

03 November 2022, Thursday



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Pursuing a greener economy and more livable areas

DENR Secretary Maria Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga, World Bank Country Director Ndiame Diop, Vice Chairperson and Executive Director of the Philippines' Climate Change Commission Robert Borje, Distinguished officials of the World Bank and our development partners, colleagues in government, friends in civil society and the private sector,

Ladies and gentlemen,
Good morning,
I want to thank the World Bank for inviting me to become a part of and a witness to the launch of the Philippine Country Climate and Development Report.

Today is a momentous occasion as it marks how the world's present leaders are committing and reacting to the climate change initiative more earnestly.

Perhaps no other issue is more important - none more existential and critical to humanity's future (at least, at this point in history) - than climate change.

And so, I extend my sincerest congratulations and gratitude to the World Bank Group and all the other contributors and stakeholders.

They dedicated their time and effort to put this report together. I am sure that many, including myself, are looking forward to seeing it presented.

As the Socioeconomic Planning secretary, I can honestly say that now more than ever, the integration of climate action into our development plans is of absolute necessity.

Compared to other parts of the world, the Philippines is particularly subject to adverse weather conditions.

On average, we encounter eight to nine tropical cyclones per year. We suffer through excessive rainfall that endangers us to flash floods and land-

slides and causes damage to our sources of food, shelter, and livelihoods.

With greater uncertainties being introduced to us by climate change, we can also expect more droughts and, consequently, more future water and food crises to affect the country.

The Philippines also has a running ecological deficit - wherein our ecological footprint (or the impact created by our population on our environment) goes beyond our area's natural capacity.

If we do not get our acts right soon, more communities will be routinely displaced, more economic activities disrupted, and more agricultural systems devastated due to these extreme, climate change-induced weather conditions.

Previously, the long-standing view had been the misperception that policymakers must choose between two seemingly opposing objectives: environmental preservation and economic growth.

It would appear as if a choice always had to be made between the two. With the rapid advances in science and technology in recent years, however, it has not only been possible but imperative to choose both.

The fast and sustained growth of economies, especially emerging markets, can and must increasingly be supported by clean technologies if we genuinely want to build the foundation for the society we wish to live in.

The World Bank's new Climate Change Action Plan, which includes the Country Climate and Development Report, has arrived at a very good time.

This guiding framework provides countries with further insight into the best practices and most impactful ac-

Keynote speech of Socio-economic Planning Sec. Arsenio M. Balisacan Delivered during the launch of the World Bank Group's Philippine Country Climate and Development Report Held at the Quezon Room, Seda Vertis North, Quezon City on Oct. 25, 2022 - Ed.



tions each can undertake to integrate the climate agenda into their particular development goals.

Globally, countries are concerting to prioritize the recovery and conservation of their natural capital for the sake and benefit of their people.

Especially in the Philippines, a country globally recognized as one of the most vulnerable to climate change, extremely volatile weather conditions can seriously impact and threaten the lives of thousands of Filipinos.

For this reason, initiatives like that of the CCDR ring much urgency here.

The National Economic and Development Authority has spearheaded actions and responses to climate change.

Of our most recent contributions, we, together with the Asian Development Bank and various agencies, have led the formulation of the Philippine Action Plan for Sustainable Consumption and Production.

This plan lays out the actions needed



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to enable the country to shift towards climate-smart and sustainable practices over the short, medium, and long terms.

Toward contributing to climate change mitigation goals, the plan intends to expedite the scaling up of renewable energy systems, adopt resource-efficient green technologies, implement sustainable, multi-modal transport, and even institutionalize Natural Capital Accounting.

The initiative on Natural Capital Accounting shall allow policymakers to measure the country's wealth by more than just its economic output or GDP.

When it comes to sustaining growth, it is an instrument that is just as crucial as measuring GDP in our statistical system, as it promotes the sustainable use of our natural resources by placing a value on something not previously measured.

Our country's long-term vision, the *AimBisyon Natin 2040*, states that all Filipinos will enjoy a firmly rooted, comfortable, and secure life by 2040.

To achieve this goal, we need to address the issues concerned with the environmental dimension of development.

The time is ripe for rethinking the trade-offs of our development mindset, that our economic gains need not arise from ecological loss and degradation, and that the governance of our environmental systems and commons be science-based.

Sustained and committed action on climate change remains at the top of the national agenda to achieve inclusive growth, development, and sustainability for the future.

Thus, we at the NEDA have high hopes that the programs and priorities

outlined in the Philippine CCDR will accordingly inform policies and influence ongoing institutional reforms in the country.

As I have said, this report could not have come more opportune, especially as the nation has set out to track a greener and more prosperous path for the medium term.

The upcoming Philippine Development Plan 2023-2028, the country's development blueprint for the medium term, will lay out the actionable steps we can take and the projects and programs we ought to prioritize in pursuing a greener economy and more sustainable, affordable, and livable residential areas by 2028.

Examples of such priority actions will include mechanisms involving carbon pricing and incentivizing local government units to focus on more climate-friendly projects (such as electric vehicles, sustainable tourism, biodiversity protection, and energy efficiency).

As we navigate this challenging recovery, I hope for the furtherance of a governance model that can achieve a healthy balance between our desired objectives as a society.

It will require everyone's commitment – from government agencies to private sector partners and the ordinary citizen, to be engaged and determined to steer our systems toward a greener and more sustainable direction.

We must bear these considerations in mind, as no less than the welfare of future generations of Filipinos is on the line.

On that note, I would like to congratulate the team once again for this report! I look forward to the discussions that will follow.

Thank you, and good day to all.



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STOP LARGE-SCALE MINING, QUARRYING, LAND CONVERSION, TOO

GROUPS URGE MARCOS TO DO MORE THAN PLANT TREES

By **Dempsey Reyes**
and **Mariejo S. Ramos**
@Team_Inquirer

Planting trees on denuded mountains is a good move that can help prevent deadly landslides and flash floods, but President Marcos should do more to stop large-scale mining, illegal logging, quarrying and “destructive” projects that kill forests and gouge the land, progressive groups said on Wednesday.

The Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP), National Network of Agrarian Reform Advocates-Youth (Narra-Youth) and Pamalakaya were reacting to the President’s statement on Tuesday after he saw the “bald” mountains where landslides had rumbled down onto Barangay Kusiong in Datu Odin Sinsuat town in Maguindanao del Norte days earlier.

At least 22 people died in the Kusiong landslide and dozens more were feared still buried in the tons of mud, rocks and boulders that swamped the village.

Mr. Marcos said long-term flood control projects should include planting trees on those denuded mountains where Severe Tropical Storm “Paeng” (international name: Nalgae) dumped heavy rains last week.

According to KMP chair emeritus Rafael Mariano, the President should not simply state the pressing need to address climate change and initiate flood control projects “while freely allowing foreign and local big businesses to plunder our land and natural resources.”

“Climate change has been here for a long time. It even evolved into a climate crisis. Now, we are calling for climate justice. We should hold those behind this environmental destruction responsible,” the peasant leader pointed out.

He said the disappearance

of the country’s forest cover “accelerated” during the 20-year rule of the President’s father, who granted logging licenses to his cronies.

Stop land conversion

Mariano urged the President to show his willingness to address the climate crisis by ordering an immediate “effective moratorium” on land-use conversion.

Mr. Marcos should also rescind former President Rodrigo Duterte’s Executive Order No. 130, which lifted the ban on new mining agreements, Mariano said.

He said that 35 mining exploration permits were recently approved by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, which also approved the environmental compliance certificates of four other mining projects in the Caraga Region and the Zamboanga peninsula.

