

23 December 2022, Friday



**DENR**

# **NEWS ALERTS**

# **NEWS CLIPPINGS**

**STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE**



STRATEGIC  
COMMUNICATION  
AND  
INITIATIVES  
SERVICE

THE EXPONENT OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS  
SINCE 1980  
**MANILA BULLETIN**  
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER



PAGE



UPPER  
LOWER



PAGE 1  
STORY



BANNER  
STORY



EDITORIAL



CARTOON

02-23-22

TITLE:

PAGE

DATE

# Private sector urged to unite, combat climate change

By JEL E. SANTOS

**T**he private sector should work closely to hasten the adoption of environmentally friendly solutions that will have positive

impact on both catastrophe prevention and climate change, Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Antonia Loyzaga said on Thursday, Dec. 22.

"I urge those present here today to

not only look to energy efficiency—the shifts to renewable energy and resource efficiency, and establishing your process and product contributions to the circular economy—but to internalize the role of nature in adapting to climate

change and its critical importance to disaster risk reduction," she said in her keynote address at the "Sustainability Forum PH: United for Climate" held recently in Manila.

As such, Loyzaga emphasized the significance of the private sector's leadership, which has become an essential player in bridging the cost of financing climate action.

She lauded the forum for providing a platform for the formation of the Philippine Alliance for Climate Action, which aims to bring the public and private sectors together to address the threat of climate change.

She said the new alliance could produce the most significant results because the potential synergy among the country's major corporations will most likely generate new capacity to protect, restore, and enhance rich but threatened ecosystems.

Loyzaga called on prominent business leaders present at the occasion to think about collaborating with the DENR in pursuit of its goal of constructing area-based resilience based on evidence.

She requested their assistance in creating a national risk register that may be used to identify development

plans' needs, gaps, and priorities.

To support the development of the agency's strategies, the DENR said it seeks to construct a national geo-spatial database of natural resources, an accounting of the nation's natural resources and environmental assets.

The DENR would highly appreciate the private companies' synergized expert insights and alignment of investments to address complex and cascading risk across sectors and scales, said Loyzaga.

The DENR chief also stressed the importance of the private sector's role in mainstreaming climate and disaster resilience into their core business cycles.

She said the conglomerates must include not only the businesses they represent and their respective paths to net zero emissions, but also the work required beyond their fences to preserve and protect the ecosystems and communities that support them.

"I believe it is high time for the private sector to come together as an alliance to ensure that the ecological and economic gains as individual companies and organizations are leveraged and magnified for the good of our people, our country, and our planet," she said.



TITLE:

PAGE

DATE

# Climate change lags in urgent concerns of Pinoys – study

By JANVIC MATEO

Despite living in one of the most vulnerable countries in the world, most Filipinos still do not identify climate change as the most urgent concern that governments, companies and people around the world should focus on.

The 2022 Climate Reality Barometer, conducted by Japanese multinational electronics company Epson, found that only 10.7 percent of the 1,005 Filipino respondents identified climate change as the most urgent issue.

Most Filipino respondents identified fixing the economy with 27.7 percent, followed by rising prices with 24.4 percent, tackling poverty (15.5 percent) and safeguarding against a future pandemic (12.7 percent) as among the most urgent issues.

Following climate change were improving equality of life with 4.3 percent, and the war in Europe, 2.6 percent.

The results of the study are somewhat similar to local surveys that showed inflation and unemployment as the most urgent concern of most Filipinos.

Epson noted that more respondents from other countries – such as France with 38 percent and Mexico with 34.1 percent – see climate change as the most pressing issue that needs to be addressed worldwide.

Despite this, the study found that Filipinos are among the most optimistic that a “climate disaster” would be averted in their lifetime.

Some 71.9 percent said they were optimistic (35.2 percent very optimistic, 36.7 percent somewhat optimistic) while 13.6 percent were pessimistic (10.8 percent somewhat pessimistic and 2.8 percent very pessimistic).

Meanwhile, 12.7 percent of Filipino respondents said they were neither optimistic nor pessimistic, while 1.7 percent said they do not believe that there is any risk of a climate disaster.

Epson said respondents in other coun-

tries were more pessimistic, particularly in Canada and Italy with 36.6 percent and 25.2 percent, respectively.

“The 2022 Epson Climate Reality Barometer shows progress, but also how short-term economic demands are in danger of distracting governments, businesses and individuals from imperative environmental action,” said Masako Kusama, president and director of Epson Philippines.

“As a global technology leader, our duty is to refocus our efforts on developing solutions which will help reduce the environmental impact of our products. By working together, we at Epson believe that we can all inspire action and build a better future,” she added.

## Addressing climate change

The online survey, conducted from July 29 to Aug. 8, also asked Filipino respondents about various actions that they do or plan on doing to tackle climate change.

Some 76.5 percent of the respondents said they already reduce plastic use followed by improving recycling habits with 70.1 percent, using more reusable goods (69.2 percent), walking or cycling more often (67.1 percent), travel to the office less (47.3 percent), switch to more sustainable products (45.9 percent) and less international travel for business and leisure (37.6 percent).

Fewer Filipinos said they adopted a plant-based diet with 39.1 percent, encouraged workplace to commit or further its net zero strategy (27.3 percent), switched to renewable energy (25.1 percent), installed solar panels (22.3 percent), boycotted an unsustainable brand (20.5 percent) and switched to an electric vehicle (17 percent).

More than half of respondents said they plan to do the following in the future: install solar panels with 67.4 percent, switch to renewable energy (58.8 percent), switch to an electric vehicle (55.6 percent) and encourage workplace to commit or further its net zero strategy (50.9 percent).



TITLE:

PAGE

DATE

# PHL eyes \$600-M World Bank loan

THE MARCOS administration is seeking a \$600-million loan from the World Bank to help the Philippines bounce back from the pandemic, as well as improve climate resilience and fiscal management.

