

02 February 2023, Thursday



DENR

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NATIONAL SCIENTIST ANGEL ALCALA DIES IN NEGROS ORIENTAL AT 93

By Irma Faith Pal
@inquirervisayas

DUMAGUETE CITY—National Scientist Dr. Angel C. Alcala died in a hospital in this capital city of Negros Oriental where he was confined for the past three days. He was 93.

Alcala's death was confirmed by his youngest son Ely and was also announced in the social media accounts of Silliman University (SU) where he studied biology and became the institution's ninth president.

He is survived by his wife of 70 years, Naomi Lusoc-Alcala, and their children Angelo, Estrilda, Moses, Emily, Grace, Moses, and Ely and their families.

Alcala grew up in a fishing village in Cauayan town in Negros Occidental.

The work of his father as a fisherman inspired him to pursue biology at SU in Dumaguete. He graduated magna cum laude in 1951.

He was a Fulbright scholar at Stanford University, where he also pursued graduate and post-graduate studies in the 60s.

He came back to SU to teach biology. In 1974, he established the Silliman University Marine Laboratory, now called

the Institute of Environmental and Marine Sciences.

In the 1970s, Alcala, an avid scuba diver, focused their efforts on the rehabilitation of coral reefs, establishing artificial coral reefs.

In 1991, he was appointed as the ninth president of Silliman, but he had to cut it short after two years to join the Cabinet of former President Fidel V. Ramos as secretary of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

At the time of his death, Alcala was vice chairperson of the Silliman Board of Trustees.

In 1992, he was also given the Ramon Magsaysay Award for "pioneering scientific leadership in restoring and protecting coral reefs" in the Philippines; and the Pew Fellowship in Marine Conservation in 1999.

He also served as chairperson of the Commission on Higher Education until 1999. He returned to the Silliman campus to continue his research in the field.

In June 2014, former President Benigno Aquino III bestowed on Alcala the Order of National Scientists of the Philippines in the field of Biological Sciences. **INQ**



Marcos approves creation of water management office

By HELEN FLORES

A water resource management office will be created under the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to ensure sufficient water supply for the country.

President Marcos approved a proposal seeking to establish the new office during a multisectoral meeting at Malacañang yesterday.

"That's why we have to strengthen

the mandate of the Water Resources Management Office (WRMO). We have to bring them together so that they are all following the overall plan," Marcos said.

Marcos stressed the importance of having a roadmap for all water management agencies.

"So that whatever the relationship we come to with MWSS (Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage

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System), the Local Water Utilities Administration (LWUA) and the Water Board, DENR and this new Water Management Office, it has to be cohesive in the sense that the recommendation of the management office must be followed," he said.

The President suggested that the WRMO's first action should be reducing the country's reliance on groundwater and deep wells as well as managing surface water supply.

"That's as far as I could tell. We have sufficient... there's enough water in the Philippines, we don't just use (water), we also waste it," he said partly in Filipino.

According to the Presidential Communications Office, an executive order will be crafted to enable the National Water Resources Board, MWSS and LWUA and the other water-related agencies of the DENR to have a collaborative mechanism under the WRMO to implement water management programs.

The WRMO will be under the DENR and will be a transitory body pending the creation of a Water Resources Department, one of the priority measures of the Marcos administration.

Marcos said the agency would set policies and implement structural reforms on water management to address issues including the critical supply of fresh water.

The WRMO's main functions include

formulating and ensuring the implementation of the Integrated Water Management Plan (IWMP), which will integrate various plans of different agencies.

The IWMP, which will serve as the main guiding document for the WRMO, will respond to the current environmental challenges and manage water resources through a concerted government effort engaging various sectors.

The WRMO is also tasked to champion, together with the Presidential Legislative Liaison Office, the passage of a law creating an apex body, collaborate closely with all relevant agencies including local government units, private sector, civil society and the communities as well as perform other functions under the DENR.



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PBBM orders creation of new water mgmt office

By SAMUEL P. MEDENILLA

[@sam_medenilla](#)

PRESIDENT Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. has ordered the creation of a new office that will manage the country's water resources amid challenges brought about by climate change.

The Presidential Communications Office (PCO) said the President ordered the formation of the Water Resource Management Office (WRMO) during Wednesday's

multi-sectoral meeting in Malacañang to consolidate water management efforts of all concerned government offices.

"We have to bring them together so that they are all following the overall plan," Marcos said.

PCO said the core task of WRMO would be to formulate and ensure the implementation of the Integrated Water Management Plan (IWMP) of the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS), Local Water Utilities Administration (LWUA)

and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

An executive order (EO) will be drafted to enforce the said "collaborative mechanism under the WRMO."

Once the WRMO becomes operational, Marcos said he wants it to prioritize "reducing the country's reliance on groundwater and deep wells, as well as managing surface water supply."

"There's enough water in the Philippines, we are just not using it properly so it ends up being

wasted," Marcos said.

Marcos pushed for the creation of the WRMO due to the pending new law, which will create the proposed Water Resource Department (WRD).

The WRMO will be coordinating with the Presidential Legislative Liaison Office (PLLO) in lobbying in Congress for the WRD.

The country is heavily reliant on its water resources for its food supply, sustaining its growing urban areas, as well as its power supply through hydro power plants.



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NATIONWIDE ROUNDUP

Marcos approves creation of new water management office

PRESIDENT Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. has approved the creation of a water resource management body, which will be under the department overseeing the country's natural resources, according to the presidential palace.

The creation of the Water Resource Management Office (WRMO) will help the government "manage the country's water resources and respond to the current environmental challenges through a concerted government effort," the Presidential Communications Office said in a statement.

The WRMO will be positioned as an interim agency pending the passage of a proposed law that will establish a department on water management with a Cabinet-level head. Related bills have been filed in both chambers of Congress.

The new office's first action should be reducing the country's reliance on groundwater and deep wells, as well as managing surface water supply, the President was quoted as saying.

"The WRMO would be under the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and will be a transitory body pending the creation of a Water Resources Department," the Palace said. — **Kyle Aristophere T. Atienza**



PBBM OKs creation of Water Resource Management Office

By BETHEL A UNITE

President Ferdinand "Bongbong" R. Marcos Jr. has approved the creation of a Water Resource Management Office (WRMO) to manage the country's water resources and respond to current environmental challenges.

Malacañang said Marcos gave the greenlight to the establishment of the WRMO during a multi-sectoral meeting on Wednesday, Feb. 1, as he underscored the need for a plan that will serve as a road-map for waste management agencies.

"Kaya nga kailangan sumunod sa plano (That's why we have to stick to the plan). That's why we have to strengthen the mandate of the Water Management Office. We have to bring them together so that they are all following the overall plan," Marcos said.

"So that whatever the relationship we come to with MWSS (Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System) and Local Water Utilities Administration (LWUA) and the Water Board, DENR (Department of Environment and Natural Resources) and this new Water Management Office, it has to be cohesive in the sense that kailangan 'yung recommendation ng management office sinusundan (the recommendation of the management office

must be followed)."

The President suggested that the WRMO's first action should be reducing the country's reliance on groundwater and deep wells as well as managing surface water supply.

"That's as far as I could tell. We have sufficient... there's enough water in the Philippines hindi lang natin ginagamit, tinatapon natin (we are not just using it, instead we waste it)," Marcos said.

An executive order (EO) will be crafted to enable the National Water Resources Board (NWRB), MWSS, and LWUA and the other water-related agencies of the DENR to have a collaborative mechanism under the WRMO to implement water management programs.

The WRMO will be under the DENR and will be a transitory body pending the creation of a Water Resources Department.

The WRMO's main functions include formulating and ensuring the implementation of the Integrated Water Management Plan (IWMP) which will integrate various plans of different agencies.

The IWMP, which will serve as the main guiding document for the WRMO, will respond to the current environmental challenges and manage water resources through a concerted government effort engaging various sectors.



President creates Water Mgt. Office to reduce reliance on groundwater

By Vito Barcelo and Vince Lopez

PRESIDENT Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Wednesday approved the creation of a Water Resource Management Office (WRMO) to manage the country's

water resources and respond to current environmental challenges.

The Presidential Communications Office (PCO) said Mr. Marcos approved the WRMO during a multi-sectoral

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President...

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meeting with officials of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

The WRMO, which will be under the DENR, will be a transitory body pending the creation of a Water Resources Department.

President Marcos said the WRMO's first action should be reducing the country's reliance on groundwater and deep wells and managing surface water supply.

"There's enough water in the Philippines. It's just that we're not using it, we're throwing the supply away," he said.

He likewise underscored the need for a plan that will serve as a roadmap for waste management agencies.

"We need to stick to the plan. That's why we have to strengthen the mandate of the Water Management Office. We have to bring them together so that they are all following the overall plan," the President said.

An executive order (EO) will be crafted to enable the National Water Resources Board (NWRB), Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) and Local Water Utilities Administration (LWUA) and the other water-related agencies of the DENR to have a collaborative mechanism under the WRMO to implement water management programs.

"Whatever the relationship we come to with MWSS, LWUA, and the Water Board, DENR and this new Water Management Office, it has to be cohesive in the sense that the recommendation needed of the management office would be followed," the President said.

The WRMO's main functions include formulating and ensuring the implementation of the Integrated Water Management Plan (IWMP), which will integrate various plans of different agencies.

The IWMP, which will serve as the main guiding document for the WRMO, will respond to the current environmental challenges and manage water resources through a concerted government effort engaging various sectors.

The WRMO will also be tasked to champion, together with the Presidential Legislative Liaison Office (PLLO), the passage of a law creating an apex body; collaborate closely with all relevant agencies, including local government units (LGUs), private sector, civil society and the communities; as well as perform other functions under the DENR.

Water is crucial to food security and supporting cities and urban growth.

Based on government data, irrigation accounts for a 35.6 percent contribution to the agriculture sector's Gross Value Added.

The Philippines ranks among the world's rapidly urbanizing countries, with over 47 percent of its population living in cities in 2021, requiring large water projects, including bulk water supply and sanitation infrastructure.

It also has a significant part in the country's energy mix, as hydropower represents 7 percent of the total energy production in the country, and its contribution can be increased by as much as 15 percent by 2030.