In a statement on Wednesday, Narra-Youth said the President’s family was allegedly responsible for “wiping out half of the Philippine forests” during his father’s administration.

“It is hypocritical of the President to suggest tree planting as a flood control measure when it is his father who allowed the destructive logging operations of his cronies,” said Narra-Youth chair Zoe Caballero in a statement.

As big as Mindanao

Citing an article from the Martial Law Museum, Caballero said these logging operations “wiped out” 8 million hectares of the country’s forests, an area about as big as Mindanao Island. Of this number, 2 million hectares were “severely damaged,” according to the article.

The group said the late dictator Marcos granted over 200 timber licensing agreements (TLAs) covering hundreds of

thousands of hectares to his cronies and allies, including retired generals, allegedly to secure their “continued loyalty” from the 1970s to the 1980s.

One TLA given to Marcos crony Alfonso Lim covered 500,000 ha, and another 200,000 ha was allegedly granted to a family member.

Narra-Youth quoted a GMA News report in 2012 on deforestation that cited a study by the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development.

Caballero said that 50 years after the Marcos dictatorship, “our forests are still recovering from the massive deforestation.”

According to a 2013 Dutch-funded study by Filipino forestry experts, the country’s forest cover decreased from 17.8 million ha, or about 60 percent of the land area in 1934, to about 7.17 million ha, or 24 percent in 2011.

The study also found that deforestation “further worsened during the Marcos regime.”

“From 1965 to 1986, the Philippines lost 7 million ha of forests. This came as a result of so many people given access to previously inaccessible areas due to logging roads and lure of employment in the logging companies,” the study said.

Caballero said the “destructive logging companies owned by Marcos cronies displaced millions of farmers and indigenous peoples from their ancestral lands.”

“Those who opposed and stood up for their rights were vilified and murdered,” she said.

Skeptical

Even the fishers’ group Pamalakaya was skeptical that the President would pursue tree planting.

It said that the fishpond lease agreement provision of his father’s Presidential Decree No. 704 led to the massive destruction of mangrove forests.

“In the 1920s, mangrove forests used to cover almost 450,000 hectares. But just two years after the PD 704 was enacted, mangrove forests drastically shrunk to 220,243 hectares due to rapid conversion of coastal areas into fishponds owned by big-fishing and exporting firms,” Ronnel Arambulo, national spokesperson of Pamalakaya, said in a statement.

Arambulo was citing findings on the country’s mangroves from the 2013 book “Mangrove Ecosystems of Asia.”

The group urged the administration to pursue mangrove reforestation as a means to prevent intense flooding caused by sea-level rise and extreme weather events related to climate change.

Lip service

“Unless Marcos Jr. recognizes that it was during his late dictator father’s term when vast tracts of mangroves and forest covers were wiped out, his statement for tree planting is nothing but pure lip service,” said Arambulo.

According to Froilyn Mendoza, a member of parliament of the Bangsamoro Transition Authority (BTA), in addition to the 22 Teduray indigenous people who died in the Kusiong landslide, there were an estimated 100 who remained missing.

She said they were among those who had evacuated to a church that was buried in the landslide near the foot of a mountain.

Mendoza, who represents the Teduray-Lambangian indigenous communities in the BTA, said the number of confirmed fatalities might be higher than 22 as they were the only ones traced at funeral homes.

Some were immediately buried by their families after their bodies were recovered from the rubble, she said. —WITH A REPORT FROM GERMELINA LACORTE INQ



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Bring back the trees to our forests



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TULFO

I REMEMBER somebody saying years ago, "We are simply killing ourselves."

He was referring to the unabated denudation of our mountain forests, as well as the land conversion of the agricultural greenery into subdivisions, commercial developments and infrastructure projects in the past decades.

In recent years, the grim reality of that statement has set upon us.

Last weekend, tropical storm Paeng's onslaught was the latest demonstration of the widespread floods and landslides resulting from forest denudation and illegal logging in protected areas.

No less than President Ferdinand Bongbong Marcos, Jr. (BBM) validated the assertion that the loss of the country's rainforests and vegetation is the cause of loss of lives, properties and livelihood.

The President and I, along with Local Government Sec. Benhur Abalos and NDRRMC officials, conducted an aerial inspection of the flooded areas, including Cavite and Maguindanao provinces over the Undas weekend.

Thousands of Filipinos have been made homeless and displaced and billions of pesos lost in damaged crops as powerful storms and typhoons hit various regions of the country every year.

It has gotten worse and worse each time.

The extent and the size of floodings have been far greater than those we experienced in previous decades.

"Noong nasa helicopter kami, nakita ko lahat ng gumuho, kalbo kasi ang mga bundok. That's the problem," PBBM said.

(When we were on the helicopter, I noticed the areas with landslides had bald mountains.)

"So we have to include tree planting in our flood control. Dapat kasama 'yan. Kung gaga-tos tayo sa flood control, kailangan mayroong tree planting," the President stressed.

(So, we have to include tree planting in our flood control. It should be included. If we spend on flood control, it should include tree planting.)

Calamities cost the government billions of pesos in funds intended for various programs and projects but have to be diverted to rehabilitation and rebuilding efforts.

PBBM declared that flood-control projects from hereon must include tree-planting.

At first, it may sound as contrived images of school children or government employees going "plantitos" as part of their clean-and-green

program.

But what the President has in mind is the massive reforestation program that will minimize the effects of heavy rains and onslaught of super typhoons that batter the islands yearly.

We must all agree with PBBM's assessment and logically there is no reason not to.

We need to bring back the trees to the mountain forests and thicken them to help absorb the massive rainwater and shield the lowland farm communities from strong winds of super typhoons.

It is high time for everyone to be aware of the need for a balanced and sustainable development.

The President has in mind the massive reforestation program that will minimize the effects of heavy rains and onslaught of super typhoons that batter the islands yearly

We need to consider seriously maintaining ecological balance which has far-reaching implications in terms of disaster-risk reduction management, agro-industrial production, and food supply.

We, at the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), are working hand in hand with the DILG, the local government units (LGUs) and accredited non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the continuing relief operations.

No bureaucracy

As DSWD Secretary, I have directed my fellow social workers to speed up the distribution of family food packs (FFP) and other essential items to evacuees, even as we appealed to good-hearted individuals to volunteer to help repack more relief goods.

I have also stressed to our staff in the DSWD central and regional Field Offices to avoid red-tape in extending various assistance, like requiring the nonsensical certificate of indigency.

It is a marching order from the President for us to immediately help our fellow Filipinos in dire need during times of calamity such as this.

I agree with PBBM it is preposterous to aggravate the hardship of our kababayans in distress situation by the requirement of more paperwork than what is necessary before a government assistance is given.



IBALIK ANG MGA PUNONG-KAHOY SA KABUNDUKAN

TULFO JUSTICE



Ni ERWIN TULFO

NATATANDAAN ko pa may nagsabi noong araw, "We are simply killing ourselves."

Ang tinutukoy nya ay ang walang patumanggang pagkakalbo ng kagubatan sa kabundukan at ang pagtatayo ng mga subdivision, shopping malls, at iba pang imprastruktura sa mga dating bukirin.

Nagkakatotoo na ang sinabi noong isang mama dahil napakarami nang namamatay at napeperwisyo dahil sa ating pang-aabuso o pagpapabaya sa kalikasan.

Ang malawakang kalamidad na dulot ng bagyong Paeng ang pinakahuling halimbawa ng bunga ng logging at pagkakalbo ng kabundukan na sanhi ng landslide o pagguho ng lupa

at pagbaha.

