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Private sector investments urged for climate action

BY BELLA CARIASO

ENVIRONMENT Secretary Maria Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga is urging the private sector to invest in climate action amid growing uncertainties and mounting financial requirements for climate change adaptation and mitigation.

During her speech at the Climate Investment Forum (CIF), Yulo-Loyzaga added that more investments for sustainable projects are needed to help reduce the country's carbon footprint.

Yulo-Loyzaga said that at least P453.11 billion will be allocated for the climate change programs in 2023.

She said this represents at least 8.6 percent of the P5.268-trillion National Expenditure Program (NEP) for next year.

"However, more investments

are still needed if we are to make transformative strides to achieve climate-resilient development," Yulo-Loyzaga said.

She said that out of the P453.11 billion funding, around 75 percent or P338.21 billion will be spent for climate adaptation, which includes programs for the development of resilient crops and livestock production systems and technologies.

Yulo-Loyzaga said the remaining 25 percent or P114.9 billion will be used for climate mitigation

consisting mainly of promotion of renewable energy and improvement of traffic infrastructure-mobility to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

The 2023 NEP carries the highest allocation for climate expenditures by far, accounting for a significant increase of about 56 percent from this year's climate budget of P289.73 billion.

"Both public and private sectors have a critical opportunity to invest in resilience which is vital not just to our country's development, but to our planet's very survival," Yulo-Loyzaga.

The CIF gathered senior government officials, climate international experts and members of the business community to discuss how climate-friendly enterprises can further engage the private sector to invest in priority climate enterprises that contribute to global

efforts to slash GHG emissions.

Yulo-Loyzaga's call for greater private sector involvement in the climate change fight came on the heels of her recent participation as head of the Philippine delegation to the recently concluded COP27 or the 27th session of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Egypt.

"Groups like Bloomberg Philanthropies and the UN sustainable energy team, working together, had the Philippines to be one of the three countries that will now apply a method of calculating the cost of energy transition to net-zero by 2050," she said.

She added that the private sector has emerged as a critical actor in bridging the cost of transitions toward non fossil-based sources of power which is estimated to be in the trillions for some countries and sectors.



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■ Representatives from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in Region 4-A (Calabarzon) have started serving cease-and-desist orders to owners of structures built inside protected areas. PHOTO FROM DENR FACEBOOK PAGE

DENR issues CDOs in Region 4A

THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources in Region 4-A (Calabarzon or Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal and Quezon) has issued show cause orders against the owners of more than 200 structures along the Marikina-Rizal-Laguna-Quezon (Marilaque) Highway, which traverses protected areas in the region.

Nilo Tamoria, DENR-Calabarzon regional executive director, said the structures were built on the designated road right-of-way by the Department of Public Works and Highways along Marilaque Highway that crosses inside the Kaliwa River Forest

Reserve, the Upper Marikina River Basin Protected Landscape and areas covered by Presidential Proclamation 1636 in some parts of Laguna and Quezon province.

Tamoria said these areas are protected by Republic Act (RA) 7586, or the "National Integrated Protected Areas System (Nipas) Act," as well as RA 11038, or the "Expanded or E-NIPAS Act of 2018."

"These structures have implications in the biodiversity and climate change. We will continue serving show cause order," Tamoria said.

Based on Sections (n) and (o) of RA 7586, as amended, permission from the Protected Areas Management Board and the DENR should be secured prior to occupation or installation of any structure inside protected areas.

Officials of DENR Region 4-A regional offices of other national government agencies and local government units convened in preparation for the simultaneous issuance of show cause orders to structures inside protected areas and timberland in the region.

Tamoria added that owners could be fined and be charged in court.

BELLA CARIASO



TO HELP EMPLOYEES, ADDRESS DEMAND

PHILEX WON'T CEASE PADCAL OPERATIONS UNTIL 2027

By **Jordeene B. Lagare**
@jordeenelagare

Pangilinan-led Philex Mining Corp. is extending the life of its Padcal mine in Tuba, Benguet until end-2027, citing studies the site can still yield a considerable amount of mineral resources that can boost earnings.

In a disclosure, the country's largest gold producer said it arrived at the decision after conducting confirmatory drillings and technical studies.

Padcal mine, which started operations in 1958, was scheduled to cease operations at end-2024 after several extensions to its life.

It said extending the mine's life was in "response to the global demand for green metals and the government's call for mineral resource development to be a driver for national growth and economic recovery."

Harnessing whatever was left in Padcal "will provide the continuous employment of 1,838 Padcal employees as well as sustain the necessary assistance given to the social development of the host and neighboring communities," the firm added.

It said the remaining mineable reserves were estimated to be 42 million tonnes with average gold and copper grades of 0.22 grams per tonne (g/t) and 0.17 percent, respectively, as of October.

The total recoverable gold was expected to hit 233,000 ounces and copper at 127.4 million pounds.

These include remaining reserves from the previously declared mineable reserves totaling 29.4 million tonnes



[The extension] will provide the continuous employment of 1,838 Padcal employees

Philex Mining Corp.

with average gold and copper grades of 0.23 g/t and 0.18 percent, respectively, as of December last year.

As of October, Padcal mine's mineral resource is approximately 230.4 million tonnes with an average grade of 0.29 g/t for gold and 0.18 percent for copper.

Philex said these developments would also provide a smooth transition toward the commercial operations of the Silangan copper-gold project scheduled for early 2025.

Philex had said an overlap in the operations of Padcal and Silangan mine sites could further bolster its income stream.