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PBBM OKs creation of Water Resource Management Office

PRESIDENT Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. yesterday approved the creation of a Water Resource Management Office (WRMO) to manage the country's water resources and respond to the current environmental challenges.

In a news release, the Presidential Communications Office (PCO) said Marcos approved the WRMO during a multi-sectoral meeting with officials of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

The WRMO, which will be under the DENR, will be a transitory body pending the creation of a Water Resources Department.

Its main functions include formulating and ensuring the

implementation of the Integrated Water Management Plan (IWMP), which will integrate various plans of different agencies.

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"That's as far as I could tell. There's enough water in the

Philippines hindi lang natin ginagamit, tinatapon natin," he was quoted as saying.

He, likewise, underscored the need for a plan that will serve as a roadmap for waste management agencies.

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Paglikha ng Water Resource Management Office, aprub ni Marcos

Inaprubahan ni Pangulong Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. nitong Miyerkules ang paglikha ng Water Resource Management Office (WRMO) na mangangasiwa sa water resources ng bansa.

Sa multi-sectoral meeting sa Malacañang,

kung saan ipinatawag ang mga opisyal ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources, tinalakay ni Marcos ang kahalagahan ng pagpapalano patungkol sa pamamahala ng tubig.

Ayon kay Marcos, mahalaga ang pagtatatag ng naturang

tanggapan para magsilbing roadmap sa waste management agencies.

Iminungkahi ni Marcos na ang unang tungkulin ng WRMO ay bawasan ang pagiging dependent ng bansa sa deep wells at ayusin ang pag-manage sa water supply.

"Iyon ay hanggang sa masasabi ko. We have sufficient... there's enough water in the Philippines hindi lang natin ginagamit, tinatapon natin," ani Marcos.

Isang executive order (EO) ang gagawin para bigyang-daan ang National Water Resources Board (NWRB), MWSS (Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System), Local Water Utilities Administration (LWUA) at iba pang ahensyang may kinalaman sa tubig ng DENR na magkaroon ng collaborative mechanism sa ilalim ng WRMO.

Ang WRMO ay ilalagay sa ilalim ng DENR at magiging isang transitory body habang nakabinbin ang paglikha ng isang Water Resources Department.

Kabilang sa mga pangunahing tungkulin ng WRMO ang pagbabalangkas at pagtiyak sa pagpapatupad ng Integrated Water Management Plan. (Ma-lou Escudero)



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FIRING LINE

ROBERT B. ROQUE, JR.

Save Sibuyan from illegal mining

Immediate government action is wanted in Romblon to stop Altai Philippines Mining Company's alleged illegal activities that have forced residents to barricade Sibuyan Island in protest.

Local environmentalist groups led by the Sibuyanons Against Mining claim that the mining firm has no permit to show yet it is on a deadset mission to extract and export 50,000 metric tons of nickel ore to Hong Kong.

Altai is waving its Mineral Ore Export Permit from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to justify its activities to the local government of San Fernando, Romblon. Still, environmentalist Rodne Galicha

disputes the document, saying it had been "tampered" with.

What has been happening to our government systems designed to protect the interests of the country and its people? And why is this happening under your administration, Mr. Marcos?

Wasn't it you who declared not to surrender an inch of our territory? What good is that promise of inches in geography if you allow our mineral resources to be shipped in tons into Chinese territory?

* * *

No official word has been out, but tongues are wagging that a well-known newspaper columnist is being shut down for accus-

ing Martin Araneta, brother of the First Lady, of being behind the smuggling and hoarding of onions.

That's a brutal counterstrike I wouldn't wish on any columnist, not even one as tough on the receiving end as Mon Tulfo.

Now, back to the story on Mr. Araneta... anyone?

* * *

And just like that, silence has overtaken the House and the Senate. It's like last week never happened when members of both chambers of Congress took turns in taking a good swipe at smugglers and their friendlies in the Bureau of Customs.

I'm not saying legislators who put out the names of alleged smugglers have been disarmed by, for example, a photograph of one of the smugglers they exposed in a cheeky smile with the President making the rounds of social media.

Perhaps, they have no comment, unlike netizens who will not be muted.

* * *

In a speech at the promotion ceremony for officers of the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG), President Junior exhorted them to defend not only the country's territories but the country's people.

A few days after that, PCG personnel rescued seven Chinese crew members of a vessel floating aimlessly off Suluan Island, a part of Guiuan, Eastern Samar. At first, I thought, "What's with the PCG rescuing these Chinese? What was it about Junior's message they didn't get?" But as it turns out, the seven may be spies, and their "fishing vessel" is designed as a tanker for refueling or even smuggling.

Good job, PCG!

* * *

Senator Jinggoy Estrada has never pulled his punches against rape and sexual abuse of women

and minors.

And so, I support him on that as he seeks the establishment of a database of sex offenders.

His proposed measure, the National Sex Offender Registry Act, will aid authorities in keeping track of convicted sex offenders once they return to society and allow communities access to their criminal background to ensure no repeat of such a crime wherever they end up living.

Request lang po, Sen. Jinggoy. Once that's enacted into law, paki sunod po yung Registry of Corrupt Officials so that voters will never forget or fall into the campaign trap of writing their names on the ballot ever again.

* * *

SHORT BURSTS. For comments or reactions, email firingline@ymail.com or tweet @SideView. Read current and past issues of this column at <http://www.tempocom.ph>.



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NI ROBERT B. ROQUE, JR.

SIBUYAN, ILIGTAS MULA SA ILIGAL NA PAGMIMINA

KINAKAILANGAN ang agarang aksyon ng gobyerno sa Romblon upang matigil ang umano'y mga iligal na aktibidad ng Altai Philippines Mining Company na dahilan ng pagbabarikada ng mga residente sa Sibuyan Island bilang protesta.

Ayon sa mga lokal na grupong maka-kalikasan, sa pangunguna ng Sibuyanons Against Mining, sa kabila ng wala raw maipakitang permit ang mining firm pursigido pa rin ito sa hangaring makapag-extract at makapag-export ng 50,000 metriko tonelada ng nickel ore papuntang Hong Kong.

Iwinawagayway ng Altai sa pamahalaang lokal ng San Fernando, Romblon ang Mineral Ore Export Permit nito mula sa Department of Environment and Natural Resources

para depensahan ang mga pagmimina nito.

Pero kinontra ng environmentalist na si Rodne Galicha ang dokumentong iyon, na tinawag niyang "tampered."

Ano na nga ba ang nangyayari sa sistema ng ating gobyerno, na itinatatag upang protektahan ang kapakanan ng ating bansa at ng mamamayan nito?

Sa isang iglap, nilamon na ng katahimikan ang Kamara at Senado.

Para bang hindi nangyari ng nakalipas na linggo ang salitan na pambabatikos ng parehong kapulungan ng Kongreso sa mga smuggler.

Hindi ko naman sinasabing ang mga mambabatas, na naglabas ng

pangalan ng mga umano'y smuggler, ay nasupalpal, halimbawa, sa litratong kumalat sa social media tampok ang isa sa mga ibinunyag nilang smuggler.

Wala siguro silang makomento, taliwas sa mga netizen na hindi napipigilan sa kani-kanilang opinyon.

* * *

Sa isang talumpati sa promotion ceremony para sa mga opisyal ng Philippine Coast Guard, hinikayat sila ni President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr., na hindi lang depensahan ang mga teritoryo ng bansa kundi maging ang mamamayang Pilipino.

Makalipas lang ang ilang araw, iniligtas ng mga tauhan ng PCG ang pitong Chinese na pangwang tripulante ng isang barkong palutang-lutang sa Suluan Island, na saklaw ng Guiuan, Eastern Samar.

Good job, PCG!

Hindi kailanman isinuko ni Sen. Jinggoy Estrada ang kanyang paninindigan laban sa

panggagahasa at seksuwal na pang-aabuso sa kababaihan at mga bata.

Kaya naman suportado ko siya sa pag-sisikap na bumuo ng database ng sex offenders.

Ang panukalang batas n'yang ito, ang "National Sex Offender Registry Act", ay tutulong sa mga awtoridad upang matugaygayan ang mga sentensiyadong sex offenders kapag nakabalik na sila sa lipunan at bigyan ng access ang mga komunidad sa criminal background ng mga ito para masigurong ang nagawa nilang krimen ay hindi na mauulit pa sa lugar na bago nilang tinitirahan.

Request lang, Sen. Jinggoy. Kapag naisabatas na ito, pakisunod 'yung Registry of Corrupt Officials upang hindi makalilimot ang mga botante o para hindi na sila mabolang muli sa mga pangako ng kampanya mai-shade lang nilang muli ang pangalan ng mga ito sa balota.



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Protesta vs Altai Mining nauwi sa girian

Nauwi sa tensyon ang barikada ng mga residente ng Sibuyan Island, Romblon sa pantalan na ginawa ng Altai Philippines Mining Corp matapos subukan ng isa sa mga truck na may kargang nickel ore na pumasok sa pantalan.

Nagkaroon ng stand-off sa gitna ng mga residente at mga pulis na may dalang mga baton at protective equipment.

Ayon kay Elizabeth Ibañez, Coordinator ng Sibuyanons Against Mining, nagulat sila sa ginawang pagsubok ng mining company na ipasok ang mga truck sa pantalan dahil wala pa umano silang naipapakitang permit.

Sinabi rin ni Ibañez na nagulat sila dahil tinulungan umano ng mga pulis ang mining firm na ipasok ang truck na may dalang nickel ore.

"We explained to the

police last night that we are protesting the illegal operations of Altai Mining Company since they do not have the necessary permits for their activities. Why then is the police taking the side of the mining company?" pahayag ni Ibañez.

Kinondena naman ng Alyansa Tigil Mina ang aksyon ng mining company at ng mga pulis.

Sa isang panayam, sinabi ni Police Capt. Richard Obsid, information officer ng Romblon Police Provincial Office, na nasa lugar ang mga pulis para masiguro ang katahimikan at kapayapaan sa lugar.

Simula pa Enero 31 ay aabot na sa halos 80 mga pulis ang pinadala ng Romblon Police Provincial Office para maging augmentation sa mga tropa ng San Fernando Municipal Police Station. (Paul Jaysent Fos)



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Bagong uri ng puno nadiskubre sa Palawan

ISANG bagong species ng puno ang nadiskubre ng mga researcher mula University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) na nakategorya bilang 'critically endangered'.