Si President Ferdinand Bongbong Marcos, Jr. (PBBM) mismo ang nagpahayag na ang kawalan ng kagubatan at taniman ang sanhi ng kapahamakan at pagkasalanta ng mga ari-arian at kabuhayan.

Kasama ako ng Pangulo, pati sina Local Government Sec. Benhur Abalos at NDRRMC officials sa pag-sagawa ng aerial inspections sa flooded areas sa Cavite at Maguindanao provinces noong Undas weekend.

Libu-libo ang mga Pilipino na nasisiraan ng tahanan at bilyun-bilyong piso ang inaanod ng baha sa pagkasira ng mga tanim ng mga magsasaka dahil sa pagbabagyo taun-taon.

At palala nang palala ang pinsala ng palaki nang palaking pagbabaha.

Patindi nang patindi ang pagguho at pagbaha nitong mga nakaraang taon kaysa ilang dekada ang nakakaraan.

"Noong nasa helicopter kami, nakita ko lahat ng gumuho, kalbo kasi ang mga bundok. That's the problem," sabi ni PBBM.

"So we have to include tree planting in our flood control. Dapat kasama 'yan.

Kung gagastos tayo sa flood control, kailangan mayroong tree planting," pagdidiin ng Presidente.

Napakalaki ng nagagastos sa kalamidad na hinuhugot pa sa pondo ng ibang programa at proyekto ng pamahalaan.

Kaya idineklara ni PBBM na anumang flood-control projects mula ngayon ay dapat mayroong kaakibat na tree-planting project.

Hindi yan ang klase ng tree-planting sa mga eskwelahan bilang bahagi ng kanilang clean-air-green program.

Ang hangad ni PBBM ay ang malawakan na reforestation program na pagpapatubo ng mga puno sa kabundukan na tutulong sa pagpigil sa landslide o pagguho ng lupa at sasangga sa hagupit ng hangin ng super typhoon.

Malinaw pa sa sikat ng araw na korek ang sinasabi ni PBBM.

Panahon na para matauhan ang mga tao ukol sa pagsasaalang-alang sa kalikasan.

Kailangan ng pananatili ng ecological balance na nakakaapekto sa disaster-risk reduction management, agro-industrial production,

at food supply.

Huwag na natin antayin na tuluyang malunod sa baha ang lahat ng komunidad at taniman ng ating makakain.

Samantala, kami sa Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), ay nakikipagtulungan sa DILG, local government units (LGUs) at mga accredited non-governmental organizations (NGOs) sa tuluy-tuloy na relief operations.

NO BUREAUCRACY
Bilang DSWD secretary, niliwanag ko sa ating mga kapwa fellow social workers na dapat madalim ang distribution of family food packs (FFP) at iba pang essential items sa evacuees.

Umapela na tayo sa publiko para sa mga volunteers na gustong makatulong na mag-repack ng mga relief goods.

Nilinaw ko rin sa ating staff sa DSWD central and regional field offices na iwasan ang red-tape sa pagbibigay ng assistance, tulad ng paghingi ng certificate of indigency mula sa barangay.

Iyan ang marching order ng Pangulong BBM, pabilisin ang pagtulong sa ating mga kababayan.



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Forest denudation blamed on illegal logging

BY BELLA CARIASO

ARANKING official of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) on Wednesday blamed forest denudation on illegal logging and poaching and called for tighter laws to protect the remaining forest cover.

DENR Undersecretary Jonas Leones said that while there are no logging concessions, the threat to forests remains amid the continuing poaching, encroachment and illegal logging.

"There are no logging concessions in our national forests, but we identify threats, including poaching, encroachment in our forests, conversions, *kaingin* and

illegal logging. These are the sources of income of those involved in illegal activities," Leones said in a radio interview.

On Tuesday, President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. attributed the massive landslide and flooding in Maguindanao to thinning forest covers.

Leones said that the DENR relies on the help of the Philippine

National Police and the military in going after illegal loggers.

"We need to tighten our law enforcement. Aside from the National Greening Program, we also need to protect our existing forests cover," he said.

"We are having difficulties in our law enforcement as we have no capacity to protect our forests," Leones noted, referring to the limited number of forest rangers assigned to man 15 million hectares of forests.

"President Marcos was correct in saying that the landslide in Mindanao was caused by bald mountains. The planting of trees in the mountains is an ongoing campaign of the DENR," he added.

The DENR is proposing an additional budget to protect forests.

For 2023, Leones said at least P2 billion will be allocated for the National Greening Program of the government.

As of 2022, at least 800,000 trees have been planted under the program.

"Based on our back image satellite, the forest covers increased by 6 percent, but we need to continue to protect our forests," the official said.

Leones said it takes eight to 25 years to grow trees, depending on the species.

"We need to capacitate our local government units to implement the environmental laws through the help of the Department of the Interior and Local [Government] (DILG)," he said, lamenting that enforcing environmental laws is the least priority of the LGUs.



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PBBM: Deforestation behind Maguindanao floods

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Take measures to prevent landslides, DPWH, DENR urged

By Jester Manalastas

THE Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) have been urged to make a study on how to prevent landslides in communities.

Deputy Speaker Aurelio "Dong" Gonzales Jr. made this call during his meeting with the regional officials of the two departments on measures to prevent landslides in communities around Mt. Arayat in the town of Arayat, Pampanga.

Gonzales, who represents Pampanga's third district, met with the officials after the onslaught of tropical storm "Paeng" and in preparation for the landfall of another tropical depression or storms.

He said residents of Barangay San Juan Baño have complained to him that landslides and debris flows from the summit of the mountain occur whenever there is a typhoon or heavy rain.

He appealed to the local government of Arayat and the provincial government of Pampanga to help the DPWH and the DENR prevent such occurrences in the future.

Regional officials told Gonzales that at the height of super typhoon Karding and Paeng, continuous rainfall caused landslides and debris flow from Mt. Arayat's summit.

They said the heavy downpour produced a large volume of surface runoff, generating rainwater and debris avalanches.

The Provincial Government of Pampanga ordered the creation of Mt. Arayat Community Safety Task Force to ensure the safety of residents living near Mt. Arayat.

The PDRRMC has established a Landslide Early Warning System that alerts high-risk communities through barangay-wide sirens and public address systems. MGB is continuously monitoring the area and conducting inspections and surveys.

The DPWH proposed the installation of debris flow barriers along Sapang Maeyagas creek. These barriers are composed of interlinked rings able to stop larger debris flow materials and absorb energy. Water and other small materials may pass through the system.

Other recommendations were the construction of slope protection structures, delineation and avoidance of risk areas, installation of effective early warning devices and evacuation, dredging and maintenance of original drainage and water flow, and clearing creeks.



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Rep. Gonzales asks DPWH, DENR to prevent landslides in Mt. Arayat

By RYAN PONCE PACPACO

DEPUTY Speaker Aurelio "Dong" Gonzales Jr. has met with regional officials of the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) and Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to ask them to take measures to prevent landslides in communities around Mt. Arayat in the town of Arayat, Pampanga.

Gonzales, who represents Pampanga's third district, which includes Arayat, met with the officials after the onslaught of tropical storm "Paeng" and in preparation for the landfall of tropical depression "Queenie".

He said residents of Barangay San Juan Baño have complained to him that landslides and debris flows from the summit of the mountain occur whenever there is a typhoon or heavy rain.

