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BBM rallies fellow Asean leaders on climate change

By HELEN FLORES

PHNOM PENH - Citing the vulnerability of developing countries to climate impacts, President Marcos rallied yesterday fellow leaders in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to come up with a "collective" action to fight climate change.

In his speech at the 41st ASEAN Summit Retreat at the Sokha Hotel here, Marcos said addressing the climate crisis is a "collective responsibility" of all nations, even as he called on developed nations to play a bigger role in global efforts to mitigate its risks and effects.

"Addressing climate change is our collective responsibility and developed countries should play a bigger role in global efforts to mitigate its risks, its effects, its damage and loss. Developing countries are more vulnerable, lose more when these climate shocks hit and have fewer

resources to cope with the adverse effects of these shocks," Marcos said.

The ASEAN can address these challenges by strengthening its cooperation mechanism on environmental sustainability and holistic green economic strategies, according to Marcos.

The President also emphasized the need to enhance climate resilience in developing nations by "using new agricultural technologies" to strengthen food security cooperation and food self-sufficiency in the region.

"We need to shift our paradigm from the old, traditional farming methods to climate-smart agricultural systems, to better shield us against the ongoing adverse effects of climate change," said Marcos, who concurrently serves as agriculture secretary.

Marcos said caring for the environment and ensuring the Philippines' resiliency and adaptation to the new normal of climate change are on top

of his administration's agenda.

"The measures we seek to undertake hopefully will enable us to become smarter, more responsible, more sustainable in all that we do," he said.

The Philippines is highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, including sea level rise, increased frequency of extreme weather events, rising temperatures and extreme rainfall.

The Philippines ranked first on the 2022 World Risk Index, which measures a country's exposure and vulnerability to natural hazards.

The report was released by Germany-based Bündnis Entwicklung Hilft and the Institute for International Law of Peace and Armed Conflict at Ruhr University Bochum last month.

Marcos earlier called for a better disaster response following the devastation brought by the recent tropical cyclones in the country.





TITLE:

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Finding consensus on the climate crisis



EAGLE EYES
TONY
LA VIÑA

THE first week of the 27th Conference of the Parties (COP 27) of the United Nations Framework on Climate Change has now passed.

The world awaits the decisions that will be made here.

The challenge as always is finding consensus on the contentious issues.

Here in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt, it is the creation of a loss and damage mechanism that is so critical for countries like the Philippines which is now the country most threatened by climate change.

Interestingly, as I wrote a few years ago with Parbukas and University of the Philippines Law Center colleague and fellow University of Makati environmental law professor Niner Guiao, there has been no definition of consensus in any of the provisions found in multilateral environmental agreements.

One United Nations legal instrument that defines it is the 1982 Convention on the Law of the Sea, which states that consensus is "the absence of any formal objection." The Merriam-Webster online dictionary definition of consensus, on the other hand, is of "general agreement," or a "judgment arrived at by most of those concerned."

In Multilateral Environmental Agreement (MEA) processes, the UNFCCC included, consensus alludes to the definition indicated in the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, referring merely to the absence of objections from any of the parties.

No formal voting requirement is required, for as long as no objection is raised by any of the parties concerned.

It is only in the event of a formal objection that consensus is blocked.

In practice, however, parties usually try to resolve known objections before such matters are brought before plenary.

Oftentimes meetings are suspended for a few minutes, in order to allow certain parties to "huddle" and attempt to resolve difficulties on their own.

The climate change regime is a formal one, with legally binding commitments, procedures and processes that are both similar and unique in comparison to other MEAs. It has taken a life of its own after the UNFCCC was adopted, and its annual COP has perhaps the highest attendance among those of other multilateral agreements.

In 2009, for instance, registration for the 15th COP held in Copenhagen reached approximately 45,000 people, the highest for any COP ever held.

Here in Sharm, nearly 30,000 registered.

In both cases, government delegates would number a quarter of those here while the rest are observers from civil society, the development community, business groups, science organizations, indigenous peoples, etc.

What must not be forgotten in the maze of treaty provisions and procedures, however, is that the entire regime is built upon human beings trying to represent the interests of their own constituencies.

The bottom line is that as one negotiates for what would best serve his or her country, the negotiation process builds on relationships between the different country delegations, and the relationship of these delegations with their constituencies.

Being forthright would build trust and inspire respect.

The UNFCCC negotiations should not be treated like a game of one-upmanship.

Despite the differences in circumstances and representations, one overarching goal remains – one that will benefit all the Parties involved.

As in any other venue or setting, everyone must be treated with respect. There should be a presumption of good faith, which will allow parties to make efforts towards compromise more willingly.

Trust-building is also absolutely essential and will pave the way for a satisfactory outcome for all.

“Despite the differences in circumstances and representations, one overarching goal remains – one that will benefit all the Parties involved”

As negotiations draw to a close and tensions run high, the trust that has been fostered will help parties to disregard rumors and actively work towards the best possible outcome. Equally important in trust-building is transparency.

Governments need to open up processes and listen to their constituencies at home and here in Sharm El-Sheikh.

I am glad that the Philippine Delegation to COP 27 led by Environment Secretary Toni Yulo-Loyzaga has been transparent and cordial in their interaction with those of us from civil society here in Egypt.

Secretary Yulo-Loyzaga also made us proud in her competent facilitation of a major climate finance meeting last Wednesday.

She partnered with her German counterpart, the special representative for international climate policy of that country.

Loyzaga and Morgan are my long time colleagues and good friends. I was proud and happy to see them take their leadership role in COP 27.

As I said in my last column, this is my 23rd COP. I have worked on this issue for 30 plus years starting when I chose the issue of climate change as my doctoral dissertation at Yale Law School in 1991.

Much has changed then. The problem has gotten worse and has reached emergency and crisis levels.

There are so many things also being done as we are witnessing in the many events and pavilions here – but they are not enough and we are still failing.

But I have hope. And this is because in the tens of thousands of delegates who are here are quite a lot of youth activists.

As I do in all COPs, I met with the young Filipinos who are here in COP 27 and they inspire me to continue this work until I am still physically able to do so.

This is an intergenerational mission and I am happy to see that the next generation is going to be better than we are in achieving in their lifetimes climate justice.

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TO ENSURE FOOD SECURITY

CIVIL SOCIETY GROUPS PUSH FOR AGROECOLOGY AT COP27

By Mariejo S. Ramos
@MariejoRamosINQ

More than 50 civil society organizations have called on the country's delegation to the 27th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP27) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to prioritize agroecology as an adaptive strategy in the face of extreme events due to climate change.

"As we welcome the inclusion of agriculture and cli-

mate adaptation as amongst the five key issues indicated in this year's COP, we hereby call on our policymakers to help put agroecology, an approach to guarantee the universal right to food, on the agenda," the groups wrote in an open letter to the delegation dated Nov. 7.