Tinawag nila itong "Helicia danlagunzadii" na natagpuan sa kasulukan ng Mt. Mantalingahan Protected Landscape sa Southern Palawan.

Binuhuo ang team ng mga researcher nina Pastor L. Malabrigo Jr., Arthur Glenn A. Umali, Gerald T. Eduarte, John Ryan L. Navidad at Adriane B. Tobias.

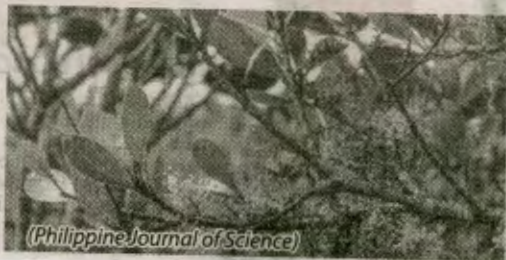
"The new species is distinct from the other known species of Helicia in the Philippines be-

cause of its ramiflorous flowering, very short inflorescences (less than 4 cm), and yellow color," paglalarawan ng mga UPLB researcher.

Itinuturing umano itong 'critically endangered' dahil sa sobrang liit ng populasyon ng specie na ito sa naturang lokasyon.

Dagdag pa rito, ang 'danlagunzadii' sa pangalan nito ay bilang pagbibigay pagkilala sa kanilang mentor na si Daniel Lagunza sa study at exploration na ito.

Talaga namang mapapaisip ka na kung kung ilan pang uri ng species sa mundo ang hindi pa natutuklasan ng mga tao. **(Moises Caleon)**



(Philippine Journal of Science)



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THE EXPONENT OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS
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DIGITALIZATION, CLIMATE CHANGE, SHIFT TO RENEWABLES: MARCOS' STEPS TO ATTAIN SUSTAINABILITY

By BETHEENA UNITE

If there is one constant thing that President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. has been emphasizing in his engagements, it has been his administration's goal to find sustainable solutions to various problems the country has been facing.

Oftentimes, the President would love to talk about climate change, and how it is a battle that must be fought now. He has been saying it needs most immediate attention.

He usually mentions climate change impacts when talking about the government's plan to digitalize the bureaucracy, and sometimes, his administration's mission to unlock renewable energy sources in the country.

"Even the renewables take time, all the power plant takes six, seven years to build but we will begin with," he once said in his remarks. "And I'm not concerned whether or not they will come online in my term, but I think that whenever they come online, we have to start now."

The President has said the same thing for digitalization, stressing it must start now as the Philippines is already catching up with the rest of the world.

"It is not something that we choose



President Ferdinand Romualdez Marcos Jr. witnesses the signing of the Memorandum of Agreement being signed by Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) Secretary Bienvenido E. Laguesma and Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Maria Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga during the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Multistakeholder Forum at the Diamond Hotel in Manila on Wednesday, Oct. 5, 2022. Also on stage are House Speaker Martin Romualdez and Presidential Management Staff Secretary Ma. Zenaida Angping, and Senator Cynthia Villar. (Noel B. Pabalate)

to do. It is something that we have to do. We are already playing catch up in terms of digitalization to the rest of the world. So it is not as if we have a choice here, we don't have a choice, that maybe we'll do it, maybe we'll not," he said in October 2022.

For Marcos, the problem of climate

change, government processes, and issues on energy are among the components of his sustainability mission.

Marcos' steps towards sustainability

Marcos has acknowledged that the Philippines has "not progressed"

much in as far as digital transformation is concerned amid the many innovations and technologies that are already available at present.

So, he has prodded lawmakers to swiftly pass the E-Governance and the E-Government bills to realize the administration's vision

of a "digital Philippines".

The E-Governance Act promotes using the internet and other information and communications technology (ICT) to provide opportunities for citizens while the E-Government Act establishes the E-Government Masterplan, covering all e-government services and processes.

He stressed that "there is nothing that I can see that should hold us back from getting the future that we want."

"I have asked them to bring it out as quickly as they possibly can so that we have the framework with which we will digitalize our government, which we will digitalize our bureaucracy," he said.

The President is convinced that digitalizing the bureaucracy plays a crucial role in his vision towards sustainability.

"We have to digitalize if we are going to keep up all our plans for the transformation of the economy and our continuing redefinition of the Philippines' place in the community of nations. All of that depends upon your work and that we are able to do all the important work that we are trying to achieve. And that can only be done if we have a digitalized government, a digitalized bureaucracy, a strong partner

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with our private sector, in terms of the technology industries," he said.

On shifting to renewables, Marcos recognizes that the country's demand for energy far exceeds its reliable supply.

So, when he delivered his first State of the Nation Address (SONA) last year, he presented measures that could increase the country's energy production, which included revisiting the construction of nuclear power plants.

"We must build new power plants. We must take advantage of all the best technology that is now available, especially in the areas of renewable energy," he said in July 2023.

"The technology of renewable energy is progressing rapidly and many of these technologies are appropriate for the Philippines. We have already begun windmill power. We are now expanding very quickly our solar power production," he further said.

"Solar power has steadily increased its efficiency in converting sunlight to electrical power, which is particularly attractive for the Philippines. Because, unlike wind power, solar power is

practical almost everywhere in the Philippines all year round," he added.

Last month, he said that the matter is "a more ticklish problem" that "keeps coming up." He furthered that resolving energy problems is a long-term program in terms of supply, especially in the midst of the country's commitments to the international community to move the mix from traditional fossil fuels to renewables.

In his SONA, the chief executive also underscored that paying attention to this problem was connected to the goal of lowering power rates that would benefit the people.

One of his administration's priority bills include the enactment of an enabling law for the natural gas industry, which seeks to foster the development of the midstream national gas industry to strengthen Philippine energy security by diversifying the country's primary energy sources, and promoting the role of natural gas as a complementary fuel to variable renewable energy.

On mitigating the effects of climate change, the most that the President has done is bringing the conversation to bigger

platforms such as the United Nations, Asia Pacific, Association of Southeast Asian Nations, and European Union.

In all his foreign trips, he has asked for solidarity and unity in addressing climate change, which, he underscored, was a global problem that needed united action.

"The world must get together to fight the effects of climate change and to ensure sustainable development. Climate change threatens to radically transform for the worst many vulnerable ASEAN landscapes," he said in Belgium in December last year.

"There is no problem like climate change that is so global in nature that it requires immediate and united effort. We need to act now. We need to act together. We need to get it right," the President stressed.

Although there was no mention of a priority bill to mitigate the effects of climate change when he assumed office, an accelerated climate change agenda was recently included in the Philippine Development Plan (PDP) 2023-2028.

According to the Climate Change Commission (CCC), "this will further

strengthen the commitment of the Philippine Government to deliver on key climate actions."

CCC Vice Chair and Executive Director (VCED) Robert E.A. Borje said an entire chapter on climate change was added in the PDP 2023-2028 — Chapter 15: Accelerate Climate Action and Strengthen Disaster Resilience.

"The PDP Chapter 15 reflects the Philippine Government's commitment and dedication to enhance the nation's overall resilience to climate change and its impacts, putting a premium on the need for integrated and comprehensive climate action between and among government, partners, and all stakeholders," Borje said.

It identified the goal for communities, institutions, and the natural and built environment to be "more resilient to the impacts of natural hazards and climate change" by 2028.

Food sustainability

Like climate change, food sustainability is also among the President's favorite topics in his speaking engagements.

However, there has been no huge deliverable in this department since he assumed office, except for the opening of several Kadiwa stores nationwide.

The country is currently facing surging prices of basic food commodities—first sugar, and now onions.

Marcos traces this problem to the lack of supply in the country's agricultural product, which forces the government to import goods. This, in turn, causes "imported inflation".

To remedy the record-high prices, Kadiwa stores in various places in the country were opened to provide producers a direct link to consumers. Prices of products in these stores are lower.

"Kailangan talagang ayusin yung production natin kasi import tayong nang import kaya yung inflation dun sa ini-import-an natin ay nadadala dito sa Pilipinas (We have to improve our production because we keep on importing, bringing the inflation from where we are importing from to the Philippines)," Marcos said in early January.

"Kaya (So), we have to improve our production, we have to improve all of that kaya naman talagang central ang agriculture sa lahat (that's why agriculture is the central of all)," he added.



Thursday, February 2, 2023

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MANILA BULLETIN

ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL ON SUSTAINABILITY

MANILA BULLETIN
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YEARS

MB@123: PROTECT. PROPAGATE. PROSPER.

By **SONNY COLOMA**, Publisher

Manila Bulletin celebrates its 123rd anniversary by focusing on Sustainability. To sustain means to protect, to propagate, and to prosper.

Planet Earth needs protection from the ravages of global warming and climate change.

The country's rich flora, fauna and marine resources must be shielded as this ecosystem provides food, shelter and water for drinking, growing crops, manufacturing, energy and transport. These also help to prevent erosion, dispose of waste

and provide natural protection from flooding.

Beyond protection, there must be constant propagation to ensure reproduction, as well as the systematic restoration or replacement of natural resources.

Prosperity is achieved when resources are protected and propagated optimally. It is the reward for responsible stewardship. Inclusion must foster equality of opportunity so that no one is left behind.

At the core of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) sought to be attained by 2030 is Goal Number 1: No Poverty. Surmounting deeply-rooted poverty and

inequality is reiterated in Goal Number 10: Reduced Inequalities. While inequality encompasses issues of diversity, equality and inclusion, it is the poverty issue that is most pervasive and concerning.

Related SDGs that beam the spotlight on poverty and income inequality are: SDG 2 - Zero Hunger; SDG 3 - Good Health and Well-Being; SDG 4 - Quality Education; SDG 6 - Clean Water and Sanitation; SDG 7 - Affordable and Clean Energy; SDG 8 - Decent Work and Economic Growth; SDG 9 - Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure; SDG 11 - Sustainable Cities and Communities; SDG **▶ SS-2**

MB@123: Protect. Propagate. Prosper. **SS-1**◀

12 - Responsible Consumption and Production; and SDG 13 - Climate Action.

The need to address the foregoing goals may be understood better if we zoom in on a specific area of concern.

Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (or 4 Ps), the conditional cash transfer program has been institutionalized by the Philippine government to drastically reduce the drop-out rate in basic education that is seen as vital to poverty alleviation. This integrated program is also targeted at battling stunting that is defined by the World Health Organization as "the impaired growth and development that children experience from poor nutrition, repeated infection, and inadequate psychosocial stimulation." Among the adverse consequences are "poor cognition and educational performance, low adult wages, and lost productivity." Significantly lower drop-out rates lead

to greater opportunities for bypassing the scourge of generational poverty and attaining a reasonable measure of economic sufficiency.

Since 2010 when the 4Ps program was prioritized in the national budget, the poverty rate dropped to a low of 16.7 percent in 2018. Surveying the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) reported that the number of poor families had increased from 5.2 million in 2018 to 5.6 million in 2022. This translates to almost 23 million Filipinos living in poverty, or 20.7 percent of the estimated total population.

From 1999 to 2019, World Bank Data shows that the Philippines registered positive growth rates in gross domestic product (GDP). In March 2013, the country attained investment grade rating. It banked upon its record of good macroeconomic management to weather the severe impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the 2023-2028 Philippine Development Plan, the country is poised to graduate to the ranks of the upper-middle income countries within the next few years. Gross National Income per capita is targeted to increase from the equivalent of \$3,640 in 2021 to at least \$4,096 by 2028, the final year of the current Philippine Development Plan.

It is imperative for the government to ensure that the fruits of economic growth are equitably shared.

Achieving sustainable long-term growth requires commitment to the entire raft of SDGs whose outcomes are anchored on consistent adherence to the triple imperatives: Protect. Propagate. Flourish.

As one of the leading Climate Vulnerable Countries, the Philippines is perennially afflicted by destructive

typhoons and floods. "Accelerate Climate Action and Strengthen Disaster Resilience" is emphasized in the strategy framework of the Philippine Development Plan. Beyond addressing climate concerns, the Plan seeks to develop and protect the capabilities of Filipino families and communities on three fronts: first, the promotion of human and social development in terms of health, education and lifelong learning, and livable commu-

nities; second, reduction of vulnerabilities and protection of purchasing power; and third, increase in income earning capability.

The imperative to propagate is addressed by this strategy: "Transform production sectors to generate more quality jobs and competitive products."

Agriculture and agribusiness must be modernized. Industry competitiveness will be enhanced through continuing innovation and reinvention. Competition and regulatory efficiency are the keys to reinvigorating the services sector.

Inclusion is the end-goal of prosperity. During the long dark night of the coronavirus pandemic, the ranks of the poor and marginalized swelled as jobs were lost and mobility was restricted. While resilience has been fortified, social protection must also be enhanced. Technology must be harnessed to improve connectivity and access to the mainstream of social opportunity.

On its 123rd anniversary, the Manila Bulletin renews its commitment to serve as the Exponent of Philippine Progress. As we continually strive to inform, inspire and empower our audiences across multi-media platforms, we shall endeavor to foster Sustainability: Protect. Propagate. Flourish.





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TOWARDS A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE: HOW LOCAL GOVERNMENTS ADVOCATE FOR URBAN SUSTAINABILITY

By METRO NEWS TEAM

As the world experiences warmer temperatures, rising sea levels, and erratic weather conditions, it has become imperative for every nation to devise solutions to mitigate the adverse effects of climate change. In order for nations to succeed in their efforts, the responsibility falls on local governments to ensure a liveable community and sustainable future for their constituents.

The local governments of Metro Manila have all committed to implementing "greener" policies and nature-based solutions, introducing innovative methods, cultivating stronger community networks, and moving towards climate resilience.

MANILA

Through the leadership of Mayor Honey Lacuna, the City of Manila is dedicated to helping, saving, and protecting Mother Earth, as it fulfills its sustainability programs.

In order to attain the city's vision, it is the paramount mission of the city government administration through the Department of Public Services (DPS), to steward its constituents on the following activities: (1) The practice of waste segregation at source to establish the manner in which factory returnable waste be economically feasible; (2) Waste diversion practice; (3) Establish collection and disposal system for household hazardous waste; (4) Discourage illegal and late dumping of solid waste through efficient garbage collection services; and (5)

Implement and enforce all environment and solid waste management laws and ordinances.

It initiated the #LinisInaMaynila program where regular cleanup activities, mopping, hauling, and clearing operations are done to maintain the cleanliness and orderliness in roads, streets, and alleys in Manila.

There are dedicated separate teams taking care of different water bodies in the city, namely the Estero Rangers, the Baseco Beach Warriors, and the Manila Bay Team Mandaragat.

To promote segregation at source and lessen the amount of plastics going into waterways and landfills, the local government has partnered with different private sectors for our Waste Diversion Programs such as: (1) "Kolek-Kilo-Kita Para sa Walastik



Manila Mayor Honey Lacuna leads the simultaneous Nilad planting held in Manila Zoo and Intramuros on Sept. 27, 2022. (Photo from Manila PIO)



Quezon City Mayor Joy Belmonte led the tree-planting activity held at the Sacred Heart I Village, Barangay Pasong Putik, in the city on June 20-24, 2022, as part of the city's celebration of Arbor Day. (Photo from Quezon City Government Facebook page)

na Maynila" (2) "Aling Tindera" (3) "Alas Kalikasan Wrapper Redemption Program" in exchange of Alaska Fortified Powdered Milk Drink; and (4) "Tapon-To-Ipon."

These waste diversion programs are through incentivized waste segregation and collection which are all geared toward environmental sustainability to address the issue of pollution caused by single-use plastics.

The city government fully sup-

ports the Plastic Smart Cities Project, a World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)-Philippines initiative, that supports a "no plastic in nature" agenda. It aims to protect the environment while addressing the needs of people on the ground in terms of livelihood projects and activities.

The city government launched its first-ever city-initiated Materials

Recovery Facility (MRF) located in Manila Zoo where they process biodegradable wastes generated by the city and produce soil conditioner through a bio composter and bioreactor.

To address air pollution, under the "Asia Blue Skies Program" with Clean Air Asia and 3M Philippines to monitor air quality, devices were installed in dense areas in the city, and the Clean Air Action Plan of Manila was formulated.

A water quality monitoring device was also installed in Baseco Beach to monitor water quality in the area as it is situated along Manila Bay.

The city government also worked with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Ecosystems Research and Development Bureau (DENR-ERDB) for the "Nilad for Maynila" program as part of its efforts to regreen part of Manila Bay as well as to increase the green spaces in the city.



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QUEZON CITY

To build a green, livable, and sustainable Quezon City for the future, the Quezon City government, led by Mayor Joy Belmonte, initiated actions for climate change with a goal of having a climate-resilient and carbon-neutral city by 2050.

The Quezon City Council passed a resolution in 2019, declaring a "climate emergency," which allowed the city

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government to dedicate up to 13 percent of its budget for adaptation and mitigation measures.

"We are under a climate emergency, our planet is dying, we can see how climate change is affecting our weather patterns. Our weather patterns are extreme, either the rains are heavy, typhoons often occur, or there are droughts. So we can see real changes that are affecting our planet and our people," Belmonte told Manila Bulletin.

The city implemented programs to promote active transport and proper waste disposal, reduce carbon or greenhouse gas emission, and create more green spaces.

QC Climate Change and Environmental Sustainability Department head Ms. Andrea Villaroman said the city has an Enhanced Local Climate Change Action Plan (LLCAP) 2021-2050 that presents a roadmap to build climate resilience, pursue net-zero carbon emissions or carbon neutrality, and advance green economic development. Based on the LLCAP, the city government is working on implementing the use of solar panels on buildings.

Among the local government's sustainability initiatives are the "Grow QC" program that developed over 670 urban farms in the city, providing livelihood to the residents through their vegetables products; the "Trash to Cashback" program, where the recyclable and plastic wastes given to the city government are converted to "environmental points" that residents can use as payment for utilities and basic necessities; and the "Project Zero" waste that produces compost fertilizers from organic wastes from markets.

The City Council has passed ordinances that prohibit the distribution of plastic bags.

Around 91 electric buses have also been deployed to promote an environment-friendly mode of transportation.

The city has also established a 93-kilometer bike lane to encourage residents to use active transportation and reduce air pollution.

In August 2022, the city government and the C40 Cities, launched the Climate Action Implementation (CAI) program that aims to take urgent steps to address the climate crisis and will implement transformational climate change actions and activities.

The city also began conducting tree-planting activities through the "A Million Trees Begins With One: Quezon City's One Million Trees Initiative" to create more green spaces in Quezon City and help in addressing climate-induced risks. They are also improving the city's parks and pathways.

Belmonte said that the youth should understand the effects of climate change for them to act as they will be the ones who might experience its effect in the future.

She added that everybody can be part of the solution to climate change by riding bicycles or walking, planting more trees, growing vegetables, and segregating wastes properly.

CALOOCAN CITY

Caloocan City Mayor Dale Gonzalo "Along" Malapitan has instructed his constituents to strengthen the implementation of proper waste management through simultaneous cleanup operations and continuous educational campaigns in all the barangays including non-government, religious, and youth organizations (NGOs).

Malapitan also instructed the City Environmental Management Department (CEMD) to strictly enforce the city's environmental policies and ordinances. These include City Or-

dinance 0407, series of 2006 or the "Caloocan City Ecological Solid Waste Management Ordinance," and City Ordinance No. 0753 Series of 2018 or the "Caloocan City Anti-littering Ordinance."

Under City Ordinance No. 0503, series of 2013 or the "Plastics and Polystyrene Regulating Ordinance," the CEMD collects used plastics and tarpaulins in various barangays and delivers them to a plastic chair factory located in Bagong Silang to convert them into school chairs. These chairs are then donated to daycare centers.

Urban Gardening was also established in Barangays 165, 166, 167, and 168. The project began during the pandemic period to get residents accustomed to healthy and self-sustained food production.

Meanwhile, the CEMD said Malapitan, since his first day in the office, had ordered them to ensure cleanliness and orderliness in the city.

They accomplished 114 cleanup operations which covered 46,145 meters and collected 620,745 pieces of debris from July to December last year. A total of 188 drainages were cleared, where 661,441 debris pieces of garbage were collected.

The CEMD also performed 149 environmental-related activities, including cleaning drainages, hauling, fogging, tree-cutting, flushing and deglogging misting, and brigada eskwela.