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The provincial government of Pampanga ordered the creation of Mt. Arayat Community Safety Task Force to ensure the safety of residents living near Mt. Arayat.

The PDRRMC has es-



Deputy Speaker Gonzales (seated, left) listens to DPWH and DENR officials discuss what measures to take to prevent landslides around Mt. Arayat

ablished a Landslide Early Warning System that alerts high-risk communities through barangay-wide sirens and public address systems. MGB is continuously monitoring the area and conducting inspections and surveys.

The DPWH proposed the installation of debris flow barriers along Sapang Maeyagas creek. These barriers are composed of inter-linked rings able to stop larger debris flow materials and absorb energy. Water and other small materials may pass through the system.

Other recommendations were the construction of slope protection structures, delineation and avoidance of risk areas, installation of effective early warning devices and evacuation, dredging and maintenance of original drainage and water flow, and clearing creeks.

Gonzales supported the measures that have already been taken by the DPWH, DENR, Arayat local government, and the Pampanga provincial government.

Those who attended the meeting included Board Member Alyssa Michaela

"Mica" Gonzales, DPWH Assistant Regional Director Denise Maria Ayag, Engr. Arthur Santos, and District Engr. Almer Miranda.

The DENR was represented by Regional Director Paquito Moreno Jr., Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Officer (PENRO) Perlita Mulato, Noel Lacadin and Renz Lazatin of MGB, and Roger Encarnacion and Romel Santiago of the PENRO office.

San Juan Baño Barangay Capt. Proilan Soriano, Kagawad Lilia Soriano, Kagawad Julie Supan, Kagawad Severino Sigua, Kagawad Noemi Magpayo, Kagawad Ricky Vicente, Kagawad Remigio Cayanan, and Kagawad June Pineda represented their community in the meeting.



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Pulong seeks nat'l policy on sustainable land use

By RYAN PONCE PACPACO

DAVAO City 1st District Representative Paolo "Pulong" Duterte has 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, demonstrates the direct impact of proper planning and use of land resources on saving people's lives.

Along with Benguet Rep. Eric Yap and two other lawmakers, Duterte has filed

House Bill (HB) No. 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.

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.

"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 [are] also vital in ensuring that we get to identify high-risk and danger-prone locations in our communities," Duterte said.

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."

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 population's growing needs for food, shelter, and jobs.

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.

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



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Duterte bats for sustainable land use

DAVAO City Rep. Paolo Duterte has 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.

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 environment sustainability.

Maricel V. Cruz



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Another national land use bill filed

Perennial floods due to typhoons is one of the many concerns that a national land use law could address via identifying danger prone areas to protect communities, Davao City Rep. Paolo Duterte said as he and some other representatives filed another bill for a national land use law. There have been several attempts over the years to pass a national land use law that would unify land policies embodied in other laws, but the attempts were repeatedly defeated due to fears over land grabbing, illegal classification conversions, tax implications and other concerns. But Duterte noted that a key aspect of having a national land use law is its importance in protecting communities from the destructive effects of climate change. In a statement on Wednesday, the lawmaker said the floods and landslides in Maguindanao caused by Tropical Storm "Paeng" (international name: Nalgae) "demonstrated the direct impact of proper planning and use of land resources on saving people's lives." Last August, Duterte, along with Representatives Eric Yap, Edvic Yap and Jeffrey Soriano, filed House Bill No. 3956, or the National Land Use Act bill, which seeks to establish clear parameters on land policies. Duterte added that a national land use policy will also aid local government units in mapping out their climate-resilient development plans. —JULIE M. AURELIO



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Army seizes illegal logs

The area, according to Iletto, is part of the Sierra Madre Mountain ranges

BY JONAS REYES

GENERAL TINIO, Nueva Ecija – At least 300 pieces of illegally-cut lumber were seized by the troops of the 84th Infantry (Victorious) Battalion of the 7th Infantry (Kaugnay) Division of the Philippine Army during a focused military operation in Barangay Rio Chico here.

84IB commanding officer Lieutenant Colonel Enrico Gil C Iletto disclosed that state troops were conducting focused military operation in the hinterlands of Barangay Rio Chico when they discovered six by 12 inches by 12 feet of good lumber on the riverbanks of Rio Chico in Barangay Sumacbao.

The area, according to Iletto, is part of the Sierra Madre Mountain ranges.

"The discovery of illegal logging activities was reported to the local government unit and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources for further conduct of anti-illegal logging operations in the area," Iletto said.

He added that most of the lumber that were cut in the area are transported by using the Rio Chico or Sumacbao River until it reaches Barangay Pias in General Tinio, or other areas where they could intercept these contrabands via trucks.

He said that it is important to augment the law enforcement operations against illegal lumber with the Philippine National Police.

"I urge those perpetrators to stop illegal logging activity or face the full force of the law," Iletto said.

To recall, 84IB troops last month apprehended 18 suspected illegal loggers in the vicinity of the same barangay and turned them over to the Gen. Tinio Police Station.

The suspects were arrested after being caught in possession of chainsaws without permits, which violates RA 9175 or the Chainsaw Act of 2022, and with more or less 5,000 board feet of illegally cut forest products.

Meanwhile, the 84IB reaffirmed its commitment in assisting other government agencies in enforcing environmental laws, rules, and regulations.

7ID commander Major General Andrew D. Costelo, meantime, stressed that they have been intensifying efforts to protect natural forest resources.



The bridges of Antique and climate change

WHILE browsing Facebook last Monday, I saw the Paliwan Bridge in Bugasong, Antique had collapsed. Its approaches were washed away so the bridge is now in the middle of a river – a scene that brings back childhood memories of my dangerous and arduous journeys through raging rivers during the rainy season.

I called up my niece in Guisujan, a barrio in the town of Lauaan next to Bugasong, just a few kilometers from Paliwan Bridge. Our conversation was brief because electricity had not been restored and her power bank was draining. Nobody could cross the rampaging waters of Paliwan River, she said.

The distance between San Jose de Buenavista, the capital town of Antique – one of the four provinces (Antique, Iloilo, Capiz and Aklan) in Panay island – and Guisujan is about 50 kilometers, crossing at least five rivers. I'm not sure about the exact number of rivers. Some may only be brooks (sapa) but they are all spanned by bridges, some short and others long.

The three known long bridges in Antique are Sibalom Pampang Bridge, made infamous by the ambush and killing of nine supporters of the late Evelio Javier, former Antique governor, on the



'...Lagmay said somebody needs to translate that rainfall amount in the future into hazard maps that will be used by communities to adapt to climate change.'

HONESTLY SPEAKING

ELLEN TORDESILLAS

eve of the 1984 parliamentary election; Cangaranan Bridge, also in Bugasong; and Paliwan Bridge.

Those bridges are now made of concrete; they used to be made of wood. Walking on those wooden planks when buses were unable to cross the river was always a scary experience for me.

Washed away bridge approaches were a common occurrence during storms and typhoons. A bridge in the middle of a river was a common sight in Antique.

Travelling was an ordeal. We would take the bus up to one river bank, take a boat or ride a raft, and take another bus on the other

side of the river. The ordeal was repeated once we reached the next river. What usually was a one-hour bus ride had become a six to eight-hour agony on the road.

One can imagine the effect of this disturbance on the economic life of the people. Aside from the scarcity of goods, prices were tripled, even tenfold.

Antique roads, with countless potholes, were "abortion highways." During the dry season, a bandana was a necessary accessory because of the dust that could turn your hair from black to white-gray.

In the past 15 to 20 years, traveling in Antique has greatly im-

proved. Roads had been asphalted or cemented (although there are places where there's a gap between cemented roads, making us suspect that part of the budget went to some people's pockets).

