030," he said.

The United Nations Environment Programme warned in its recent emissions gap report that the "window is closing" on climate mitigation efforts, unless emissions are cut by as much as 45 percent eight years from now "to avoid global catastrophe."

Chuck Baclagon, campaigner for environmental group 350.org, said the latest emissions gap report was proof that "as far as climate science is concerned, it [should be] all hands on deck to organize society in such a way that it no longer relies heavily on fossil fuels to power its economy."

However, Baclagon stressed that for decarbonization to occur in societies, there has to be a "robust community ownership of climate action."

"The imperative to act is not only about ensuring collective survival, but rather to stir the trajectory of development toward one that puts equity and ecology ahead of the financial interests of the wealthy. This must be at the center of economic development in the context of climate change," he said. INQ



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DIRER 'PAENG' PICTURE FORMS: 112 DEAD, 161 CALAMITY AREAS

By Frances Mangosing
and Angel Yabut
@Team_Inquirer

More deaths have been recorded due to landslides and flooding triggered by the heavy rainfall brought by Severe Tropical Storm "Paeng" (international name: Nalgae), raising the number of fatalities nationwide to 112, the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) said on Tuesday.

More than half, or 61 of the deceased, were from the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), which was not in Paeng's path but was battered by heavy rains induced by the fourth tropical storm to hit the country for the month of October.

The NDRRMC said 34 people remained missing, down from the 63 people earlier reported as unaccounted for on Monday.

Paeng affected 2.4 million individuals in 17 regions across the country, with 865,000 people displaced and taking shelter in more than 2,700 **A2**



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DIRER 'PAENG' PICTURE EMERGES: 112 DEAD, 161 CALAMITY AREAS

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evacuation centers nationwide, the NDRRMC said.

The storm also damaged 6,542 houses valued at P12.4 million, and caused P1.3 billion in losses in agriculture, affecting 53,575 farmers and 58,000 hectares of crops, it added.

As of Tuesday, 161 areas were placed under a state of calamity, the disaster agency said.

The declaration of a state of calamity will enable local government units to use their calamity funds and hasten relief and rehabilitation efforts. The move will also be an effective mechanism to control the prices of essential commodities since a price freeze is automatically in effect in areas under a state of calamity.

A fifth weather disturbance that followed Paeng, named "Queenie" after it entered the

Philippine area of responsibility (PAR) on Monday, has weakened from a tropical depression to a low pressure area, the state weather agency Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) reported on Tuesday.

Light to moderate, and at times heavy, rains are to be expected over areas in Caraga and Davao Occidental between the afternoon of Nov. 1 until morning of Nov. 2, but no wind signals were hoisted, according to Pagasa.

The agency advised residents in places prone to flooding and rain-induced landslides to follow evacuation and instructions from their local government.

The low pressure area was last spotted east of Hinatuan, Surigao del Sur, and was moving generally westward. It is expected to dissipate in the early morning of Nov. 2.

Queenie entered PAR as a tropical storm on Oct. 31. It

weakened into a tropical depression in the morning of Nov. 1 before turning into a low pressure area in the afternoon of the same day.

Five of the 17 tropical cyclones that entered PAR this year were in October alone, including Queenie.

The estimated cost of damage caused by Paeng on the agriculture sector reached P1.3 billion. This adds to the P114 million and P503 million in farm losses due to Tropical Depressions "Maymay" and "Neneng" that struck on Oct. 11 and Oct. 13, respectively.

Higher toll

Of the deaths related to Paeng, 28 were from Western Visayas, according to data from the Regional Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council in Western Visayas (RDRRMC-6).

It said 24 of them died of drowning after being swept by floodwaters, while two persons

suffered cardiac arrest and two others were covered by mounds of earth following a landslide.

Antique had the most number of fatalities with 11, followed by Aklan with 6; Capiz, 6, and Iloilo, 5.

The disaster teams also reported 10 missing persons—including six from Antique, two from Iloilo province, and one each from Aklan and Negros Occidental.

At least 298,708 families or 1,130,651 persons from 1,865 barangays across six provinces and the highly urbanized cities of Iloilo and Bacolod were affected by Paeng, of whom 21,893 families stayed at 935 evacuation centers in the region.

