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DENR

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DENR identifies 9 M hectares of potential mining areas

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has identified nine million hectares of potential mining areas in the country as it vowed to boost the industry to help the country recover from the economic setback that started when the Covid-19 pandemic broke out.

Lawyer Jonathan Leones, DENR undersecretary for policy, planning and interna- ► 12

DENR identifies 9 M hectares of potential mining areas 1◀

tional affairs, said of the nine million hectares already identified by the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB), less than three percent were awarded mining contracts.

"Since we are among the most highly mineralized country in the world, our priority is to build both a strategic and responsible industry," said Leones in a speech he delivered on behalf of Environment Secretary Maria Antonia Yulo Loyzaga at the 48th Philippine Business Conference and Expo, hosted by the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

"The MGB will vigorously promote the development of mineral processing and value-adding enterprises while at the same time intensifying the enforcement of environmental safeguards and targeting social development components in mining operations to address vulnerabilities," he added.

Leones said the DENR will review mining laws, including small-scale mining, to ensure standards are updated and the provision of implementing rules and regulations take full advantage of remote sensing and innovation in artificial intelligence.

Under the Mineral Investment Promotion Program, the DENR will address illegal mining through the assessment and declaration of "Minahang Bayan" areas where small-scale mining will be confined and regulated.

He said the DENR will also under-

take geological survey and mapping to populate the geoscientific and mineral information database, as well as rehabilitation and remediation of 11 abandoned mines to address the persistent misinformation that has stigmatized the mining industry.

Other policy directions in the mining sector, according to Leones, include the design of mineral extraction models with minimal environmental footprints, identification of new mineral reserves and the use of technological support for decision making, bidding out of national government mining assets such as those under the Philippine Mining Development Corporation, development and expansion of roads, power and other infrastructure support to mineralized areas through the Department of Public Works and Highways, construction of modular mineral processing plants such as those for steel and nickel, conduct of studies of mine rehabilitation, reuse of mining waste and tailings and acid mine grain management, and integration of small scale mining sector into the industry.

He said the agency will also ensure mining firms will strictly implement their respective safety and health program, environmental protection and enhancement program, final mine rehabilitation and decommissioning plan, and social development management. (Aaron B. Recuenco)



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DENR sets 'Minahang Bayan' strategy

By Rio N. Araja
and Maricel V. Cruz

THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) is aiming to boost the potential of the mining sector to support the country's economic growth under the Marcos Jr.'s administration through the agency's 'Minahang Bayan' plan.

Camarines Sur Rep. Luis Raymond Villafuerte on Thursday backed the DENR's plan to declare more "Minahang Bayan" areas as a more effective means of monitoring small-scale mining operations and better protecting the environment.

Undersecretary for Policy, Planning and International Affairs Jonas Leones said the DENR's Mines and Geosciences Bureau has initially identified approximately nine million hectares as potential mineral areas.

Out of the 9 million hectares of potential mineral areas, only less than 3 percent are awarded as mining contracts, he said.

"Since we are among the most highly mineralized country in the world, our priority is to build both a strategic and responsible industry," he said.

The DENR would review mining laws, including small-scale mining, to ensure that standards are updated and that the provision of the implementing rules and regulations takes full advantage of remote sensing and innovation in artificial intelligence.

Under the Mineral Investment Promotion Program, Leones said the DENR would address illegal mining, particularly small scale-mining operations through the assessment and declaration of the 'Minahang Bayan' areas where small-scale mining would be confined and regulated.



Gov't urged to declare Davao region mining-free zone

BY GERARD NAVAL

THE Archdiocese of Davao and its suffragan dioceses are calling on the national government to declare the entire Davao region as a mining-free zone to improve the country's protection of the environment for the welfare of the next generations.

In a joint statement, the Archdiocese of Davao as well as the dioceses of Digos, Tagum, and Mati urged lawmakers to swiftly pass pending bills ridding the entire Davao region of mining operations.

In particular, the prelates called for the passage of proposed House Bill seeking to declare the entire province of Davao Oriental as a mining-free zone.

The statement was signed by Davao Archbishop Romulo Valles, Davao Auxiliary Bishop George Rimando, Digos Bishop Guillermo Afable, Tagum Bishop Medil Aseo, and Mati Bishop Abel Apigo.

"In this sacred and morally-binding context, we express our hope, our plea, indeed, our demand, that we all should care for the environment from which we derive our existence. In the mighty name of the Creator God, pass a law declaring the province of Davao Oriental and other Davao region provinces a mining-free zone," said the Davao bishops.

"We, the DaDiTaMa (Davao, Digos, Tagum, Mati) bishops, clergy, religious men and women, pastoral directors, and lay coordinators support the statement of the Diocese of Mati calling for the protection of the Common Home in support (of) the House Bill 1124," they also said.

"It (bill) says that mining shall be pro-

hibited within the province of Davao Oriental, both large scale and small-scale mining including quarrying," they noted.

Similarly, the bishops urged the Senate to come up with its version of HB 1124.

"(This shall) fast track the protection of the province of Davao Oriental and other Davao Region provinces from mining activities," they said.

The bishops said they are issuing the call as the Davao region has not been spared from the "unprecedented destruction of the environment" brought about by various destructive activities, including mining.

This, they said, include logging activities, oceans filled with filth from human waste and garbage, rivers quickly drying up from quarrying, air that is unbreathable due to coal fired power plants fuming toxins, aquatic creature dying from our plastic garbage, and mountains flattened by mining activities.

"We cannot, in our conscience, allow these destructions to go on without staging a staunch defense for and (on) behalf of our common home," said the bishops.

"As stewards of the environment, we should be acting as keepers of our common home, exercising an intergenerational responsibility that we must all embrace, not only in the name of the present generation but also in the name of generations yet unborn," they said.

Citing records of the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB), the prelates said there are a total of 39 mining permits granted within the region to several mining companies, including 19 mineral production sharing agreement, four exploration permits, and 12 "minahang" bayan permits.



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Why international climate summits are doomed to fail

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YEN MAKABENTA

two-part article written for the Heritage Foundation by Heritage fellow Katie Tubb, which was reprinted by the Epoch Times on Nov. 4 and 6, 2022. She examined at length the international climate summits organized by the United Nations, and raised little hope of success for the 27th Conference of the Parties (COP27) in Egypt, which opened on Sunday, November 6. ► **MakabentaA5**



MAKABENTA FROM A1

Why international climate summits are doomed to fail

From many years of monitoring and researching the climate change debate, I consider Ms. Tubb's article as the most penetrating and persuasive critique of the international climate summitry organized by the UN. As a matter of policy, however, the UN does not answer or acknowledge criticism of its climate activities and agenda.

1. Aspirations untethered from reality
Representatives from some 190 countries will meet in Egypt for two weeks starting November 6 to [deliver] for people and the planet" at COP27, the UN Conference of the Parties annual summit on climate change policy.

The predominant message at these climate conferences is one of "catastrophic" global warming necessitating policies to reduce anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions drastically.

COP27 in Egypt will likely be no different, even though last year's conference in Glasgow, Scotland, was heralded by the United Nations and the popular press as "one minute to midnight," "literally the last chance," with "no more time to hang back," and any number of other "emergency mode" warnings to catalyze "maximum ambition — from all countries on all fronts."

Member nations of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) have met for these Conferences of the Parties since the first one in Berlin in 1995. These summits aim to establish a common understanding of global warming as an emergency, agree upon broad policy objectives, and enforce the Paris Agreement of 2015.

During the 2015 Paris meetings, governments agreed to "reach global peaking of greenhouse gas emissions as soon as possible ... and to undertake rapid reductions thereafter" in a bid to limit global temperature increases to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. To that end, more than 40 countries — including the United States, Great Britain and members of the European Union — have established policies attempting to force massive transitions of their energy sectors and economies to "net-zero" greenhouse gas emissions by mid-century.

Despite clear success in defining and propagating a narrative of alarm in the media and in politics, and the general awareness of Western populations, it's fair to say that nearly three decades of COP meetings have not accomplished much in the way of their stated objective to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions globally.

Setting aside relevant questions about the degree to which anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions drive warming, global emissions have only continued to increase since the first COP in Berlin in 1995.

To put the Paris Agreement goals in perspective, carbon dioxide emissions from energy production and use (the overwhelming majority of man-made emissions) declined more than 5 percent in 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandem-

ic and government responses to it. Those caused a historic retraction in economic activity and mobility, and consequently, in demand for oil, natural gas and coal.

Despite the recession, global emissions still increased in 2020.

It appears that global carbon dioxide emissions in 2022 will again exceed pre-pandemic levels. The UN estimates that greenhouse gas emissions will continue to rise even if countries fully meet their Paris Agreement commitments.

The UN and the World Meteorological Society estimate that countries' pledged emissions reductions "[need] to be ... seven times higher" to meet the Paris Agreement goal. A report from the meteorological society concludes: "We are still nowhere near the scale and pace of emission reductions required."

Government representatives who supported the radical changes heralded at COPs and enshrined in the Paris Agreement have tried to be optimistic as COP27 begins. They emphasize the net-zero emissions policies and exorbitant spending announced by many Western governments to inhibit access to conventional energy and force a transition to alternatives.

It's one thing to intend to do something, but another entirely to actually do it. A radical energy transition is far from a foregone conclusion.

For example, the International Energy Agency's annual "Tracking Clean Energy Progress" report considers only two components (electric car sales and lighting) of 55 technology and infrastructure components "on track" for a net-zero energy transition.

Yet even with electric car sales — one of those "on track" components — political aspirations and timetables are already starting to hit the road of reality. The International Energy Agency estimates that politicians' aspirations for EV deployment under the Paris Agreement imply a 30-fold increase in demand for minerals used in EV batteries by 2040.

Policy 'gamble'

Baked into many governments' net-zero policies are similar leaping assumptions about the technological readiness, affordability and deployment of adequate replacements for conventional fuels. They presume massive market shifts in multitrillion-dollar sectors of global economic activity as large as the transportation, industrial and petrochemical sectors — free of political constraints and trade-offs.

Net-zero transition plans are more appropriately understood as a policy "gamble" that replacement energy technologies will be sufficiently available on political timelines. That gamble shows no sign of paying off.

Despite the aspirational policies attempting to define a transition away from conventional fuels, actions speak louder than words. Countries are showing every day that they are more interested in

affordable energy than in paying a green premium. That's proving particularly true in light of the energy-price crisis, whether considering China's interest in buying Russian oil, or climate warrior Germany's decision to hold onto coal.

If the purpose of Conference of Party summits is to instigate rapid reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, they have failed.

Where they have been successful is in giving politicians leeway under the cloak of supposed impending catastrophe to centrally plan the energy sector and entire economies. They have also been successful in absolving those politicians of accountability for the consequences of those policies.

But with a global energy crisis in large part created and inflamed by the net-zero policies championed at these summits and enshrined in the Paris Agreement, even that "success" may [finally] be wearing thin.

2. Mobility of poor depends on energy

Here's a reality-framing statement for the roughly 190 countries at the COP 27 climate summit in Egypt: global carbon dioxide emissions in 2022 appear to be higher than pre-pandemic levels, again, and yet, according to the UN, greenhouse gas emissions must be reduced 43 percent (relative to 2019 levels) by 2030.

Why is the Conference of the Parties 27 in Egypt likely destined for failure as the summits before it were?