The Philippines' first sustainable recovery development policy loan (DPL) is expected to be approved by the World Bank board

on May 16, 2023, according to a document uploaded on the multilateral lender's website.

"The DPL series aims to support the government of the Philippines' reforms to: 1) accelerate the economic recovery; 2) protect the environment and improve climate resilience; and 3) improve fiscal management," the World Bank said.

The Washington-based multilateral bank said the reforms supported by the proposed loan series will be implemented by the Marcos administration "which has thus far emphasized some degree of economic policy continuity."

The loan series is expected to boost foreign investments in renewable energy, green sectors

and shipping service infrastructure, as well as increase the number of public-private partnership (PPP) projects.

It will also support reforms to protect the environment and improve climate resilience through plastic waste reduction, recovery and recycling, and the increased use of green public procurement.

The loan series is also expected to improve fiscal management through reforms that will boost revenues, contain expenditures and reduce fiscal risks from the agriculture sector.

"The reforms supported by this DPL series are well aligned with the forthcoming 2023-2028 Philippine Development Plan and AmBisyon Natin 2040, in particular, the objec-

tives to protect the purchasing power of families through reduced energy costs; to create more jobs through promoting investment, improving infrastructure, and achieving energy security; to create green jobs through pursuing a green and blue economy; and to ensure sound macroeconomic fundamentals," the World Bank said.

Loan, S1/5



PHILIPPINE STAR/MIQUEL DE GUZMAN

**THE PHILIPPINES is seeking a \$600-million loan from the World Bank, which will fund efforts to improve climate resilience, protect the environment and boost the economy's recovery from the pandemic.**

The World Bank said the loan is also aligned with its 2019-2023 Country Partnership Framework for the Philippines, and its goals of ending poverty and promoting shared prosperity.

The implementing agencies for the loan series include the departments of Energy, Trade, Budget and Environment, as well as the Anti-Red Tape Authority, Office of the President, Bureau of Internal Revenue, and National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA).

Development policy loans typically support policy and institutional changes needed to create an environment conducive to sustained and equitable growth as defined by borrower countries' own development agenda, according to the World Bank.

As of 2021, the World Bank was the country's third-largest source of official development assistance (ODA), with loans and grants representing 24% of the total, based on a report from the NEDA.

The World Bank is currently supporting 25 ongoing programs and eight grants worth \$7.66 billion as of 2021. Out of the 92 new ODA last year, 44% were from the World Bank, or \$2.9 billion for seven loans and two grants.

The National Government's (NG) debt ballooned in 2020 and 2021 as the government ramped up borrowings to fund its coronavirus response and stimulus measures.

As of end-October, the NG debt hit a record high of P13.64 trillion, of which 69% were from domestic sources.

Outstanding debt as a share of GDP rose to 63.7% as of the third quarter, the highest in 17 years. This is above the 60% threshold considered manageable by multilateral lenders for developing economies.

The government is aiming to bring down the debt-to-GDP ratio to 61.8% by yearend and 52.5% by 2028. —

Keisha B. Ta-asan



TITLE:

PAGE

DATE

## Asean launches 3rd biodiversity report at COP15

**M**ONTREAL, Canada—The Asean launched the third edition of its biodiversity report, the Asean Biodiversity Outlook (ABO3) at the margins of the UN 2022 Biodiversity Conference.

For two weeks, environment ministers, international organizations, and representatives from various sectors gather at the second part of the 15th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD-COP15) to finalize the newest set of global biodiversity targets.

The ABO3 launch was part of the "Asean Strides Toward the Achievement of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework," a CBD-COP15 side event organized by the Asean Secretariat, the Asean Centre for Biodiversity, the European Union, the Federal Government of Germany through GIZ and KfW, and Pew Charitable Trusts, said ACB in a news release.

In line with the COP15 theme, "Ecological Civilization: Building a Shared Future for All Life on Earth," the report launching engaged key policymakers from Asean member states (AMS) to highlight the progress in achieving biodiversity goals in the Asean region, including the challenges and innovative solutions to contribute to

the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF).

"At least 50 percent of the AMS have indicated 'on track' progress in achieving the majority of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets," said Lim. The Aichi targets for 2010-2021 were set in Aichi Prefecture, Japan, in 2010.

She presented how the Asean region has fared in the achievement of the previous set of global biodiversity goals.

She added that one AMS even exceeded meeting Aichi Target 1 for increasing awareness on biodiversity, and another AMS in increasing the coverage of protected areas, or Target 11, ACB said.

Deputy Secretary-General Ekkaphab Phanthavong, of the Asean for Socio-Cultural Community of the Asean Secretariat, lauded the AMS for its conservation efforts at the national and regional levels, as reflected in ABO3.

He likewise highlighted the need for a multi-stakeholder, participatory approach to achieve global biodiversity targets, and the need to implement nature-based solutions to environmental challenges such as biodiversity loss and climate change, ACB said.

In preparation for the impending post-2020 GBF, key recommendations from major

regional biodiversity conferences were presented by Dr. Khairul Naim bin Adham of the Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources of Malaysia, and Dr. Badiah Achmad Said of the Ministry of Environment and Forestry, Indonesia.

The Philippines' Environment Undersecretary Ernesto Adobo Jr. of the Philippines; Dr. Lena Chan of National Parks Board of Singapore; and Dr. Benchamaporn Wattanatongchai from the Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning, Thailand, shared their respective national priorities and strategies in promoting a more resilient and sustainable future.

Masha Kalinina of Pew Charitable Trusts shared about the Blue Nature Alliance and the 30x30 initiative, which aims to conserve 30 percent of terrestrial and marine habitat by 2030.

Clarissa Arida of the ACB provided a brief summary of the ABO3.