The Silangan mine site in Surigao del Norte is expected to process around 2,000 tonnes of ore per day. Its production will be scaled up to 12,000 tonnes a day or four million tonnes a year by the 12th year of operations.

It had projected to generate almost \$7 billion in sales of metallic minerals throughout the 28-year lifespan of the Silangan project. **INQ**



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Philex gets add'l mine life for Padcal

By DANESSA RIVERA

Pangilinan-led Philex Mining Corp. has extended the life of its Padcal mine by another three years up to 2027 after confirmatory drilling yielded additional mineable reserves.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange yesterday, Philex Mining said it recently completed confirmatory drillings on the ore body and technical studies on the mining methodology and Tailings Storage Facility (TSF) 3.

The company said the activity successfully identified additional mineable reserves of 24 million tons in its Padcal Mine.

At an annual production rate of 8.1 million tons, Padcal mine's life is extended by three years to Dec. 31, 2027.

"The new extension of the life of Padcal mine from Dec. 31, 2024 to Dec. 31, 2027 will provide the continuous employment of 1,838 Padcal employees as well as sustain the necessary assistance given to the social development of the host and neighboring communities," Philex Mining said.

As of end-October, Padcal Mine has an estimated mineral resource of about 230.4 million tons with an average grade of 0.29 grams per ton (g/t) and 0.18 percent for gold and copper, respectively.

Based on the updated remaining mineable reserves as of end-October, Padcal mine is estimated to have 42 million tons with an average gold and copper grades of 0.22 grams per ton (g/t) and 0.17 percent, respectively.

The total recoverable gold is estimated to be 233,000 ounces while the total recoverable copper is estimated to be 127.4 million pounds.

"The new estimate includes remaining reserves from the previously declared mineable reserves

as of Dec. 31, 2021 aggregating to 29.4 million tons with an average gold and copper grades of 0.23 g/t and 0.18 percent, respectively," Philex Mining said.

Meanwhile, Padcal mine's extension will also allow the mining firm a smooth transition to the start of commercial operations of the Silangan copper-gold mine in Surigao del Norte.

Philex Mining said the Silangan project, estimated to commence in early 2025, was in response to the global demand for green metals and the government's call for mineral resources development to be a driver for national growth and economic recovery.

Pre-development works are on going at the Silangan project, which include earthmoving activities and the excavation of the portal site for underground mining.

Phase 1 of the Silangan project, which covers the Boyongan deposit, has a long mine life of 28 years and will take two and a half years to develop.

The company had said it will initially spend \$224 million for the first phase of the Silangan copper-gold mine.

In another disclosure, Philex Mining said the convertible notes issued to Asia Link B.V. is also extended by another three years.

This, after Asia Link and Silangan Mindanao Exploration Co. Inc. (SMECI) agreed to the three-year extension of the maturity date of the convertible notes held by Asia Link from Dec. 19 to Dec. 18, 2025.



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Philex extends Padcal mine operation to 2027

By Jenniffer B. Austria

GOLD and copper firm Philex Mining Corp. said Friday it will extend the operation of its underground mine in Padcal, Benguet until the end of 2027 after it identified additional mineable reserves.

“After the completion of confirmatory drillings on the ore body, technical studies on the mining methodology and Tailings Storage Facility No. 3 have successfully identified additional mineable reserves in its Padcal mine that are feasible for mining up to Dec. 31, 2027,” Philex said in a disclosure

to the stock change.

Padcal, where copper and gold have been extracted since 1958, is scheduled to cease operation by the end of 2024 after several extensions of its mine life.

Philex said that based on latest technical studies as of end-October, Padcal’s remaining mineable reserves were estimated to be 42 million tons with an average gold and copper grades of 0.22 grams per ton and 0.17 percent, respectively.

The total recoverable gold is estimated to be 233,000 ounces, while the total recoverable copper is estimated to be 127.4 million pounds.

The new estimate includes remaining reserves from the previously declared mineable reserves as of Dec. 31, 2021 aggregating to 29.4 million tons, with an average gold and copper grades of 0.23 g/t and 0.18 percent, respectively.

Philex said the new extension of the life of Padcal to 2027 would provide the continuous employment of 1,838 Padcal employees and sustain the necessary assistance given to the social development of the host and neighboring communities.

Philex said with the mine life extension, Padcal’s operations would overlap with Silangan mine’s start of commercial operations.

Philex earlier said it planned to launch its long-delayed Silangan project in Surigao del Norte for commercial operation in the first quarter of 2025, with an initial development cost of \$224 million.

Silangan is estimated to be capable of producing 2,000 tons of copper and gold ore per day in the first few years of operations, which will be ramped up gradually in the succeeding years.



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Philex finds more gold, copper reserves in Padcal mine

By JAMES A. LOYOLA

Philex Mining Corporation, one of the oldest and largest gold and copper producers in the Southeast Asia, has found additional mineable reserves in its Padcal Mine that will extend its mine life by three more years.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange, the firm said it has successfully identified additional mineable reserves in its Padcal Mine in Benguet that are feasible for mining up to December 31, 2027.

This comes after the completion of confirmatory drillings on the ore body, technical studies on the mining methodology and Tailings Storage Facility (TSF) No. 3. The updated remaining mineable reserves as of end October 2022 are estimated to be 42 M-million tons with an average gold and copper grades of 0.22 grams per ton (g/t) and 0.17 percent, respectively.