The department said it continuously spearheads the implementation of segregated door-to-door collections in 76 barangays in the city.

In line with the city's focus on cleanliness and orderliness, the CEMD coordinates with a global research company ThinkPlace for the Accelerated Circular Economy (ACE) Project Research that promotes proper waste management.

More sustainability programs in the city will be launched in the coming months, said the CEMD. The department also appealed to the public to stop throwing garbage in drainages and public places.



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MALABON CITY

Malabon City Mayor Jeannie Sandoval has vowed to lead Malabonians in protecting the environment as the local government implements initiatives to address climate change and other environmental issues in the city.

"We know for a fact that climate change is really happening, the threat of global warming and its effects is felt not only in the Philippines but in the whole world, we must act now or our future generations are at risk," Sandoval said.

"Our ecosystem is now desperate because it is being abused and disregarded due to rapid urbanization. Given that Malabon City is a flood-prone area, the effects on our city will be really disastrous if we will not address this concern," she added.

Since Malabon is one of the low-lying cities in Metro Manila and is at the tail end of the Malabon-Navotas-Tullahan-Tinajeros River, the city is becoming a "catch basin" of waste materials from upstream areas during heavy rains.

Weekly cleanup operations are held every Friday in the city, in compliance with Executive Order No. 22-07-22-018, series of 2022 or "An Order mandating all Barangay Officials, Individuals, Government Institutions, Non-Government Organizations, and other Associations, Private Institutions to Conduct Intensified Clean-Up Operations in their Respective Jurisdictions, and Observe Cleanliness in

the City of Malabon."

City Hall employees, non-government organizations (NGOs), private associations, barangays and national private agencies participated in the operations.

The city government is currently implementing environmental city ordinances for anti-littering, regulation of the usage of plastic, waste segregation and others to apprehend individuals violating its provisions for environment preservation.

Sandoval said that Malabon's 21 barangays are also implementing proper waste management strategies while the city also coordinated with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to deploy "Estero Rangers" in various areas to help during clean-up operations.

The Estero Rangers are tasked to regularly conduct cleanups and assist in information, education, and communication campaigns in communities on proper solid waste management and other environmental laws.

A total of 60 Estero Rangers were deployed by the DENR in Malabon while 50 more will be hired for other operations.

Lectures or forums in schools are conducted to inform teachers, workers, and students on the existing environmental laws and ordinances including the best practices applicable on schools and communities, the mayor said.

The city government also coordinated with the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) for the development of parks or open spaces like the Hulong-duhat Plaza and Catmon Plaza to make them more environment-friendly. Planting of trees and ornamental plants were also done to create greener surroundings.

Sandoval said that tree-planting on open spaces, mangrove-planting

on waterways, and identifying more areas to conduct those activities must be intensified with the support of the national government and private agencies.

NAVOTAS CITY

The Navotas City local government intensified its cleanup operation in line with its solid waste management campaign.

The city government invited volunteers to join its simultaneous cleanup operations in all the city barangays during the 117th Navotas Day last Jan. 14.

Members of the City Environment and Natural Resources Office (CENRO) also recently attended an orientation under the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Strategic Communication and Initiatives Service-Development Communication Division (SCIS-DCD), which aims to educate barangay officials about the proper waste management and disposal.

Coastal and waterways cleanup drives are also regularly conducted in the city.

Navotas placed third in the Manila BAYani Awards and Incentives last December for its exemplary contribution to the cleanup and rehabilitation of Manila Bay.

The local government said the city officials are consistent in participating in environmental events including Earth Day, and international and national coastal cleanup and clearing operations.

Last International Coastal Cleanup Day, Navotas CENRO together with DENR conducted a clearing and hauling operation in the coastal areas in Barangays Bagumbayan North, Tangos North at Tangos South, and Tanza Marine Tree Park, where tons of solid waste were collected.

It also continues to improve the city's tallest vertical farm or a four-story urban farm located at NavotaAs Homes 1-Tanza to provide a healthy and sustainable food source to the residents.

The NavotaAs Hanapbuhay Center trains residents, including students and the elderly, to plant and harvest fruit and vegetable-bearing plants. The harvested vegetables from the vertical farm were either distributed

or sold at affordable prices to residents.



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VALENZUELA CITY

The Valenzuela City government is developing more urban green spaces in line with its sustainability and liveability initiatives.

"The City Government of Valenzuela will always strive for sustainability and liveability, aiming for the city's continued progress while contributing to environmental awareness, through expanding more urban green spaces, maximizing resources, and improving the city's surroundings," Valenzuela City Mayor Weslie "Wes" Gatchalian said.

The city anticipates the opening of Arkong Bato Linear Park or the park adjacent to the city's iconic 19th century "Arkong Bato". The park's area was a reclaimed space from an abandoned industrial complex which will be elevated and planted with flowering native trees like banaba and balayong and low-maintenance softscapes.

Apart from the linear park, three more parks, a fishing village, and a mini-park were inaugurated in the city.

Additional sustainability programs under the city's agriculture office are being developed, including the Greening Program and Urban Gardening Program.

The city government said they will continue to conduct tree-planting activities for the rest of 2023 as part of the Greening Program.

The Urban Gardening Program aims to plant various seedlings to produce fruit and vegetable-bearing plants and shade trees.

The Integrated Community Food Production Project was also launched in Disiplina Village Bignay. The project seeks to educate residents on how to practice healthy and self-sustained food production and inform them on chemical fertilizer-use reduction.

Some residents can even earn extra income by selling food products in the City's Central Kitchen supply, which were harvested from the community gardens.

The local government is developing an eco-tourism zone in Tagalag Fishing Village. Both Disiplina Village and Tagalag Fishing Village received awards from Gawad Galing Pook.

The Public Sanitation and Cleanliness Office (PSCO) also strengthened the city's domestic waste collection and disposal through its Solid Waste Management Operation and General Cleaning Program.

The PSCO's programs include remapping and hauling systems, garbage collection, street sweeping, trimming of trees, and grass cutting to all major and secondary roads in the city's 33 barangays.

"In a city, improving the quality of life should go hand in hand with inspiring the community to also cooperate and contribute to the local government's sustainable programs. For this reason, the people, especially the youth, have an important role to play. To be of service to society, to grasp a better life for the generations to come," Gatchalian said.

MAKATI CITY

Under the leadership of Mayor Abby Binay, the city of Makati has become not just the country's business hub, but also as one of the most sustainable cities in the metropolis.

Being a staunch promoter of sustainability and environmental protection, Binay introduced some of the best practices and initiatives in increasing climate change awareness and mitigating pollution that have been well regarded both domestically and internationally.

These include her declaration of a state of climate emergency in the city

as she called for a whole-of-society approach in responding to the issue of climate change and pollution.

She also launched the upcoming integration of electric vehicles (EVs) in Makati's transport system, development and distribution of healthy foods for students, improvement in disaster reduction technology, and hydroponics among others.

In August, Binay announced that electric buses (E-buses) will soon be a part of the regular public transportation sector in the city following the signing of a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the city government and the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) on the establishment of a smart public transport system in the city.

The smart public transport system will provide commuters an affordable means of transportation, help mitigate the impacts of climate change, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The city government also began installing solar panels in all public schools and government offices to minimize energy consumption and ensure the continuity of services during calamities.

The city strictly implements its Solid Waste Management Code, Makati Green Building Code, plastic ban among households and business establishments, ban on cigarette smoking, Anti-Smoke Belching Ordinance, and the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Ordinance.

The mayor added that they are promoting sustainable housing and increasing the land area available for housing settlements.

"Makati plans to build 500 more housing units to address the shelter needs of formal and informal sectors under the city's Comprehensive Shelter Plan. The city will also allocate 1,000 units for city government employees who do not have homes; improve living conditions of residents and government employees by building 1,500+ climate-resilient homes; reduce air pollution through sustainable and affordable housing; and improving public health by reducing exposure to pollutants and providing green space for recreation," Binay said.

The local chief then stressed the importance of protecting the environment and advocating sustainability for the future generations.

"In Makati, we understand that a sustainable future for our children and grandchildren is dependent on us taking concrete steps to protect the planet. We are committed to creating an environment that is healthy and safe for all, so we have taken specific actions to reduce emissions, conserve energy, reduce pollution and waste, and promote green spaces. Through various initiatives, we are actively protecting the environment and mitigating climate change," Binay said.

"In addition, Makati has created green spaces and enhanced existing parks to promote access to clean air, healthy environment, and recreational activities. These measures demonstrate Makati's commitment to protecting

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the planet and creating a sustainable future for generations to come," she added.



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MANDALUYONG CITY

Known as the "Tiger City" in Metro Manila, Mandaluyong showcased its efforts in promoting climate change awareness and disaster resilience initiatives.

Under the leadership of Mayor Ben Abalos, the city continues to ramp up its efforts in protecting the environment and mitigating pollution by introducing E-Vehicles in Mandaluyong's public transportation system and conducting regular training and seminars for all government employees and barangay personnel on the city's environmental laws and ordinances.

The city government also deployed Barangay Environmental Police who assist its Solid Waste Management Office-City Environmental Management Department in enforcing the city's policies.

Abalos' daughter-in-law, former Mayor and now Vice Mayor Menchie Abalos, also created revolutionary programs and systems in Mandaluyong's disaster preparedness and response.

In August 2022, the City Disaster Risk Reduction Management Office (DRRMO) held a program together with the Office of Civil Defense-National Capital Region on the different disaster and calamity monitoring and response procedures amid the growing threat of climate change and other natural disasters.

The Incident Command System (ICS) Executive Course aimed to increase the city government employees' knowledge of the ICS by virtue of Republic Act No. 10121, the "Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act of 2010."

In July, the city government announced that its multi-hazard, automated, and hyper-local early warning system "Project MENCHIE" (Mandaluyong Enhanced monitoring of Natural Hazards and Climate for Household Information and Education) was upgraded as the city continues to boost its climate and natural disaster monitoring.

The new features of Project MENCHIE include a Multi-Disaster Automated Risk Assessment Generator for data such as heat index, six-hour rain forecast, and six-hour accumulated rain for a specific barangay.