As the world's most disaster-prone country, according to the World Risk Index 2022, the groups said the country's vulnerabilities to climate change were "also threatening the basic

human right to food security."

"This, along with the accumulated loss and damage from past disasters and the pandemic, and interrelated issues on health, transport, energy and market affordability, continue to make living situations worse for most Filipinos," the groups wrote in their letter.

During the last decade alone, 317 extreme weather events in the country led to disasters that incurred damages worth P515 billion, according to

government data.

Among all these climate-related disasters, Super typhoon "Yolanda" (international name: Haiyan) in 2013 was the costliest, with loss and damage reaching P95.48 billion, according to government data.

Citing a report by the International Food Policy Research Institute, the Center for Environmental Concerns (CEC) Philippines said that the country stands to lose around P26 billion annually through 2050 if the situation continues.

The groups believe that agroecological farming practices, including the use of organic fertilizers and increasing the capacities of small-scale farmers, can help in creating "food systems that emit less carbon and preserve biodiversity."

Among those who signed the letter were the CEC Philippines, Advocates of Science and Technology for the People, Youth Advocates for Climate Action Philippines, Good Food Community and Mag-sasaka at Siyentipiko para sa

Pag-unlad ng Agrikultura.

The Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP), one of the signatories, said that agroecology "will foster the creation of food systems that emit less carbon and preserve biodiversity."

The KMP and other farmers and food security advocacy groups will march to Bantayog ng mga Bayani on Saturday to join the Global Climate Strike, in time for the closing activity of COP27 in Sharm, Egypt. INQ



Youth demand climate justice amid COP27

Toxic air pollution particles can cross the placenta and end up in the livers, lungs, and brains of fetuses. Additional data indicates that every day, around 93 percent of the world's children under the age of 15 breathe polluted air. Tragically, many of them die.

Years into the Conference of Parties, a summit that brings together the world's most powerful, little action is still done to address climate change.

"We actually stopped expecting from world leaders. Now we have demands for them," Nisreen Elsaïm said, chair of the Sudan Youth Organization on Climate Change and the UN Secretary General's Youth Advisory Group on Climate Change.

The young climate activist from Sudan cited COP's climate finance which shifted from US 100 billion in 2021 to US 100

trillion in 2022 yet a goal hasn't been achieved.

"How many more reports do we need to actually realize that we are in a very bad situation and we are running out of time and we are losing this planet?" Elsaïm said.

A few years ago, scientists began to discover fossil fuels are literally killing us, Sophia Kianni, the youngest United Nations advisor and founder of international youth-led non-profit Climate Cardinals, said.

Toxic air pollution particles can cross the placenta and end up in the livers, lungs and brains of fetuses. Additional data

indicates that every day, around 93 percent of the world's children under the age of 15 breathe polluted air. Tragically, many of them die.

"If our leaders took action to meet who air quality guidelines, we would save millions of lives, drive real climate action and keep children safe. What are our leaders waiting for?" Kianni said.

In 2016, 600,000 children died from acute lower respiratory infections caused by polluted air without aggressive action to slash greenhouse gas pollution. At this rate, climate crisis is going to become the defining narrative of



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DAILY TRIBUNE

PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF UN YOUTH

YOUNG climate activists cross the Egyptian desert in a bid to demand climate justice.

human health.

"I am very much dedicated to have the hope that will take us somewhere, not the hope that will keep us in our place and that's why it's not climate anxiety. It's climate reality," Elsaim added.

COP27 is currently being held at Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt until 18 November.

COP was first held in Berlin, Germany in March 1995. The most recent, COP26, was hosted by the United Kingdom in Glasgow from 31 October to 12 November 2021. COP28 will take place in Dubai Expo City, UAE on 6 to 17 November 2023.



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF UNSPLASH/ TOBIAS RADEMACHER

YOUTH are demanding solutions to climate change.



Climate change and the Philippines

THE
2022
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Climate Change Conference or COP27 officially started in Sharm El Sheik in Egypt on Tuesday, Nov. 8, 2022. This is 30 years after the United Nations Framework Conference on Climate Change (UNFCCC) was held, and seven years after the Paris Agreement was agreed upon by parties during the COP21 meeting.

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Climate change

All throughout these conferences of parties and meetings, there are three key themes that have consistently propelled the discussions. These are mitigation, or limiting the changes in climate; adaptation, or adjusting to current and future impacts of climate change; and financing the lowering of greenhouse gas emissions and adopting climate-resilient development.

The scientific premise of climate change is that the increase in the amount of greenhouse gases in the earth's atmosphere leads to global warming that alters both biological and physical earth processes which, in turn, have serious consequences, from sea-level rise to more severe climate episodes, that would in turn threaten food security, lead to more virulent disease outbreaks and even species extinction. Island nation-states and coastal cities are being threatened to be wiped out and inundated by sea water.

The Philippines is technically not a net emitter of greenhouse gases, considering that we are not an industrialized country, but we are certainly most vulnerable, considering our archipelagic nature, as well as our geographical location along the usual pathway of typhoons that have become stronger and more destructive. Thus, it would be in order for our government to prioritize climate adaptation in our climate change strategy. As a country that is frequented by fierce weather events, we have to begin going beyond post-

disaster management, and get really serious in disaster risk reduction. This would entail not only investing in human and physical capital for weather forecasting, but making sweeping reforms in governance processes, and moving away from reactive and into more proactive ways. As recent typhoons showed, floods are often caused by blocked waterways. These can all be remedied both by engineering measures, as well as by simple old foresight by local and national government agencies.

Adaptation will have to also entail formulating radical measures to alter our human settlements design, from the houses we build, to the location of our communities in areas that are perennially flooded. There has to be political will and proper incentives that would force people to move into safer zones.

Our contribution to mitigation is focused more on the fact that we are, in fact, a possible carbon sink. The main pathway for greenhouse gas emissions is through actions associated with certain human activity, directly through the use of fossil fuels and other activities that emit carbon, or indirectly by relying on resources the production of which entail processes that emit carbon. While we can certainly contribute to the lowering of carbon emissions by altering our production and consumption practices, our impact would be more strategic by engaging in activities that would instead sequester or trap carbon from the atmosphere, instead of emitting them.

It is here that we have to correct the impression that the more forest cover we have, the

more we can contribute to climate change mitigation efforts, and the concomitant urge to peddle the mantra that cutting of trees is bad for the environment. People should be informed that a mature forest is no longer an efficient carbon sink. Science points to the fact that carbon is sequestered more in plantations where a naturally growing stock would become sinks that take in the carbon in the atmosphere in the form of carbon dioxide. Conscious of the adverse impacts of planting single species, and taking action to mitigate these, the plantation cycle of planting and cutting trees when they are mature is a more effective and efficient way of turning forest into carbon sinks, compared to just leaving them untouched, which is what preservationists are advocating for.