The total recoverable gold is estimated to be 233,000 ounces while the total recoverable Copper is estimated to be 127.4 million pounds. The new estimate includes remaining reserves from the previously declared mineable reserves as of December 31, 2021 aggregating to 29.4 million tonnes with an average gold and copper grades of 0.23 g/t and 0.18 per-

cent, respectively. The latest mineable reserves estimate was prepared by Engineers Julius A. Bayogan, Benedict B. Gapongli, and Ricardo S. Dolipas II, are Competent Persons under the definition of the Philippine Mineral Reporting Code (PMRC).

As of October 31, 2022, Padcal Mine has an estimated mineral resource of about 230.4 million tons with an average grade of 0.29 g/t and 0.18 percent for Gold and Copper, respectively. The latest mineral resource estimate was prepared by Mr. Noel C. Oliveros, an accredited Competent Person for Exploration and Mineral Resource Estimation under the definition of the PMRC. He is a Professional Geologist. The new extension of the life of Padcal Mine from December 31, 2024 to December 31, 2027 will provide the continuous employment of 1,838 Padcal employees as well as sustain the necessary assistance given to the social development of the host and neighboring communities.

The extension of the Padcal Mine life to December 31, 2027 will also allow a smooth transition to the start of the commercial operation of the Silangan project estimated to commence in early 2025 in response to the global demand for green metals and the government's call for mineral resources development to be a driver for national growth and economic recovery.



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Climate change is a serious threat to human rights

TODAY, December 10, and every year, we, as one humanity, observe Human Rights Day. Seventy-four years ago, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a historic document that “proclaims the inalienable rights that everyone is entitled to as a human being — regardless of race, color, religion, sex, language, political or other opinions, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.”

Almost two decades ago in 2003, Republic Act 9201 was signed into law. It promulgates the observance of the National Human Rights Consciousness Week every December 4 to 10 of each year.

With this year’s theme, “Dignity, Freedom and Justice for All,” we must realize that climate change is no longer a scientific and environmental issue, but rather an all-encompassing threat to our basic human rights — food, potable water, shelter, decent livelihood, health and life itself.

The UN Environment Program declares “climate change is one of the greatest threats to human rights of our generation, posing a serious risk to the fundamental rights to life, health, food and an adequate standard of living of individuals and communities across the world.”

With our fascination to continue burning fossil fuels and releasing harmful greenhouse gas emissions for more than a century and half, we must expect worsening extreme weather events, increasing temperatures and rising seas.

We have been warned of what this means. Coral reefs will vanish, along with the livelihoods that depend on them. Severe harvest failures will happen more frequently. Climate change will threaten the essentials of good health — like clean air, safe drinking water, nutritious food and safe shelter. Climate change will transform human life as we know it.



ALL ABOUT
CHOICES

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The urban and rural poor already afflicted by food and nutrition insecurity will be the most vulnerable (World Food Program, 2021).



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The nexus of climate change and human rights

Right to life. In a report of the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council, Severe Tropical Storm "Paeng," the 16th tropical cyclone that entered the Philippines this year, left 101 dead and 35 missing due to flooding and landslides. More than half of the deaths came from the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao. In 2021, nearly 500 people died due to weather events, the highest since 2013 when Typhoon "Haiyan" hit various regions in the Visayas and Mindanao, and left over 6,000 dead (Statista, 2022).

Right to health. The Philippines does not only belong to the top 10 most affected by weather-related disasters (Germanwatch, 2021), but is the most at-risk country in the world (World Risk Report, 2022). Increasing rainfall, intensifying typhoons and the frequency of floods give rise to the risks of vector-borne diseases like dengue and flood-borne diseases like leptospirosis (Tagupa, 2021).

Right to food security. Climate hazards will impact agricultural, livestock and fishery supply chains, and affect all aspects of production, distribution and consumption across urban and rural sectors. As a result, it affects the availability, affordability and accessibility of nutritious food, particularly for the most vulnerable, poor and marginalized populations. According to the discussion paper published by the Philippines Institute for Development Studies in June 2022, the Philippines have yet to achieve its food security goal based on the four dimensions of food security, namely food availability, food accessibility, food utilization and stability.

Right to water and sanitation. Climate change with rapid urbanization and increasing population will cause water supply shortages. In 2015, the World Resources Institute estimated that the Philippines will be one of the water-stressed countries by 2040.

Right to livelihood. Climate change threatens our economic growth. Loss and damage to agriculture and infrastructure from severe disasters have been increasing in recent years, and as a result, the country's gross domestic product is declining. World Bank estimates showed the Philippines may see a 3.2-percent average loss in the gross domestic product (GDP) by 2030 and as high as a 5.7-percent loss in GDP by 2040. The impact could be much worse, reaching 13.6 percent in 2040 if no actions are taken (Coulibaly, 2022).

Right to adequate housing. The projected sea level rise in the Philippines is almost three times higher than the global average. Sixty percent of the population lives in coastal communities, which are one of the poorest sectors and are highly affected and need relocation. For 2020, the Internal Displacement Index Report revealed that climate-related disasters displaced 4.4 million Filipinos. More than half of these new displacements were caused by typhoons ("Molave," "Goni" and "Vamco").

Rights of future generations. The impacts of climate change are long term and widespread. We will compromise the ability of future generations to meet their own needs if we continue to embrace current unsustainable development.