This map-based multi-risk assessment generator provides barangay-level color-coded risk assessment for both observed and forecast weather events which updates every 10 minutes, giving residents an idea on which barangays are currently experiencing and will expect heavy rains or extreme heat.

The generator also shows other possible hazards that can affect the Greater Metro Manila Area (GMMMA) such as earthquake-induced landslide, flood, ground rupture, ground shaking, liquefaction, rain-induced landslides, storm surge, and tsunamis.

Another upgrade of the system is its capability to send alerts via SMS, which are also emailed to barangay officials, to warn them 15 to 30 minutes in advance if there are incoming lightning strikes and thunderstorms over/near their vicinity.

This gives barangay officials the capability to disseminate warnings or alerts to their respective constituents. They will also receive via email a 24/7 daily weather forecast summary which they can easily disseminate to the community.

SAN JUAN CITY

Despite being the smallest city in Metro Manila, the city of San Juan led by Mayor Francis

Zamora, has become one of the metropolis' pioneer cities in introducing breakthrough programs in promoting sustainability and environmental awareness.

In 2022, the city partnered with several environmental protection organizations as it moved towards a greener city. These include the signing of several memoranda of agreement (MOA) with Plastic Credit Exchange and Eastwest Builders Inc.

Zamora signed three MOAs with Greenpeace under the Livable and Lovable Cities Program.

One of the agreements is the Air Quality Monitoring MOA that will address the air pollution in the city. Air quality monitoring devices will be placed in strategic places such as the Agora Public Market and Pinaglabanan Shrine to check the air quality. Data gathered from these devices will allow Greenpeace and San Juan City to come up with plans and projects to clean the air.

The Alternative Delivery Systems for Communities MOA encourages San Juanenos to reuse their containers and minimize single-use plastic. A station will be placed in Brgy. Onse where residents can buy wellness products by bringing their own containers.

The last MOA is the Better Cities System, a project designed to develop maps containing data on best practices of the community for information awareness campaigns.

The MOA between San Juan and Plastic Credit Exchange, dubbed as the "Aling Tindera Program", is a project where residents can bring their recyclable plastics to recycling stations in exchange for cash in Brgy. Pasadena and Brgy. Corazon de Jesus.

Zamora and Eastwest Builders, Inc. launched the country's very first reverse vending machine, called the Reverse Vending YC-301.

The reverse vending machine collects different beverage containers and can identify 100 different barcodes from 100 different bottles (350, 500, 1000, 1500 ml) and standardized aluminum cans. It can store up to 300 (300 ml) cans and 400 (300 ml) PET bottles. It is also equipped with a touch screen feature and compression module to improve the capacity of the storage.

Once the RVM is full, Incom Tomra, the developer of the machine, will collect the bottles and be brought to recycling facilities.



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San Juan City together with Greenpeace Philippines, Zero Waste, and Impact Hub Manila launched the "Kuha sa Tingi" project, that will install refill-stations in 10 existing sari-sari stores in the city where the public can purchase different liquid commodities such as shampoo and body wash in smaller quantities.

"San Juan City is committed to addressing the problem of plastic pollution in the country. We believe that communities can lead the way to show that we can reduce, if not totally eliminate, single-use plastics. This project protects the environment, reduces plastic waste, creates livelihoods, and supports a slow circular economy," Zamora explained.

Teodoro strictly ordered the protection and conservation of their own ecosystem at the Marikina River Park through various tree-planting activities and cleanup operations by the riverside.

Complementary to these are the clearing and cleaning of the city's inner waterways and drainage system, which has a combined length of almost 903 kilometers, with intersecting pipes all flowing out to the Marikina River.

Marikina City touts a comprehensive Solid-Waste Management Policy that includes door-to-door garbage collection, compliance to color-coded garbage containers and waste segregation around the city.

Instead of disposed oil clogging drainages and polluting the river, the City Environmental Management Office (CEMO) collects and transports used oil from households and establishments to the city's Materials Recovery Facility (MRF), where it is **► SS-16**



Makati City Mayor Abby Binay discussing the importance of women environmental leaders in an event organized by the Masungi Georeserve. (Photo from Masungi Georeserve)

MARIKINA CITY

The quaint and quiet city of Marikina has long been a "sustainability champion," hailed for its cleanliness and orderliness, as well as the discipline of its citizens.

In 2021, Marikina City was a recipient of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Environmentally Sustainable Cities Award, citing 100 percent household access to water infrastructure, efficient solid waste management, and abundance of green spaces.

The focus of the local government under Mayor Marcelino "Marcy" Teodoro's third term is consistency and maintenance, emphasizing on disaster resilience.

The biggest project they are undertaking is the dredging and widening operations of the Marikina River, as part of the Marikina River Restoration Project (MRRP) in cooperation with the DPWH, DENR, MMDA, and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

The daily dredging operations have proved effective in reducing the severity of flooding in flood-prone areas in Marikina and increasing the carrying capacity of the river.

The local government has shown support for the conservation advocacies of the Masungi Georeserve Foundation in Rizal. Teodoro was one of the Metro Manila mayors who joined Masungi's call to cancel quarrying operations in the Upper Marikina Watershed in June 2022.



Malabon City Mayor Jeannie Sandoval led the Malabon City-wide Clean Up Drive held last July 23, 2022 to remove wastes and prevent the spread of dengue. (Photo from Malabon City Government Facebook page)



San Juan City Mayor Francis Zamora testing the Reverse Vending Machine (RVM) for San Juan's recycling efforts. (Photo from Mayor Francis Zamora's Facebook page)



Towards a sustainable future: How local governments advocate for urban sustainability **SS-15** ◀

mixed with shredded plastic waste and fed to a styro-plastic densifier machine. Ecobricks are used for the city's landscaping projects such as flooring or pavements for school grounds, parks, playgrounds, or gardening pots.

The city continues to implement Ordinance No. 18, Series of 2012, regulating single-use plastics by establishments to minimize plastic consumption. It bans plastic packaging materials used for dry goods and secondary packaging for wet goods, except for main plastic bags used to carry wet goods.

Marikina City is a walkable and "bike-friendly" city, with its accessible bike infrastructure and widespread pedestrian lanes.

The city is the site of the 318-kilometer Marikina Bike Lane Network, which covers half of the Department of Transportation (DOTr) and DPWH's chosen roadways for the overall Metro Manila Bike Lane Network.

Teodoro has also promoted the use of bicycles for alternative transport, saying it greatly helps mitigate pollution and reduce the carbon footprint emitted by motor vehicles.

PASIG CITY

With Mayor Vico Sotto at the helm, Pasig City is pursuing a "greener" policy direction for 2023 onwards, in recognition of the urgent issues presented by climate change.

Accelerating the use of alternative, low carbon mobility through the gradual integration of electric vehicles in government operations has been a top priority in Pasig.

The local government partnered with NGOs like Clean Air Asia, and international government bodies such as the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the European Union (EU) for the future acquisition and use of electric quadricycle (E-quads) and Flexible Electric Van's (FLEVs), and installation of solar-powered EV charging stations.

To promote the use of EVs, the City Council passed Ordinance No. 50, series of 2022, that exempts

EVs from the mandatory unified vehicular reduction scheme.

A Steering Committee on Electric Mobility was created, through Executive Order No. 63, series of 2021, that is tasked to implement e-mobility programs in accordance with the Clean Air Act of 1999.

Despite being a highly urbanized city, Pasig is still home to a 6.2-hectare rainforest park in Barangay Maybunga. Ordinance No. 57, series of 2022, "declaring the Pasig City Rainforest Park as a Permanent Park and Protected Area," was approved by the City Council in order to preserve its local biodiversity.

Pasig City also signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) last April 2022 on the implementation of a Climate Resilient and Localized Urban Greening Plan (CRLUGP).

Through the plan, the DENR will assist the City Environment and Natural Resources Office (CENRO) and Solid Waste and Management Office (SWMO) in integrating and developing green spaces in Pasig through multi-sectoral exchanges of resources and expertise.

They have also partnered with the MMDA, DPWH, and the Pasig River Coordinating and Management Office (PRCMO) to create parks such as the Pineda Linear Park, Buting Linear Park, and Bitukang Manok Linear Park along Pasig's waterways to beautify them and reconnect communities to the river.

Headed by the City Transport and Management Office (CTMO), the local government has opened numerous "People's Streets." This initiative serves as supplementary green spaces for adults and children to conduct leisure activities safely from vehicular accidents.

Pasig City has conducted pilot launches for the "May Pera sa Basura" program to minimize solid waste in the city. Citizens donated reused or recycled trash in exchange for cash. The recovered materials will be turned into

products for sale.

Sotto has also advocated for the protection of the Masungi Georeserve in Rizal and the Upper Marikina Watershed by calling for the cancellation of quarrying operations in the area. They teamed up with Masungi to train teachers and educators on environment conservation.

The city government is also strictly enforcing its environmental laws to ensure compliance by both business establishments and households, pertaining to Ordinance No. 9, series of 2003, on the issuance of the Environmental Permit to Operate (EPO).

MUNTINLUPA CITY

The Muntinlupa City government led by Mayor Ruffy Biazon has formulated and implemented the Muntinlupa Enhanced Climate Change Action Plan, which lays out the long-term sustainable goals of Muntinlupa City to address climate change.

To combat the proliferation of greenhouse gases, the city's Environmental Management Cluster has set up a Greenhouse Gas Inventory to monitor and measure the city's emissions and their sources via air quality monitoring stations. The city also strictly implements its Anti-Smoke Belching Policy for vehicles and conducts regular inspections in establishments in accordance with the Philippine Clean Air Act.

Through the City's Urban Greening Program, green and open spaces are developed, preserved, and maintained.

City Ordinance 2020-188 regulates the cutting, trimming, pruning, and earth-balling of trees. Parks located in Barangays Tunasan, Bayanan, and Alabang have been developed using an environment and people-friendly design.

The city government is actively implementing a comprehensive solid waste management program by establishing Material Recovery Facilities (MRFs) in all barangays, community awareness campaigns on proper solid waste management, and holding Recyclables Fairs to properly collect, process, and dispose of non-traditional recyclables.

It has partnered with organi-

zations such as Plastic Flamingo (Plaf) to convert residual waste into chairs and other sustainable construction materials.