Logging has always been seen by many as the harbinger of environmental destruction. Indeed, irresponsible and unscientific logging practices can lead to the erosion of biodiversity and can lead to floods and landslides. But the cutting of plantation crop, as well as the cutting of decaying tree parts and the removal of mature and over-mature trees in natural forests, when done properly using principles in silviculture, would provide more environmental benefits, particularly to climate change mitigation efforts, by preventing methane gas emissions by decaying organic matter.

In addition, the harvesting of mature and over-mature trees and turning these into construction materials and furniture are technically turning the carbon in trees into inert carbon. This is for all intents and purposes an



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act of carbon sequestration. Dead wood that is not decaying is nothing but carbon that is no longer in the atmosphere.

Beyond adaptation and mitigation, one of the sore points in global climate change negotiation is the issue of climate justice, where richer countries are the ones primarily responsible for greenhouse gas emissions, while poorer countries like the Philippines are the ones bearing the brunt of adverse climate change impacts. Climate change financing from developed economies should go beyond carbon trading mechanism where they provide funds for developing economies to become carbon sinks by financing, for example, reforestation programs and cleaner technologies. They should also finance climate adaptation measures.

But more fundamentally, richer countries should really be serious in capping their emissions and be more zealous in their own measures to reduce their greenhouse gas contributions. They cannot continue to use their monies to buy carbon quotas from developed economies, to enable them to continue engaging in activities that would continue to emit carbon. The goal is not to make countries like the Philippines sequester carbon for them which, in fact, and in some instances, may even have the effect of constraining our own development trajectories.

It is good that as we face the new challenges of COP 27, that President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. has openly declared and adopted a climate change agenda that includes a well-articulated call for climate justice.



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THE EXPONENT OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS
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CO2 pollution from fossil fuels to hit all-time high in 2022

SHARM EL SHEIKH, Egypt (AFP) — Carbon dioxide emissions from fossil fuels, the main driver of climate change, are on track to rise one percent in 2022 to reach an all-time high, scientists said Friday at the COP27 climate summit in Egypt.

Emissions from oil, fueled by the continuing rebound in aviation, will likely rise more than two percent compared to last year, while emissions from coal — thought by some

to have peaked in 2014 — will hit a new record.

"Oil is more driven by the recovery from Covid, and coal and gas are more driven by events in Ukraine," Glen Peters, research director at CICERO climate research institute in Norway, told AFP.

Global CO2 emissions from all sources — including deforestation and land use — will top out at 40.6 billion tons, just below the record level in 2019, the first peer-reviewed

projections for 2022 showed.

Despite the wild cards of pandemic recovery and an energy crisis provoked by war in Ukraine, the uptick in carbon pollution from burning oil, gas and coal is consistent with underlying trends, the data suggested.

And deeply worrying, said Peters, a co-author of the study.

"Emissions are now five percent above what they were when the Paris Agreement was signed" in 2015, he noted.

Barely 1.2C of warming to date has unleashed a crescendo of deadly and costly extreme weather, from heat waves and drought to flooding and tropical storms made more destructive by rising seas.

To achieve the ambitious Paris target, global greenhouse emissions must drop 45 percent by 2030, and be cut to net zero by mid-century, with any residual emissions compensated by removing CO2 from the atmosphere.

To be on track for a net-zero world, emissions would have to plummet by seven percent annually over the next eight years.

To have a 50/50 chance of staying under the 1.5C limit, humanity's emissions allowance is 380 billion tons of CO2, according to the study in Earth System Science Data, authored by more than 100 scientists.

"You have to ask: When are they going to go down?"

Carbon budget

The new figures show just how dauntingly hard it will be to slash emissions fast enough to meet the Paris goal of capping global warming at 1.5 degrees Celsius above preindustrial levels.

Heating beyond that threshold, scientists warn, risks triggering dangerous tipping points in the climate system.



Can social media propel decisive climate action?



ALL ABOUT
CHOICES

LUDWIG O.
FEDERIGAN

BETWEEN you and me, there is no doubt that the trend of people using social media is increasing worldwide.

In the Philippines, according to the Digital News Report published in 2021, with 111 million Filipinos and an 82 percent of internet penetration rate, 72 percent of Filipinos considered social media as the main source of news, ahead of television at 61 percent and print at 16 percent.

Spreading information quickly and accurately is easier using social media than the time-consuming traditional methods such as television and print. People can connect to the internet at any time and share information with others in an instant.

Going digital makes sense in this country that spends the greatest amount of time online in the world — nearly 11 hours per day, particularly on social media more than four hours daily. The same survey report revealed that Facebook remained the leading source of news at 73 percent, followed by YouTube (53 percent), Messenger (36 percent), Twitter (19 percent) and Instagram (12 percent).

An average Filipino spent over four hours using social media platforms, the highest across the Asia-Pacific region. Facebook is the most used social media platform in the Philippines, with 96.2 percent of internet users accessing the platform.

We resort to social media channels when there is a disaster or an emergency where traditional communication channels have been disrupted. Even if the disaster is distant, we can see their photos and videos which can encourage us to mobilize efforts to aid those who are in need.

The influence of social media networks is immensely huge today, as many people are relying on the internet to learn, gather information, entertain and socialize. With the pandemic and lockdown last year, educating and encouraging people through online media has been critical, more than ever, in mainstreaming climate change and climate action.

An International Public Opinion on Climate Change reported last month that 32 percent of Filipinos heard of climate change from television, print and social media either once a week or once a month, and 36 percent heard at least once a year.

Many of us are following conversations about climate change through social media. Often, from miles away, we are able to tune in to livestreams, comment on speeches and repost or reshare information that we find useful or important.

Misinformation and disinformation

In contrast to other countries in the world, the issues of climate change misinformation and disinformation are not so rampant in the Philippines although one of my fellow columnists in *The Manila Times* chooses to believe a different climate science.

The recent report of the Yale Program on Climate Change Communication stated that the Philippines is one of the countries with a high percentage of climate change awareness, 82 percent of Filipino respondents said that the issue of climate change is either extremely or very important to them personally.

Perpetrators of climate change misinformation and disinforma-

tion are false myths and broken narratives surrounding fossil fuels and climate change, with the fossil fuel industry deceiving the public about their role in contributing to climate change; information that has no scientific foundation and draws conclusions based solely on superstition; and "greenwashing," or a product or company labeling themselves as environment-friendly even if it's not. The ultimate objectives of the narrative

are to undermine climate science, uphold capitalism, delay action and generate more profits as much as these companies can.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change said: "Rhetoric and misinformation on climate change and the deliberate undermining of science have contributed to misperceptions of the scientific consensus, uncertainty, disregarded risk and urgency, and dissent."