Several State policies are enshrined in the Philippine Constitution. These include "adequate social services, promote full employment, a rising standard of living and an improved quality of life for all" (Section 9); "the dignity of every human person and full respect for human rights" (Section 11); "the right to health" (Section 15); "the right to a balanced and healthful ecology in accord with the rhythm and harmony of nature" (Section 16); and "labor as a primary social economic force" (Section 18).

Nine out of 10 Filipinos (95 percent) believe climate change must be the government's top priority, according to the new study of Yale Program on Climate Change Communication. The responses to climate change will have effects on the exercise of human rights.

Our government must continue to respect and protect human rights. We must fulfill our commitment to the Paris Agreement, protect Filipinos against the harmful effects of climate change and ensure that responses to climate change do not result in human rights violations.

While the government has taken significant steps, there is more to be done, which includes working with all stakeholders to ensure the protection of human rights for all Filipinos.

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.

Climate alarmists have no fallback plan to replace vital products from fossil fuels

First word

THIS is the argument

that will drive the last nail into the coffin of the renewable energy transition and the fantasy about the demise of fossil fuels. ►MakabentaA5



OBSERVER

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Climate alarmists have no fallback plan to replace vital products from fossil fuels

Apart from the many solid arguments laid out by Richard Heinberg in his thesis that the renewable energy transition is failing (which I discussed at length in my column of December 8), there is one more argument that proponents of the energy transition and opponents of fossil fuels must hurdle. And this is the question posed by the uncountable beneficiaries of products from crude oil in modern civilization.

Ronald Stein, PE, energy policy adviser and international columnist, presented the issue cogently and persuasively in a commentary published by both the *Epoch Times and Insights* on Dec. 7, 2022 entitled "Climate change experts have no back-up plan to replace products from crude oil."

Stein's article is persuasive and conclusive. Climate change fanatics and renewable energy advocates have really not thought at all about how to replace the thousands of products that fossil fuel and electricity generate and sustain in modern life today.

They have not addressed the dislocation and strangulation of human life that would follow if fossil fuels were snuffed out overnight.

Their facile replacement answer is renewable energy. But there is plainly no way that solar panels, wind turbines and electric vehicles can replace fossil fuels.

Stein delivers a truly crushing blow against the fancied renewable energy transition. I reproduce and summarize key passages and issues he raised in his article.

Basic energy literacy

"The 2022 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP27), which was recently held in Egypt, attracted many global elites and more than 400 private jets. All attendees recognize that climate change is occurring, as it has for 4 billion years, but most attendees also lack basic energy literacy, which starts with the knowledge that renewable energy is only intermittent electricity generated from unreliable breezes and sunshine, and cannot replace fossil fuels.

The indisputable unpleasant

fact is that renewables, like wind turbines and solar panels, cannot be manufactured into any of the oil derivatives that are the basis of thousands of products which make up the foundation of societies and economies around the world.

Fossil fuel products were the reason the world population grew from 1 to 8 billion in less than 200 years. As much as world leaders wish to rid the world of emissions from fossil fuels, they have yet to identify the replacement for these substances, which serve as the basis of more than 6,000 products and fuels for our various transportation infrastructures.

Fuel for manufacturing

COP27 attendees should also know that crude oil is useless unless it can be manufactured into something usable — like the fuels for the heavy-weight and long-range ships and jets that have made our lives more comfortable.

— More than 50,000 merchant ships are moving products throughout the world.

— More than 50,000 aircraft are being used by commercial airlines, private usage and the military.

Dangerous precedent

The World Economic Forum, the UN, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and banks that promote environmental, social and governance (ESG) standards have created an extremely dangerous precedent because the world population never voted to give governments or other entities this sort of control over basic products demanded by the people.

COP27 attendees wishing to achieve zero emissions at virtually any cost will face major supply chain issues of exotic materials like lithium, cobalt, copper, zinc and silicon, as well as the challenge of affordability — in addition to the availability and efficiency of electricity from wind and solar, and the ethical challenges from mining these materials in poorer countries, just for elites to drive an electric vehicle (EV).

The supply of lithium for

current EV batteries is already extremely limited in the world, and initiatives around the world to open lithium strip mines and ore processing plants have caused public uproar as environmentalists and the local population are fearful about the impact on nature and people's livelihoods.

Other dark clouds on the lithium supply to meet demands of EV batteries are:

1. The Chilean Supreme Court stopped the mining of lithium in Salar de Atacama, Chile — a huge chunk of terrain that holds 55 percent of the world's known deposits of lithium.

2. The European Chemicals Agency's risk assessment committee aims to label three lithium compounds as dangerous for human health.

Supplying needs of 8 billion people

Before the UN jumps out of an airplane without a tested parachute, officials need to have a plan to support the demands of the 8 billion people on this globe for all the products and infrastructures that exist today, which did not exist a few hundred years ago. Where is the UN plan to keep the planet's population alive and well without the products now being manufactured from crude oil?

Threat to modern civilization

Efforts to cease the use of oil, without a planned replacement, could be the greatest threat to modern civilization — not climate change — and lead the world to an era of guaranteed extreme shortages of fossil fuel products. This is exactly what we had in the decarbonized world of the 1800s, and its return may result in billions of fatalities from diseases, malnutrition and weather-related deaths.

It's perfect nonsense to think that functional, civil societies can live without coal, oil and gas. Today's efforts to end the use of fossil fuels are symptomatic of an uneducated cohort who haven't the faintest idea about what makes their safe and

privileged lives possible.