At least 4,550 houses in Western Visayas were damaged while 512 others were destroyed, according to the Department of Social Welfare and Development in Western Visayas (DSWD-6).

In Calabarzon (Cavite, Lagu-

na, Batangas, Rizal and Quezon), police on Tuesday tallied six more people who died reportedly from drowning at the height of Paeng's wrath, raising to 28 the latest number of fatalities in Luzon.

State of calamity

Three provinces and four cities in the Bicol and Calabarzon regions were placed under a state of calamity due to the mounting number of fatalities and losses caused by Paeng.

The province of Albay was among the first to make the declaration on Oct. 29, a few hours after the storm made its landfall in Catanduanes and Camarines Sur provinces, according to Gov. Noel Rosal.

Quezon province and its capital, Lucena City, declared a state of calamity on Monday.

In Catanduanes, where Paeng made its first landfall on Saturday morning, the Sanggunian Panlalawigan placed the island province under a state of

calamity on Monday. The same was also declared in the cities of Biñan, San Pedro and San Pablo in Laguna province.

In northern Luzon, the province of Cagayan was placed under a state of calamity on Oct. 24 after it sustained more than P1 billion in losses due to damaged farms and structures following the onslaught of three storms that hit northern Luzon from Oct. 12 to 20.

Ilocos Norte has been in a state of calamity since Oct. 17 in the wake of the onslaught of Typhoon "Neneng" (international name: Nesat). The province was again placed under a state of calamity on Oct. 27 following the magnitude 6.4 earthquake that struck northern Luzon provinces on Oct. 25. —WITH REPORTS FROM JOEY MARZAN, DELFIN T. MALLARI JR., MICHAEL B. JAUCIAN, REY ANTHONY OSTRIA, MADONNA T. VIOLO, VILLAMOR VISAYA JR., JOHN MICHAEL MUGAS, TONETTE OREJAS, JACANNA ROSE AGLIBOT AND INQUIRER RESEARCH INQ



Zambales fishers wary of Chinese rocket debris near Panatag Shoal

PH Space Agency: 'Expected unburned debris' pose

'considerable risk' to boats, planes passing through drop zones

By Joanna Rose Aglibot
@joannaglibotINQ

SAN ANTONIO, ZAMBALES— Fishermen in this province raised concern over the possibility of floating debris at their fishing ground that reportedly fell from a Chinese rocket that was launched on Monday afternoon.

Bobby Roldan, a local fisherman and vice chair for Luzon of fisherfolk group Pamalakaya, said this debris could pose a danger to fishermen venturing out into the West Philippine Sea.

"We urge the authorities to ensure that the fishing grounds of our fishers are cleared of any possible debris caused by China's recent rocket launch," Roldan told the Inquirer in a text message on Tuesday.

On Monday, the Philippine Space Agency (PhilSA) said a rocket was launched from the Wenchang Space Launch Center in China's Hainan Island at 3:37 p.m. Philippine time that day.

In an advisory, PhilSA said the rocket carried the Mengtian laboratory module for the Tian-

gong space station, a research facility being built by China in orbit.

Traditional fishing ground

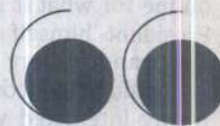
Citing the notice issued by the Civil Aviation Administration of China to the Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines, PhilSA said the identified drop zone 1 was about 72 kilometers from Bajo de Masinloc, locally known as Panatag, or Scarborough Shoal.

The shoal is about 240 km from the coastline of Zambales and serves as the traditional fishing ground for fishermen in Luzon. It is located inside the country's 370-km exclusive economic zone.

PhilSA said drop zone 2 was some 39 km from Busuanga town in Palawan province.

"Anticipated to fall within these areas are the 'expected unburned debris,' or parts of the rocket designed to be discarded as the rocket enters outer space," PhilSA said.

It said these components got separated from the rocket minutes after the launch and were



Actual drop zones may also vary because of various factors, such as the Earth's rotation, weather and climate conditions

Philippine Space Agency

designed to float over bodies of water to minimize the hazard of falling into populated areas.

"The booster stages are expected to fall on drop zone 1, while the rocket fairing is expected to fall on drop zone 2," PhilSA added.