Two-thirds of carbon dioxide emissions growth is coming from developing countries — and for good reason. While many Western nations have enjoyed relatively uninhibited access to energy for more than a century, people in developing countries lack reliable and affordable — or in some cases, any — access to heat, power and transportation energy.

The demand for reliable, affordable energy is only increasing globally.

An estimated 940 million people around the globe do not have access to any electricity, and roughly 3 billion are without clean cooking fuel.

Lack of access to affordable electricity and fuel has various and wide-ranging consequences. For example, as the World Bank reported in 2013, "more firms cited electricity as a major constraint to doing business than any other factor in nearly [4 out of every 10] client countries for the World Bank Group."

A provocative — and productive — essay by Vaclav Smil further demonstrates the challenge:

"[I]n 2020, the average annual per capita energy supply of about [40 percent] of the world's population ... was no higher than the rate achieved in both Germany and France in 1860.

"In order to approach the threshold of a dignified standard of living, those 3.1 billion people will need at least to double — but preferably triple — their per capita energy use, and in doing so multiply their electricity supply, boost their food production and build essential infrastructures."

Conventional, carbon-intensive fuels meet 82 percent of global energy needs, 79 percent of Americans' total energy needs, and more than 90 percent of Americans' transportation fuel needs. Conventional energy's share of total global energy consumption has remained roughly unchanged for decades even as global energy consumption has increased and renewable energy technologies have entered energy markets.

Thousands of products are made with oil, coal and natural gas as feedstocks, including pharmaceuticals, steel, fertilizers, concrete and plastics.

Myopic focus

Yet, these are the energy resources targeted by the COP summits and by net-zero policies for immediate reductions and ultimately near-elimination from production and use.

The myopic focus of COP summits on reducing greenhouse gas emissions hinders access to affordable energy, particularly for the poorest countries — energy that may ultimately enable them to be more prosperous and, therefore, more resilient against natural disasters. And yet, this fixation has, for example, frustrated construction of a new coal plant in Kosovo to replace "the worst single-point source of pollution in Europe," and choking off financing for natural gas projects in sub-Saharan Africa.

While those projects (and many others like them) would reduce air pollution, empower those countries to utilize their natural resources, and provide affordable energy, global-warming activists have fixated on emissions from countries that are too poor to even have emissions worth measuring.

Conference of the Parties summits have failed because they presume that the best and only way to understand environmental risk is through the lens of greenhouse gas emissions, and that the best and only way to address that risk is to eliminate use of conventional energy sources for power, heat and transportation. Consequently, they have attempted to operate independent of physical realities and missed opportunities to improve people's lives, whatever challenges the future holds.

Acknowledging failure is the first step toward finding a better way. Regardless of how one characterizes global warming as an issue for public policy, policy must be tethered to the realities of how and where people get energy for heat, power and transportation and what those enable for human well-being.

As aptly stated by one climate scientist: "We need to remind ourselves that addressing climate change isn't an end in itself, and that climate change is not the only problem that the world is facing. The objective should be to improve human well-being in the 21st century, while protecting the environment as much as we can."



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editorial

Ancestral lands shield us from climate hazard

ECONOMIC inequality is the unequal distribution of income and opportunity between different groups in society. In the Philippines, our indigenous people (IP) have been unjustifiably trapped in the web of economic injustice for the longest time. Despite their territories having an estimated forest ecosystem value of P1.1 trillion annually, three in every four indigenous persons remain among the poorest 40 percent of Filipinos, according to the Legal Rights and Natural Resources Center (LRC).

LRC is the chapter of Friends of the Earth in the Philippines. It works for the recognition and protection of the rights of indigenous peoples and upland rural poor communities to land and environment. The Center seeks to bridge the gap between the informal articulations of the aspirations of these marginalized communities on the one hand, and the formal, technical, bureaucratic and legal language used by the state, on the other.

In its 2022 State of the Indigenous Peoples Address Report, LRC said that half of all Certificate of Ancestral Domain titles (CADTs) in the Philippines are embroiled in environmentally destructive projects. The threats were found to cover at least 1.25 million hectares or equivalent to 21 percent of the total area of all CADTs (**Read, "Report shows vast tracts of PHL ancestral domain lands tied to destructive projects," in the BUSINESSMIRROR, November 4, 2022**).

"We found that half of all approved large-scale mining contracts and a whopping 87 percent of all large-scale logging projects are within or close to registered ancestral domains. Protecting ancestral domains and their natural defenses to extreme climate impacts is urgently needed if we are to rise above the climate emergency we are already experiencing now," said Atty. Mai Taqueban, LRC executive director.

The report said the indigenous people are facing significant socioeconomic gaps in accessing education, public health, water and electricity, and other public services. "The exploitation and commoditization of nature is sadly an enduring framework to managing our natural resources. This is contrary to indigenous peoples' conception of development. Not only has this marginalized them; it has also worsened their human-rights situation, for many of them naturally oppose these projects. What they have been clamoring for is support for their own development plans, anchored in their right to self-determination," Taqueban said.

The report highlighted the ongoing struggles of IP communities against extractive projects, such as the water woes experienced by the Tawali people during the operations of the OceanaGold copper-gold project in Barangay Dipipio, Kasibu, Nueva Vizcaya: Protesting the depletion and pollution of water and its impacts on their farmlands, they have been repeatedly met with a history of violence and human-rights violations.



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Taqueban said: "Indigenous peoples have declared they will pursue an IP agenda under the new government. They called for a harmonization of the Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act with natural resources and other laws affecting IPs. They also enjoined the government to fast track the issuance of CADTs. Indigenous peoples' enjoyment of their rights is premised on their right to land."

The LRC report, which was launched in time for the opening of the UN COP27 climate negotiations, highlights the need for both local and world leaders to support indigenous actions to address the climate crisis.

The country's indigenous lands are the last remaining intact ecosystems that can protect us against the negative effects of climate change. For example, the Sierra Madre Mountain, which is home to indigenous Dumagat-Remontado communities that have ancestral domain claims covering parts of the mountain range, acts as a resilience backbone that weakens the impact of typhoons. Apart from being a natural barrier to typhoons, the Sierra Madre Mountain range absorbs large amounts of rainfall, thanks to the diversity of ecosystems found in the area.

It's about time that interest groups are stopped from treating our ancestral lands as a rich resource base of raw materials. Let's find out how we can do our share to protect these ecosystems, which are nature-based solutions that shield us from the devastating effects of climate change.



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A matter of human survival

Last Nov. 8 marked the ninth year since Super-typhoon "Yolanda," the world's strongest typhoon to hit land, barreled across central Philippines, claiming 6,300 lives and causing P95.4 billion in damage.

But as catastrophic as Yolanda was, it may be just a foretaste of the worse to come should governments fail to act together to ensure that global temperatures don't heat up beyond 1.5 degrees Celsius to prevent a "climate catastrophe."

Yolanda's painful memory throws into greater focus the urgency of meeting the goals of the ongoing 27th Conference of Parties (COP27) in Egypt, where government leaders have come together to address the "defining issue of our age" and "the central challenge of our century," as United Nations Secretary General António Guterres put it.

From its previous editions, the 2022 United Nations Climate Change Conference, COP27 is being positioned as an "implementation COP," meant to firmly address the devastating weather disturbances caused by human activity-induced global warming. These include the rise in sea levels, heat waves, cold spells, and catastrophic flooding that are seen to become more frequent, prolonged, and severe.

"We are in the fight of our lives. And we are losing..." warned Guterres during the high-level opening of COP27. "Our planet is fast approaching tipping points that will make climate chaos irreversible. We are on a highway to climate hell with our foot still on the accelerator."

The Philippine delegation led by Environment Secretary Maria Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga has joined the global conversation with its urgent call for "bolder climate action" and increased assistance to developing countries like the Philippines.

The Philippines has been identified as one of the most vulnerable, as it lies in the world's most cyclone-prone region and is visited by some 20 typhoons a year.

The World Bank also noted that with half of the country's population of 111 million living in cities, many of them along coastal areas, the Philippines is vulnerable to sea level rise. Changes in the frequency and intensity of rainfall, as well as increased temperatures, will also affect the food security and safety of the population. Annual losses from typhoons have been estimated at 1.2 percent of (gross domestic product), the World Bank said.

In fact, just a week before COP27, Severe Tropical Storm "Paeng" hit the Philippines, leaving over a hundred dead amid the devastation wrought by landslides, floods and torrential rains.

Yulo-Loyzaga said the Philippines would assert its entitlement to support and assistance as a nation highly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change, given that "the increasing intensity and frequency of climate and weather-related hazards have been severely impacting the lives and livelihood of every Filipino and putting a strain on the Philippine government's efforts toward poverty reduction and sustainable economic growth."

"As developing countries need resources for climate adaptation, the Philippine delegation will continue calling on developed countries to step up to these obligations and deliver without delay on their commitments on climate finance, technology transfer, and capacity building," Yulo-Loyzaga said.

Fortunately, an increasing number of wealthy nations responsible for the bulk of greenhouse gas emissions heating up the planet are heeding the call to shoulder some of the costs of climate change. There have been pledges to help developing nations transition to renewable energy sources as part of efforts to address the loss and damage caused by climate change.

These are welcome steps, but the Philippines must also do its part by strengthening its disaster risk reduction and management policies, and exacting accountability from violators of environmental protection laws that should be properly implemented.

It's been heartening to hear President Marcos Jr. acknowledge before the 77th United Nations General Assembly in September that "there is no other problem so global in nature that it requires a united effort."

In line with that, he has proposed to put the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council—the lead agency tasked to coordinate government response to disasters—directly under his office.

"I believe that there are ways when we can make it (disaster response) more streamlined," the President said during the commemoration of Yolanda's 9th anniversary in Tacloban City, one of the hardest hit by the super-typhoon.

Any improvement in disaster response and changes to climate change policies should be pursued and implemented quickly, for there is no time to waste. As Guterres has said, "change is happening with catastrophic speed—devastating lives and livelihoods on every continent," as the Philippines knows only too well.

It is thus imperative for the Philippines to join Guterres' call to "answer the planet's distress signal with action—ambitious, credible climate action. COP27 must be the place—and now must be the time."

Indeed, humanity's very existence depends on it.

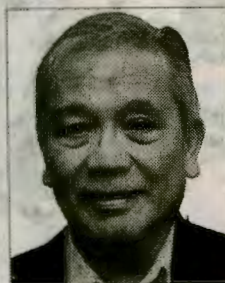


BREAKTHROUGH

ELFREN S. CRUZ

Averting the climate chaos

“Greenhouse gas emissions keep growing. Global temperatures keep rising. And our planet is fast approaching tipping points that will make climate chaos irreversible. We are on a highway to climate hell with our foot still on the accelerator.”



This was in the opening statement of UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres at the ongoing Climate Summit in Egypt.

As he urged the assembly of world leaders to accelerate the transition from fossil fuels and speed funding to poorer countries struggling under the negative impact of climate change, he said, “Humanity has a choice, to cooperate or perish.”

Former US vice president Al Gore and a leading environmental champion said at the opening ceremony of the summit, “We have a credibility problem, all of us: we are talking and starting to act, but we are not doing enough. We must see the so-called ‘dash for gas’ for what it really is: a dash down a bridge to nowhere, leaving the countries of the world facing climate chaos and billions in stranded assets especially here in Africa... We have to move beyond the era of fossil fuel colonialism.”

Gore’s comments remind me of what 19-year-old climate activist Greta Thurnberg said about last year’s UN climate summit in Glasgow. She describes the results of the summit as a lot of “blah blah blah.”