Big or small, fake news and climate change denial are spreading and are very difficult to curb, especially if these are not monitored and filtered by the social media networks themselves.

Communicating climate change

When explaining climate change, it may be overwhelming, and people may lose interest. One effective strategy is to deliver a message of optimism that is centered on the solutions, giving people a sense of empowerment and motivating them to take climate action.

Create outputs that are relatable, local and personal so that the audience may feel a connection and care more about the crisis we are facing today.



climate action ?

Highlight the importance of science and articulates that injustice also plays a role in climate change. Growing climate threats frequently have the greatest impact on the poor and vulnerable. Those who contribute the least to greenhouse gas emissions suffer the most consequences. Addressing climate change, therefore, is climate justice.

Show that the most at-risk groups, such as Indigenous Peoples, women, children and youth, are not simply victims of climate hazards but also agents of change by giving them the platform to elevate their voices and highlight their actions.

Let the audiences know that they have the power to bring change through individual action also matters, however, demanding action from governments and corporations is a top and most urgent priority.

Show urgency. Some narratives present climate action as something necessary — in the future. Make sure that we let people know that we need to act right now, as in today, to address the climate crisis. The Earth cannot wait. Humanity is threatened.

Convey that addressing climate change also brings opportunities for sustainable development: green jobs, cleaner air, renewable energy, food security, livable coastal cities and better health, among others.

Continuous awareness-raising through the expansion of platforms. Aside from the usual writing or talking about climate change, other forms and mediums of communication can be used to convey the message of the need for climate action, such as drawing, dancing, poetry, etc. Other behavioral habits, such as eating sustainable food and planting organic vegetables and fruits, can also be posted on social media to influence others to do the same, resulting in behavior change.

Lastly, involve the youth. The youth play a powerful role in driving action, speaking truth to power and holding leaders accountable.

The author is the executive director of the Young Environmental Forum and a nonresident fellow of Stratbase ADR Institute. He completed his climate change and development course at the University of East Anglia (United Kingdom) and an executive program on sustainability leadership at Yale University (USA). You can email him at ludwig.federigan@gmail.com.



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ADB approves \$15-M assistance for SEA climate change program

By LOUELLA DESIDERIO

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has approved a \$15-million program to promote climate change adaptation and mitigation in Southeast Asia.

In a statement, the multilateral lender said the program would help countries in the region mobilize financing for nationally determined contributions or their climate action plans to cut emissions and adapt to climate impacts.

Through the program, the ADB will help countries improve investment planning, identify and develop projects and build their capacity for green projects.

"The Accelerating Climate Transitions through Green Finance in Southeast Asia program will generate much-needed pipelines of climate investments in Southeast Asia," ADB director general for Southeast Asia Ramesh

Subramaniam said.

"It applies a large-scale, holistic approach – planning frameworks, innovative project ideas and knowledge sharing – to help the region's governments deliver on ambitious climate commitments," he said further.

The program will be financed by the ADB's Technical Assistance Special Fund and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Catalytic Green Finance Facility Green Recovery Program being managed by the multilateral lender.

Through this initiative, the ADB aims to encourage investments in clean energy, sustainable transport, waste management and nature-based solutions that could mobilize \$750 million in climate finance.

ADB said it plans to scale up the program by increasing funding.

It will also integrate lessons on climate-resilient development learned by Southeast

Asian countries.

Earlier, the ADB raised its ambition for 2019 to 2030 cumulative climate financing to \$100 billion.

The multilateral institution also aims to have at least 75 percent of its projects address climate change mitigation and adaptation by 2030.



GOVERNMENT TO REHABILITATE THE WORLD
FAMOUS TUBBATAHA REEFS NATURAL PARK

EDITORIAL

Tubbataha Reef

THE release of a P58-million fund is a welcome development in government efforts to rehabilitate the world famous Tubbataha Reefs Natural Park (TRNP) in Palawan.

Nine years ago, a United States Navy ship ran aground on the reefs, damaging part of the 97,030-hectare site, which is teeming with a variety of marine animals, like turtles.

Discovered by divers in the late 1970s, the Tubbataha reefs serve as nesting areas for birds and animals. They are home to 374 and 500 coral and fish species, respectively.

Before they became well-known, the "Samal" - seafaring people of southern Philippines - would visit the Tubbataha Reefs intermittently.

Reports said the US Navy paid the Philippines for the damage, and the provincial government of Palawan received the amount of P58,375,080 on October 25.

In 1993, the TRNP, which is known for its incredible marine biodiversity and dynamic underwater terrain, was inscribed by UNESCO as a natural World Heritage Site.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and former Palawan governor and now Rep. Antonio Alvarez were instrumental in the release of the money.

Part of the fund will be used to complete the living quarters of park rangers, who guard the site throughout the year, said TRNP protected area Supt. Angelique Songco.



Bills filed to protect Panaon Island reefs

BY BELLA CARIASO

LAWMAKERS filed separate bills seeking to declare Panaon Island in Southern Leyte as a protected seascape under the Expanded National Integrated Protected Areas System (Enipas) Act to enhance efforts to safeguard the island's coral reefs and threatened endangered species.

Leyte Second District Rep. Christopherson Yap and Southern Leyte First District Rep. Luz Mercado filed House Bills 4095 and 3743, respectively, outlining the parameters of the protected seascape's coverage in the four municipalities of Liloan, San Francisco, Pintuyan and San Ricardo.

"The declaration of Panaon Island as marine protected area under the Enipas Act is very im-

portant. The formation of a body especially created for its protection would deter commercial vessels from encroaching in municipal waters to do their illegal acts with impunity and keep our most prized reefs from destruction," Yap said.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources with the local government units and other stakeholders have already

conducted the Protected Area Suitability Assessment on Panaon Island.

Environmental group Oceana, together with the provincial government of Southern Leyte, held a 21-day scientific expedition to Panaon Island in October 2020. The expedition assessed the corals and reef fish collection on the island.

"We are running against time in protecting the biodiversity rich areas in our country. These are our shield against the devastating impacts of climate change, protection of Panaon Island," Oceana Vice President Gloria Estenzo Ramos said.

For her part, Mercado said the filing of the bill is important amid the dwindling marine resources in Panaon due to natural and man-made causes.



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Bill's filed to protect Panaon Island reefs 2

■ Panaon Island in Southern Leyte is home to reefs and endangered marine species. PHOTO FROM OCEAN PHILIPPINES FB PAGE



"We need to sustain the continuous supply of fish and marine products for the people of Panaon and the Filipino people," Mercado said.