Boats warned

Although PhilSA noted that the debris from Long March 5B would unlikely fall on land features or inhabited areas in the



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MUNICIPAL WATERS ONLY A fisherman in Masinloc, Zambales, checks on his gear on Oct. 15 as he gets ready for another day off fishing but only within the town's municipal waters. Masinloc fishers are scared to venture to their fishing grounds in Panatag (Scarborough) Shoal after getting harassed by China's coast guard that claims the shoal as its territory. —JOANNA AGLIBOT

Philippine territory, falling debris would still pose a "considerable risk" to ships, aircraft, fishing boats, and other vessels that will pass through the drop zones.

"Actual drop zones may also vary because of various factors, such as the Earth's rotation, weather and climate conditions," it said.

It added: "There is also a possibility for the debris to float around the area and wash

toward nearby coasts."

'Threatened'

But Roldan described the falling rocket debris as "highly alarming," noting that debris from a Chinese rocket had previously landed in Philippine waters during an uncontrolled reentry.

He was referring to the suspected fallen rocket fairings from China's launch of one of its rockets that were found by

Filipino fishermen near Mindoro Strait on July 27.

According to Roldan, China has been failing in meeting "responsible standards" regarding space debris.

He said this recent activity by China would "endanger" Filipino fishermen, "who are already threatened by the Chinese presence in the Philippine exclusive economic zone."

In 2012, China seized control of Panatag Shoal after a tense standoff with the Philippine Navy, which led the Philippine government to file a case against China before the international arbitration court. The Philippines won in the arbitration court but the ruling was not recognized by China.

In recent years, Filipino fishermen have been reportedly harassed by patrolling Chinese coast guards in the area by driving them away using water cannons.

"We demand the Marcos administration to denounce China over this reckless act that could possibly endanger any Philippine vessel present in our territorial waters," Roldan said. INQ



ASTEROID THAT MAY COLLIDE WITH EARTH DISCOVERED

WASHINGTON, D.C.: An international team of astronomers on Monday announced the discovery of a large asteroid whose orbit crosses that of Earth, creating a small chance far in the future of a catastrophic collision.

The 1.5 kilometer- (0.9 mile-) wide asteroid, named 2022 AP7,

was discovered in an area notoriously difficult to spot objects due to the glare from the sun.

It was found along with two other near-Earth asteroids using a high-tech instrument on the Victor M. Blanco telescope in Chile that was originally developed to study dark matter.

"2022 AP7 crosses Earth's orbit, which makes it a potentially hazardous asteroid, but it currently does not now or anytime in the future have a trajectory that will have it collide with the Earth," said lead author of the findings, astronomer Scott Sheppard of the

► AsteroidA8

■ ASTEROID FROM A1

ASTEROID THAT MAY COLLIDE WITH EARTH

Carnegie Institution for Science.

The potential threat comes from the fact that like any orbiting object, its trajectory will be slowly modified due to myriad gravitational forces, notably by planets. Forecasts are therefore difficult on the very long term.

The newly discovered asteroid is "the largest object that is potentially hazardous to Earth to be discovered in the last eight years," said NOIRLab, a US-funded research group that operates multiple observatories.

2022 AP7 takes five years to circle the sun under its current orbit, which at its closest point to Earth remain several million kilometers away.

The risk is therefore very small, but in case of a collision, an asteroid of that size "would have a devastating impact on life as we know it," said Sheppard. He explained that dust launched into the air would have a major cooling effect,

provoking an "extinction event like hasn't been seen on Earth in millions of years." His team's results were published in the scientific journal *The Astronomical Journal*. The two other asteroids pose no risk to Earth, but one is the closest asteroid to the sun ever found.

Some 30,000 asteroids of all sizes — including more than 850 larger than a kilometer wide — have been catalogued in the vicinity of the Earth, earning them the label "Near Earth Objects" (NEOs). None of them threaten Earth for the next 100 years.

According to Sheppard, there are "likely 20 to 50 large NEOs left to find," but most are on orbits that put them in the sun's glare.

In preparation for a future discovery of a more threatening object, NASA conducted a test mission in late September in which it collided a spacecraft with an asteroid, proving that it was possible to change its trajectory.

AFP