From the initial discussions it seems that the world leaders believe that the fight against global warming is a battle for human survival. Yet it is apparent that the world is not moving towards the supposedly global target of limiting the increase of global temperature to 1.5 degrees Centigrade over pre-industrial level. This was the goal agreed upon by members of the United Nations during the Paris Agreement of 2015, seven years ago.



Originally, the major countries wanted the target to be set at 2.0 degrees Centigrade. However, many of the island nations lobbied strongly for a lower target. Their reasoning was simple. For a country like the Maldives, for instance, more than 80 percent of its land was less than one meter above sea level. A rise of more than 1.5 degrees Centigrade of global warming would see most of this country disappear into the sea. Many coastal countries like the Philippines would be at a particular risk of their coastal areas also sinking.

A report published by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in 2018 stated that an increase of 2 degrees Centigrade of global warming would impact every possible domain, from fisheries to floods to droughts to decimated ecosystems. Compared to 1.5 degrees Centigrade, this 2-degree increase would result in 420 million additional people exposed to record heat, millions more would have their livelihood wiped away by higher seas. The Arctic would be expected to become an ice-free area.

This 2018 report, however, also concluded that for the 1.5-degree target to be met, net emissions needed to zero out by the middle of this century. This has become known as the "net zero" target by 2050 which has become the slogan for many politicians, businesses and activists. However, many climate experts and activists believe that the 1.5-degree Centigrade target is now virtually impossible.

There is not even a 50-50 chance of meeting this goal. According to *The Economist*: "Seven intervening years (since the Paris Agreement) of rising emissions mean such pathways are now firmly in the realm of the incredible. The collapse of civilization might bring it about; so might a comet strike or some other highly unlikely and horrific natural perturbation. Emissions reduction policies will not, however bravely intended."

One of the most contentious issues in the summit is the demand of the poorer countries for compensation from the richer countries for destruction caused by climate change as typhoons, floods, forest fires and droughts. The reasoning is that it is the richer countries, especially China and the United States, that are the causes for these greenhouse emissions. But the poorer countries have become victims of the destruction caused by climate change.

The global average temperature is currently 1.0 to 1.3 degrees Centigrade above the pre-industrial levels. According to the World Meteorological Organization, there is a 48 percent chance that the global average temperatures will reach 1.5 degrees Centigrade higher than the pre-industrial level sometime during the next five years. Already, there is speculation among many governments that the target should be set at an increase of 2 degrees Centigrade above pre-industrial level, instead of 1.5.

Instead of all these warnings of global catastrophe, the greenhouse gas emissions are actually increasing. Coal was supposed to be totally banned and yet countries, especially China, are still heavily dependent on coal. Oil and natural gas are still being used all over the world. Part of this has been attributed to the strong lobbying by fossil fuel producers.

This Climate Summit ends on Nov. 18. For the sake of the world, we can only hope and pray that there will be solid results to avert impending climate chaos instead of just more "blah blah blah."

* * *

Write Things' Zoom classes for November: Nov 19, 10:30 am-noon, last class for adult writers for the year with facilitator Dinah Roma on the art of poetry. Nov 26, 2-3 pm, Young Writers' Hangout with returning facilitator Susan Lara. Contact writethingsph@gmail.com. 0945.2273216

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WB expects PHL climate mitigation efforts to be led by private sector

THE Philippine climate change mitigation effort will be borne largely by the private sector, the World Bank (WB) said in a report, adding that the absence of policies optimized for unlocking private investment could erode gross domestic product (GDP) by as much as 13.6% in the worst case.

"It is absolutely key that the incentives for the private sector be put in place so they can fully take action," Benoit Bosquet, regional director for Environment, Natural Resources and Blue Economy Global Practice at the World Bank, said on Wednesday at a virtual briefing presenting the World Bank Group's Country Climate and Development Report for the Philippines.

"The good news is that the Philippines does have many options to address climate change which could dramatically reduce the impacts," Mr. Bosquet added.

The World Bank's more moderate projections for GDP erosion range from a 3.2% average loss by 2030, and 5.7% in losses by 2040.

He added that the Philippines must address both extreme and slow-onset events and provide targeted support for the most vulnerable members of society.

Climate mitigation financing is a contentious issue in developing countries, which include some suffering from the worst effects of climate change. Devel-

oping countries have taken the position that the rich world did the most to disrupt the climate when it industrialized, and bears responsibility for funding the bulk of climate mitigation efforts.

The previous Philippine government has argued for "climate justice" from developed countries, estimating that the Philippines can internally fund only a fraction of its climate-mitigation bill.

"Climate change indeed poses major risk for the development of the Philippines. Policy inaction will impose substantial economic and human costs, especially for the poor," Mr. Bosquet said.

The report recommended that governments arrange incentives in such a way that make the benefits of climate action clear, while removing obstacles to allow the private sector to undertake climate projects.

"We can induce farmers to adopt practices that reduce water use and emissions while increasing productivity by ensuring these practices are more profitable than the status quo. We can induce the private sector to invest in renewable energy by ensuring that renewable energy plants are more profitable than fossil fuel plants," the report stated.

"Likewise, private sector investment in electric vehicles and energy-efficient and disaster-resilient buildings will depend on the profitability (of such projects)," it added.

"Adaptation is the key priority for the Philippines. Adaptation means reducing the risk and damage from extreme events, like typhoons. It also means reducing the risk from slow onset events like rising temperatures and we should not forget about that," Mr. Bosquet said.

"The good news is that adaptation actions can substantially reduce the impact of climate change on the economy. Economic losses could be reduced by two-thirds by mid-century," he added.

Typhoons have been estimated to dampen GDP by 1.2%, the World Bank said.

The report recommended avoiding new construction in vulnerable areas and increasing the energy efficiency of buildings to help urban residents deal with the effects of gradually increasing temperatures.

"Improving water storage will reduce the risk of damaging floods and droughts and, by increasing water availability, allow irrigation to be extended into rainfed areas, thus helping farmers in those areas adapt to higher temperatures," it added.

World Bank Regional Vice-President for East Asia and Pacific Manuela V. Ferro said that the power sector is a potential driver for mitigating climate change risk.

"The Philippines is one of those countries where there is a sweet spot between climate change mitigation action and lowering the price of electricity," she said.

"Investments in renewable energy... (that) bring costs down are very within hand. That's a sector we see tremendous potential to do more," she added.

Mr. Bosquet said the Philippines has the opportunity to decarbonize using solar and wind energy.

"An important aspect of this transition is that all these options reduce the current electricity generation costs. The Philippines has a high cost of electricity at the moment. Based on our analysis, we see that many of the investments that are already planned will do a great deal and the adaptation options are feasible and costly, but less costly than other countries we've analyzed," he added.

According to the World Bank, most climate actions do not require legislative change but improved implementation of existing programs or changes to implementing rules and regulations.

"For example, strengthening financial sector regulators' capacity to integrate climate risks in monitoring and supervision requires developing regulations, guidelines, and standards but no new legislation," it added. — **Luisa Maria Jacinta C. Jocson**



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Treaty against fossil fuels floated at UN climate conference in Egypt

BY FRANK JORDANS & WANJOHI KABUKURU

The Associated Press

SHARM EL-SHEIKH, Egypt—
The world should confront
climate change the way it does
nuclear weapons, by agreeing to a non-
proliferation treaty that stops further
production of fossil fuels, a small island
nation leader urged Tuesday.



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The proposal by Tuvalu came as vulnerable nations pushed for more action and money at international climate talks in Egypt, while big polluters remained divided over who should pay for the damage industrial greenhouse gas emissions have done to the planet.

"We all know that the leading cause of climate crisis is fossil fuels," Tuvalu Prime Minister Kau-sea Natano told his fellow leaders.

The Pacific country has "joined Vanuatu and other nations calling for a fossil fuels non-proliferation treaty," Natano said. "It's getting too hot and there is very [little] time to slow and reverse the increasing temperature. Therefore, it is essential to prioritize fast-acting strategies."

Vanuatu and Tuvalu, along with other vulnerable nations, have been flexing their moral authority against the backdrop of recent climate-related disasters. The idea of a non-proliferation treaty for coal, oil and natural gas has previously been advanced by campaigners, religious authorities including the Vatican, and some scientists, but Natano's speech gave it a boost in front of a global audience.

A year ago at climate talks in

Glasgow, a proposal to call for a "phase out" of coal—the dirtiest of the fossil fuels—was changed at the last minute to "phase down" by a demand from India, earning the wrath of vulnerable countries.

Since then the global energy crunch triggered by the Russian invasion of Ukraine has prompted a scramble by some countries and companies seeking to tap fresh gas and oil sources.

Pushing back against that, vulnerable nations also called for a global tax on the profits of fossil fuel corporations that are making billions of dollars daily from sky-high energy prices.

"It is about time that these companies are made to pay a global carbon tax on their profits as a source of funding for loss and damage," said Gaston Browne, prime minister of Antigua and Barbuda. "Profligate producers of fossil fuels have benefited from extortionate profits at the expense of human civilization."

The idea of a windfall tax on carbon profits has gained traction in recent months amid sky-high earnings for oil and gas corporations even as consumers struggle to pay for heating their homes



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Platteau at UN Climate conference
in Egypt PAGE 3/4



KAUSEA NATANO, prime minister of Tuvalu, speaks at the COP27 UN Climate Summit on Tuesday, November 8, 2022, in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt. AP/PETER DEJONG

and filling their cars. For the first time, UN climate conference delegates are to discuss demands by developing nations that the richest, most polluting countries pay compensation for damage wreaked on them by climate change, which in climate negotiations is called "loss and damage."

Barbados Prime Minister Mia Mottley said fossil fuel companies should contribute to those funds, which would provide vulnerable countries with financial aid for the climate-related losses they are suffering.

Other leaders rejected the idea.

"I think this is not the place now to develop tax rules, but rather to jointly develop measures to protect against the consequences of climate change," German Chancellor Olaf Scholz told reporters.

If the small islands can't get a global tax on fossil fuel profits, Antigua's Browne suggested going to international courts to get polluters to pay. Scientists from Dartmouth College calculated specific damages for all the world's countries and how much was caused by

other nations, saying it would work well in international court cases.

Browne quoted William Shakespeare's "Macbeth" in sharing his frustration with lack of action.

"Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow creeps in this petty pace from day to day to the last syllable of recorded time. And all our yesterdays have lighted fools the way to dusty death," Browne said.

Despite 27 climate summits "tomorrow has not come," he said.

Speaking for a country that has suffered from the consequences of climate change recently, Somalia's president said it faces "one of the worst droughts in modern history."

President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud said more than 7 million Somalis, or about half the population, cannot meet their basic food needs as the Horn of Africa region has seen two years of failed rains.

"We are trying desperately to respond," he said. The drought has killed thousands of people, many of them children. It is also reshaping Somalia's landscape as the country struggles with one of the



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world's fastest urbanization rates as many people flee parched areas.

Pakistani Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif told fellow leaders how his country was struck by catastrophic floods in recent months that affected 33 million people and caused more than \$30 billion in economic damage.

"This all happened despite our very low carbon footprints," Sharif said, insisting: "Of course it was a manmade disaster."

Sharif called for additional financial support for his country and others suffering from the effects of climate change, saying money to help Pakistan rebuild after the floods should be on top of other aid and not come in the form of loans. Further debts, he said "would be a financial death trap."

The president of Malawi, meanwhile, praised those leaders present in Egypt for simply showing up.