Antique was hit hard by typhoon Yolanda in November 2013. After that, if I remember correctly, Antiqueños had a respite from damaging storms and typhoons. Until Paeng came last weekend.

Antique Gov. Rhodora Cadio said in an interview on GMA-7 last Monday that she did not expect the province to be severely affected because it was not the center of the storm. She reported that Paeng left nine people dead. "Grabe talaga ang ulan (the rain was heavy)," she said, adding that there were places which experienced flooding for the first time.

As we are confronted with the loss of lives and damage to infrastructure and crops due to storm Paeng, we should be reminded that rain does not kill people. Do you know of anybody who died because of the rain?

Mahar Lagmay, executive director of the University of the Philippines Resilience Institute and the driving force behind Project Noah (Nationwide Operational Assess-

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THE BRIDGES

ment of Hazards), said, "Rainfall is not a hazard."

But Lagmay said somebody needs to translate that rainfall amount in the future into hazard maps that will be used by communities to adapt to climate change.

Cadio's lament was exactly what Lagmay shared with VERA Files in an interview last Friday, hours before Paeng came.

"Hindi ba kapag nagkakaroon ng mga disaster, tapos may biktima na iinterbyuhin ng media, ano ba sinasabi ng mga tao? Hindi ba commonly, sinasabi

nila ay: 'First time nangyari ito. Hindi pa binabaha dito dati. Ngayon lang namin nakita ito. Ngayon lang kami nakakita ng ganito kalaking storm surge. Ngayon lang kami nakakita ng ganito kalaking baha. Hindi pa nagkakaroon ng landslides.'"

(Isn't it that whenever there's a disaster, when a victim is interviewed by the media, what do they say? Commonly, they say: 'It's the first time that this has happened. This place had not been flooded. We experienced it just now. It's only now that we saw that huge storm surge. It's only now that we saw such massive floods. Never have we had landslides.)

Lagmay said: "It only tells us that, aba, we failed to anticipate. 'Yun lang ang (that's the) collective meaning nun, eh. Bakit lahat 'yan sinasabi nila na ngayon lang (Why are they all saying), first time, first time. It only tells us that we failed; they failed to anticipate the bigger event than what they have experienced.

"And that also tells us that we need really to change it to prepare for the bigger impacts. The impacts that will be brought about by climate change; those that are predicted by climate scientists from all over the world that can happen in the future ... and it may be happening now."

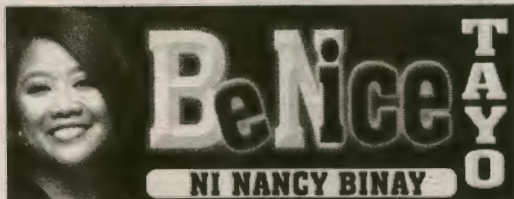


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SIMULAN NA ANG AKSYON PARA SA CLIMATE CHANGE



PINALAMLAM ng Bagyong Paeng ang sana'y masayang long weekend ng mga kababayan natin.

Matinding pinsala na naman ang dinulot ng huling bagyong ito at marami ang nangangamba pa dahil kasunod nito ang pagpasok naman ng Bagyong Queenie.

Nasa 121 kababayan natin ang pumanaw dahil sa bagyo, ayon sa ulat ng National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council.

Dagdag pa rito, umabot na sa P1.2 bilyon ang tantiyang pinsala sa agrikultura at P760 milyon naman sa imprastruktura.

Umaasa tayong mabilis na kikilos ang buong pamahalaan upang matulongang bumangon muli ang mga kababayan nating apektado.

Nasa 20 bagyo ang dinaranas ng Pilipinas sa bawat taon.

Inaasahang lalakas lalo ang mga bagyong tatama sa atin dahil sa epekto ng kasalukuyang krisis sa klima.

Kung nais nating maibsan ang epekto ng climate change at maprotektahan ang mga mahal natin sa buhay,

kinakailangang magsimula na ang masinsinang aksyon para tugunan ang mga isyu ng kalikasan.

Napakarami nang nailatag na estratehiya kung paano tayo magiging climate-resilient.

Ang kailangan, sinsero at agarang aksyon sa buong bansa, sa lahat ng antas ng pamahalaan at lipunan.

Paalala lamang sa lahat na patuloy pa ring mag-ingat sa paglabas ng bahay, magsuot ng face mask, ugaliing maghugas ng mga kamay, bigyang-halaga ang kalusugan at huwag kalilimutang magdasal.

Malalagpasan din natin ito.
Be Safe. Be Well. Be Nice!

Kung mayroon kayong nais idulog o ipaabot sa inyong abang lingkod, maaari kayong sumulat sa BE NICE TAYO ni Sen. Nancy Binay, BULGAR Bldg., 538 Quezon Ave., Quezon City o mag-email sa benicetayo@gmail.com.

Paalala lamang na sana ay isama ninyo sa inyong mga liham ang inyong contact number upang mas madali namin kayong mapaglingkuran. Always Be Nice!

FOLLOW US!

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Groups push mangrove reforestation as coastal defense

By DANESSA RIVERA
and ELIZABETH MARCELO

Several groups are pushing for mangrove reforestation for coastal defense while urging government to stop land-use conversion, destructive mining and infrastructure projects to address flooding, especially during typhoons.

In a statement yesterday, militant fishers' group Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (Pamalakaya) urged the Marcos administration to pursue reforestation of mangroves as a measure to prevent intense flooding caused by sea-level rise, devastating storm surges and other threats of climate change.

"The destruction of mangrove forests
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Groups From Page 1

exposes fishing families to damaging floods and storm surges. Mangroves are vital to marine ecosystem and biodiversity as they serve as fish sanctuaries, pollution filters and defense for coastal communities," Pamalakaya national spokesman Ronnel Arambulo said.

The group said it was under President Marcos' late father's regime when mangrove forests were wiped out in favor of massive conversion of coasts into fishpond areas, which culture aquatic species for export.

Enacted in 1975, Marcos Sr.'s Presidential Decree 704

allowed massive destruction of mangrove forests through its Fishpond Lease Agreement provision.

"In the 1920s, mangrove forests used to cover almost 450,000 hectares. But just two years after the PD 704 was enacted, mangrove forests drastically shrunk to 220,243 hectares due to rapid conversion of coastal areas into fishponds owned by big-fishing and exporting firms. Unless Marcos Jr. recognizes that it was during his late dictator father's term when vast tracts of mangroves and forest covers were wiped out, his

statement for tree planting is nothing but pure lip service," Arambulo said.

But more than tree planting, government should stop environmentally destructive projects such as large-scale mining, quarrying and land reclamation activities to restore the environment.

"Environmental protection is more than just tree planting and recognizing the climate crisis; it is taking concrete steps to protect our natural resources against destructive and profit-driven activities such as reclamation and land-use conversion," Arambulo said.

"For starters, the Marcos administration can openly reject reclamation projects in

Manila Bay and instead restore its mangrove forests and seagrasses that were cleared for reclamation and conversion over the years," he added.

In the same vein, Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP) also said the "administration must rein in and decisively stop large-scale mining operations, illegal logging, quarrying and other destructive projects."

KMP chairman emeritus Rafael Mariano said preservation of forests should start with an effective moratorium on land-use conversion projects and the rescinding of former president Rodrigo Duterte's Executive Order 130 that lifted the ban on new

mining agreements.