Yap said research on the impact of Marine Protected Area (MPA) underscored the need to protect the environment to secure the people's right to a balanced and healthful ecology.

"Fish catch increased in many of the areas covered by MPA, tourism jobs provided livelihood to people in areas formerly devoted to mining, the neighboring towns experienced these same benefits as well. It will also signal to our global tourists that we are serious in our efforts to keep our world-renowned diving sites pristine. The resulting increase in recreational and tourism opportunities would provide jobs and spark commerce



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Lagay ng Mt. Arayat binabantayan

UMAKYAT sa Mt. Arayat ang mga miyembro ng Mt. Arayat Community Safety Task Force na pinamumunuan ni Governor Dennis 'Delta' Pineda upang tingnan ang lagay ng nasabing bundok.

Ginawa sa site visit ang pagtingin sa kalagayan ng bundok at upang kumustahin narin ang mga taong nakatira malapit sa lugar matapos itong magtala ng pagguho.

Sa pagtutulungan nina Provincial Disas-

ter Risk Reduction and Management Office (PDRRMO) head Angelina Blanco at Arayat Vice Mayor Emmanuel Alejandrino, hinati ang mga miyembro sa iba't ibang gawain kabilang ang pagsasagawa ng house tagging, aerial survey at mamamahagi ng mga GO Bags.

Matatandaang nagkaroon ng bitak sa Mt. Arayat, ang ganitong bitak ay maaaring maging sanhi ng ilang pagguho ng lupa. (**Carl Santiago**)



Ships have sailed again in Puerto Galeras

TWO years since the Covid-19 pandemic, keelboats and yachts once again sailed across the waters of Puerto Galera in Oriental Mindoro to participate in the annual All Souls Regatta (ASR). More than 150 sailors participated in the three-day event, which kicked off on All Souls' Day, November 2.

The event aimed to showcase Puerto Galera as one of the premier sailing tourist destinations in the country. Aside from tourism, the event also showcased young sailors belonging to the marginalized and most vulnerable sectors in Puerto Galera who are now being supported by the Stairway Foundation. These young sailors are allowed to learn how to sail and eventually land a career in sailing.

Part of the proceeds of the event will be donated to the Stairway Foundation. Puerto Galera Mayor Rocky Ilagan said the event is essential to revive the tourism industry in the area that was badly hit by the pandemic. Ilagan added that the local government is taking steps to

boost tourism now that travel restrictions have been relaxed. The local government is currently rehabilitating its famous white-sand beach. Drainage systems have been fixed and more lamp posts were installed on the beachfront for better lighting at night. Aside from the white-sand beach, Puerto Galera also prides itself on its beautiful destinations such as Muelle Bay, Tamaraw Falls, Aninuan Falls, and Mangyan Village, among others.

Puerto Galera was once recognized as one of "The Most Beautiful Bays in the World" in 2005 by a Parisbased website, Le Plus Beels Du Monde.



■ Puerto Galera's renowned regatta returns after two years CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



BuCor probes tunnel inside Bilibid area

THE Bureau of Corrections is investigating a 200-meter wide and 30-meter deep tunnel discovered inside the New Bilibid Prison, prisons chief officer-in-charge Gregorio Catapang Jr. said in a television interview Friday.

"We are not experts on this so we called for the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. They said this was an illegal excavation or illegal quarrying since there is no permit but we are not experts on this so we will rely on the DENR for this," Catapang said.

Asked if the tunnel was used for inmates to escape or to smuggle contraband, he said the BuCor will still have to find out.

"We will look into that. There are so many possibilities on what it could be used for," Catapang added.

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CAVERNOUS. The 200-meter wide and 30-meter deep tunnel discovered inside the New Bilibid Prison leads to a river and was dug below a swimming pool. **Screengrab from ABS-CBN's drone footage**

Catapang said the tunnel, which leads to a river, was dug below a swimming pool.

The tunnel was discovered days after some 12,000 contraband items were seized from the NBP earlier this month.

The illegal items include cellular phones, laptops, illegal drugs, and some 7,500 cans of beer.

The issue of contraband items entering the NBP surfaced after it was confirmed that Cristito "Jun Villamor" Palana, the alleged middleman in the hit order against broadcaster Percival Mabasa, was in possession of a cellular phone inside the jail facility.

Palana was killed hours after self-confessed gunman Joel Escorial surrendered to authorities. Before he died – from plastic bag suffocation based on the second autopsy – the inmate, who was already

fearful for his life, was able to message his sister where he confessed to the crime and revealed details on who ordered the murder of Mabasa.

Meanwhile, Catapang said BuCor will publish the names of some 166 NBP inmates whose cadavers remained unclaimed at the Eastern Funeral Homes have been buried.

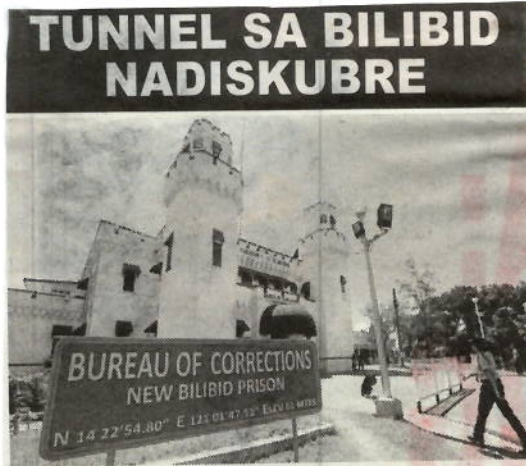
"There are 176 and we buried 10. So there are 166 left at the Eastern Funeral Parlor," he said.

The Department of Justice is seeking to transfer the remaining bodies to the University of the Philippines College of Medicine for a possible autopsy.

Catapang said he will also implement the wearing of body cameras for BuCor personnel.

"I will implement a mass cam. The purpose is to guard the guardians.

They will have body cams and it will not be for the prisoners. I will give them a reason not to be ordered around by drugs lords and be their accomplices," he said.



TUNNEL SA BILIBID NADISKUBRE

ISINIWALAT ng mga awtoridad sa New Bilibid Prison (NBP) na may nadiskubre umanong isang tunnel sa ground ng national penitentiary.

Subalit hindi pa matukoy kung ito ay isang escape tunnel o kung ito ay ginawa ng mga dating opisyal ng Bilibid na nag-hukay umano ng gold.

Paliwanag naman ni Bureau of Corrections (BuCor) officer in charge Gregorio Catapang Jr., ang naturang tunnel ay parte ng isang excavation project na malapit sa Director's Quarters, ang opisyal na residence ng BuCor director general.