"The temptation to abstain from COP this year was great," President Lazarus Chakwera said, referring to the talks by their UN acronym, "because of the great and unprecedented economic hardships your citizens are suffering."

"But you resisted this temptation and chose the path of courage," he said.

Chakwera said any agreements forged at the two-week meeting should recognize the different abilities of countries such as the United States and China, and developing nations like his own.

There is growing pressure on Beijing to step up its climate efforts given its massive economic clout.

So far, the world's biggest polluter has insisted that it cannot be held to the same standards as developed economies like the United States or Europe because it is still lifting millions of its citizens out

of poverty.

Beijing's climate envoy said Tuesday that the meeting in Egypt should focus on "implementation" of existing pledges.

"The developed countries will take the lead in effectively scaling up their emission reduction targets and achieving carbon neutrality ahead of time," Xie Zhenhua said, according to an official translation of the speech.

Xie said it was up to developed countries to "achieve substantive results" on measures for adapting to climate change and financial aid for the poor that are "of greatest concern to developing countries."

The US mid-term elections were hanging over the talks, with many environmental campaigners worried that defeat for the Democrats could make it harder for President Joe Biden to pursue his ambitious climate agenda.

Also hanging over the conference was the fate of one of Egypt's most prominent jailed pro-democracy activists, Alaa Abdel-Fattah, who has been imprisoned for most of the past decade. He stopped even drinking water Sunday, the first day of the conference, vowing he is willing to die if not released, his family said.

Numerous world leaders raised his case in meetings with Egypt's President Abdel Fattah el-Sissi, and the head of the UN human rights office called for his immediate release.

Egypt's longtime history of suppressing dissent has raised controversy over its hosting the annual conference, with many climate activists complaining that restrictions by the host are quieting civil society.

Seth Borenstein and Samy Magdy contributed to this report.



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COP27: Hosts launch plan to help poorest adapt to climate change

SHARM EL-SHEIKH, Egypt — The hosts of the COP27 climate talks on Tuesday launched a global plan to help the world's poorest communities withstand the impacts of global warming.

Unveiling the Sharm-El-Sheikh Adaptation Agenda, named after the Egyptian resort where the talks are being held, the plan sets out 30 goals to hit by the end of the decade to enhance the lives of 4 billion people.

The hope is that by setting targets across themes including food and agriculture, water and nature, and coastlines and oceans, the public and private sectors will work with common goals and accelerate adaptation to change.

Urgent targets highlighted by the COP27 Presidency include moving the world to more sustainable agriculture

practices that could increase yields by 17% and cut emissions by 21%.

Other goals include protecting 3 billion people from catastrophic weather events by installing early warning systems to help them prepare; investing \$4 billion into mangrove restoration, which protects against flooding; and expanding clean cooking options to 2.4 billion people to reduce indoor air pollution.

"The Sharm-El-Sheikh Adaptation Agenda is a critical step at COP27," COP27 President and Egypt's Minister of Foreign Affairs Sameh Shoukry said in a statement

"The COP27 presidency has long articulated our commitment to bringing together state and non-state actors to progress on adaptation and resilience for the 4 billion people that live in the

most climate vulnerable regions by 2030."

In total, the plan seeks to mobilize up to \$300 billion a year from private and public investors. By contrast, the world's biggest multilateral development banks spent \$17 billion on adaptation finance for poorer countries in 2021, a report by the lenders published last month showed.

The majority of climate finance goes towards mitigation efforts, such as reducing emissions, despite U.N. pleas that half of all funding should be channeled into helping vulnerable countries adapt.

Africa, hosting its first COP, receives just 3% of total climate finance globally and was being "short changed," Akinwumi Adesina, president of the African

Development Bank, told a conference session on the theme of adaptation.

Among specific Africa-focused projects to be announced at COP27 that will help meet the adaptation targets are a plan to improve water resilience for 29 million people across 100 cities.

Going forward, the U.N. Climate Change High-Level Champions for COP27, which form a link between the hosts of the COP, other national governments and non-state actors such as companies, said they would continue to refine and expand the targets.

U.N. climate chief Simon Stiell said: "The Sharm el-Sheikh Adaptation Agenda firmly puts key human needs at its core, along with concrete, specific action on the ground to build resilience to climate change". — Reuters



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AS COP27 CLOSES IN EGYPT

US says polls

won't disrupt

climate plan

SHARM EL SHEIKH, Egypt—The United States sought to reassure the UN climate summit in Egypt on Tuesday that it will stick to its energy transition even if Republicans triumph in midterm elections.

The COP27 talks have been dominated by calls for all nations to step up their commitments to cut greenhouse gas emissions, and for rich ones to fulfill pledges to financially help the developing world to green their economies and build resilience.

Poor and climate-vulnerable economies devastated by natural disasters have demanded compensation for damages already incurred, with calls for a windfall tax on the profits of oil companies to help pay.

But stiff international criticism of Egypt's treatment of hunger-striking activist Alaa Abdel Fattah and the US midterm election also loomed large over the summit.

US President Joe Biden's Democrats

face a tough battle to hang on to their majority in Congress against Republicans, who are less favorable to international climate action.

A Republican victory could be a boon to the ambitions of former president Donald Trump, who is expected to make another bid for the White House.

Trump pulled the United States out of the 2015 Paris Agreement on climate change. Biden returned the United States—the second-largest emitter of greenhouse gases after China—to the pact on his first day in office in 2020.

Biden won a major victory earlier this year when Congress passed the Inflation Reduction Act, which will channel hundreds of bil-

ions towards green energy initiatives.

'More determined than ever'

The "climate crisis doesn't just threaten our infrastructure, economy and security -- it threatens every single aspect of our lives on a daily basis," US climate envoy John Kerry said on the sidelines of the summit, in the Red Sea resort of Sharm el-Sheikh.

He said that even if Democrats lose the election, "President Biden is more determined than ever to continue what we are doing."

"And most of what we are doing cannot be changed by anybody else who comes along," Kerry said. "The marketplace has made its decision to do what we need to do to respond to the climate crisis." **AFP**



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World's CO2 hotspots pinpointed by Al Gore-backed climate project

BY ERIC ROSTON | *Bloomberg Opinion*

A CONSORTIUM of dozens of research nonprofits on Wednesday launched a free online platform that details greenhouse gas emissions around the world across 20 economic sectors. Climate Trace, which can be viewed on a web browser, includes a zoomable world map that displays and ranks the dirtiest 72,000 power plants, oil refineries, airports, ships and more. The group used satellite imagery and machine learning as well as more conventional techniques to build what it says is the largest available source of greenhouse gas emissions data.

"The sources of emissions data that are available now are not granular enough, or comprehensive enough, to use as the basis for decisions," former US Vice President Al Gore said in an interview. "And so what we are finding is that there is a ravenous hunger for accurate data." Gore, who has fundraised for the group, is expected to introduce the platform on Wednesday at COP27, the UN climate talks in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt.

Each economic sector on the platform is tracked using its own methodology, managed by team leads and checked by other experts not involved in creating the technique. Several of these individual methodologies have already been peer-reviewed, and the team expects to put more and more of its work through that rigorous process.

"I like to think of it as Wikipedia with more sensors," said Gavin McCormick, executive director of the research nonprofit WattTime and a Climate Trace co-founder.

The site lets users compare any major pollution source in the world, no matter the scale, with any other. For instance: According to the site's data, China's five largest power plants release more carbon dioxide in a year than the entire country of Colombia.

Climate Trace itself is made up of hundreds of researchers who have been scouring the world—tapping 300 satellites and 11,100 sensors, in addition to corporate and government data and the internet at large—for three years to assemble as complete a view of the human sources of greenhouse gas pollution as they think is currently possible.

The data they compiled suggests that oil and gas sector emissions are much higher than what some countries or facilities report. Recent scientific research into methane flaring and leaks is built into one of the platform's models, leading to the conclusion that many facilities are dramatically under-reporting their emissions. Countries that disclose to the UN their emissions related to oil and gas production may have actual emissions up to three times that amount, according to Climate Trace.

"We know that transparency drives accountability," said Andrew Zolli, chief impact officer at satellite company Planet Labs, a Climate Trace partner. "We are headed for an era of radical climate transparency."

Their findings also show that in virtually every corner of the global economy, a small number of polluters make up the bulk of emissions. It's true at the largest scale: The biggest 500 emitters make up less than 1 percent of all those in the group's database, but were responsible for 14 percent of total emissions in 2021. Oil and gas production accounts for 26 of the 50 dirtiest sources. Sixty percent of the dirtiest 500 sources are power plants.



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The goal of the project is to provide decision-makers with information to determine where to cut carbon dioxide, the most common greenhouse gas, and the other pollutants. But the takeaways are not always intuitive. Saudi Arabia's oil production, for example, is responsible for less CO₂ per barrel than the equivalent from Canada or Venezuela. In a world that still needs oil, some "might prefer to see a world where people are scaling up Saudi Arabian oil production and scaling down oil production elsewhere," McCormick said. "So it's a good example of how the data cut both ways."

"We're finding those patterns everywhere," said McCormick. "Everywhere you look, in every sector, a relatively small number of assets make up a much larger share of total global emissions than we expected."

With the world's climate diplomats and advocates in Sharm El-Sheik for COP27, the ability to independently

check any country's emissions estimates—or, provide them where they're absent—may be the most important potential use of Climate Trace this week and next.

But there are potentially many others. The mapping tool allows users to zoom in on any territory to see where specific facilities sit relative to surrounding cities or natural areas. A scroll along the bottom of the screen adjusts to show the biggest polluters at every zoom level.

Corporate supply chain managers might use the platform to gauge the carbon footprints of potential partners. International energy developers could scan a country or a continent for places where fossil-fuel generators are prevalent and clean power can make large CO₂ gains in a short period of time. Cities strapped to measure their CO₂ responsibility could use the tool to get a sense of how they're doing, or to check their own math.

The purpose of Climate Trace is to spur collaboration, not to point fingers or "name and shame," said Deborah Gordon, senior principal for climate intelligence at RMI, an energy think tank, and the lead for Climate Trace's work on oil and gas production.

"Climate Trace doesn't exist to be the climate police," she said.

The project's origins go back to 2018, when the UK research nonprofit Carbon Tracker published a pilot study that applied machine learning to satellite imagery of coal plants in countries where there's often little data about them. The researchers studied images of plumes released from flue stacks and cooling towers and became confident in their ability to infer from that how much the plants were being used, their productivity and even their profitability.

left their own servers for little reason other than data compatibility. Some 50 software engineers work on Climate Trace directly, in some cases just to make existing data usable.

In addition to convenor, Gore worked as a fundraiser for the group, attracting support from Google.org, Schmidt Futures, Benificus Foundation and his partners at Generation Investment Management. Fossil fuel backers were ruled out on principle and the team avoided companies too, to prevent them from potentially using any support of the effort to greenwash themselves, Gore said.

In September 2021 Climate Trace released national greenhouse gas inventories covering 2020, which until today was the group's major output.

The group came in for some tough love in a "fast-track" National Academy of Sciences report published in early October, which evaluated ways to improve greenhouse gas monitoring. The report dinged the enterprise in several areas, including data transparency, whole-project peer review and inclusivity of air-pollution agencies or citizen science efforts.

McCormick said the panel was evaluating dated work, and added that as Climate Trace grows rapidly—its data doubling every two months or so—it is adopting recommendations and resolving critiques. The group is releasing more than 400 pages of additional material, according to McCormick; it has undergone checking by multiple independent sources and has sought input from a wide range of developing-country government officials and professionals, he said.