The group said the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) is said to be fast-tracking the approval process of mining projects in Caraga and Zamboanga peninsula involving Earth Tools and Development Corp., Holcim Resources and Development Corp., CEKAS Development Corp. and the TVI Resource Development Philippines Inc.

The agency also recently approved at least 35 mining explorations permits.

KMP also called for significant relief and rehabilitation efforts for flood victims - farmers from hard-hit provinces of Quezon, Panay, Negros

Occidental and Cagayan Valley and fisherfolk from Aklan and Cavite.

The group likewise called on the national and local governments to be thoroughly transparent on the utilization of calamity funds and quick response funds.

Based on annual Commission on Audit (COA) reports, the annual utilization rate of available calamity funds is below 60 percent.

The farmers' group said it will ask Congress to exercise its oversight function to probe if the calamity funds are conscientiously disbursed. - With Sheila Crisostomo, Rainier Allan Ronda, Delon Porcalla, Cecille Suerte Felipe



EDITORIAL

Enhancing disaster management

Contrary to the claim of Maguindanao local officials, the country's geohazard map clearly shows in red the areas prone to landslides in the province, now gerrymandered into two, as well as the rest of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

Science Secretary Renato Solidum pointed this out amid reports that residents of coastal communities in Maguindanao were evacuated from the shores to avoid possible storm surges or tsunamis that might be spawned by Severe Tropical Storm Paeng. The evacuees were brought to higher ground, where they ran smack into deadly mudslides unleashed by days of incessant rain even before Paeng made landfall.

The mudslide area is marked in red in the geohazard map that can be accessed on government websites, according to Solidum, a geologist. Rainfall warnings, color-coded for easier understanding, are also issued regularly during weather disturbances, he said.

Certain disaster mitigation protocols are associated with the color-coded warnings. The question is whether local government units are aware of the protocols, or even bother to study the geohazard maps, which also specify areas prone to earthquakes and flooding.

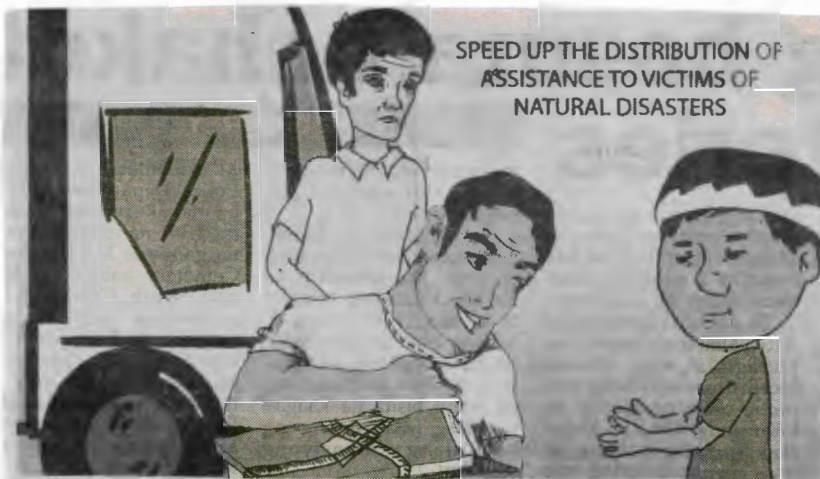
Even if local government officials do not scrutinize the geohazard maps in their areas of jurisdiction, there are localized disaster risk reduction and management councils that are supposed to have personnel tasked to study such maps and coordinate with government officials for

appropriate responses.

With the death toll soaring to over 110 from Paeng, a weather disturbance that was not even categorized as a typhoon, various agencies involved in disaster management should get together for improved coordination and information dissemination on the risks associated with natural calamities.

The creation of a new department of disaster resiliency, with all the additional costs it will entail, will not resolve these problems of disorganization in disaster response. There are local government units that will continue to act like independent republics, without bothering to review available geohazard maps that can serve as guideposts in drawing up plans for disaster preparedness. Many LGU officials move swiftly only in placing disaster-hit areas under a state of calamity because it speeds up the release of public funds.

Government scientists may have to conduct additional training or upskilling for personnel of disaster management councils, not only on the proper use of geohazard maps but also to finesse protocols on responses to rainfall alerts, which are different from typhoon warnings that are based on wind speeds. A typhoon can bring destructive winds but not enough heavy rainfall. A storm may not have such powerful winds, but can bring torrential amounts of rainfall within a short period, as Ondoy did in September 2009, spawning catastrophic flooding. Paeng, also classified as a storm, should offer lessons in enhancing disaster management.



EDITORIAL

Aid distribution

CONCERNED government authorities would do well to speed up the distribution of assistance to victims of natural disasters in various parts of the Philippines.

This after President Marcos himself lamented reports that in some areas, disaster victims need to secure "stubs" or "tickets" first before they are given relief goods.

Marcos made the statement last Tuesday in a speech at the Datu Odin Sinsuat in Maguindanao del Norte, one of the provinces hit hard by "Tropical Storm Paeng."

Accompanied by Maguindanao government officials, President Marcos conducted an aerial inspection of the areas devastated by landslides and flash floods in Mindanao.

He thumbed down this "condition" (securing stubs) set by some local government units, explaining that "it's important to fast-track the distribution of aid" to victims.

"Ano kung ma-doble? Bigay niyo na lahat... Yayaman ba ang tao na maka-doble ng food pack? Hindi yayaman. There's no such thing as sobrang relief goods," the President added.

We share the view of President Marcos that there's that urgent need to improve the current SOP (standard operating procedure) in the distribution of aid to the needy.

There are even complaints that unscrupulous local government officials, notably barangay authorities, favor their relatives, friends and partymates in the distribution of relief goods.

"Mabuti na lang at nagsalita na si Pangulong Marcos. Siguro naman ay mahihiya na ang mga opisyal na ito. Wala munang politika dahil malayo pa ang 2025," a jobless carpenter said.

Is that clear?



Underwater 'inferno' ravages corals

MARSEILLE: In the temperate shallows of the Mediterranean, once-vibrant red and purple coral forests that provide a crucial haven for biodiversity now stand bleached and brittle, transformed into skel-

etons by record summer temperatures, scientists say.

Holding naked branches of gorgonian coral, Tristan Estaque of marine conservation group Septentrion Environnement is returning

despondent from an exploratory dive off the coast of Marseille in southern France.

"It is heartbreaking, the deterioration is so fast," he told Agence France-Presse. **➤CoralsA8**

■ CORALS FROM A1

Underwater

Dive surveys just two months earlier found an intact landscape, lush with violet-fringed fans of a gorgonian coral.

Now it is a "ghost forest," Estaque said, with the majestic fans largely bare of living tissue.

"You have to imagine a tree where there are no more leaves, no more bark."

Fragile forests

Gorgonian corals, which have flexible skeletons encrusted with polyps, are found across the planet.

Those found in the Mediterranean are said to create "forests," sheltering a huge array of species.

But they are acutely vulnerable to human activities.

Fishing nets, anchors and careless divers can rip their delicate structures, while exposure to continuous and intense heat can be lethal.

Marine heat waves are becoming more common, according to a report this year by UN climate experts.

This summer a major marine heat wave hit the western Mediterranean, with water up to 5 degrees Celsius hotter than normal, according to Mercator Ocean International, the organization that runs the European ocean monitoring service.

In some places, water reached 30 C. Recent Septentrion Environnement

surveys have shown that between 70 percent and 90 percent of the red gorgonian population in the 10 to 20-meter zone off Marseille have since died.

The effect was like "an underwater inferno," according to Solene Basthard-Bogain, another of the group's specialists.