Electricity from wind and solar can:

- Charge your iPhone but cannot make your iPhone
- Operate a defibrillator but cannot make the defibrillator
- Operate your TV but cannot make the TV

Electricity from wind and solar cannot:

- Make tires for billions of vehicles
- Make asphalt for millions of miles of roadways
- Make medications and medical equipment
- Make water filtration systems
- Make sanitation systems
- Make fertilizers that come from natural gas to help feed billions
- Make pesticides to control locusts and other pests

Getting down to the basics, even all the components of wind turbines and solar panels are made with products from fossil fuels. Thus, eliminating fossil fuels would eliminate all the components of wind turbines, solar panels, vehicles, merchant ships, jets and more. Again, where is the UN plan to keep the planet's 8 billion alive and well without the products now being life-saving products manufactured from crude oil?

World leaders and ESG advocates who are setting policies to rid the world of fossil fuels forget that poor nations should also have inalienable, God-given rights to develop — using fossil fuels, nuclear and hydroelectric power, and petroleum for fertilizers, pharmaceuticals, plastics and hundreds of other miraculous life-enhancing."

Stein concludes his piece with this sobering thought:

"Life without oil is not as simple as the UN may think as renewable energy is only intermittent electricity from breezes and sunshine. Neither wind turbines nor solar panels can manufacture anything for society. Climate change may impact humanity but being mandated to live without the products manufactured from oil will necessitate lifestyles being mandated back to the horse and buggy days of the 1800s."



Improving environmental governance in Asean

In August 1967, five countries formed the Association of South-east Asian Nations, or Asean, by virtue of a Bangkok Declaration. Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand were the founding members. Brunei Darussalam joined in 1985, and during the 1990s, Asean doubled its membership with Vietnam, Laos, Myanmar and Cambodia. The 2022 Asean Summit in Cambodia agreed to admit East Timor or Timor Leste as the 11th member of Asean.

The 1967 Bangkok Declaration stated as one of its aims the acceleration of economic growth and promotion of matters of common interest, inter alia, economic fields. Although no mention was made of cooperation on the environment, world events culminating in the Stockholm Declaration of 1972, which called for regional cooperation on the environment, led to the subregional Asean Environment Program beginning in 1978.

An Asean Charter entered into force on Dec. 15, 2009. The charter bestowed a legal personality upon Asean which, for the past 42 years, has operated as a coalition of nations born out of the Bangkok Declaration.



AMBASSADORS' CORNER

AMADO S. TOLENTINO JR.

SERIOUS concern over environmental problems in the Asean member countries began as early as the 1980s when the problem of environmental degradation was recognized in the Manila Declaration on the Asean Environment (1981). The document provides that member countries shall cooperate in the progressive implementation of projects under the Asean Environment Program, and encourage the enactment and enforcement of environmental protection measures.

More than 50 years later, Asean member countries demonstrated a growing commitment to the goals of environmental protection/sustainable development. The recognition of the imperative of sustainable development as a central national agenda has been accompanied by specific legislative and institutional developments, including the establishment of appropriate judicial precepts and techniques for translating

sustainable development policies into action. Beginning with the incorporation of environmental principles in national constitutions and the integration of environmental planning in the overall national socioeconomic planning, this commitment has been demonstrated in a variety of ways and through a continuing process of legal and institutional innovation, including the emergence of integrated and ecosystem-oriented legal regimes.

Brief background

In the beginning, Asean countries saw no need to institutionalize the protection of the environment because it was not considered a serious problem. Environmental issues were assigned to a range of sections, divisions or departments or authorities as a matter of "policy." The next development was the designation of specific departments among the ministries/departments to look after environmental issues, the most prominent of which is pollution. Subsequent requirements for specialized needs and skills necessitated the creation

of a full-time environmental ministry/department, agency or board specially committed to environmental protection.

Through the years, Asean saw the emergence of environmental institutions with varying degrees of responsibilities ranging from policymaking to regulatory, implementation and enforcement, coordination and advisory, or a combination of some or all of those functions. Today, Asean countries have agencies entrusted with environmental management.

Different countries have institutional coordination schemes. In Singapore, there is an Environment Council set up as an umbrella organization to facilitate coordination between NGOs (nongovernmental organizations) and other green groups. Indonesia's Environmental Impact Management Agency is the first specialized environmental regulatory body with implementing powers to monitor pollution and the negative impact of development on the environment.

Aside from constitutional provisions on the right to a healthy environment as in the Philippines, many Asean countries have

► TolentinoA5

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Improving environmental governance in Asean

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environmental framework legislation also known as "umbrella" legislation in order to cover the various sectors of environmental management. Among them are Indonesia's Environmental Management Act (1977), the Philippines' Environment Code (1977) and Vietnam's Law on Environmental Protection (1999). These framework laws convey a new technique with strong environmental policy coordination. Their purpose is to establish an overall coherent policy and provide a basis for the coordinated work of different government agencies with operational responsibility for the environment and natural resources. There are instances when legislation grants regulatory powers to agencies to meet certain issues affecting the environment.

Among the areas covered by the framework laws are: prevention of air and water pollution; prevention of unsustainable use of natural resources; and laws on integration of environmental consideration into the development process through an environmental impact assessment (EIA) requirement. Biodiversity, pandemic-related health issues and climate adaptation/resilience are current concerns.