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McCormick and Matt Gray, who led the Carbon Tracker study and is now chief executive officer of the UK company Transition Zero, applied for and received funding from Google.org's Google AI Impact Challenge to expand on the work, partnering also with the World Resources Institute. They announced in May 2019 their goal to track in real time pollution from every power plant in the world. Gore read an article about it, contacted them to see how many other sectors might be included, and Climate Trace was born.

The project grew as it became clear how much data it could suck in. Scientists contributed data that had never

"Our commitment is to openly and transparently publish the best info we have at any time, and be constantly soliciting and incorporating widespread feedback from many sources as we go," McCormick said. "And I think that's what the peer review of the future has to look like."

Gore said the urgency of climate change sometimes encourages research that publishes first and peer reviews later.

"The hunger for this data is such that people don't want to wait for years before they start using data ... that can empower them to make important decisions," he said. "We have a global emergency on our hands, and we have very accurate data that can be used to respond to that emergency."



UN vows zero tolerance for greenwashing

SHARM EL SHEIKH (AFP) – The UN's chief called Tuesday for an end to a "toxic cover-up" by companies as a sweeping report said they cannot claim to be net zero if they invest in new fossil fuels, cause deforestation or offset emissions instead of reducing them.

Antonio Guterres said businesses as well as cities and regions should update their voluntary net zero pledges within a year to comply with the recommendations by UN experts, as he trained his sights on fossil fuel firms and "their financial enablers".

"Using bogus 'net-zero' pledges to cover up massive fossil fuel expansion is reprehensible. It is rank deception," he said at the launch of the report at the COP27 conference in Egypt.

"This toxic cover-up could push our world over the climate cliff. The sham must end."

The UN expert panel, convened by Guterres after UN climate talks in Glasgow last year, set its sights on drawing a "red line" around greenwashing – misleading the public to believe that a company or entity is doing more to protect the environment than it is – in net zero targets from companies, cities and regions.

A huge surge in decarbonization pledges in recent months means that around 90 percent of the global economy is now covered by some sort of promise of carbon neutrality, according to Net Zero Tracker.

"It's very easy to make an announcement that you are going to be net zero by 2050. But you have to walk the talk and what we've seen is that there is not enough action," said Catherine McKenna, Canada's former environment and climate change minister, who led the panel.

"We have to do two things to reach net zero – we need to drastically reduce emissions, and we need to invest in clean (energy)," she told AFP.

She added it was currently "extremely hard" to properly evaluate whether firms were cutting emissions and called for greater transparency.

The report lists a slew of recommendations, including calling on governments to begin putting in place binding regula-

tions.

A central recommendation from the panel is that net zero plans must be in line with the Paris Agreement's most ambitious aim of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial temperatures.

But to do that UN scientists say that global emissions must be slashed virtually in half by 2030, and after that they should be reduced to net zero by 2050.

There have been growing concerns that some firms have not aligned their efforts with the latest climate science – by failing to account for emissions from key activities, or by saying they can make up for increasing pollution today with "carbon credits" from activities like tree planting.

The report recommends that credits should not be used to "offset" emissions, until after a firm has done everything possible to cut emissions in line with the 1.5C target and that if they are used at all they should be from a reliable and verified source.

"The reality is you can't offset your way to net zero," McKenna told AFP.

"You don't get an A for showing up in class. You get an A for doing the work and you can't pay someone else to do it, you have got to do it yourself."

The report added that net zero pledges should include short term targets every five years, beginning in 2025.

It stressed that these should cover all greenhouse gas emissions from all activities – including supply chains for businesses and investments for financial institutions.

Net zero is "entirely incompatible" with any new fossil fuel investment, the report said, although McKenna said oil and gas companies could still have these pledges if they swiftly transition to renewables.

Firms would also not be able to continue activities that result in deforestation and still claim they are decarbonizing.

"We find that too often too many businesses continue to rely on business models that result in the destruction of natural ecosystems," said panel member Arunabha Ghosh, of the Council on Energy Environment and Water, a think tank.



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People demonstrate for climate in Zagreb, as the COP27 UN climate talks are being held in Egypt.

AFP



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UN EXPERT

Corporate climate pledges rife with greenwashing

SHARM EL-SHEIKH, Egypt-Promises by companies, banks and cities to achieve net-zero emissions often amount to little more than greenwashing, UN experts said in a report on Tuesday as they set out proposed new standards to harden net-zero claims.

The report, released at the COP27 climate conference in Egypt, is intended to draw a "red line" around false claims of progress in the fight against global warming that can confuse consumers, investors and policy makers.

At last year's climate negotiations in Glasgow, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres appointed 17 experts to review the integrity of non-state net-zero commitments amid concerns about "a surplus of confusion and deficit of credibility" around corporate climate claims.

"Too many of these net-zero pledges are little more than empty slogans and hype", group chair and Canada's former environment minister, Catherine McKenna, said during a news conference launching the report.

"Bogus net-zero claims drive up the cost that ultimately everyone will pay," she said.

Regulators across the world are starting to set tougher rules around what activities can be deemed environmentally friendly, yet progress is patchy and campaigners and activists are increasingly turning to the courts to challenge weak claims.

On Tuesday, an official at Australia's corporate watchdog said it was investigating several companies over greenwashing, in which a company or group makes exaggerated claims over the environmental impact of their products or practices.

Last month, meanwhile, Britain's financial watchdog proposed new rules from 2024 for funds and their managers to prevent consumers being misled about their climate credentials.

An estimated 80 percent of global emissions are now covered by pledges that commit to reaching net-zero emissions.

The report set out a list of recommendations that companies and other non-state actors should follow to ensure their claims are credible. For example, a company cannot claim to be net-zero if it continues to build or invest in new fossil fuel infrastructure or deforestation.

The report also dismisses the use of cheap carbon credits to offset continued emissions as a viable net-zero strategy, and recommends companies, financial institutions, cities and regions focus on outright emissions and not carbon intensity - a measure of how much carbon is emitted per unit of output.

The report was "potentially very significant, depending on the traction it gets", said Eric Christian Pedersen, head of responsible investments at Nordea Asset Management.

"If this report becomes a legal standard against which one can measure if a net-zero commitment is bona fide or not, then it... can provide ammunition for the lawsuits and regulatory action which are sorely needed to make the absence of climate action more expensive at the individual company level."

The report "gives companies, investors, cities, regions - and by implication, countries - a clear statement of what 'good' looks like", said Thomas Hale, a global public policy researcher at Oxford University and co-leader of the Net Zero Tracker project which measures the effectiveness of such pledges.

"We need to be clear that most net-zero targets are not on track," he told Reuters, noting the tracker found that only half of companies with pledges have robust plans.

Teresa Anderson, global lead for climate justice at poverty-eradication non-profit ActionAid International, said corporations had "long hidden behind net-zero announcements and carbon offsetting initiatives, with very little intention of really doing the hard work of transforming and cutting emissions."

"These recommendations will aim to keep them in line and close any loopholes." - Reuters



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A police officer stands in front of the entrance of the Sharm El Sheikh International Convention Centre during the COP27 climate summit in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt Nov. 9, 2022. (Reuters photo)





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Climate protesters glue themselves to Warhol print

Attacks of artworks by activists continue

CANBERRA, Australia (AFP) — Climate protesters on Wednesday glued their hands to the transparent covers of Andy Warhol's famous "Campbell's Soup" screen prints at the National Gallery of Australia in Canberra.

The protest by a group calling itself "Stop Fossil Fuel Subsidies Australia" was the latest in a series of climate demonstrations targeting

famous artworks around the world.

The two protesters also scrawled graffiti across the covers of the prints, which were removed for cleaning but were not damaged, according to the gallery.

"A protest has taken place at the National Gallery of Australia following similar incidents here and overseas," the organization said in a

statement.

"The National Gallery does not wish to promote these actions and has no further comment."

A video shared online showed one of the protesters dabbing her hand with glue before slapping it to the cover of a "Campbell's Soup Cream of Mushroom" print.

Warhol's "Campbell's Soup" screen prints, produced in the 1960s, remain one of the most recognizable symbols of the American pop art movement.



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Climate change may cut GDP by 7.5%

BY TIZIANA CELINE PIATOS
@tribunephil_tiz

Economic damage from climate change could reduce the gross domestic product by as much as 7.5 percent by 2040, the World Bank said in a report on Wednesday.

During the Philippines Country Climate and Development Report Launch, WB's regional director for East Asia and Pacific Benoît Bosquet warned that the temperatures in the Philippines would continue to rise and rainfall could become

more intense due to climate change, putting at risk the country's ability to meet its development goals.

He also mentioned that changes in the country's rainfall variability, intensity, and rising temperatures would affect food security and public safety.

Agriculture affected

According to World Bank, rising temperatures in the country are expected to increase by another one to three degrees Celsius over the century.

Bosquet said the productivity of many crops would decline and rain-fed crops would be the most affected by climate change.

He noted a 5 percent reduction in the yields of rice and sugarcane and as much as 20 percent for maize across the country.

"Lower agricultural production will affect the well-being of the farmers, many of whom are poor. And because this will lead to higher food prices, it will affect the well-being of all Filipinos, especially the poor who spend a greater part of their income on food," Bosquet said.



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WB: Climate change may block PH's bid to become upper-middle income country

By Julito G. Rada

CLIMATE change is exacting a heavy toll on Filipinos' lives, properties and livelihoods and could hamper the country's ambition to become an upper middle-income country by 2040, the World Bank said Wednesday.

It said that with 50 percent of its 111 million population living in urban areas, and many cities in coastal areas, the Philippines is vulnerable to sea level rise. Changes due to the variability and intensity of rainfall in the country and increased temperatures will affect food security and the safety of the population, it said.

The bank said any policy inaction on the part of the government to address climate change would result in around 5.7 percent to 7.5 percent reduction in GDP by 2040.

Benoit Bosquet, the bank's regional director for sustainable development in East Asia and Pacific, said in an online briefing that climate change would likely reduce GDP substantially, but the range of possible outcomes would be wide.

Bosquet said the sectors that would be hardly hit are water, agriculture, energy, transport and urban areas.

"Rainfed crops will be mostly affected and this might result in low agricultural production that will impact the

farmers and the poor," he said, adding this would eventually result in higher food prices.

"Even under conservative estimates, climate change will reduce GDP by 5.7 to 7.5 percent by 2040," Bosquet said.

He said the good news is that adaptation actions could reduce the impact of climate change to the poor.

"[The] Philippines needs to take action to avoid worsening the problem," he said, citing the country's number one ranking in the 2022 World Index in terms of vulnerability from climate change.

The Philippines Country Climate and Development Report presented by Bosquet said that climate change poses major risks for development in the Philippines.

Climate shocks, whether in the form of extreme weather events or slow-onset trends—will hamper economic activities, damage infrastructure and induce deep social disruptions, it said.

The report analyzes how climate change will affect the country's ability to meet its development goals and pursue green, resilient and inclusive development.

It said adapting to the risks of climate change—including extreme events and slow-onset problems—would be critical for the Philippines.



Climate change threatens PH bid to become upper middle-income county

THE World Bank Group said climate change, if not addressed, could hamper the country's ambition of becoming an upper middle-income country by 2040.

Climate change is exacting a heavy toll on Filipinos' lives, properties, and livelihoods, according to the Group's Country Climate and Development Report for the Philippines.