Nagsimula ang naturang proyekto noong 2019 subalit hindi binanggit kung ito ay sa ilalim ng pamumuno noon ni dating BuCor director general Nicanor Faeldon o ng suspendidong si BuCor chief Gerald Bantag na humalili

noong Setyembre ng taong iyon.

Subalit, malamang aniya ay nagsagawa ng gold hunting sa naturang lugar sa nagdaang BuCor administration.

Sinabi rin ni Catapang na wala namang permit na inisyu mula sa Department of Environment and Natural Resources para sa naturang excavation project.

Ayon pa sa BuCor official na kanilang iimbestigahan kung sangkot sa naturang excavation project si Bantag subalit iginiit nito na hindi aniya maisasagawa ang naturang proyekto kung hindi ito alam ng opisyal na nasa Director's Quarters.

Hindi pa matukoy kung gaaano kahaba ang naturang tunnel na patungo sa Director's Quarters swimming pool at ang dulo nito ay sa Poblacion River sa katarungan Village sa loob ng NBP reservation.



The need for intensified watershed planning

The high number of fatalities, severe damage, and hardships caused by Severe Tropical Storm "Paeng" has once again demonstrated that frequent and disastrous natural events are now the climate change normal in the country. And these are traceable mainly to the unconscionable use of fossil fuels. The calamity should also be a wake-up call for us living in the Pacific typhoon belt and Ring of Fire to seriously consider how we plan and use our limited land resources in a national area of only 30 million hectares.

The yearly occurrence of destructive typhoons should force us to consider a more environment-oriented land use planning other than the comprehensive land use planning process being promoted by the Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development for local government units (LGUs). I am referring to the urgent need for what is called the ridge-to-reef or watershed planning approach that involves planning for land areas that encompass many LGUs as a way of effectively reducing the disastrous effects of hydro-meteorological hazards like floods, droughts, landslides, and storm surges; anthropogenic hazards that are caused by human action or inaction, as well as geologic hazards, including earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, and tsunamis (tidal waves).

Ridge-to-reef or watershed planning involves a holistic approach that takes into consideration all the environmental entities from the ridge, or top of a mountain range, down past the shoreline to the coral reefs fronting the land. A watershed consists of the entire drainage area of a river which is bounded by surrounding highland ridges, and which are usually drained by abutting tributary

COMMENTARY

MELITON B. JUANICO

streams that form their own sub-watersheds. Thus, a watershed will include all or parts of a number of towns within its boundaries that are delineated by surrounding ridges. As a mountainous country, the Philippines has 412 river basins or large watersheds, of which 19 are considered major river basins.

It should be pointed out that of the total cited above, 130 are considered critical watersheds that demand either protection or rehabilitation since they support existing and proposed critical infrastructure facilities.

Within a watershed, holistic and ecologically sound land use planning can be practiced by delineating proper uses for the land based on slope groupings, namely: 0-18 percent for settlement, agricultural, and fishery uses; 18-50 percent for regulated uses such as controlled timber harvesting, mining, grazing, upland farming, and tourism, and over 50 percent for protected forest.

If strictly observed under the principles of multiple use and sustained yield, these land use delineations will significantly reduce flooding, landslides, and siltation of rivers and coral reefs. Building dams can also provide more uses for a watershed as they regulate water flow and collect rainfall for producing domestic, industrial, and irrigation water, as well as hydroelectric power.

Currently being implemented is the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Administrative Order No. 2021-41, or the Guidelines in the Creation of Watershed Management Councils, which serve as oversight and advisory bodies on watershed planning and program/project implementation. Their major function is to prepare and implement watershed management plans with the participation of government and nongovernment organizations.

However, a policy forum conducted by the DOST-PCAARRD in July 2022 observed that the approach has failed to gain much recognition, nor has it been implemented sufficiently because of inadequate understanding and appreciation of the concept; the problem of sustaining interest and participatory enthusiasm among stakeholders; conflicting mandates among government agencies; the financial requirements of the program, and the lack of political will among decision-makers.

Pending the adjustments to be made, short-term moves that can and need to be done now include Congress' substantial augmentation of the DENR's proposed budget. This can be used to hire more personnel that will, in turn, jumpstart the following activities: delineation of terrain slope categories with markers; reforestation of denuded forests; guarding of the protected forests, and conduct of intensified information, education, and communication campaign among watershed stakeholders. This is one way to start fleshing out President Marcos Jr.'s loud call for people to plant trees.

Meliton B. Juanico is a retired professor of geography at the University of the Philippines Diliman and a licensed environmental planner.



Security Bank pledges 10K trees at La Mesa Watershed

Security Bank Corporation, together with its Corporate Social Responsibility arm, Security Bank Foundation Inc., has committed to plant 10,000 seedlings at the La Mesa Watershed over the next five years, contributing to reforestation efforts that began in 1999.

To kick off the five-year commitment, Security Bank employees planted 2,000 seedlings of *Lago* and *Malapapaya* trees at the watershed.

This was in partnership with the ABS-CBN Foundation's Bantay Kalikasan Program, which has been serving the community in protecting one of the biggest sources of clean water in Metro Manila.

The La Mesa Watershed is the largest rainforest in Metro Manila and the region's major source of potable water. The activity involved more than 200 employee volunteers and generated 1,600 volunteer hours. SBFI was also honored to be this year's top private donor for La Mesa Watershed reforestation.

"We know and understand that protecting the environment is critical to uplifting the quality of lives. Our commitment represents 45 percent of the La Mesa Watershed's

remaining area for reforestation. By planting these seedlings, we will help increase the country's forest cover, offset carbon emissions that affect global warming, prevent flooding and ensure the cleanliness of Metro Manila's water supply," said Melissa Aquino, Trustee and Corporate Secretary of SBFI.

The commitment to plant 10,000 trees in five years will be complimented by environmental education efforts, which is also in line with the Bank's education advocacy. This will be led by Security Bank's Sustainability Unit.

"Security Bank Foundation's adoption of 25 hectares of the La Mesa Watershed for five years is proof of their long-term commitment to protecting and preserving the environment; the ABS-CBN Foundation is honored to be a partner in their advocacy," said Joal Ascalon, Head of Bantay Kalikasan Program.

Prior to the tree-planting event, SBFI and Security Bank's Sustainability Unit conducted virtual learning session with employees on the importance of climate change, the Bank's sustainability efforts, and how employees can contribute to achieving the Bank's sustainability goals.