The detailed report of the Asean on how it contributed to the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 is presented in the ABO3, which will be made available through [www.aseanbiodiversity.org](http://www.aseanbiodiversity.org).

The publication's highlights are presented in a video produced by the ACB.



2-23-22

TITLE: \_\_\_\_\_

PAGE \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

## Leyte seaweed farmers bear brunt of climate-change impact

**D**AWAHON ISLAND, Bato, Leyte—The cuttings of the brownish seaweeds were piling up. But 31 years old Marifel Gabison is undaunted as she picks them one at a time to tie them to a fiber rope of about two-meter long while she chats with five other women, who are doing the same task.

Her hands are quick, the twigs are perfectly tied even without looking at them—a skill that she developed from over three years of doing the job. She receives P6 for every line of 100 cuttings which she gets in cash at the end of the day.

The cuttings are the seedlings that will be planted back to the sea in the vast expanse of the town's seaweed farm.

"Earnings are not always the same. Today I will receive more than P200 for what I have completed," she said as she took a peek into a room at her back where her four-month-old baby is peacefully sleeping.

Gabison said there is big demand for new seedlings to replenish those that were destroyed by Typhoon Paeng (international code Nalgae) from October 28 to 31, just three days before the interview.

Dawahon Island, which straddles between

Leyte and Bohol, is the biggest seaweed producer in Eastern Visayas and accounts for 90 percent of the region's seaweed production.

Before Typhoon Odette destroyed their marine farms in December 2021, this expanse in Camotés Sea was one of the biggest sources of seaweeds in the country.

The Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) Regional Office-8 said Paeng damaged an estimated P16-million worth of crops and properties on the island, the second worst disaster since Odette, when total damages reached P200 million.

"We haven't even fully recovered from Typhoon Odette, then we have Paeng," lamented Benjamin Taño, the president of the 342-strong Dawahon Seaweeds Farmers Association.

"Typhoons are getting more destructive now," he said. "During Odette all our seaweed farms were washed out and houses were blown away. We were able to replant after five months by gathering those that were washed to the deeper part of the sea as our seedlings."

Even then, Taño said the seaweed seedlings that he gathered could cover a small portion of his 20-hectare seaweed farm.

He also lost his boat that he used to access his seaweed farm, which was about half-kilometer away from the island.

For its response to Odette, BFAR-8 distributed 93 fiberglass boats with engines and complete accessories worth P4.6 million and P500,000 worth of propagules.

Vicenta Projimo, BFAR-8 regional civic coordinator, said one boat will be shared by three seaweed farmers, while each farmer is provided with 100 kilograms of seaweed propagules.

To date a total of 220 hectares out of the 1,300 hectares of potential area for farming have been planted and replanted with seaweed propagules by its 578 earnest fisherfolk, some of them have started selling their seaweeds to consolidators and buyers in Leyte and Cebu.

Rue Inoc, a barangay councilor and spokesman of the association, said he believes that the increasing frequency of destructive typhoons, as well as the emergence of seaweed diseases, such as "ice-ice," is due to global warming.

"We had strong typhoons before but they were not as destructive and more often as they are now," Inoc said. "We also didn't have these seaweed diseases in the past."

He added that the changing climate pattern has also reduced the number of times where they could experience a bountiful harvest. *Elmer Recuerdo*



02-23-22

TITLE:

PAGE

DATE

EASING IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE

# Ifugao Rice Terraces land on another 'protection' list



By **Ronnel W. Domingo**  
@RonWDomingoINQ

Communities that depend on the Ifugao Rice Terraces for their livelihood will receive support from Canada-based Manulife Financial Corp. and National Geographic (NatGeo) Society, which have included the famous Cordillera landmark in a list of 10 heritage sites that must be protected from the impact of climate change.

Eight others on the list, drawn up under the "Preserving Legacies: A Future for Our Past" initiative, are also on the World Heritage List **A5**

## IFUGAO RICE TERRACES LAND ON ANOTHER 'PROTECTION' LIST

**FROM A1**

of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (Unesco).

These are Petra (Jordan); Angkor Archeological Park (Cambodia); Historical Mosque City of Bagerhat (Bangladesh); Nan Madol (ruins in Micronesia); Levuka (port town in Fiji); Koutammakou, the Land of the Batammariba (Togo and Benin); Sceilg Mhichil Island (Ireland); and the Port, Fortress and Group of Monuments at Cartagena (Colombia).

The 10th entry is the Border Field natural beach and coastal habitat which straddles the border between the United States and Mexico.

### Local threats, responses

In a joint statement, Manulife and NatGeo said the project could help safeguard these historic and culturally significant sites from the impact of climate change and protect the physical and financial well-being of the communities that rely on them for livelihood.

Under the project, it is hoped that the communities can better visualize climate threats on a local scale and be trained in scientific mitigation efforts.

The initiative is led by National Geographic explorer Victoria Herrmann and is connected to Manulife's Impact Agenda, which was launched in the Philippines earlier this year with Gawad Kalinga, Corazon Sanchez Atayde Memorial Foundation and Hari-bon Foundation as partners.

"[O]ur ambitious approach



### STILL MAKING WONDERS

The world-famous Cordillera landscape keeps getting international attention amid increasing climate threats.

—EV ESPIRITU

to addressing this critical issue will not only lead to tangible protection of cultural heritage sites; it will be the game changers needed to increase access to heritage adaptation and transform conservation as a field to meet the challenges of a climate-changed world," Herrmann said.

Rahul Hora, Manulife Philippines president and chief executive, said the company wants to contribute to efforts in mitigating climate change risks to people's lives and livelihood.

Through mentoring programs and education materials, the project hopes to teach communities how to turn scientific knowledge into actionable management plans for the protection of the heritage sites.

Using local weather data, for example, climate models can be developed to assess how much flooding, heat, sea level rise and changing seasonality could threaten the communities in different scenarios. This

would enable their leaders or site managers to know what climate impacts to anticipate and plan for.