Aside from training workshops and seminars for government officers on environmental law compliance, implementation and enforcement, use of various types of economic incentives and disincentives such as user fees, licensing fees and the polluter-pays-principle, the following trends in environmental law development were noted in the Asean countries: (i) imposition of new types of liability or increased penalties for environmental offenses in order to secure better environmental quality; (ii) some countries have also broadened liability for environmental offenses. In Malaysia, strict liability schemes for damage to the environment are attracting attention as is personal liability of directors and managers of companies as well as government officials; (iii) The Philippines' Pollution Adjudication Board has been authorized to issue ex parte orders to cease and desist, and to close facilities causing heavy or dangerous levels of pollution.

This narrative on environmental governance will not be complete without mention of renewable energy use in Asean countries. The objective is to strengthen public-private partnerships that could enhance the region's energy sector toward resilient and sustainable energy.

Renewable energy technologies are annually tackled by Asean meetings of experts with detailed experiences and best practices. Surprising is the availability of Asean companies with flagship projects on power generation, transmission and distribution. Services offered range from solar to wind energy-related services.

Due to its location in the Pacific and by the South China Sea, Asean countries have excellent conditions for solar and wind power generation. With an estimated 350 days of sunshine and varying year round wind speeds which, if effectively harnessed, could very well provide the needed energy, it is safe to conclude that the target could be reached.

Indeed, by resorting to legislations on renewable energy use, Asean countries can improve security, lower greenhouse gas emissions, increase renewable energy supply and benefit the overall Asean economy.



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Public participation

Public participation relates to how to involve people in environmental governance. Who should participate in major policy decisions affecting the environment? How should those affected by environmental policy choices

be appropriately involved in the decision-making process? Often, representation is claimed to be biased toward small, well-organized groups with unclear claims to represent the public. In Vietnam, for instance, public participation is project-based depending on the requirements of the project country's donor. Public participation, however, is usually done during the monitoring stage of the project's existence because planning is mostly done by the government.

A major requirement of constructive participation of civil society is provision of environment-development information. Current thinking in the Philippines considers the EIA as the only way of protecting disadvantaged groups like the indigenous tribal communities which are most often affected by construction in or around their ancestral lands of environmentally critical projects such as power plants, dams and the like.

The most important aspect of public participation is the people's right to know. Citizens have the right to be informed about threats to their well-being whether it is a factory to be put up in a neighborhood or an impending change in their natural resources base like a mangrove area. This is an essential democratic precept and the protection of the environment cannot be ensured without safeguarding this fundamental principle. Unfortunately, both state and private enterprises find it difficult to part with vital information. Many documents are often classified as "confidential" or "secret." For instance, the authorities putting up the Nam Choan Dam in Thailand or Tembeling Dam in Malaysia or Chico Dam in the Philippines never clearly stated how much forest or wetland areas will be completely submerged as a result or how many people would be affected by the dam project. The same with factory owners who cannot part with information on the ground that it would prejudice their industrial processes and commercial secrets.

Singapore, among Asean countries, is often cited for its success at environmental governance, specifically at providing the public information, including avenues for complaints, feedback and adequacy of response to enforce environmental laws.

Poverty and illiteracy

Poverty is perhaps the greatest impediment to public participation. When people are caught up in the daily efforts at survival, they have neither the time nor the inclination to resist an environmental threat. This situation is true in the rural and urban areas. To illustrate the problem, conversion of wetlands into fishponds in the Asean countries were not met with protests by people living near them on account of the expectation of employment or income in the fishpond venture.

Another hindrance is illiteracy. Environmental threats are often of a technical nature. Illiterate people are not able to comprehend what the presence of a contaminant in their environment means to their health. In rural areas, such lack of education leads to fatalism. Most often, droughts and floods are believed to be the wrath of divine forces.

Inadequacy of political mechanisms also prevents public participation in environmental issues. Politicians are more concerned with short-term gains from development projects and are indifferent or unconcerned about their negative impacts in the long term. Worse, some government agencies view environmental movements as an obstacle to development.

The author served as coordinator of the Asean Experts Group on the Environment (now Senior Officials on the Environment).



Suplay ng tubig, sapat hanggang 2023 - MWSS

Sapat ang suplay ng tubig sa Metro Manila at kalapit lalawigan hanggang sa susunod na taong 2023.

Ito'y ayon sa Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) na kahit pa nga nagsibalikan na sa normal ang mga industriya na gumagamit ng tubig.

"I think we don't have any concern or problem with regard to the water situation this year up to December and also up to next year," sabi ni MWSS administrator Leonor Cleofas.

Anya bagama't ang karamihan ng pinagkukunan ng tubig ay mula sa Angat dam, marami pa namang ibang mga sources na pinagmumulan ng tubig para isuplay sa Metro Manila at karatig lalawigan.

"This is because of our Umiray River. We have the Umiray tunnel that augments the water in Angat," sabi ni Cleofas.

Anya ang Umiray-Angat Transbasin Rehabilitation Project ay dinesenyo para magbigay ng dagdag na tubig sa Angat water system.

Sa latest monitoring, ang water level ng Angat Dam ay umaabot sa 208 meters na bahagyang mababa sa 210 meters na normal na water level sa dam.

Ang Angat ang nagsusuplay ng 90 percent ng tubig sa Metro Manila.

"Although our target is 210 meters so we are almost there, we want to maximize [that] up to 212 meters and also as I've said, we have other sources like the Cardona and Putatan water treatment plants that draw water from Laguna Lake and also this one," dagdag ni Cleofas.