The city has launched an Eco Grocer initiative, where customers can bring their containers and purchase refills of liquid bath and hand soap, shampoo, and other toiletries in an environmentally-friendly manner.

The city's Lake Protection Management Program was implemented to protect Laguna Lake. The program includes patrolling for illegal fishers using non-traditional methods, quarterly lake seeding to increase fisheries production, and regular cleanup drives with the help of Barangays, residents, volunteers, and partner organizations.

Muntinlupa is also one of the first few local government units (LGU) in the Philippines and the first in Metro Manila to complete their Local Energy Code and Local Energy Efficiency and Conservation Plan (LEECP).

The city's Local Finance Committee recently signed a resolution reducing the fuel allocations to government services vehicles by 10% while also encouraging departments and offices to implement fuel-saving measures alongside electricity-saving measures.

For sustainable mobility, e-jeepneys and e-tricycles have been deployed on major thoroughfares to reduce pollutants and noise pollution. These e-jeepneys have previously won the Best Customer Experience Award in UITP in Montreal, Canada.



TAGUIG

The Taguig City government has implemented sustainable programs to protect the environment through its City Environment and Natural Resources Office (CENRO).

It has its regular City Solid Waste Management meeting that gathers representatives from the city government and private sector to tackle policies and technologies for efficient solid waste management in Taguig.

The CENRO has implemented various programs and projects about protecting the environment including workshops and seminars, cleanup drives in every barangay, and planting and greening activities.

Based on a Waste Analysis and Characterization Study (WACS) conducted by CENRO, 50 percent of waste by residents is biodegradable.

During the Solid Waste Management Summit 2022, Mayor Lani Cayetano said, "Ang ating kapaligiran ay repleksyon ng ating katauhan (Our surroundings are a reflection of our personality). As Taguiguëños, we value our environment and we want our partners to see our action plans."

PATEROS

Pateros, the smallest local government unit in the National Capital Region, has implemented programs and projects related to the environment through its Municipal Environment and Natural Resources Office (MENRO).

Among these are tree planting activities, cleanup drives and solid waste management.

In July 2022, during the Environmental Summit and Exhibit 2022 held by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources' Environmental Management Bureau, the Pateros municipal government was given a certificate of recognition "for their solid commitment" in implementing Republic Act 9003 or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000.

PASAY CITY

The Pasay City government is practicing the 3Rs which means reuse, reduce and recycle in order to protect the ecosystem and preserve it for future generations.

According to Mayor Emi Calixto-Rubiano's chief of staff, Peter Pardo, the city government is strictly implementing the 3Rs in preserving Mother Earth.

The city government usually conducts cleanup drives to improve the quality of water in Manila Bay.

The City Environment and Natural Resources (CENRO) is usually conducting cleanup drives at the city's esteros and creeks and using trash traps to prevent garbage from nearby cities and provinces like Cavite and Bataan.

A linear park in Zone 15 in Barangay 127 up to 144 near the Estero Tripa de Galina was developed by the city government into a community park where residents and visitors can enjoy the beauty of the place with playgrounds, wishing well, and green

vegetables planted around.

PARAÑAQUE CITY

As one of the country's most densely populated and highly urbanized cities, and one that is situated along the shores of Manila Bay, the City of Parañaque needs to deal with many environmental challenges that require holistic and forward-looking solutions.

Mayor Eric L. Olivarez and the CENRO have adopted programs and projects aimed at environmental sustainability anchored on community participation and the economic empowerment of its constituents.

The city's Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) is at the heart of its solid waste management efforts. The facility has a Waste Recovery Center, a Centralized Composting Center, a Research and Development Center and a Livelihood Training Center. It is at the Waste Recovery Center where sorting and shredding of recyclable materials are done.

The recovered materials are forwarded to the Livelihood Training Center where workers - mostly mothers from surrounding communities - upcycle the materials by producing eco-products like bags, sandals and others.

The products from the Livelihood Training Center are sold at the La Huerta Public Market and even at the Center's stalls at Ayala Malls Manila Bay and SM BF which provide the retail spaces for free.

The recyclable wastes are collected from homeowners' associations, partner schools, barangay collection centers and partner establishments like City of Dreams and Shopee Express, and segregate single-use plastics at source under the "Zero Plastics sa Landfill" project.

The CENRO also mobilizes special teams for hauling yard waste, construction debris, and even debris collected from streets and communities after a typhoon or a fire incident, as well as those recovered during mopping and clearing operations.

Residual wastes, mostly from households and industries, are hauled by the city's garbage hauling contractor and are sent to the Garbage Transfer Station where they are compacted and sent to landfills.

Biodegradable wastes, on the other hand, are collected mainly from the main public market in Barangay La Huerta and are sent to the Centralized Composting Center where the materials are turned into earth-friendly fertilizers that are distributed to local farmers and garden enthusiasts.

"Our sustainability programs have resulted in drastic reduction of plastic wastes going to our landfills and waterways which eventually would have ended up at Manila Bay," Mayor Olivarez said.

"In fact, the US Agency for International Development or USAID has observed our operations, and they have pledged to give us more assistance to enhance our sustainability. This includes technical training as well as a state-of-the-art sorting line for our MRF, for which we are preparing," the mayor added.

LAS PIÑAS CITY

Mayor Imelda Aguilar said her late husband, former Mayor Vergel Aguilar, made it a point to prioritize projects concerning the environment for the future generation.

Aguilar stressed that the city government is intensifying its "clean and green" programs that involve tree-planting and landscaping of open spaces for residents to commune with the environment.

She also said the city government is regularly conducting cleanup of drainages and water canals in the city, which will help in their efforts to maintain the city's cleanliness.

Las Piñas City was cited by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources - Environmental Management Bureau (DENR-EMB) for their continued implementation of sanitation and environmental programs.

The city government also received a certificate of recognition for its commitment to implementing Republic Act No. 9003 or the Ecological Solid Management Act of 2000.

The city was also awarded with a plaque of recognition for its best practices in its composting operations.

With the latest recognition received by the city government, Aguilar vowed that her administration will continue to promote sanitation and environmental programs in Las Piñas.



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Navotas City Mayor John Reynaldo 'John Rey' Tiangco and members of the local government during the Navotas Day cleanup operation last Jan. 14, 2023. (Photo from Navotas City PIO)



The Pasig City local government inaugurates the solar-powered electric vehicles charging station at the City Hall Mega Parking on July 4, 2022. (Photo from Mayor Vico Sotto Facebook page)

The local governments of Metro Manila have all committed to implementing 'greener' policies and nature-based solutions, introducing innovative methods, cultivating stronger community networks, and moving towards climate resilience.



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Why sustainability matters

Sustainability has become a hot topic in the last decade as we become increasingly aware of how our actions impact the ecosystems and the planet. Hence, it has been equated to the environment, i.e., environmental sustainability.

Etymologically, the word sustainability is derived from the word *sustinere*, which in Latin means to hold which can mean to sustain, maintain, support, uphold, or endure. The term itself goes back a very long time when communities have always worried about the capacity of their environment to sustain them in the long term.

Therefore, sustainability is the ability to continue over a long period of time. Over time, its definition evolved as an approach to sustaining life and supporting the planet. This brings us to the three pillars of sustainability – the environment, the economy, and society – all these things directly interlink with each other.

The interplay of these three pillars are important because we live in a world with finite resources, in the form of natural resources. A city purifies water coming from a lake or ocean to supply it to communities and industries, which lead to economic development and the betterment of society as a whole. But if industries and people pollute the bodies of water with the wastes of progress, then the economy and society will not be able to continue its progress.

This is why global agencies and nations, in recent years, came up ways to measure sustainability, albeit in differing metrics.

One is the Sustainability Trade Index (STI) which measures economies' behavior and effects of international trade on sustainability and economic prosperity. In the 2022 STI report, the Philippines ranked 5th regionally and 12th globally joining more developed economies as it scored high in the report. New Zealand ranked first, the UK second, and Hong Kong third.

Examining the three pillars, the Philippines ranked high globally in the Environmental pillar at 5th, Societal pillar at 17th, and Economic pillar at 19th, with mixed scores in 70 indicators across the three pillars.

One would probably smirk at this report, considering the apparent issues the Philippines have in agriculture, water supply, energy, and pollution. But the STI is a reminder for nations that sustainability of trade is impacted by the environment, the economy, and society.

Another sustainability measure is the Environmental Performance Index (EPI) reported by the Yale Center for Environmental Law and Policy. It ranks 180 countries based on 40 performance indicators across 11 issue categories in three policy objectives – Climate,



BUSINESS OPTION

REYNALDO C. LUGTU JR.

Environmental Health, and Ecosystem Vitality.

The 2022 EPI report ranks the Philippines at 158, ahead of fellow ASEAN nations Indonesia (164th), Vietnam (178th) and Myanmar (179th). The six other ASEAN countries ahead of us are Cambodia (154th), Laos (149th), Malaysia (130th), Thailand (108th), Brunei Darussalam (71st), and

Singapore, the highest ranked ASEAN country at 44th.

Looking at the finer details, the Philippines ranks 175th in Climate Change Mitigation, 132nd in Air Quality, 110th in Sanitation and Drinking Water, 116th in Waste Management, 100th in Biodiversity and Habitat, 161st in Acid Rain, 113rd in Agriculture, and 126th in Water Resources. In many of these areas, our country lags most of the ASEAN countries.

It seems that the EPI is more attend to the reality on the ground. Talk about pressing sustainability issues in agriculture where the Philippines is besieged with agricultural products shortages and frequent onslaught livestock diseases.

When it comes to water, more than 3 million people in the Philippines rely on unsafe and unsustainable water sources and 7 million lack access to improved sanitation, according to water.org.

Pollution, in particular plastic pollution, is a huge problem of the country which generates of 2.7 million tons of plastic waste annually according to the World Bank due to an insufficient waste management system, coupled with a high dependence on single-use plastics.

These are all aligned with the latest Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) dashboard which described 14 of the 17 SDGs as mostly with "challenges remain" or "significant challenges remain."

If our country continues to lag in these sustainability metrics without consideration for our surroundings or fellow humans, our country will continue to contribute to making the planet uninhabitable, physically, socially, and economically, for future generations.

We can already see the impact of our actions manifesting in issues such as string and frequent typhoons, pollution, flooding, and food insecurity.