"Climate impacts threaten to significantly lower the country's GDP and the well-being of Filipinos by 2040. However, policy actions and investments – principally to protect valuable infrastructure from typhoons and to make agriculture more resilient through climate-smart measures – could reduce these negative climate impacts by two-thirds," said Manucla Ferro, World Bank vice president in a statement.

The country has experienced highly destructive typhoons almost annually for the past 10 years. Annual losses from typhoons have been estimated at 1.2 percent of GDP.

With half of its 111 million population living in urban areas, and many cities in coastal areas, the Philippines is vulnerable to sea level rise, the report said.

Changes due to the variability and intensity of rainfall in the country and increased temperatures will affect food security and

the safety of the population, it added.

The report noted the crucial role the private sector plays in accelerating the adoption of green technologies and ramping up climate finance by working with local financial institutions and regulators.

"The investments needed to undertake these actions are substantial, but not out of reach," said John Gandolfo, IFC acting vice president for Asia and the Pacific. "The business leaders and bankers who embrace climate as a business opportunity and offer these low-carbon technologies, goods and services will be the front runners of our future."

The report identified some recommendations to address issues on climate change. These include: avoiding new construction in flood-prone areas; improving water storage to reduce the risk of damaging floods and droughts; extending irrigation in rainfed areas and promoting climate-smart agriculture practices such as Alternate Wetting and Drying; making social protection programs adaptive and scalable to respond to climate shocks; removing obstacles that private actors face in scaling investments in renewable energy and; ensuring new buildings are energy efficient and climate resilient.



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BAGUIO TOURIST

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IGOROT STONE KINGDOM

**BAGUIO TOURIST SPOT SHUT DOWN
OVER SAFETY, PERMIT VIOLATIONS**

By Vincent Cabreza
@InqNational

BAGUIO CITY—A tourist spot that has become a social media attraction a little over a year since it opened during the coronavirus pandemic was closed on Wednesday by Mayor Benjamin Magalong over safety and permit violations.

Igorot Stone Kingdom is a 6,000-square-meter amusement park billed as a showcase of Cordillera ingenuity, such as "ag-kabite," an indigenous rock and stonewalling technique mastered in Mountain Province and an accepted engineering practice.

Echoing elements of fantasy television shows like "Game of Thrones," guests enter a gateway guarded by giant statues of Igorot warriors and medieval stone bridges and stairways that lead to "stone domes" dedicated to Cordillera deity "Kabunyan," the first man (Gatan) and woman (Bangan) in Ifugao lore, and an Igorot mine.

Stone Kingdom, owned and operated by businessman Plo Velasco, has been flooded with visitors and has caused traffic jams at Barangay Pinsao since opening in May 2021.

Word-of-mouth referrals

It has been included in the itinerary of local tours after word-of-mouth referrals and recommendations by travel vloggers on social media made this park a Baguio destination, said Jovita Ganongan, Cordillera director of the Department of Tourism.

The outdoor destination charges an entrance fee of P100 and is a block away from the much older Tam-awan Village, an art and culture hub which recently hosted an international arts festival.

But at the Nov. 8 city managers' meeting, Magalong ordered Stone Kingdom's closure for failing to heed safety notices issued by the local government and for operating without permits.

Architect Johnny Degay, city building officer, did not respond to inquiries about these violations.

However, a copy of the closure notice signed on Wednesday by Magalong indicated that some of the structures had no visible engineering support "to prevent the stones from detaching" from walls or dome pillars, except for cement grouts (the concrete mixture used to fill gaps between stones).

The notice also saw safety violations at the Igorot Mine

attraction for having no support systems that should prevent "cave-ins or the collapse of the ceiling."

'Landslide exposure'

The document cited an observation made by the Mines and Geosciences Bureau that the property lies in an area that is prone to erosion. The climate risk and vulnerability assessment being conducted for Baguio by the Asian Development Bank also concluded that Stone Kingdom was threatened by "high landslide exposure," the notice says.

It was not clear how the attraction was allowed to operate without permits. The notice says the city's business licensing office had first issued a notice of violation in May, followed by a cease-and-desist order from Degay for building violations.

The document says Magalong initiated dialogues with Velasco to compel him to heed the safety issues raised by the city, only to resume issuing violation notices in July after the businessman allegedly built new attractions without incorporating the suggested safety features.

"If [the Stone Kingdom owner] follows the rules, that may be up and open again. But its closure would not disrupt tourism traffic to Baguio and the Cordillera. There are many more places to see here," Ganongan said.

The city has stopped requiring tourists to sign up in a travel registry which helped track the number of daily Baguio visitors, but 30,000 tourists continued to visit on weekends during the rainy season, according to estimates from the city tourism office.

Last week, Ganongan relaunched the Cordillera's new tourism brand, "Find Yourself in the Cordillera," which highlights mountain treks for self-reflection and for adventure following two years of lockdowns. It describes Baguio as the gateway to the rest of the highland region.

She said the new slogan "captures everything we have—nature, adventure, culture and wellness," and relies on the fact that every generation has good memories about the summer capital.

Baguio has again become easily accessible when car travel was reduced from seven to four hours due to a new network of expressways. On Dec. 16, Philippine Airlines will begin offering Baguio to Cebu flights at Loakan Airport. INQ



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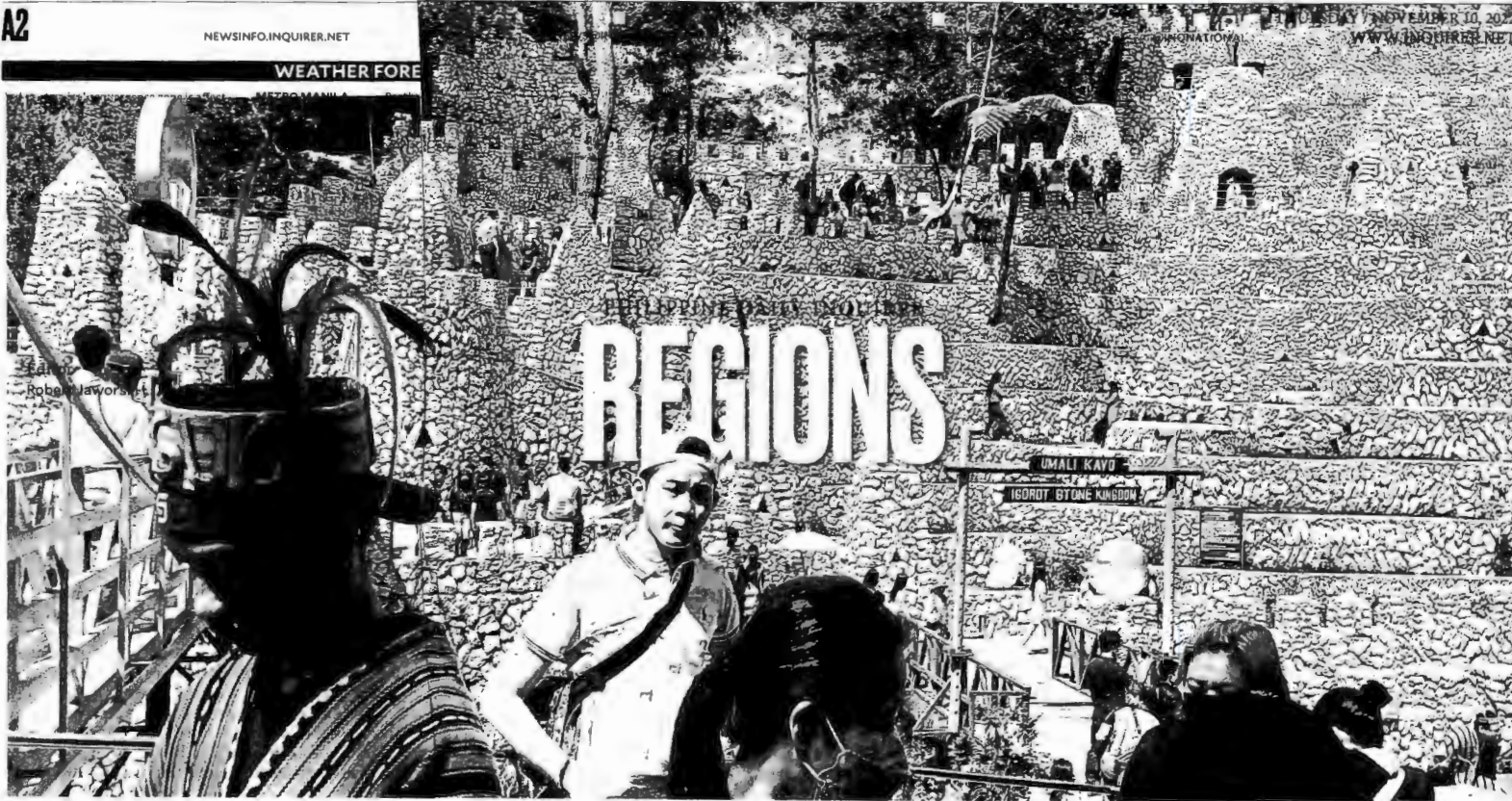
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ATTRACTION CLOSED Tourists flock to Igorot Stone Kingdom, one of the newest attractions in Baguio City, in this photo taken on March 13. But the city government on Wednesday stopped the operation of the theme park, which became popular due to social media, over safety issues and permit violations. —ALLAN MACATUNG



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Dredgefill Extraction Agreement, nilagdaan ni Mayor Honey

NILAGDAAN ni Manila Mayor Honey Lacuna ang Dredgefill Extraction Operations Agreement para sa Horizon Manila Reclamation Project kung saan ang JBros Construction Corporation na kina-katawan ni President, Engr. Jesusito Legaspi, Jr., ang siyang project proponent nito.

Ang Horizon Manila ay 419-hectare reclamation project, na binubuo ng tatlong isla na kinabibilangan ng industrial, commercial projects, kabilang na rin ang public housing projects para sa mga residente ng Maynila.

Ang pagpirma ay sinak-sihan ni Vice Mayor Yul Servo-Nieto, District 3 Congressman Joel Chua at members ng Manila City Council.

Sinabi ni Lacuna na ang joint venture ang first reclamation project na gagawin sa City of Manila at ang konstruksyon ay magsisimula sa kalahati ng taong 2023.

Ang Horizon Manila ay isang mixed-use planned community na itatayo sa 419-hectare reclaimed land sa Manila Bay. Ito ang sinasabing pinakamalaking reclamation project sa Maynila.

Ito ay binubuo ng tatlong isla: Island 1 (140 hectares), Island 2 (140 hectares) at Island 3 (139 hectares). Ang proyektong ito ay inaprubahan ng Phi-

lippine Reclamation Authority noong 2019.

Ang Memorandum of Understanding ay nilagdaan sa pagitan ng Maynila at ng Philippine Reclamation Authority noong June 2, 2017. Ang master plan para sa proyekto ay dinisenyo ng project WTA Architecture + Design Studio, isang local Filipino architecture and design firm.

Sinasabi sa master plan

na kailangang gumawa ng 28 distinct "communities" para sa 100,000 residents, na makikita sa tatlong isla na hahatiin ng four-kilometer long canal park. May kabuuang 83 ektarya naman ang ilalaan sa green space, na siyang sasakupin ng 'fifth of the project's total area' at bawat distri- ay magkakaroon ng sariling development guidelines.