Kahit pa sapat ang suplay ng tubig sa Metro Manila at karatig lalawigan ay patuloy na naghahanap ang MWSS ng dagdag na source ng tubig para paghandaan ang tumataas na demand sa tubig dahil sa lumalaking populasyon sa naturang lugar taun-taon (Angie dela Cruz)



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Suplay ng tubig, sapat hanggang 2023 - MWSS

Inanunsyo kahapon ng Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) na sapat ang suplay ng tubig sa Metro Manila at mga kalapit na lalawigan hanggang sa susunod na taong 2023.

"I think we don't have any concern or problem with regard to the water situation this year up to December and also up to next year," sabi ni MWSS administrator Leonor Cleofas.

Ani Cleofas, bagama't ang karamihan ng pinagkukunan ng tubig ay mula sa Angat Dam, marami

pa namang ibang mga sources na pinagmumulan ng tubig para isuplay sa Metro Manila at karatig lalawigan.

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mababa sa 210 metro na normal na water level sa dam.

Ang Angat ang nagsusuplay ng 90 porsyento ng tubig sa Kalakhang Maynila.

"Although our target is 210 meters so we are almost there, we want to maximize [that] up to 212 meters and also as I've said, we have other sources like the Cardona and Putatan water treatment plants that draw water from Laguna Lake and also this one," dagdag ni Cleofas. -*Angie dela Cruz*-



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EU-PH meet focuses on going green

BY ED PAOLO SALTING

AS part of the EU-DTI Arise Plus Philippines project, the first European Union-Philippines Conference on green transition and trade focused on the need for small business to go green.

Under the theme "The Green Transition: Opportunities and Challenges for Philippine MSMEs," the discussions at the conference highlighted the importance and impact of "sustainability" for Philippine micro, small and medium

enterprises (MSMEs) which are exporting to the EU.

International and national experts, and practitioners raised several topics on the new agenda for sustainable growth of the EU, also called the "Green Deal," dur-

ing various sessions as discussions focused on the opportunities and challenges this "Green agenda" entails for Philippine exporters and MSMEs.

The event also provided an introduction to the circular economy, deforestation-free products and carbon adjustment.

"Having this 'Green Deal' session is an opportunity for the Philippine MSMEs to be informed of the importance of sustainable production in enabling them to access more diverse and high value markets, especially the EU,"

DTI-Trade Promotions Group (TPG) Assistant Secretary Glenn Peñaranda said.

Philipp Dupuis, head of the Economic and Trade Section and minister-counsellor of the delegation of the EU to the Philippines, pointed out in his speech as conferences like this one are essential.

"This will help in informing exporters in our partner countries about what the Green Deal is and how it can affect the requirements of their EU business partners have toward them," Dupuis remarked.

Lastly, International Trade Cen-

tre Division of Market Development Director Rajesh Aggarwal and Arise's main implementer expressed his thanks on being on part of this initiative from the EU and the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI).

"This conference will pave the way for enabling Philippine SMEs to become export competitive and make their mark in international trade," Aggarwal concluded.

With an allocation of 5.8 million euros, the European Union-funded Arise Plus Philippines helps Philippine exporters take

advantage of EU market access and of the trade privileges granted under the Generalized System of Preference (GSP+).

Arise promotes awareness of new trade opportunities in the private sector in the Philippines, but also helps local MSMEs upgrade their production processes to meet international quality standards as the project supports the overall EU-Philippines trade relationship and trade-related policies by improving trade performance of the Philippines and fostering inclusive economic growth.



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5.9 magnitude na lindol, yumanig sa Northern Samar

NIYANIG ng magnitude 5.9 na lindol ang karagatan sa Northern Samar kahapon ng hapon, ayon sa Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs).

Ang tectonic tremor na matatagpuan sa layong 105 kilometro hilagang-silangan ng bayan ng Mapanas, ay tumama alas-2:33 ng hapon.

Sa lalim na 38 kilometro, maaring magdulot ng aftershocks ang lindol, sabi ng inisyat na bulletin ng Phivolcs.

Sinabi ng Phivolcs na naitala nito ang mga su-

musunod na instrumental Intensity.

Intensity III - Mapanas at Palapag, Northern Samar

Intensity II - Rosario at San Roque, Northern Samar; Prieto Diaz at Bulusan, Sorsogon

Intensity I - Legazpi City at Tabaco, Albay; Mercedes at Daet, Camarines Norte; Pili, Camarines Sur; Hernani at Can-Avid, Eastern Samar; Hilongos, Dulag, Kananga, Abuyog, Alangalang at Baybay, Leyte.

Ang lindol ay hindi inaasahang magdulot ng pinsalang imprastruktura, dagdag

nito.

Ang mga lindol ay karaniwan sa Pilipinas na matatagpuan sa "Pacific Ring of Fire" kung saan maraming mga pagsabog at pagyanig ng bulkan ang nangyayari.

Noong Miyerkules, isang mababaw na magnitude 5.3 na lindol ang tumama sa baybayin ng Camarines Norte at naramdaman sa ilang bahagi ng Luzon at Visayas.



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Cagayan River research boosted

PART of an ongoing effort on water management research in Region 2 (Cagayan Valley) is the continuing series of dialogues between the Isabela State University (ISU) and the Japan-based Kyoto University, aiming to introduce innovation on river basin management for disaster resilience and water hazard mitigation.

This, as delegates from Kyoto University recently met with counterparts from ISU for the Cagayan River Basin Research Dialogue during the two-day special meeting of the technical working group (TWG) for the initiative.

According to ISU, this water research effort is in partnership with the National Irrigation Administration, Cagayan River Basin Management Council, Department of Science and Technology, Japan Water Agency and Quirino State University whose representatives also joined the event.