### 'Unparalleled beauty'

The Ifugao Rice Terraces have five terrace-clusters within the province that were included in the World Heritage List in 1995.

Unesco described the terraces in Batad and Bangaan in Banaue, Hungduan, Kiangan and in Mayoyao as "a living cultural landscape of unparalleled beauty."

Built more than 2,000 years ago and preserved through generations, the terraces, Unesco said, can be considered an example of how an ancient civilization can survive the various challenges of modernization.

### Marijuana plantation?

In 2001, the terraces also landed on the World Heritage Committee's list of endangered heritage sites. They were removed from the list in 2012 after the government gave assurances that the threatened sections would be repaired.

Earlier this month, Ifugao Gov. Jerry Dalipog said abandoned and worn-down terraces may be suitable for growing medical marijuana should cannabis cultivation be legalized in the country.

Dalipog was then reacting to the idea of using the terraces for growing "weed," a proposal that cropped up during a Senate hearing on a medical marijuana bill. —WITH A REPORT

FROM INQUIRER RESEARCH INQ  
SOURCES: INQUIRER ARCHIVES,  
UNESCO.ORG



STRATEGIC  
COMMUNICATION  
AND  
INITIATIVES  
SERVICE

# BusinessMirror

A broader look at today's business



02-23-22

TITLE:

PAGE

1

DATE

# 15TH CONFERENCE OF PARTIES, CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY 'Preserve the environment, preserve life'

By JONATHAN L. MAYUGA

**T**HE preservation of the environment is the preservation of life," declared Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.

The declaration embodied the Philippine Country Statement delivered by Environment Secretary Maria Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga, the head of the Philippine delegation to the recently concluded 15th Conference of Parties (COP15) of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in Montreal, Canada, sharing the country's commitment and call to action during the high-level segment with the theme: Ecological Civilization—Building a Shared Future for All Life on Earth" on December 17.

"The Philippines envisions a future where biodiversity is restored and maintained to sustain healthy, resilient Filipino communities while delivering benefits to all. The post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework [GBF] must ensure clear linkages to national policy mechanisms and implementation that recognize the intersections between climate change, biodiversity and sustainable development," Yulo-Loyzaga said.

## New deal, new hope

THIS was declared as COP15 ended on a high note, with "historic deal," as described by the Associated Press, with nations promising to protect 30 percent of the planet and help prevent species extinction on Monday.

The new deal to protect 30 percent of the planet by the end of 2030, known as 30 by 30, is considered a ray of hope for plants and animals, as well as human species, that are threatened with extinction on account of the massive environmental degradation experienced globally over the past decades.

Canada's environment minister Steven Guilbeault, who was hosting the conference, compared the deal to the UN's landmark Paris agreement, in which countries committed to keep global temperature increase below 2 degrees Celsius and ideally closer to 1.5C.

"It is truly a moment that will mark history as Paris did for climate," Guilbeault said to reporters on Monday, Bloomberg News said.

Currently, 17 percent of terrestrial and 10 percent of marine areas are protected, the AP said.

## Hits and misses

AT the same time, international environmental group Greenpeace welcomes what it describes as explicit recognition of Indigenous people's





72-23-22

TITLE: Preserve the environment Preserve life

PAGE 2

DATE

rights, roles, territories and knowledge as the most effective biodiversity protection that has come out of the UN biodiversity talks.

In a statement, An Lambrechts, head of the Greenpeace delegation at COP15, said: "Indigenous peoples are the most capable and knowledgeable guardians of nature. There is so much potential for biodiversity protection if Indigenous peoples are in leadership roles. Rights-based protections are the future of conservation. Direct finance for Indigenous peoples is a critical next step."

However, she said taken altogether, COP15 failed to deliver the ambition, tools, or finance necessary to stop mass extinction.

"The 30 by 30 target, to protect at least 30 percent of land and of sea by 2030, has successfully made it in. But it is stripped-down, without essential qualifiers that exclude damaging activities from protected areas. As is, it is just an empty number, with protections on paper but nowhere else," Lambrechts explained.

### Biodiversity finance not enough

"\$20 billion a year until 2025, and then \$30 billion a year until 2030, is a start, but it's not enough. With a \$700 billion biodiversity funding gap, it's unclear where the rest of the money will come from. Finance is not only a question of how much, but how fast. Setting up a fund in 2023 should get funding to developing countries faster," she added.

"Corporate schemes like nature-based solutions and offsets leeches on to the UN biodiversity talks from start to finish. These are false solutions that may prove to be costly mistakes. The scandals and greenwashing you see in carbon offsetting today are what's on the menu for biodiversity tomorrow," she pointed out.

### Action and commitment

IN the Philippines, the country's chief steward of the environment and natural resources is optimistic.

On conservation, Yulo-Loyzaga boasted that the Philippines planted and maintained over a million hectares of degraded forestlands while identifying more potential protected areas, bringing the country closer to its development goals and the 30 by 30 target. It calls for 30 percent of earth's land and sea to be conserved through the establishment of protected areas and other area-based conservation measures.

"These areas include scientifically determined ecologically or biologically significant marine areas.

We regard these efforts as a source of nature-based solutions to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change," she said.

Meanwhile, the country's Environment chief said that on sustainable use, ecotourism jobs have more than doubled in the last five years, promoting practices, products, and services that enhance biodiversity.

### Mainstreaming biodiversity

ACCORDING to Yulo-Loyzaga, regulations for Mainstreaming Biodiversity-Friendly Agricultural Practices and Nationally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems, have likewise been implemented.

"Our high endemism and rate of species discovery, drive our will to strengthen the Nagoya Protocol's implementation to complement practical bilateral and multilateral benefit-sharing mechanisms for the utilization of genetic resources, associated traditional knowledge and Digital Sequence Information," she said.