(ANDI GARCIA)



Estero Rangers ng Manila Department of Public Service, malupit ang trabaho

LAGOT KA



NI EDD REYES

HINDI biro ang mapabilang sa "Estero Rangers" ng Manila Department of Public Service (DPS) dahil sa pangalan pa lamang, kikalabutan ka na sa uri ng kanilang trabaho bilang tagapag-liuis ng mga maruruming estero, kanal at iba pang daluyan ng tubig sa Lungsod ng Maynila.

Walang pinipiling lugar o panahon ang mga Estero Rangers dahil tag-init man o tag-ulan wala silang takot na lusungin ang maruruming estero at kanal para alisin ang mga basura ng hindi inaalintana ang posibleng epekto nito sa kanilang kalusugan.

Batid naman ng lahat na may mga estero sa Maynila na nagsisilbi ring pa-

likuran ng mga residenteng naninirahan sa gilid ng mga kanal at ito rin ang ginagawang tapunan ng iba't ibang uri ng basura ng mga pasaway na residente.

Pero dahil sa ipinamalas na sipag, tiyaga at dedikasyon sa kanilang trabaho ng mga malulupit na Estero Rangers, marami na ngayong mga estero at kanal na dati'y hindi nakikita ang tubig dahil sa dami ng basura ang maayos na nadadaluyan na ng tubig kaya halos wala ng baha sa lungsod o kung mayroon man dahil sa lakas ng buhos ng ulan ay madali rin namang nawawala.

Bukod nga pala sa Estero Rangers, may mga tauhan din si DPS Acting Director Kayle Nicole Amurao na tinatawag namang Team Magdaragat at Baseco Beach Warriors na naglilinis naman ng mga baybaying dagat na nasasakupan ng Lungsod ng Maynila.

Batid naman ng marami kung gaano karumi dati ang Baseco Beach dahil isang katerbang informal settlers ang namamalagi rito pero dahil sa mga mandirigma ng DPS, napapaliguan na ngayon ang dati'y napakaruming baybaying dagat.

Kung sabagay, noong

panahon pa ni dating Mayor Francisco "Isko Moreno" Domagoso, ay tumanggap na ng pagkilala ang DPS a ilalim ni Director Kenneth Amurao mula sa International Council for Environmental Law at sa Institute for Governance Sustainable Development ng Washington DC dahil sa kanilang pangangalaga sa kalikasan.

Pamahalaang Lungsod ng Navotas,

humakot ng parangal

ISANG malugod na pagbati kay Mayor John Rey Tiangco dahil isang katerbang parangal ang hinakot ng Pamahalaang Lungsod ng Navotas sa 2022 Urban Governance Exemplar Awards ng Department of the Interior and Local Government-National Capital Region (DILG-NCR).

Kabilang sa mga parangal na tinanggap ng pamahalaang lungsod ang Ideal Level of Functionality dahil sa pagpapahalaga ng lokal na lupon sa pagkaka-loob ng proteksiyon sa mga kabataan at kababaihan, High Functionality dahil sa itinayong lupon na tutugon sa problema sa paggamit ng ilegal na droga at ang Functional ratin dahil sa binuong lupon para sa pagpapanatili ng kaayu-

san at katahimikan.

Kinilala rin ang Navotas bilang Child-Friendly Local Government dahil sa pangunguna sa proyektong Informal Settler Families Cluster for the Manila Bay Clean-Up Rehabilitation and Preservation Program (MBCRPP) at agarang pagtupad sa MBCRPP sa hanay ng mga LGUs pati na rin sa pangunguna sa Fisheries Compliance Audit (FishCA).

Pinasalamatan naman ni Mayor Tiangco ang suportang ipinagkaka-loob ng baw't Navoteño sa kanyang pamumuno at sinabing magsisilbing inspirasyon ang mga parangal para lalo pa nilang pagbutihin ang pamamahala at pagkaka-loob ng serbisyo sa mamamayan.

Kasama ni Mayor Tiangco sa pagtanggap ng parangal sina City Planning and Development Officer Engr. Rufino M. Serrano at Navotas DILG OIC Director Jenifer G. Galorport habang dumalo rin sa okasyon ang iba pang opisyal ng lokal na pamahalaan.

Sa puna, komento at suhestiyon, mag-text lang sa 0923-347-8363 o mag-email sa eddreyes2006@yahoo.com



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Mayor Honey, pangulo ng JBros Corp. lumagda sa kasunduan sa 'dredging'

Ni EDD REYES

Para sa Horizon Manila Reclamation Project

NILAGDAAN nina Manila Mayor Maria Sheilah "Honey" Lacuna Pangan at ni JBros Construction Corporation President Engr. Jesusito Legazpi, Jr., Martes ng hapon ang Dredgefill Extraction Operations Agreement para sa Horizon Manila Reclamation Project.

Ayon kay Atty. Princess Abante, tagapagsali-

ta ng alkalde at pinuno rin ng Mayor's Communication Office, ito ang kaunahan at pinakamalaking reclamation project sa Lungsod ng Maynila, na may sukat na 419-ektarya at kabilangan ng tatlong isla na pagtatayuan ng mga gusaling pang-industriya at komersiyo, pati na ang pabahay para sa mga residente ng Maynila.

Idinugtong pa ni Atty. Abante na ang makasaysayang kaganapan ay sinaksihan din nina Vice Mayor John Marvin "Yul Servo" Nieto, Congressman Joel Chua ng ikatlong distrito ng lungsod at mga miyembro ng Sangguniang Panlungsod.

Magugunita na inaprubahan ang proyekto noong Disyembre 2019 ng

Philippine Reclamation Authority (PRA) at noong Oktubre 2020, kinumpirma na ng JBros Construction Corp. na nakumpleto na nila ang lahat ng mga kinakailangang permiso at dokumento, kabilang ang Environmental Compliance Certificate (ECC) na dahilang upang aprubahan na ito ng Philippine Competition Commission (PCC).



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Robin pushes probe on tribe relocation

SEN. Robinhood "Robin" Padilla on Monday, November 7, filed Senate Resolution 280 to get to the bottom of the deaths of 24 members of a tribe and injury to 30 others following landslides brought by Tropical Storm "Paeng."

Padilla cited reports indicating the Teduray tribe was forcibly relocated from Datu Odin Sinsuat town to a landslide-prone area at the foot of Mt. Minandar in Maguindanao del Norte.

He also wants to know who was remiss in their mandate to ensure the rights of tribes to remain in their ancestral land — whether it was the National Commission on

Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) or the Ministry of Indigenous Peoples' Affairs in BARMM.

Earlier reports quoted Chieftain Timuay Alim Bandara of the tribal indigenous group community Teduray as saying the tribal community was forced out of their coastal homes to Sitio Tabunon, Barangay Kusiong, Datu Odin Sinsuat, Maguindanao del Norte in 2020 despite their protests.

The reports said such forced relocation was allegedly caused by a "powerful person" who wanted to convert the place into a resort.

Padilla pushed for the probe to be handled by the Senate Committee on Cultural Communities and

Muslim Affairs which he heads.

"The right to stay in the territory and not to be removed therefrom is a guaranteed right pursuant to Section 7(c) of the Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act. Where relocation is considered necessary as an exceptional measure, such relocation shall take place only with free and prior informed consent of the concerned Indigenous Cultural Communities/Indigenous Peoples (ICCs/IPs), and whenever possible, they shall be guaranteed the right to return to their ancestral domains, as soon as the grounds cease to exist," Padilla said.

In his resolution, the senator noted the area where the tribe was relocat-

ed at the foot of Mt. Minandar was "prone to landslides."

He also cited reports that 127 of 300 families affected by the supposedly forced relocation in December 2020 had petitioned the NCIP and protested their transfer, but the agency did not respond.

Because of this, Padilla stressed the need to find out if the Teduray tribe's constitutional rights were violated.

In view of the foregoing, there is a need to examine and review the IPRA as well as the mandate of the NCIP of protecting the rights and welfare of the IPs, with the end in view of amending the provisions of the IPRA," he said.

JAVIER JOE ISMAEL



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A-Blades join Mt. Banoy tree-planting activity

By **JOJO CESAR
MAGSOMBOL**

BATANGAS CITY - More than 100 guyabano trees the other day were planted by the Alliance of Batangan Leaders and Devoted Scouts (A-Blades) in Mt. Banoy, in Barangay Talumpok East, here.

The tree-planting activ-

ity was part of their hiking with the theme "One in Scouting, One in Saving Mother Nature."

The Scouts partnered with the Sangguniang Barangay of Talumpok East, led by village chief-tain Franklin Lontoc.

Also participating in the project were 367 Senior and Rover Scouts, 55 Outfit Advisors, 36 A-Blades officers led by its

chairman, SCA Arvin Valencencia, and organization President ES Leira Dianne Perlada, A-Blades staff and volunteers from 18 schools in the city.

The crops were gifts from the Office of the City Veterinarian and Agricultural Services (OCVAS), and the safety of the participants was handled by the Philippine Red Cross (PRC).



Young Scouts smile as they participate in the tree planting activity in Mt. Banoy, Batangas City. Photo courtesy of PIO Batangas City



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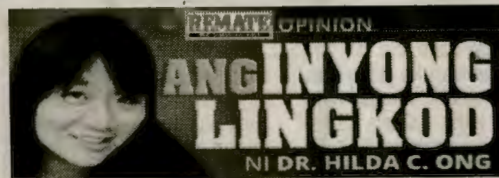
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ANG National Water Resources Board (NWRB) ay isang ahensya ng pamahalaan na namamahala sa lahat ng katubigan sa buong bansa at nagmomonitor sa paggamit ng tubig.

Ang pagkontrol ng paggamit ng lahat ng uri ng katubigan tulad ng alokasyon, konserbasyon at pag-iingat na kakibat ang pagsustena sa pagpapaunlad nito sa pamamagitan ng sistema ng water rights.

Humihingi ng paumanhin at pang-unawa si executive director Dr. Sevillo David, Jr. NG NWRB sa publiko partikular sa kanilang mga kliyente na hindi makatawag sa kanilang tanggapan sa National Irrigation Authority Road, Quezon city dahil sa pagkawala ng mga kable ng telepono sahi ng pagnanakaw sa mga ito.

Inaayos na ng PLDT ang mga linya ng telepono. Para



REMA TE OPINION

ANG INYONG LINGKOD

NI DR. HILDA C. ONG

NWRB APEKTADO NG PAGNANAKAW NG KABLE NG TELEPONO

sa pansamantalang pagpapatulo ng serbisyo, maaari muna nang makipag-ugnayan sa mga dibisyon ng NWRB sa mga sumusunod na email address at mobile numbers:

General concerns and queries – nwrphil@gmail.com;

Water Rights Division (WRD) para sa issuance of conditional water permit at resolution of cases and petitions – wrd@nwr.gov.ph / 0918-

4236870, 0956-9255256;

WRD para sa issuance of permit to drill for observation and monitoring, registration of water use for domestic, at issuance of NWRB indorsement as requirement for registration with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) – 0918-4236862, 09165440-299;

Water Utilities Division para sa issuance of provisional authority for certificate of public convenience and other related applications and petitions – wud@nwr.gov.ph / 0918-4236851, 09165440-319;

Policy and Program Division para sa issuance of certificate of water availability at NWRB certificate for Philippine Economic Zone Authority (PEZA) registration – ppd@nwr.gov.ph / 0918-4236866, 0956-9255225;

Monitoring and Enforcement Division para sa application and renewal of well driller, issuance of ground water table depth for proposed memorial park, at calibration of water meter – med@nwr.gov.ph / 0918-4236842, 0916-

5440309;

Administrative and Financial Division para sa statement of accounts at iba pang administrative concerns – billing@nwr.gov.ph, afd@nwr.gov.ph / 0918-4236852, 0956-9255201.