And it is not just near the southern French coast.

Gorgonian mortality has also been observed on the Spanish coasts and around the Italian island of Sardinia, according to Stephane Sartoretto of the French research agency Ifremer.

The severity of the impact appears to vary depending on the depth of the corals.

Along the sawtooth coastline of France's Calanques National Park, notched with craggy coves and shallow habitats where the gorgonians are found in waters of just 6 meters (20 feet) in places, the die-offs have been particularly intense.

In the Balearic Islands, they live deeper, at 40 meters, and were, therefore, less impacted, Sartoretto says.

'Forest fire'

In addition to the gorgonians, sponges and bivalves have also been affected.

The marine heat wave likewise battered mussel farming, with 150 tons of commercial mussels and 1,000 tons of young stock — for next year's crop — lost in Spain over the summer.

AFP



ANGAT DAM BAHAGYANG TUMAAS ANG LEBEL NG TUBIG DULOT NI TYPHOON PAENG

AYON kay Dr Seville David Jr., Executive Director ng NWRB o National Water Resources Board, umakyat ng 8 meters ang lebel ng tubig sa Angat Dam na umabot na sa 197.8 meters mula sa dating 189 meters matapos ang malakas na ulan sa Metro Manila at kapalit na mga lalawigan ng Bulacan at Rizal si Typhoon Paeng (Nalgae) nitong huling weekend ng October 2022.

Nitong October 29, 2022 ay unang tumama si Paeng sa Virac, Catanduanes, sumunod sa Caramoan at Siruma sa Camarines Sur; sa Buena Vista at Sariaya, Quezon; Santa Cruz, Marinduque; at sa Baliuag, Bulacan. Sa pagdaan nito sa pagitan ng Metro Manila at mga lalawigan ng Laguna at Rizal ay direktang nagbuhos ito ng tubig ulan sa An-

gat Dam, kaya may pagtaas ng level ng tubig.

Magandang balita ito sa mga nasa Greater Manila Area na umaasa ng tubig buhat sa Angat Dam, lalo na ngayong Kapaskuhan kung saan tumataas ang pangangailangan sa tubig dulot ng kaliwa't kanang paghahanda para sa Pasko at Bagong Taon.

Ang malungkot lamang, malawak ang naging pinsalang iniwan ni Paeng sa ating bansa. Naapektihan nito ang 68 probinsiya, 620 cities at municipalities, at 5,466 Barangays.

Ayon sa pinakahuling ulat ng National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC), nasa 2.03 million indibidwal ang appektado ng bagyo at 618,817 pamilya, nasa 101 na ang nasawi pinakamarami sa Maguindanao, nasa 70 ang sugatan, at nasa 60 ang patuloy na pinaghahanap pa.

Bagamat gusto natin na mapanatiling mataas ang lebel ng tubig sa Angat Dam, hindi naman sana sa ganitong paraan na maraming buhay ang nasasayang at maraming kabuhayan ang nasisira.

Agad na tumugon ang Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) Auxiliary sa panawagan ng PCG TASK FORCE KALINGA para matulungan ang mga pamilyang naapektuhan ng Bagyong #PaengPH.

Kahung-kahong donasyon ang dumating sa Coast Guard Base Farola na nagsisilbi bilang tanggapan ng mga relief supplies na ibibyahe ng mga barko, air asset, at land vehicle ng PCG.

Sa mga nais magpahatid ng donasyon, makipag-ugnayan lamang sa PCG Civil Relations Service gamit ang mga sumusunod na contact details:

E-mail: cgcrcs2022@gmail.com

Facebook: Coast Guard Civil Relations Service

Mobile: 0977-496-6811 / 0977-496-6810



Editorial **EDITORIAL** *Editorial*

BASURA, SAKIT SA ULO MULA NOON HANGGANG NGAYON

S ANGKATUTAK na basura na naman ang nakolekta sa mga sementeryo nitong Undas.

Ayon sa Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA), nakapuno sila ng pitong trak ng mga basura sa iba't ibang libingan sa Metro Manila.

Katumbas nito ang 24.2 tonelada o 85.2 cubic meters ng basura at nagpapatuloy pa ang paglilinis sa mga sementeryo.

Tuwing may kaganapan sa bansa, kung saan nagkakatipon ang publiko, palaging paalala ng kinauukulan na maging responsable at kasama na riyang usapin sa basura.

Batid naman natin ang grabeng epekto ng basura, lalo na kapag panahon ng bagyo. Ito ang isa sa mga nagpapalala ng baha.

Kung lahat lang sana ay kayang iwasan o makapagbawas ng basura, napakalaking tulong nito. Ganundin ang wastong pagtatapon ng basura.

Turuan natin ang mga bata na sa kanilang murang edad ay maging responsable sa basura, ipaunawa ang kahalagahan nito at siyempre mas madali nila itong matututunan kung nakikita sa ating nakatatanda.



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NEWS

4 regions under state of calamity

President Marcos has placed four regions under a state of calamity following the damage caused by Severe Tropical Storm "Paeng" (Nalgae) last week. Proclamation No. 84 declares such a status in Calabarzon (Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal and Quezon), Bicol, Western Visayas and the Bangsamoro regions. A price freeze on basic commodities automatically takes effect in these areas. —STORY

BY NESTOR CORRALES AND FRANCES MANGOSING

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PRICE FREEZE IN EFFECT; DEATH TOLL AT 121

MARCOS PLACES 4 'PAENG'-HIT REGIONS UNDER STATE OF CALAMITY

By Nestor Corrales
and Frances Mangosing
@Team_Inquirer

President Marcos on Wednesday placed four regions heavily hit by Severe Tropical Storm "Paeng" (international name: Nalgae) under a state of calamity for six months.

Under Proclamation No. 84, the President declared a state of calamity in Regions IV-A (Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal and Quezon), V or Bicol (Albay, Camarines Norte, Camarines Sur, Catanduanes, Masbate, and Sorsogon), VI or Western Visayas (Aklan, Antique, Capiz, Guimaras, Iloilo and Negros Occidental), and the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao or BARMM (Basilan, Lanao del Sur, Maguindanao del Norte, Maguindanao del Sur, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi), noting that 1.4 million people were affected in these areas.

On Wednesday, the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) reported more deaths from the flooding and landslides caused by Paeng, raising the number of fatalities to 121 from 112 on Tuesday. More than half or 61 of these deaths were from the BARMM.

Rescuers also continued to search for 36 missing individuals.

The storm's damage to the agriculture sector has also more than doubled to P2.74 billion as of Tuesday from the Department of Agriculture's earlier estimate of P1.33 billion. Affected were 74,944 farmers and fishers in the ravaged regions.

Mr. Marcos said the declaration of a state of calamity would hasten the government and the private sector's rescue, recovery, relief and rehabilitation efforts and would control the prices of basic commodities.

Price freeze

Under Republic Act No. 10121 or the Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act, a price ceiling is imposed on basic necessities and prime commodities such as rice, eggs, meat, canned goods, cooking oil, and household fuel during a state of calamity. (See related story on Page A5.)

The President added that the declaration would allow the national government and local government units (LGUs) to use appropriate funds for relief and

rehabilitation programs.

A state of calamity also authorizes the reprogramming of funds for the repair of public infrastructure and facilities; enforces a stricter monitoring of overpricing/profitteering and hoarding of basic commodities; and gives access to the affected sectors to no-interest loans from state-owned financial institutions and agencies.

Mr. Marcos ordered concerned government offices to coordinate with LGUs "to provide or augment the basic services and facilities of affected areas."