However, she admitted that despite these efforts, much remains to be done across all the land and seascapes to ensure the balance between advancing human development and protecting biodiversity.

### Biodiversity financing gap

ON means and tools of implementation, Yulo-Loyzaga said the most recent estimates show a more three-fold increase in public expenditure for biodiversity, with agrobiodiversity expenditures increasing 9-fold.

"However, these estimates likewise indicate at least a P14 billion annual

biodiversity funding gap exists, particularly for protection and restoration," she added.

"We expect this gap to remain deeply significant, if not larger than previously determined," she added.

"We intend to achieve our highest goals while respecting the rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities, women and youth, and the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment. Development is not sustainable if the vulnerable are left behind," she added.

### Call for support

YULO-LOYZAGA said: "Our president [Marcos Jr.] has said that 'the preservation of the environment is the preservation of life.'"

"Mindful of our common but differentiated responsibilities, we join the call for the fulfillment of commitments, specifically for the establishment of a global biodiversity fund that will mobilize resources for biodiversity," she said.

"We are grateful for the support of our Asean neighbors, including the Asean Center for Biodiversity [ACB], and other bilateral, regional, and global partners for capacity building, scientific cooperation and technology transfer," she said.

The support from partners, she said, enable ecosystem risk assessment; creation of a geospatial database of biodiversity resources; establishment of the natural capital accounting system; quantifying loss and damage from climate change; and measures and safeguards to ensure equitable benefit-sharing from traditional



72-23-22

TITLE: Preserve the environment to preserve life PAGE 3

DATE

Asean Green Initiative and the Asean Heritage Parks Programme," Lim said.

She announced that in pursuit of mainstreaming biodiversity in tourism, the ACB will be supporting the International Ecotourism Travel Mart from March to April 2023 in the Philippines, "as an effort to promote sustainable and nature positive tourism."

"With the Asean's call for a realistic yet ambitious and transformative post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, the ACB welcomes partnerships across sectors, as it continues to assist and support Asean member states in making considerable strides toward the 2050 vision of living in harmony with nature," she said.

### Catastrophic consequences

A WEEK before the final adoption of the new biodiversity deal, the environmental and legal rights groups in the Philippines were fretting.

The Legal Rights and Natural Resources Center (LRC) warned that any erasure of Indigenous people's rights and roles from the CBD COP15's Global Biodiversity Agreement will have catastrophic consequences for 75 percent of the Philippines's remaining forest landscapes in their territories.

knowledge and genetic resources, Yulo-Loyzaga said.

### Shaping post-2020 GBF

THE ACB, meanwhile, underscores the important role of sub-regional and regional organizations in shaping the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework and in its implementation.

"Sub-regional organizations, especially those under very large and highly diverse regional groups, are in a unique position to contribute significantly in facilitating effective and concrete measures to meet global biodiversity targets," ACB Executive Director Theresa Mundita S. Lim told the BUSINESSMIRROR via Messenger on December 19.

"This is by supporting the efforts of similarly situated member states in accordance with their national priorities, circumstances and capabilities, and maximizing available resources to do so," Lim added.

### Nurturing partnerships

MEANWHILE, Lim said nurturing partnerships has been enabling the ACB to enhance the region's whole-of-community approach to mainstreaming biodiversity through inclusive, cross-sectoral processes.

"These include building on the biodiversity and climate change nexus through the promotion of nature-based solutions and ecosystem-based approaches; addressing the interlinkages between health and biodiversity in line with the Asean Comprehensive Recovery Framework; and strengthening ecological connectivity, restoration, and resilience through the

"In turn, adverse impacts will cascade across its interconnected natural systems, such as our watersheds, seas and climate. World leaders and corporate lobbyists at Montreal are refusing to heed to the urgent clamor for biodiversity protection and recognizing indigenous people's role in safeguarding forests," Joolia Demigillo, Community Services coordinator told the BUSINESSMIRROR via Messenger on December 13.

The CBD COP15 must not take two steps backward from these scientific pronouncements. As it is, Indigenous peoples are already experiencing the consequences of collapsing biodiversity corridors," Demigillo said.

"In our 2022 State of Indigenous Peoples Address Report, we saw how at least 49 percent of ancestral domains are in conflict with mines, tree plantations, fossil fuels and other environmentally critical projects," she said.

According to LRC, as the agreement returns to the home countries of the CBD COP15 parties, countries must have clear and concrete plans to protect and enhance biodiversity.

This is especially true for a country like the Philippines, which continues to have policies that enable biodiversity destruction by large-scale mines, plantations, dams and other environmentally destructive projects encroaching into indigenous territories, the center said.



INDIGENOUS peoples' leaders lead the march for Biodiversity and Human Rights during the COP15 of the Convention on Biological Diversity in Montreal, Canada, on December 10. At the forefront of the demands

was the protection of human rights, including that of Indigenous peoples and reversing biodiversity loss. GREENPEACEPHOTO



TITLE:

PAGE

DATE

## BBM's plan to legalize small-scale miners' operations backed

By DELON PORCALLA

A lawmaker-ally of President Marcos in the House of Representatives has expressed his full support behind the government's plan to legalize the operations of the predominantly unlicensed activities of danger-prone small-scale miners.

Rep. LRay Villafuerte of Camarines Sur said the instruction to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources led by Secretary Maria Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga to study the matter is a step in the right direction, where miners can also get more skills training.

"The legalization of more small-scale mining activities, as sought by President Marcos, would let the DENR and its Mines and Geosciences Bureau effectively track the extractive activities of these small-scale miners and promote their safety," he said.

This is important because the government can in fact even provide "financial incentives for their operations," with the "end in view of legalizing the preponderantly unsupervised and perilous activities of these small miners while better protecting the environment."

Villafuerte said this would "promote their safety, provide financial incentives for these now largely unsupervised type of extractive activities, generate higher revenue from the mining sector, and (at the same time) do a better job of protecting the environment."