NMM plants 2,000 trees to protect Mt. Makiling boundary

NMM & Associates Customs Brokers has partnered with the Makiling Center for Mountain Ecosystems (MCME) through their Corporate Partnership and Environmental Restoration Program for a Boundary Tree Planting and Nurturing Project organized by UBE Media on October 22, 2022, at the Mount Makiling Forest Reserve at Brgy. Puting Lupa, Calamba, Laguna. This is in compliance with the Philippine Ports Authority (PPA) Administrative Order No. 14-2020 which states that contract holders are required to plant 1,000 seedlings of trees or mangroves. The Boundary Tree Planting and

Nurturing Project aims to protect the area from encroachment, expansion, and other damages that may arise along the Mount Makiling Forest Reserve (MMFR) boundary. Specifically, it aims to plant vegetative markers with unique colors for easy recognition and reference along the MMFR boundary and to strengthen the partnership between communities for more effective monitoring and protection of the reserve. The species of trees being used as markers are the Palawan Cherry, Banaba, and Alibangbang.

Attendees arrived at the venue as

early as 6:00A.m. with the event formally starting at 8:00a.m. Present for the event were UBE Media President Donna Lina, NMM President Atty. Randy Nague with his wife, Farrah Nague, MCME Deputy Director Dr. Rogello Andrada 2nd, Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Senior Ecosystem Management Specialist Melvin Lalican, Puting Lupa Brgy. Captain Allan Pedraja, and OneLGC Chairman Alberto Lina and his wife Sylvia Lina. In total, there were 192 people present for the event.



■ From left, standing: MCME Deputy Director Dr. Rogello Andrada 2nd and DENR representative Melvin Lalican. From left, squatting: Farrah Nague and Atty. Randy Nague with their two daughters. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



Some Mindoro mountain dwellers survive with P1,000 monthly income, study shows

ABOUT 45 percent of dwellers inside the Mounts Iglit-Baco National Park (MIBNP) are destitute, and earn less than \$20 a month or less than P1,000 a month, an official of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) said.

Neil Anthony Del Mundo, the Coordinator of the Tamaraw Conservation Program and concurrent Assistant Protected Area Superintendent of the MIBNP said a socio-economic study conducted by the DENR revealed that the mostly-Mangyan communities are subsistence farmers and earn income by selling handicraft products, firewood or charcoal.

The study, he revealed, was part of the overall effort they conducted to enhance the protection of the last remaining Tamaraw population at MIBNP.

"That is why the challenge in protecting the Tamaraw and the Protected Area is huge," he told the BUSINESSMIRROR at the sideline of the ongoing Europe Asia and the Pacific (EAPAC) Regional Dialogue organized by the United Nations Development Program-Biodiversity Finance Initiative (UNDP-BIOFIN) held at the Conrad Manila Hotel in Pasay City.

Speaking mostly in Filipino, he asked: "How can you stop them from hunting or cutting trees if they have no means of livelihood other than the forest?"

The DENR's Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB), as well as the MIBNP, is working with the UNDP-BIOFIN to find a financial solution to

the problem besetting the conservation effort of the government in the Protected Area, the only remaining lush pocket of greens where around 600 tamaraw, a critically endangered species that is indigenous to the island of Mindoro, are concentrated.

According to Del Mundo, the TCP receives an annual budget of P4.5 million, of which P3.5 million goes to the salary of the Tamaraw Rangers and other staff.

"The remaining P1 million goes to operational expense," said Del Mundo.

During the pandemic, he recalled that the tamaraw rangers have nearly lost their jobs, leaving the Tamaraw and their habitat, completely unprotected from hunters.

He said through their participation in the regional dialogue, they hope to find a sustainable financing solution that would allow the TCP to hire more Tamaraw Rangers, and give them a fair wage or salary.

A tamaraw ranger starts with a P8,500 a month pay, it was learned.

Currently, there are only 24 tamaraw rangers protecting Mindoro's iconic land mammal. The most senior tamaraw ranger receives P15,000 monthly in salary but has been in the employ of the TCP for 34 years.

"We hope to have the funding to hire more, and hopefully, increase the salary they receive." He added that hiring tamaraw rangers as regular employees would also be very helpful, as it will ensure job security and continuity of the ongoing protection and conservation effort at MIBNP. *Jonathan L. Mayuga*



GREENING PROGRAM. Nickel Asia Corp. records 234,823 trees planted within its mining camps and donates 185,466 seedlings to the Department of Natural Resources in support of the government's National Greening Program. Above and beyond what the law requires, NAC and its subsidiaries take serious participation in the NGP programs by generating seedlings, with the help of the communities and donating thousands of them to DENR.



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Makati to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 2025

MAKATI City Mayor Mar-len Abigail "Abby" Binay said the city targets to reduce greenhouse gas emission by 2025 as part of the local government unit's efforts to address the effects of climate change.

"By 2025, we expect a significant decrease in our greenhouse gas emission levels through various initiatives," Binay said during the Adapt Asia 2022 in Makati City organized by Komunidad, an Asian leader in environmental intelligence.

The event aims to provide a platform for public figures, specialists and innovators to share their risk resilience methods and technologies.

Binay added that public schools and city government offices will have solar panels to reduce power consumption.

"By using renewable energy, we can reduce our reliance on fossil fuel which have a major impact on the environment and human health," she noted.

According to Binay, last August, she declared climate emergency in Makati to accelerate climate action among all stakeholders in the city.

"Climate change is no longer just a distant threat. It is upon us. It is already affecting our planet, causing rising temperature, extreme weather events that have made it more difficult to us to live in the city," Binay added.

Binay underscored the need to act with utmost urgency to address the multiple challenges brought by the effects of climate change.

"Through our forward initiatives, we aim to build a more sustainable city. We will continue to encourage Makatizens to adopt environmentally friendly practices," she said.

"Next year, we will bring this program to 23 *barangay* (villages) to support and further reduce greenhouse emissions at the grassroot level. I believe that to effectively combat the effects of climate change, we must take a whole of society approach," Binay added.

Finding solutions

Binay said that various sectors should find solutions that will benefit communities and protect the environment for the generation to come.

"Our city's department of environmental services has been relentless in conducting webinars to increase public awareness about climate

change. At present, we continue tree planting activities and the segregation of garbage through our material recovery facilities. We are also planning to promote the use of alternative renewable resources," she said.

Binay said climate change is one of the greatest challenges of the world.

"Rising global temperatures lead to more national disasters and changing weather patterns which, in turn, impact human societies and ecosystem around the world. Makati is among the megacities around the world that have been affected by climate change," Binay noted.

She said that based on the data, extreme heat has been observed in Makati City for 12 years.

"Our disaster team has projected a significant rise in the number of hot days, with maximum temperature exceeding 35 degrees (Celsius) during summer. Greenhouse gas emissions are also expected to continue rising, especially with the continuous infrastructure developments in the city. We also expect more frequent heavy daily rainfall in the coming years," Binay said.

She added that as the financial capital of the Philippines, Makati is determined to take bolder steps to become more resilient against these changes.