Government together with the private sector need to step up to reverse, if not slow down the impact of our collective actions to the environment, the economy, and society.

The author is the Founder and CEO of Hungry Workhorse, a digital and culture transformation consulting firm. He is a Fellow at the US-based Institute for Digital Transformation. He teaches strategic management and digital transformation in the MBA Program of De La Salle University. The author may be emailed at rey.lugtu@hungryworkhorse.com



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SMC integrates sustainability in its operations

By JAMES A. LOYOLA

Sustainability is an integral part of San Miguel Corporation's (SMC) operations as reducing its impact on the environment and fostering social inclusion are ingrained in the conglomerate's culture.

Through its commitment to good corporate governance and citizenship, long-established circular economy practices, stewardship of the environment, and continuing efforts to improve the lives of SMC's employees and communities, the group has championed sustainability across our business.

Recognizing the urgency of addressing pressing economic, social, and environmental concerns, SMC began a journey in 2017 that has seen the company meet head-on a number of critical sustainability issues.

Six years ago, SMC exited the plastic bottled water business and soon after, it had set a goal to cut by 50 percent its Group-wide use of utility water by 2025.

More initiatives have followed since. SMC has pioneered the use of recycled plastics wastes for road construction at its logistics facilities in Cavite.

SMC has continued to help tackle the issue of solid waste pollution through key projects that include a pioneering effort to build the country's first recycled plastics road, and today, its clean-up of major river systems to mitigate flooding and rehabilitate rivers counted as among the world's largest plastic emitters.

Recently, it officially completed its ₱1-billion Tullahan River cleanup initiative and is also undertaking a multi-billion-peso clean-up of the Pasig River. SMC also started cleanup efforts for Bulacan river systems.

SMC has also delivered key infrastructure projects that addresses the country's problem with continuously worsening traffic congestion, that limits economic growth and harms the environment through emissions from hours of stand-still traffic.

Meanwhile, SMC is developing the largest Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) network in the Philippines and Southeast Asia which will serve to ensure that quality power supply is delivered even to far-flung areas, such as islands and mountain regions, where access to power is still an issue.

The BESS network will provide Filipinos with a sustainable power storage solution, support



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rural electrification, and help the transition to renewable energy. It is designed to minimize electricity wastage and will be critical to enabling the integration of more renewables into the grid.

SMC's power and beer subsidiaries have also invested in nationwide reforestation efforts to help mitigate carbon emissions. San Miguel Global Power alone has planted and grown over five million upland and mangrove trees, across some 1,500 hectares of land from December 2019 to date. This is part of a multi-year, nationwide forestation and carbon capture program.

SMC has conducted coastal clean-up drives in Calatagan and Balayan in Batangas, where a total of 1,340 bags full of garbage have been collected initially.

The Group's response to the pandemic and its impact on the most disadvantaged Filipinos and SMC's continuing social development initiatives have helped address issues of hunger, poverty, and lack of opportunity while engaging and empowering other stakeholders to do their part as well.

SMC continues to develop livelihood and educational initiatives at its project sites to help improve the

lives of families and partners in its host communities. SMC also continuously implements programs for its employees to ensure they are able to contribute to improving the lives of others.

The firm has also built housing communities for victims of natural calamities, unrest, as well as those at its project sites. It also continues to provide scholarships and feeding support for disadvantaged students.

SMC has completed 450 sustainable housing units at San Miguel-Christian Gayeta Homes for fisherfolk-relocatees in Sariaya, Quezon. Included in the development are the Sariaya Fishermen's Dock and Fishermen's Hall, as well as the San Miguel Market where fishermen and their families can sell their catch and market their other products. Through a partnership with TESDA, beneficiaries were provided training for skills needed to manage their small businesses or gain employment.

Recently, SMC rolled out a youth development program focusing on children of disadvantaged families near its development sites, as part of efforts to help improve learning outcomes. The SMC Educational Assistance Program will benefit some 292 elementary, junior high, senior high, and college students around communities it serves in Bulacan, Quezon province, Batangas, General Santos City.

The company also partners with non-governmental organizations on various social development projects in order to empower those who are better equipped to effect positive change in specific areas of concern.

Malasakit is the core value of SMC and is



SMC CHAIRMAN-CEO
SIMON S. ANG

deeply ingrained in its company culture. As such, the firm continues to make a positive impact in its communities, developing programs that have a deeper and longer-lasting impact for those battling hunger, inequality, and lack of opportunity.

Through its flagship corporate social responsibility program, its Better World Community Centers, SMC works to address critical social issues through partnerships with non-profit groups who are given access to SMC's vast resources and networks to strengthen their efforts.

Last year, SMC opened Better World Cubao, a health, empowerment, and recovery (H.E.R.) center for women from underprivileged backgrounds, including victims of violence.

In 2022, SMC tapped global firm Pricewaterhousecoopers (PWC) to help the Group focus its efforts and plan how best to deliver transformative change, and impact on particular areas of sustainability, including reducing carbon emissions, improving circular economy and supply chain management, and uplifting more communities.

Each of SMC's businesses is likewise actively engaged in pursuing greater sustainability, aligned with SMC's mission, vision, values, and goals while taking on issues and challenges unique to their industries.



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Maynilad: Creating a green impact

West Zone concessionaire Maynilad Water Services, Inc. (Maynilad) implements a number of programs and projects to protect and nurture the environment to fulfill its mission of providing safe, affordable, and sustainable water solutions to its customers.

Shortly after its re-privatization in 2007, Maynilad implemented a Greenhouse Gas (GHG) and Air Pollutant emissions inventory program, which aims to establish baseline data for the company's carbon emissions using an Inventory Management Plan that covers the entire organization. The inventory defines Maynilad's management plan to improve energy utilization, reduce its power consumption and, ultimately, cut its GHG emission.

Through this program, Maynilad became the first Philippine company to receive the ISO 14064:2006 certification for the verification of its GHG or carbon footprint quantification and reporting initiative from TUV Rheinland. The standards define international best practice in the management, reporting and verification of GHG data. These

greenhouse gases are the precursors of global climate change.

More recently, Maynilad made its initial foray into renewable energy by building two one-megawatt PV (photovoltaic) solar farms at the La Mesa Compound in Quezon City. This is in line with the company's environmental sustainability and operational efficiency initiatives.

The two solar power farms augment the power requirements of La Mesa Treatment Plant 1 and several pumping stations within the La Mesa Compound—facilities that operate 24/7 to treat and distribute water for Maynilad customers. Each solar farm is expected to reduce the electricity consumption of Maynilad's La Mesa facilities by around 90,000 (kWh) kilowatt per hour, as well as minimize carbon emissions by 21 tons per month.

Further supporting this initiative is Maynilad's "Plant for Life"—the company's flagship environmental conservation program, which aims to recover denuded watersheds and thus protect the water supply of millions of consumers. It rallies volunteers from

the public and private sector to help recover forestlands through the annual planting of trees.

Originally conceptualized to reforest the watersheds in Angat, Ipo, and La Mesa, this tree-planting initiative later became a multi-site reforestation program that included areas along the Manila Bay coast and Laguna Lake. Since the program's inception in 2007, Maynilad has already planted more than one million indigenous trees and mangroves covering a land area of 755 hectares.

Maynilad also became the first company in the country to include indigenous peoples in this reforestation program when it tapped the Dumagats' support in caring for saplings planted at the Ipo watershed.

The company also embarked on a partnership with the Laguna Lake Development Authority (LLDA) for the reforestation and afforestation of the Laguna Lake watershed. The program seeks to restore and introduce land cover, which will alleviate environmental issues at the Laguna Lake watershed and promote environmental values among surrounding communities.



Water treatment plant being built in Poblacion, Muntinlupa.

Maynilad allots P19 billion for new sewer lines

Recently, it announced it is investing P19 billion over the next five years for the expansion of its sewerage services with the installation of 121 kilometers of new sewer lines.

In a statement, the firm said the new sewer pipelines — to be laid in portions of Manila, Muntinlupa, Valenzuela,



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Installing new sewer pipeline.

Bacoor, Las Piñas, Caloocan, and Quezon City — will catch used water generated by around 2.1 million customers.

This wastewater will be conveyed to Maynilad's Sewage Treatment Plants for proper treatment before being discharged to the ecosystem.

"The installation of new sewer lines is part of our effort to protect community health and the environment through proper sewage collection and treatment," said Maynilad Chief Operating Officer Randolph T. Estrellado.

He added that, "We hope for the continued support of the local government units so that we can fast-track the implementation of these pipe-laying projects in their area."

To minimize public inconvenience resulting from these pipe-laying activities, Maynilad said it closely coordinates with the barangays and communities.

Affected roads are also immediately restored with temporary asphalt pavement to make the roads passable to motorists.

Moreover, Maynilad regularly monitors its contractors to ensure that their work sites are fully enclosed by board-up barricades and have appropriate lighting and traffic/warning signs.

Maynilad is currently operating and maintaining 625 kilometers of sewer lines, and 22 wastewater treatment

facilities that have a combined capacity to treat around 664 million liters of wastewater per day.

Maynilad stated that it also is targeting to boost its water supply by an additional 50 million liters per day (MLD) by December 2023 as initial output of the treatment plant it is building in Poblacion, Muntinlupa.

In a statement, the firm said construction of the new Poblacion Water Treatment Plant (WTP) — which will be Maynilad's third facility to tap Laguna Lake as an alternative raw water source to the Angat Dam — is now 53 percent complete.

Once fully operational by the first half of 2024, this facility will have the capacity to produce 150 MLD of potable water for the southern portion of Maynilad's concession area, particularly Parañaque, Las Piñas, Muntinlupa, and Cavite.

At present, Maynilad has two treatment plants in Putatan, Muntinlupa, that provide 300-MLD of water supply for around 1.7 million customers in the south.

"Our production of 300 MLD is stretched to meet the current requirements of our customers in the south," said Maynilad Chief Operating Officer Randolph T. Estrellado.

He noted, "Hence, whenever extreme conditions necessitate reduced production, there is no extra supply so some of our customers experience service disruption. The additional output that we will get from the Poblacion WTP will help to address that."

The Poblacion WTP is part of Maynilad's P220 billion service enhancement program from 2023 to 2027 that is focused on promoting enhanced water sustainability and climate resiliency.