He is open to Marcos' proposal for Congress to amend the 31-year-old "People's Small-Scale Mining Act of 1991" (Republic Act 7065), by "incentivizing small-scale mining and extending social assistance, labor protection and government assistance programs to miners."

"Limiting small-scale miners to do their extraction activities only in Minahang Bayan areas will enable the government to effectively monitor if these miners are abiding by the law that bans their use of mercury, which is believed to cause respiratory and kidney diseases or even death for people following their high exposures to this neurotoxin," Villafuerte said.

Executive Order 79, issued by former president Aquino in 2012, prohibits small-scale miners from using mercury in their extraction. People's Small-scale Mining Program (RA 7076), however, allows them only in government-declared Minahang Bayan areas.

The 1991 (People's Small-Scale Mining Act of 1991) law defines small-scale mining as activities that "rely heavily on manual labor using simple methods and do not use explosives or heavy mining equipment."

The People's Small-Scale Mining Areas or Minahang Bayan areas are places where small-scale miners are legally allowed to extract gold, silver and chromite.

"The legalization of small-scale mining is definitely a lot better in monitoring the operations of these miners, because it is far more difficult for the DENR and MGB to track the activities of small-scale miners if they continue operating outside Minahang Bayan areas," Villafuerte said.

Small-scale miners are defined by law as Filipino citizens who, "individually or in the company of other Filipino citizens, voluntarily form a cooperative duly licensed by the DENR to engage, under the terms and conditions of a contract, in the extraction or removal of minerals or ore-bearing materials from the ground."



2-23-22

TITLE: \_\_\_\_\_

PAGE \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

## Villafuerte backs legalization of small scale mining ops

**A** LAWMAKER on Thursday said legalizing the operations of small-scale miners would help promote their safety, provide financial incentives, generate higher revenue for the sector and protect the environment.

Camarines Sur Rep. Luis Raymund Villafuerte made the statement in support of President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.'s recent order for the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to strengthen its regulatory powers on small-scale mining so the government can provide miners with social protection plus skills training and even financial incentives for their operations. *PNA*



TITLE: \_\_\_\_\_

PAGE \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

## Finance chiefs pushing for global green recovery

**Finance Sec. Benjamin Diokno stressed the vital role finance ministers play in integrating green solutions into global economic recovery and development.**

"[M]inistries of Finance across the globe play a vital role in pushing for reforms that incentivize and finance the integration of biodiversity considerations into economic recovery and development," said Diokno in his intervention for the COP15 Finance Day Plenary 3: Economics, Finance, and Nature Nexus: A Conversation with Ministries of Finance on December 14.

He cited that world expenditures on biodiversity conservation only

amount to \$120 billion to \$140 billion.

These are mostly sourced from domestic public spending and accounts for only around 20 percent of the annual cost of implementing the proposed post-2020 global biodiversity framework that is valued at not less than \$700 billion.

"[W]e are not waiting around for long-overdue commitments to materialize. We are moving ahead with reforms to quicken our shift to more sustainable practices," the Finance chief stressed.

The Philippines has begun its shift towards sustainability with the recently approved House Bill 4102 or the

Single-Use Plastic Bags Tax Act. The bill seeks to help regulate the consumption of SUPs as part of the country's efforts to reduce plastic pollution.

The Department of Finance is studying the feasibility of implementing carbon pricing mechanisms such as carbon tax to generate revenues that can be tapped for environmental concerns.

The DoF is also working towards building a sustainable finance ecosystem through its Sustainable Finance Roadmap. The plan aims to synergize investments from the public and private sector towards green and social projects.



TITLE:

PAGE

DATE

## Bataan coal plant turns over 3-year reforestation program

MARIVELES, Bataan: A coal-fired power plant here announced Thursday that it has turned over its three-year reforestation program to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

After three years of site maintenance and reforestation, GNPowr Dinginin Ltd. Co. (GNPD) said it officially turned over the program to the representatives from DENR, Miguela Ramirez and Romelo Cuaresma.

Arcel Madrid, GNPD associate vice president for community relations, said the reforestation program in 3.5 hectares of land along the 6.5-kilometer Bypass Road in Mariveles has 389 banaba trees.

"The GNPD will continue to work with empowering progress to achieve sustainable forest management, based on science and principles of good forest governance. Let us protect a forest one at a time because protecting our forest is protecting our lives," he said.

Madrid said that through the initiative of the company and the goal to sustain the Environmental Compliance Certificate, the GNPD supports and acts in response to various DENR programs.

"Ultimately, the GNPD aims to reduce the effects of the company's business operations on the community, health, welfare and environment through this kind of program," Madrid added.

CJ Pascua, GNPD stakeholder and public relations associate, said the initial reforestation activities have already been conducted on the site since June 19, 2018.

On Dec. 10, 2019, the memorandum of agreement (MoA) for the adoption of an expanded National Greening Program plantation between DENR and GNPD was signed, with a cover period of three years.

"Through this MoA, the reforestation [efforts] in conducting tree planting, maintenance, and protection activities are expanded," Pascua said.

Both DENR and GNPD said they look forward to a good partnership in having the same campaign to empower and protect the environment.

The coal-fired power plants of GNPD and its sister company, Mariveles GNPowr Energy Center Ltd. Co., are located in Barangay Alas-asin, Mariveles.

ERNIE ESCONDE



TITLE:

PAGE

DATE



WESTERN COMMAND-AFF

## Defense dep't orders tighter military watch in West PHL Sea

THE DEPARTMENT of National Defense has ordered the military to strengthen its presence in the West Philippine Sea, the territory the country claims within the South China Sea, following reports of increased Chinese activity in the area.

"Any encroachment in the West Philippine Sea or reclamation on the features therein is a threat to the security of Pag-asa Island, which is part of Philippine sovereign territory," it said in a statement on Thursday.