Muling magbibigay ng abiso ang NWRB kapag naibalik na ang serbisyo ng telepono sa tanggapan.

Kung nais ninyo malaman ang TAMANG IMPORMASYON, TAMANG SERBISYO ni AGARANG SERBISYO LADY, i-search sa YOUTUBE CHANNEL, "HILDA ONG" at sa Facebook Fanpage "TV RADIO HILDA ONG", Huwag kalimutan i-click ang salitang "SUBSCRIBE", "LIKE" at "SHARE".



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Mayor Lacuna signs pact for Manila Reclamation Project

MANILA Mayor Maria Sheilah "Honey" Lacuna-Pangan signed on Tuesday afternoon an agreement with a private construction firm for the Horizon Manila Reclamation Project.

Atty. Princess Abante, spokesperson and head of the Mayor's Communication Office said Horizon Manila is the first and biggest reclamation project of the City of Manila with 419-hectare reclamation, consisting of three islands that will include industrial, commercial projects, as well as public housing projects for the residents of Manila.

The signing of the Dredgefill Extraction Operations Agreement was witnessed by Vice Mayor John Marvin "Yul Servo" Nieto, District 3 Representative Congressman Joel

Chua and members of the City Council.

The project was approved in December 2019 by the Philippine Reclamation Authority (PRA) and in October 2020, JBros Construction Corp. confirmed that all

the necessary permits have been secured, including the Environmental Compliance Certificate (ECC) prompting the Philippine Competition Commission (PCC) to approve the project.

However, before the construction began in the second quarter of 2021, former President Rodrigo Duterte rejected the massive land reclamation activities in Manila Bay from Navotas City to Cavite allegedly due to cor-

ruption issues. In February, Duterte gave his go signal to proceed with the development, recognizing the jobs that would be created, which in turn would help contribute in the recovery of the economy.

Edd Reyes



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COMMENTARY

MOIRA G. GALLAGA

Designating archipelagic sea lanes

Currently pending with the House committee on foreign affairs are four bills aimed at establishing archipelagic sea lanes (ASL) in Philippine waters. These are House Bill Nos. 1095, 2465, 2843, and 3894. Of these, HB 2465 filed by Rep. Rufus Rodriguez, has been in the news lately with the author calling on fellow lawmakers to urgently pass it.

I agree with Rodriguez that it's urgent that we pass a law establishing our country's archipelagic sea lanes, as they are vital in protecting our national security and economic interests. It is also a right and duty accorded under Article 53 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Seas (Unclos) to archipelagic states such as the Philippines.

The explanatory note of HB 3894 principally authored by Rep. Rachel Arenas points out that "without any officially established ASLs, foreign vessels may pass through the country using any route within our internal waters and airspace normally used for international navigation."

By designating ASLs, our country will be able to limit the areas or passages where foreign vessels can pass through. This, in turn, will enable the efficient use of resources for monitoring our maritime territory and our exclusive economic zone. Resources can now be focused on areas where passage is allowed to ensure that vessels passing through do so in accordance with Unclos provisions.

Having designated ASLs also simplifies the conduct of operations of maritime enforcement authorities in areas not covered by them. There will be less room for ambiguity on the status of vessels that are spotted in areas outside ASLs. Vessels transgressing the ASL can no longer make the excuse that they are simply exercising the right of innocent passage through archipelagic waters.

With the benefits provided by such a measure, it begs the question: why did the bill languish in previous Congresses? There have been arguments raised on how such a law could be enforced effectively. What's the point of passing a law if it can't be enforced?

But this only becomes a problem if the law is violated. Given that this is consistent with Unclos provisions, most responsible countries would normally observe and respect international norms and rules. Having designated ASLs strengthens our case against violators who are nationals of these countries, and we can more forcefully assert our sovereignty in these situations.

As for countries who take advantage of the power imbalance in their favor, there are other ways and mechanisms to deal with that problem. We shouldn't let this complication derail what is on balance a net benefit for the country's national security and economic interests.

While international law gives us the right to designate ASLs and thereby limit the movement of foreign vessels in our waters and air space, and facilitate as well our ability to manage and secure such areas, we still need to pass a law to avail of this right and benefit.

Even as Rodriguez has made a very public call for the urgent passage of his bill, Sen. Jinggoy Estrada has filed a similar measure. Senate Bill No. 462 is currently pending in the Senate foreign relations committee. Hopefully, with Congress back in session after its brief adjournment, these bills designating ASLs would be among its priorities.

Moira G. Gallaga served three Philippine presidents as presidential protocol officer, and was posted as a diplomat at the Philippine consulate general in Los Angeles and the Philippine Embassy in Washington.



Dealing with government agencies

THROUGH the years, Filipinos have experienced an everyday nightmare in the form of red tape and government inefficiency. Red tape refers to any regulation, rule, or administrative procedure or system that is ineffective



MY LAW.IQ

**JEREMIAH
BELGICA**

or detrimental in achieving its intended objectives and, as a result, produces slow, suboptimal and undesirable social outcomes. There are many causes of red tape, but one of its major causes is the silo systems in government. According to the Cambridge dictionary, silo systems are a part of a company, organization or system that does not communicate with, understand or work well with other parts. These result in redundancy of processes and requirements, circuitous processes, uncoordinated planning, duplication of functions, and limited data-sharing among others.

Several studies have shown that cutting red tape and implementing regulatory reform are needed to achieve true progress in the Philippines. In a study made in 2010, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) said despite national reforms, progress can be hampered by poor quality regulation or poor enforcement at the subnational level. They said this after it was found that local government units in the Philippines exert significant independence in their jurisdiction and struggle with resource and capacity constraints — adding to the complexity of the business environment and regulatory regime in the Philippines. The OECD further stated that there is a strong body of evidence, which connects regulatory reduction reforms with positive economic outcomes.

One unfortunate finding in the red tape and corruption cycle is how members of the public can participate in it. In this regard, the public can both be a victim or a conduit when they participate in the cycle through engaging the services of fixers. We must remember that corruption is a two-way street. Fixers will no longer exist if there is no demand for them. So, we should remember not to pay the cost of compromise. Engaging the illegal services of fixers may be a temporary relief in processing documents but will cause the overall destruction of the system and the profession.

But how can we stop the cycle? There are three things that you should know and do: First, you must establish your position based on ethics and values. Second, know your rights and remedies. And last, assert and make use of your rights. For the first part, one should know about negotiation. A negotiation is reaching a compromise that is acceptable to both parties. A basic rule before negotiating is to know your non-negotiables, your set of fundamental values, and those that are not open

for debate or modification. Political and spiritual leader Mahatma Gandhi once said, "All compromise is based on give and take, but there can be no give and take on fundamentals. Any compromise on mere fundamentals

is a surrender. For it is all give and no take."

The next step after figuring out your fundamentals is to know your rights. Before transacting with government agencies, the public should know about a landmark and game-changing law of the Duterte administration which is Republic Act 11032, or the "Ease of Doing Business and Efficient Government Service Delivery Act of 2018." This law, which I have extensively discussed in my previous columns, aims to streamline the current systems and procedures of government services. This law also created the Anti-Red Tape Authority (ARTA).

Armed with your fundamentals and your rights, you can now engage with other government agencies on your transactions systematically. I have prepared an eight-step guide that you can use in this endeavor. The guide is as follows:

1. Access the agency's citizen's charter posted in its office, through its website, or through the Anti-Red Tape Electronic Management Information System (Artemis) at citizenscharter.gov.ph.
 2. Comply with all the documentary requirements and pay all the fees indicated in the citizen's charter.
 3. Wait for action within the prescribed processing time.
 4. Claim the application after the prescribed processing time. (Note: The agency may request and notify you for an extension equivalent to the same period.)
 5. If no action has been taken, respectfully remind the office of the complete submission and lapse of time.
 6. If still no action has been taken, approach the agency's public assistance and complaints desk to request for assistance.
 7. If no action has been taken, submit a simple letter addressed to the head of the office where the application is pending. Attach proof of the completed submission and the pertinent part of the citizen's charter. Also mention the accountability of the head of the office as stated in RA 11032. Furnish a copy to the committee on anti-red tape (CART) of the agency or office.
 8. Finally, if no action is done to address your concern, file a direct complaint before ARTA, Civil Service Commission-Contact Center ng Bayan, or the Office of the Ombudsman.
- Let me end with a verse from Ephesians 3:20-21: "Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen."



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Ratify outer space treaty, gov't urged

By Geraldford Ticke
and Madonna T. Virola
@InqNational

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY—An international maritime law expert urged the government to ratify the outer space treaties it signed 55 years ago as incidents of space debris falling in Philippine territory increased.

Lawyer Jay Batongbacal, director of the University of the Philippines Institute for Maritime Affairs and Law of the Sea, made the appeal as residents of Occidental Mindoro and Palawan reported the discovery of space debris in their towns.

Batongbacal said in an email to the Inquirer that the debris appeared to be part of the Long March 5B rocket that carried the final part of China's new Tiangong (Heavenly Palace) Space Station.

The rocket was launched from the Wenchang launch site in Hainan on Nov. 4.

He said the Philippines and its surrounding waters are well within the potential debris field of any rocket launched from Wenchang and China's Civil



SPACE DEBRIS A resident of Calintaan, Occidental Mindoro, helps clear space debris that were found at the town's beach.

—PHOTO FROM CALINTAAN MAYOR DANTE ESTEBAN

Aviation Administration earlier issued an advisory to warn about rocket debris falling back to Earth after the launch.

More reason to ratify

The Philippine Space Agency also noted that Chinese authorities identified areas in Panatag (Scarborough) Shoal and Busuanga, Palawan, as the two drop zones of the rocket debris.

"This is just another reason why the Philippines should immediately ratify the outer space

treaties that deal with the liability of launching states and procedure for compensation for damage or injury that may be caused by their space activities," Batongbacal said.

The Philippine is among 23 signatories that have not ratified the 1967 Outer Space Treaty, officially the "Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies," that

serves as the basis of international space law.

Four other space treaties have been forged since 1967: the Rescue and Return Agreement in 1968, Liability Convention in 1972, Registration Convention in 1975 and Moon Agreement in 1979.

Latest incidents

It remained unclear why the Outer Space Treaty has remained unratified.

The latest discoveries of rocket debris were in Calintaan, Occidental Mindoro, where residents found metal objects bearing a Chinese ensign at Barangay Poblacion on Sunday and Tuesday, according to town disaster office chief Joven Gequiñana.

The rocket debris were turned over to the Coast Guard headquarters in San Jose, Occidental Mindoro, on Wednesday.

More debris were also found in waters off Barangay Cheey in Busuanga, Palawan, on Monday, Busuanga Mayor Elizabeth Cervantes told the Inquirer on Tuesday. The debris were turned over to the Navy. **INQ**



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Department of Environment and Natural Resources
ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT BUREAU
DENR Compound, Visayas Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City 1116
Tel. No. (832) 8539 4378
Website: www.emb.gov.ph Email: recordco@emb.gov.ph



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.** application 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, Ten 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
Tugaa, Balangasan, Pagadian City

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

FENRO Zamboanga del Norte
Sta. Filomina, Dipolog City, Zamboanga del Norte
(065) 212 - 6750

Dapitan City Hall
Junipon Pulo-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.