"Since 2017, our city has been implementing programs and policies to build resilience and mitigate greenhouse gas emissions. We have been upgrading our infrastructures and investing in disaster equipment to ensure our city can survive the worst outcomes of a changing climate," Binay noted.

She said the city has established an early warning system by putting up seven automated weather stations in strategic areas, seven water level sensors, 17 automatic rain gauges and 27 earthquake recording instruments.

"We also have CCTVs connected to the Makati Command Control and Communication Center to monitor flood-prone areas during heavy downpours. Emergency go bags and huts were distributed to students and residents in high-risk areas in 2018 to promote disaster preparedness. These initiatives, as well as the integration of climate change adaptation and disaster risk resilience, are included in our local action plan and comprehensive land use plan," Binay added.

BELLA CARIASO



SOUTHERN OPTICS
JUN LEDESMA

Davao City's bulk water project (2)

“ Among the biggest infrastructures that are on the finishing touches are the water treatment plant and laboratory building and facilities.

The Davao City bulk water project consists of two parts. Part 1 is being undertaken by Apo Agua which is tasked to construct a weir at the converging point of Tamugan and Panigan rivers in Barangay Tawan-Tawan, a desilting complex where debris and sands are removed from the raw water, a mini hydropower plant downstream, a complex of water treatment facilities and a laboratory that monitors and test the quality of water. From this point starts a network of giant transmission pipes from the treatment complex to all the eight off-take points of Davao City Water District.

Part 2 of BWP is the responsibility of DCWD. It partakes in the replacements of existing old transmission and distribution pipes with bigger and newer ones. The water utility also set up eight OTPs in new expansion areas consisting of seven outlying additional barangays. OTPs are huge reservoirs that are made of steel.

Embarking on such a big and important bulk water project is not a walk in the park. It was hobbled by senseless government bureaucracy in securing permits not to mention the road rights of way. The conversion of a piece of property for the water treatment plant and laboratory from agricultural to industrial seemed like an eternity. The Davao Regional Office of the Department

of Agrarian Reform refused to accept the request for conversion which had been cleared by the City Council for reason that there are still pending business in their office and that they might not be able to meet with Duterte's (he already sat as President) directive to process all applications within 15 days. When it was finally elevated to DAR head office, Apo Agua was given a run around prompting both DCWD and AAIL to seek the intervention of Malacañang.

It is simply unimaginable that a project of prime importance would go through the web of bureaucratic procedures. Apo Agua finally commenced working in 2017 only to be stopped later when the coronavirus epidemic struck.

DCWD, on the other hand, was able to start procuring new transmission pipes and steel tanks, and lots for the additional reservoirs as early as 2016. Replacements of old pipes started as soon as the new and bigger ones arrived. By 2019, Engr. Oscar de la Cruz, DCWD Assistant Manager for Technical Services, said about 95 percent of the infrastructures under Part 2 had been accomplished. The cost of the project segment was estimated at P2.5 billion.

Apo Agua cautiously resumed work in 2020 with nearly 4,000 laborers assigned in various places of work. This was to be augmented later as the work progressed. By 2021, all infrastructures along the Tamugan river, which includes an intake weir, a desilting complex, a surge tank, a mini-hydropower plant downstream, and a 7-foot diameter conduit pipe that connect these structures were practically done.

Among the biggest infrastructures that are on the finishing touches are the water treatment plant and laboratory building and facilities. It is here where the clean water from Tamugan will be siphoned and where the mini-hydropower plant comes into use.

The major transmission lines, measuring about 5 feet in diameter,

from the treatment plant to all the off-take points of DCWD are all in place and are meticulously being tested. AAIL President Ana Lu assured the Davao City officialdom led by Mayor Sebastian Baste Duterte that by March 2023 they will start supplying bulk water to DCWD's Tugbok OTP benefiting at least 11 barangays. By June next year, the bulk water project of DCWD for Davao City will be fully operational.

City Councilor Pilar Braga, the author of the Davao City Water Code, expressed her appreciation to DCWD for planning and undertaking a gargantuan bulk water project. She stressed that this will not only guarantee the supply of water for generations to come but also will allow the vital aquifers of the city to rest and be fully recharged.

DCWD remains to be the most successful government water utility in the country. Chairman Ed Bangayan, who had steered the firm to its status today, said while they made a few adjustments in the water rates, DCWD rates remain to be the cheapest in its category. He added that with the present expansion towards the industrial zone north of Davao City and the exponential growth of commercial establishments, the cost of water for domestic use might even decline.

Bangayan said DCWD will only use 30 percent of the total volume of water from Tamugan and Panigan rivers to deliver 300 million liters per day.

“We have lots of reserves not to mention the fact that we have rich and fully recharged aquifers. All we asked from the government is to help us preserve and conserve the recharge areas of our aquifers and rivers,” he pleaded.

“ It is simply unimaginable that a project of prime importance would go through the web of bureaucratic procedures.



Holcim sees need for green construction measures, products

HOLCIM Philippines Inc. is continuing its to accelerate adoption of innovative building materials and practices for the sake of the environment and to provide superior construction performance to support the country's sustainable progress.

Holcim Philippines highlighted in two recent events the importance of shifting faster to these options and its readiness to provide such solutions to preserve natural resources as the country builds essential structures for development.

During the Swiss Innovation Exhibit on Oct. 27, 2022, Holcim Philippines President and Chief Executive Officer Horia Adrian discussed the need to change building practices to ease the pressure on the environment as continued economic growth leads to greater construction activity.

He noted that building the needed structures for development following current standards will continue to consume large amounts of natural resources, so it is critical to embrace a circular economy in construction, wherein used materials such as demolition waste are reused as inputs for new structures.

Adrian said that Holcim Philippines is prepared to help the government and private sector partners build better and more with less with its expanding line up of blended cements and other construction solutions with lower environmental footprint.

"We recognize that the construction sector has a tremendous environmental impact. As one of the biggest building materials industry players, we have a responsibility to lead the way in providing solutions that help our partners continue contributing to development in a sustainable manner," he said.

Adrian added the importance of using the right cement for the right application, in order to minimize the waste of natural resources.

"The future of construction will have to shift from the traditional approach of take-make-waste to the new paradigm of reduce-reuse-recycle and embracing the circular economy to reduce the use of natural resources," he said.

Adrian noted that Holcim Philippines already provides the market with specialized blended cement options such as Holcim Solido for roads, Holcim Excel for general applications and Holcim Wallright Prime for masonry. He emphasized that Holcim has made available in the Philippines ECOPlanet, its most environment-friendly cement with at least 30-percent lower carbon footprint than traditional portland cement.

Aside from getting the support of local builders in shifting toward blended cements, he also recommended the government to take the lead in using green products in infrastructure projects and drive policies that enable the faster adoption of the latest construction innovations such as recycled aggregates.