Pag-asa Island is also referred to as Thitu Island.

"It also endangers the marine environment, and undermines the stability of the region," the Defense department added.

It also called on China to uphold prevailing rules-based international order and refrain from acts that will increase tensions in the disputed waters.

Beijing, meanwhile, said its relationship with Manila remains smooth and reiterated its denial of a report that it has been conducting reclamation activities in unoccupied features of the resource-rich Spratlys Island, parts of which are claimed by the Philippines and calls it the Kalayaan Island Group.

"The Bloomberg report is completely untrue," Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Mao Ning said, according to a transcript released by the Chinese government late Wednesday.

"Refraining from action on the presently uninhabited islands and reefs of the Nan-sha Islands is a serious common understanding reached by China and ASEAN countries in the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DoC), and China always strictly abides by it," she added.

The 2002 DoC, where both the Philippines and China are signatories, provides that "no new structures shall be constructed in an uninhabited feature of South China Sea."

The South China Sea, a key global shipping route, is subject to overlapping territorial claims involving China, Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan and Vietnam. Each year, trillions of dollars of trade flow through the sea, which is also rich in fish and gas.

"The growth of China-Philippines relations currently enjoys sound momentum, and the two sides will continue to properly handle maritime issues through friendly consultations," Ms. Mao said.

### VERIFY

In a report published Tuesday, Bloomberg News cited warnings from Western officials on Beijing's latest construction activity, which they said indicated an attempt to advance a new status quo.

The report included graphics such as a map and images on changes in land features, mentioning Whitsun Reef, locally known as Julian Felipe Reef, and Sandy Cay, locally known as Pag-asa Cay, "where previously submerged features now sit permanently above the high-tide line."

"The Bloomberg report created a stir but lacked definitive and time sensitive details," Lucio Blanco Pitlo III, a research fellow at the Asia-Pacific Pathways to Progress Foundation, told *BusinessWorld* in a Viber message.

"It cited expansion of occupied features in the past decade, a long stretch that dates back prior to the 2016 arbitration award," he said. "Instead of merely referencing such report, it will be better to investigate and verify facts on the ground before taking appropriate action."

The Philippine Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) on Wednesday asked relevant agencies, including the Department of Defense, to verify the report.

DFA expressed "serious concerns," saying the reported activities go against the Declaration of Conduct on the South China Sea, as well as the 2016 Arbitral Award.

The Permanent Court of Arbitration based in the Hague upheld the Philippines' rights to its exclusive economic zone within the disputed waterway.

China has repeatedly rejected the 2016 arbitral ruling, which voided its claim to more than 80% of the South China Sea based on a 1940s nine-dash line map.

Philippine President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. is scheduled to visit Beijing in January.

"China's occupation of new features in the Spratlys, especially post the 2016 arbitral award, will undermine efforts to foster cordial PH-CN ties, diminishing mutual trust and confidence and raising Manila's threat perception of its big neighbor. Hence, such charge is taken seriously," Mr. Pitlo said.

"West Philippine Sea remains a challenge to bilateral ties and needs to be handled deftly. Further reclamation only raises the bar, making it more difficult for rival disputants to manage the regional hotspot," he said. — **Alyssa Nicole O. Tan**



STRATEGIC  
COMMUNICATION  
AND  
INITIATIVES  
SERVICE

Trusted Since 1898

# The Manila Times

A7  
PAGE

UPPER  
 LOWER

PAGE 1  
STORY

BANNER  
STORY

EDITORIAL

CARTOON

12-23-22

TITLE :

PAGE

DATE

## FUTURE'S HOPE

Sea turtle hatchlings make their way to the sea in Barangay Labac in Naic town, Cavite on Tuesday, Dec. 20, 2022. Caretaker volunteers are hoping the over 100 hatchlings would survive the rough seas and poaching incidents. PHOTO BY DENNIS ABRINA







STRATEGIC  
COMMUNICATION  
AND  
INITIATIVES  
SERVICE



02-23-22

TITLE:

PAGE

DATE

# Who's ready to fight plastic pollution?

**M**unich/Ottawa—In late November, the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee on Plastic Pollution (INC) met for the first time. The INC was established by the United Nations Environment Assembly with a well-defined mission: to create the first ever legally binding global agreement on plastic pollution. The fact that delegates and observers finally met to have this discussion is welcome. But the meeting results are just the beginning of addressing the scale or scope of the problem.

Plastic pollution threatens people's health and endangers the environment. And plastic causes harm throughout its entire lifecycle, beginning with resource extraction and continuing after disposal.

But the problem is not just plastic itself. Plastic contains over 10,000 chemicals, more than a quarter of which are toxic to humans and wildlife. In the absence of a global requirement that companies make known exactly which chemicals are in which plastic materials and goods, what we know about plastic in our lives is dictated by the whims of individual manufacturers and national legislatures. As a result, we are ignorant of the full extent of the problem. No one—from workers facing occupational hazards to parents trying to make healthy choices for their children—has all the information they could and should have.

Plastic does not affect everyone equally. Vulnerable groups like low-income families, indigenous communities, and people of color are especially at risk. For example, the vulnerable and disadvantaged are more likely to live or work near petrochemical manufacturing facilities and refineries, exposing them to air, water, and soil pollution from the toxic chemicals

## WORLD VIEW

OLGA SPERANSKAYA  
AND ALEXANDRA CATERBOW

used to manufacture plastic products.

This inequality exists within and between countries. Plastic products are often made in developing countries, transported to developed countries, and then returned to developing countries as waste. It is not only the last stage of plastics' lifecycle that creates pollution and endangers communities; plastic production itself is hazardous.