Delegates from Japan, led by Khagendra Pralhad Bharambe of

Kyoto University's Water Resource Research Institute, together with the University of the Philippines former chancellor Rex Victor Cruz, also met with ISU President Ricmar Aquino.

Addressing the stakeholders and the Cagayan River TWG, Aquino noted that the impact of the changing climate is a call that everyone needs to answer, and a rallying point to strengthen efforts among the academe, government and public sectors.

Aquino added the meeting was a venue for strengthening the dialogue between policymakers, scientists, innovators and other actors to find ways to support each other in making faster progress toward sustainable Cagayan River Basin.

"[G]iven the vast amount of expertise that is gathered in this room, we carry out such enthusiasm on our initiatives, and will be able to shoulder this important responsibility very ably," Aquino said.

He said the TWG meeting is the

more proactive action to empower communities as they are the first ones to feel the impact of inclement weather conditions.

"It is timely, as we just experienced another flooding these days. While its effect is still within the perplexities of our communities, we cannot just depend on their resiliency but be challenged to take action that would address the long impact of climate change in the river basin," Aquino said.

He said the partnership has resulted in the formation and implementation of various projects including Integrated Flood and Water Resources Management, or Ifwarm, and Integrated Flood and Sediment Management in River Basin for Sustainable Development, or Fsmart, which also convened water management and disaster and risk management practitioners for sustainable reservoir monitoring and research initiatives.

LEANDER C. DOMINGO



STRATEGIC
COMMUNICATION
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INITIATIVES
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THE EXPONENT OF THE PHILIPPINE PROGRESS SINCE 1898
MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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Pitmaster Foundation vows more sustainable measures in mitigating climate change

Private charity organization Pitmaster Foundation has pledged that its initiatives in addressing climate change would be more responsible and more sustainable.

In a Facebook post, Pitmaster Foundation executive director Atty. Caroline Cruz said adaptation to climate change is among the priorities of their organization.

"For the past 2 years, the Pitmaster Foundation strategically positioned its resources to lessen the harm that disasters cause through relief operation by sending foods to affected communities to mitigate hunger among the communities which could not yet rebuild their normal life," Cruz said.

"Recently, the Pitmaster Foundation, reposition further its resources of supporting activities that lead to the root cause of all these typhoons/disaster—Climate Change," she added.

Just last month, the foundation sponsored a Disaster and Climate Emergency Policy Forum dubbed "2023-2028 Policy Roadmap: Charting the Urgency of the PBBM Climate Agenda and the Philippine Contribution to Achieve the Global Goal of Net Zero 2030 and 2050 Targets", wherein stakeholders from various sectors were invited to talk about climate emergency measures.

The charity organization, chaired by businessman Charlie "Atong" Ang, also continued its mangrove and tree planting activities last October 14 and 21 in Albay as part of its #PitmasterGoesGreen initiatives which aim to forward climate change mitigation efforts.

To date, the foundation has already planted about 10,000 trees in the mountain ridge of Laguna

and mangroves in Albay.

According to Cruz, the task of protecting the environment is an important advocacy as she stressed that the issue of climate change is "no longer the issue of the day but the issue of our times."

"The Philippines has seen increasing storms and typhoons cause havoc with more frequency in an incredible amount of rainfall, flooding many areas in the country for months. This was the first sign of climate change and weather disturbance that became frequent in the following years," she said.

"Now, the Pitmaster Foundation is proactively involved on causes that would address ongoing problems left behind by limited relief packages. How long are we going to be resilient? And how long can we sustain our relief operation? The frequent disaster expanded its coverage and so the number of affected communities," she furthered.

The Pitmaster official also mentioned that climate change is "generally describe as an environmental issue, often without the public considering its full ramifications."

With this, Cruz pointed out that the matter needs the "assistance and understating of every citizen to mitigate and to adapt to climate change."

"The weather is no longer distinct. During summer, it was very hot. Now, due to unpredictable weather, it would rain, or worse a strong typhoon arrives. Extreme weather may significantly impact crop yields, livestock fisheries and fish counts, a drastic shift to food unavailability," she said.

Meanwhile, several netizens

took to social media to commend Pitmaster Foundation for delivering immediate disaster response as well as its next-level measures in addressing the impact of climate change in the country.

They also praised the foundation for "always helping the less fortunate wholeheartedly in times of crisis."

"Saludo talaga ako sa Pitmaster Foundation at Kay Atty. Caroline Cruz sampu ng kanyang mga kasamahan. Sa nagdaan na Kalamidad dulot ng bagyong Paeng at Queenie na marami ang binawian ng buhay dulot ng sakunang Pangkalikasan," a Facebook user said.

"Ang Pitmaster Foundation ay masasabi kong nangunguna sa pagtulong at pagpapabot ng mga relief goods at maraming pang tulong dahil sila mismo ay umaakasyon. Tunay na may compassion sa pagtulong. Mabuhay po kayo na Pitmaster Foundation!" he added.

Another netizen thanked the charity organization for reallocating its resources to accelerate its mission to preserve and manage the environment.

"Since climate change is the primary cause of all typhoons, including the recent one that devastated us, we are grateful to the Pitmaster Foundation for further reallocating its resources to supporting initiatives that address this issue," he said.

"Likewise, for the quick response required for government work like disaster assistance efforts. For those of our fellow citizens who were severely impacted by the typhoon, being able to start afresh will be of huge benefit for them," he continued.