He said law enforcement agencies, with the support of the military, should also ensure peace and order in areas placed under a state of calamity.

Under his proclamation, the President said he might place other areas under a state of calamity "if warranted, taking into consideration the continuing damage assessment in affected areas and based on the recommendation of the NDRRMC and the conditions provided by law and issuances."

Relief funds

Outside of the four regions covered by the presidential proclamation, some LGUs have declared a state of calamity in their jurisdictions.

In Metro Manila, Muntinlupa was put under a state of calamity on Oct. 31 due to the effects of Paeng.

According to local government assessments and reports, eight out of the nine barangays in the city were flooded and as of Nov. 2, 13 out of 25 risk areas were still submerged in water.

A total of 5,000 individuals were affected and brought to evacuation centers, including 1,200 families. There were also two recorded casualties.

The City Health Office likewise noted an increase in cases of respiratory infections such as tuberculosis, pneumonia and other water-borne diseases due to their high transmissibility in evacuation centers and flooded areas.

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.



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MARCOS PLACES 4 'PAENG'-HIT REGIONS UNDER STATE OF CALAMITY

FROM A2

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.

On Monday, Mr. Marcos said a nationwide state of calamity was not needed as the damage caused by Paeng was not extensive and was "highly localized."

The NDRRMC earlier recommended a yearlong state of national calamity following Paeng's wrath.

"I don't think it's necessary. I came to that conclusion in consultation with the DENR (Department of Environment and Natural Resources). The [damage was] not extensive and [was] highly localized," he said when asked about the NDRRMC's recommendation.

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

Slim survival chance

At the Laging Handa briefing on Wednesday, the Army's

6th Infantry Division chief, Maj. Gen. Rey Galido, whose jurisdiction includes BARMM, said there was a slim chance of finding survivors in the village of Kusiong in Datu Odin Sinsuat in Maguindanao, where dozens of houses were buried by a landslide from heavy rains even before Paeng lashed the country.

"The chances of survivors in this landslide incident are minimal already," he noted.

Galido said they were looking for four more residents from Kusiong, although records from the NDRRMC showed there were 17 people missing across Maguindanao.

Aside from search and rescue operations, the military in the area is also assisting in the distribution of relief goods to inaccessible areas such as in some parts of Sultan Kudarat and Maguindanao, he said.

The number of affected people in 73 provinces have likewise crossed the 3 million mark, with around 869,000 people displaced from their homes. More than 11,000 houses were reported damaged by the storm.

The cost of damage to infrastructure slightly increased from P760 million to P896 million, the NDRRMC said. —WITH

REPORTS FROM ANGEL YABUT, JORDEENE B. LAGARE AND INQUIRER RESEARCH INQ



Blue whales eat 10 million pieces of microplastic a day – study

By AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

PARIS, France – Blue whales consume up to 10 million pieces of microplastic every day, research estimated Tuesday, suggesting that the omnipresent pollution poses a bigger danger to the world's largest animal than previously thought.

The tiny fragments of plastic have been found everywhere from the deepest oceans to the highest mountains, and even inside human organs and blood.

Now a modelling study published in the journal *Nature Communications* has estimated how much is being ingested by whales.

A US-led research team put tags on 191 blue, fin and humpback whales that live off the coast of California to observe their movements.

"It's basically like an Apple Watch, just on the back of a whale," said Shirel Kahane-Rapport, a researcher at California State University, Fullerton and the study's first author.

The whales mostly fed at depths of between 50 to 250 meters (165-820 feet), which is home to the "greatest concentration of microplastics in the water column," Kahane-Rapport told AFP.

The researchers then estimated the size and number of mouthfuls the whales had daily and what was filtered out, modelling three different scenarios.

Under the most likely scenario, the blue whales ate up to 10 million microplastic pieces a day.



THE RESEARCHERS attach a tag to the back of a blue whale off the coast of California. (AFP)

Over the 90-120 day annual feeding season, that represents more than a billion pieces a year.

The largest animal ever to live on Earth is also likely the biggest microplastic consumer, eating up to 43.6 kilograms a day, the study said.

"Imagine carrying around an extra 45 kilograms – yes, you're a very big whale, but that will take up space," Kahane-Rapport said.

Humpback whales were estimated to eat around four million pieces a day.

While it is easy to imagine whales sucking in vast amounts of microplastics as they gulp their way through the ocean, the researchers found that was not the case.

Instead, 99 percent of the microplastics entered the whales because they were already inside their prey.

"That's concerning for us," Kahane-Rapport said, because humans eat that prey.

"We also eat anchovies and sardines," she said, adding that "krill is the basis of the food web."

Previous research has shown that if krill are in a tank with microplastic, "they will eat it," Kahane-Rapport said.

Now that the researchers know how much microplastic is being consumed by whales, next they aim to determine how much harm it could be doing.

"The dose defines the poison," Kahane-Rapport said.



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NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

On the **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA) REPORT** of the proposed **Dakak Golf Course Project** of **Dakak Golf Club, Inc.** located in **Barangay Taguilon, Dapitan City, Zamboanga del Norte**.

Notice is hereby given to all parties who wish to give their opinion regarding the implementation of the proposed **Dakak Golf Course Project** to attend Public Hearing that is scheduled as follows:

Date	Time	Venue
17 November 2022	9:00 AM (Registration starts at 8:30 AM)	Barangay Covered Court, Taguilon, Dapitan City, Zamboanga del Norte

This Public Hearing is being conducted in connection with the **Dakak Golf Club, Inc.** applications for Environmental Compliance Certificate (ECC). The Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) of the aforementioned project is being reviewed by the Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

The following is the project information:

Proponent	Dakak Golf Club Inc.
Project Name	Dakak Golf Course Project
Project Location	Barangay Taguilon, Dapitan City, Zamboanga del Norte
Components	18-hole Golf Course, Irrigation/Artificial Lakes, Cart Path, Club House, Tea Houses, driving range, maintenance building
Rationale	To develop an 18-hole PGA standard Golf Resort in Dakak Park and Beach Resort, located in Barangay Taguilon, Dapitan City on the western part of Mindanao with world-class amenities catering to the refined taste and preference of high-end global tourists. Filipinos are also developing a real taste for high quality lifestyle that combines wonderful living standards set within a healthy and natural environment.

All interested parties who wish to attend or participate in this Public Hearing should preferably confirm their attendance/ participation and may give their opinion(s) in a concise position paper submitted to the **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT DIVISION (EIAMD)** of this Office through email or cia@emb.gov.ph, three (3) days before the Public Hearing schedule. Those who will not be able to register or submit written positions may be given the opportunity to share their issues on the day of the hearing itself.

The project's EIS and Executive Summary for the Public are downloadable at our website: www.cia.emb.gov.ph (kindly access the Notice of Public Hearing/Consultation link found in our website) while copies will be available in the following offices:

EMB Region IX
Tugas, Balangasan, Pagadian City

Barangay Taguilon Hall
Barangay Taguilon, Dapitan City, Zamboanga del Norte

PENRO Zamboanga del Norte
Sta. Filomena, Dipolog City, Zamboanga del Norte
(065) 212 - 6750

Dapitan City Hall
Junction Polo-Dapitan Park National Rd, Dapitan City,
Zamboanga del Norte

For more details, please contact the EIAMD Division at this Office at telephone numbers (02) 8539 4378 local 116 and look for the project case handler **Engr. Joel G. Polintan** at email: joel_polintan@emb.gov.ph or **Engr. George Silvederio** at email: george_silverderio@emb.gov.ph.