Consider the textile sector, where workers create clothes from synthetic fibers made of plastics. The workers are largely unaware of the toxicity of the chemicals they are using while they assemble skirts and shirts for people an ocean away. They do not have all the information they need to understand the risks they are facing from doing their jobs. There is an obvious gendered component to this, too, given that the textile sector in developing countries is dominated by women.

But while people are unfairly and unevenly affected by plastic pollution, the reality is that no one is spared. Plastic pollution does not respect borders. Women everywhere use menstrual products containing plastics with chemicals that pose a direct risk to their health. Children all over the world, including in wealthy countries, play with cheap plastic toys containing unknown chemicals.

Given the high-stakes challenges facing the first INC, it is disappointing that delegates did not even manage to adopt procedural rules. More substantive nego-

tiations will be delayed until they do.

There were some small successes. The presence of observers permitted corridor conversations in which they could help delegates better understand the link between plastic, chemicals, and health. This was reflected in some delegates' statements, which highlighted the need for transparency on chemicals in plastics.

That is not nothing. But it is also not enough.

In May 2023, delegates will have another chance. Representatives of governments from around the world will convene in Paris for the INC's second meeting. Their mission will once again be to work toward a legally binding agreement on plastic pollution.

Delegates cannot simply retread the same ground as in November. Delegates will need to demonstrate their governments' commitment to reducing plastic production. Together, they will need to consider the entire plastic lifecycle and the dangers that it poses to communities, people, and the environment.

Perhaps most important, they will need to remember that the point of these meetings is to establish a global, legally binding instrument, not to shrug and sigh and let countries follow mere voluntary guidelines, effectively allowing business as usual to continue.

In Paris next year, negotiations on plastic pollution need to be both more efficient and more ambitious. Delegates must act as though they are saving the world. If they get this right, they will be. *Project Syndicate*

Olga Speranskaya and Alexandra Caterbow are codirectors of Health and Environment Justice Support.



## Bongbong pushes fireworks, not crackers

BY MICHELLE GUILLANG  
*@tribunephil\_mish*

President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. on Thursday asked

local government units to organize community displays of fireworks to keep individuals from using firecrackers.

"All we have to do is I will enjoy

*Turn to page A2*

### From page 1

the LGUs, instead of allowing our people to have their own firecrackers, just make a good fireworks display for your constituents," Marcos said in a chance interview after leading the distribution of Christmas gifts to poor families in Manila.

The President said setting up community fireworks displays will be effective in reducing firecracker injuries as Filipinos welcome the New Year.

He also warned Filipinos about the dangers and health effects of firecracker use, particularly those that result from their reckless and indiscriminate use.

"Let's not set off firecrackers and we know that sometimes that is dangerous, especially now. And there are firecrackers being sold that we don't know where they came from or if they were well-manufactured," he pointed out.

The health department earlier noted a downward trend in firecracker-related injuries in the country, citing figures in recent years: 122 cases were recorded in 2020, while 128 were reported last year.

Meanwhile, Justin Develos, a 21-year-old student, said while it is their family tradition to greet the New Year with a bang, they'll just have to settle with non-pyrotechnic noise makers.

"Right now, it is hard to find firecrackers, and if we find one, it is very costly. So, we'd rather spend our money to buy food for New Year's Eve," he told the *Daily Tribune* in an interview.

"We could use cooking pans or metal scraps to make noise," he noted. Life this year has been tough, he said, so they are excited to celebrate Christmas and New Year as a family.

"All my siblings already have their own families and they live far away from us. So on these holidays, they come to our home and we celebrate together under one roof," he said.

On Wednesday evening, President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. surprised families visiting Malacañang to view its Christmas tree and lantern displays at the Kalayaan Grounds.

He made the surprise visit while on his way to a get-together with officials and personnel of the Radio and Television Malacañang.

Marcos arrived in the area at around 8 p.m. and took pictures with the visitors who came from nearby cities and as far as Cavite and Laguna provinces.

As he walked forward to greet them, the visitors chanted his name and greeted him with a "Merry Christmas."

Ben Aguilar, a visitor from Muntinlupa City, said he did not expect to see the Chief Executive in person.

"I am very happy because the Palace is open to the public. And it is quite amusing as the public looks up to a leader who is within reach," he told the Office of the Press Secretary.

The opening of Malacañang is part of the President's goal to make sure that Filipino children will have a joyful and meaningful Christmas.

From Tuesday evening until 4 a.m. Wednesday, at least 2,116 individuals have seen the Christmas displays and attended the *Simbang Gabi* held every 4:30 a.m., in front of the Mabini Hall.

Those visiting Malacañang can enter the Palace Grounds through Gate 6.



TITLE:

PAGE

DATE

### Pagasa may naispatang LPA sa Mindanao

Magiging maulap at maulan ang panahon sa mga susunod na araw bunsod ng aktibong hanging amihan at low pressure area (LPA) na namataan sa Mindanao na siyang nagdadala ng kalat-kalat na pag-ulan sa ilang bahagi ng bansa.

Ayon sa Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa), north-east monsoon o amihan ang umiiral sa Cagayan, Apayao, Metro Manila at malaking bahagi ng Luzon habang ang LPA na namataan sa Surigao City ang nagdadala ng pag-uulan sa Bicol Region, Eastern Visayas, Central Visayas at Caraga.

"May times na magiging malakas ang ulan kaya't pinag-iingat po natin ang mga residente ng nasabing lugar sa mga baha at landslides," paliwanag ni Pagasa weather specialist Benison Estareja.

Pero sa ngayon aniya maliit pa ang tsansa na maging bagyo ang namataang LPA bagama't inaasahan na magdadala ito ng mga pag-ulan.

Samantala, ipinagbawal din ng Pagasa ang paglalayag ng mga malilit na sasakyang pandagat dahil sa magiging maalon, partikular sa northern Luzon, eastern seaboard ng Central Luzon at Southern Luzon at sa eastern coast ng Catanduanes. (Tina Mendoza)