

18 May 2023 Thursday



DENR

NEWS ALERTS

NEWS CLIPPINGS

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



TITLE:

PAGE

DATE

EYES WIDE OPEN

IRIS GONZALES

Water disputes, the new water superbody and water conservation

It's sweltering, sticky summer weather and some days feel like we're moving inside one giant furnace. For many of us, the way to cope is to plunge into a pool or take a shower not just once but several times a day.

Unfortunately, while we want to just soak in water these days, it's also the time when we need to conserve this precious commodity the most.

It's good that President Marcos signed last month the order creating the Water Resources Management Office (WRMO), which is meant to address water-related challenges in the country such as increasing demand for water due to population and economic growth, impact of climate change, lack of infrastructure, inconsistent government regulations. And conflicts.

Yes, this new water superbody has many roles and functions and was also given the authority to resolve conflicts involving water claims.

This is especially important because we can better manage water resources if disputes are handled properly.

LGU water dispute

This early, the new agency's conflict resolution function could soon face its first acid test due to a bitter dispute over a fresh water spring in the province of Bohol, the beautiful Bugwak Spring.

As reported by **The STAR** on Monday, two local government units – Sevilla and Balilihan in Bohol – have conflicting claims over Bugwak Spring.

Sevilla is claiming ownership over Bugwak Spring while its neighboring town Balilihan has already appropriated the water resource for its own use.

Thus, the municipal government of Sevilla has asked Balilihan to remove a P95-million water facility built on its property, **The STAR** reported.

Sevilla's municipal council adopted a resolution saying that Balilihan town officials and their representatives "clandestinely" built a water pumping station in Bugwak Spring without the consent and approval of LGU Sevilla.

Erroneous coordinates

The root of the issue, it seems, is erroneous coordinates.

"Records at the National Water Resources Board (NWRB) show that the National Irrigation Administration provided wrong area coordinates, which resulted in claims that the spring is located in Barangay Sto. Nino in Balilihan instead of Barangay Magsaysay in Sevilla. Sevilla officials said the NWRB approved the Balilihan water project despite the error in the location due to wrong coordinates," **The STAR** also reported.

I believe this may be the first major test case for the new water superbody.

The current dispute shows that LGUs will fight over scarce water resources.



Thus, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, NWRB and now WRMO should be able to resolve conflicts over water resources carefully and judiciously.

NWRB, for its part, has earlier ordered Balilihan to submit its reply to Sevilla's petition, which the LGU filed as early as June 2022.

"[T]he LGU of Balilihan is hereby directed to file an answer, not a motion to dismiss, to the attached petition..." the NRWB said.

As I write this, the issue has not been resolved but I hope it is addressed soon.

I am citing this case as an example of how important it is to resolve water-related issues and conflicts in helping local communities and the rest of the country have access to water.

Water quality

And while we're at it, the WRMO and NWRB should also consistently check and monitor the quality of water being extracted from Bugwak Spring and distributed to various communities in Balilihan.

I believe the creation of WRMO is very timely, if not a long time coming.

Everyday, we face challenges because of scarce and mismanaged water resources.

It's quite ironic that while the Philippines is blessed with freshwater sources and tremendous amounts of rain, the country continues to face severe water shortage.

Experts have already warned that a water crisis is projected to worsen by 2040 if we stay business-as-usual.

And we all know what happens if there is a severe water shortage. It would have far-reaching effects on the health and welfare of Filipinos, not to mention its adverse impact on economic growth.

Water conservation

Aside from properly managing water resources, the government should also push for serious water conservation efforts.

As consumers, there are many ways we can conserve water – from reducing the time we spend in the shower to recycling potable water for other needs such as cleaning and watering plants.

In a hotel in Cape Town in South Africa, the bathrooms have an hourglass so that guests can time their baths.

That's how conscious they are of the need to conserve water. We should be conscious of that, too.

Car wash, pools

A reader also recently pointed out the need to regulate car wash establishments, which we all know use high pressure potable water.

Last March, NWRB executive director Sevillo David Jr. was interviewed on *One News' The Chiefs*, where he said that they were indeed considering regulating car wash shops and swimming pool operators.

I think this is a good move and it should be done now. Industry data show that one car wash uses up to 100 cubic meters of water equivalent to the needs of 2,000 households.

As the reader pointed out, "It is irritating to see residents lining up before water tankers to get a few plastic liters of water for cooking and personal hygiene, while a short distance away, cars are being washed with high pressure clean potable water."

"Our neighborhood has three car wash shops," the reader noted.

Indeed, the regulators and the new water superbody have a lot to do when it comes to resolving our water-related challenges.

I hope they act now before the water runs dry.

Email: eyesgonzales@gmail.com. Follow her on Twitter @[eyesgonzales](https://twitter.com/eyesgonzales). Column archives at [EyesWideOpen](https://www.eyeswideopen.com) on FB.



STRATEGIC
COMMUNICATION
AND
INITIATIVES
SERVICE

PHILIPPINE DAILY
BALANCED NEWS • FEARLESS VIEWS
INQUIRER

Ab
PAGE

UPPER
 LOWER

PAGE 1
STORY

BANNER
STORY

EDITORIAL

CARTOON

05-18-23

TITLE : _____

PAGE _____

DATE _____



MORE VOICES

The actual issue in the Masungi Georeserve is whether the area is PROPERLY within the protection of the Constitution and environmental laws. Some people have, however, redefined the

issue was whether the area is PROPERTY within the protection of the Constitution. Simply absurd,
Galahad A. Pe Benito,
@gbplaw



TITLE: _____

PAGE _____

DATE _____

Turning waste into energy will just pollute earth and is not sustainable

CONVERTING wastes into energy runs against the very principle of protecting mother Earth and mitigating climate change. Those advocating it should pause—there is a lot more to it than meets the eye.



OUT IN
THE OPEN
RAY S.
ENANO

Burning trash to generate power is actually dirtier than burning coal. Like other incinerators, they release incredible volumes of tiny pollutants into the air that will contaminate the atmosphere and lead to a health crisis.

The House of Representatives has passed a bill allowing the use of waste-to-energy and redefining the incineration ban in the Clean Air Act. Current laws, however, contradict the waste-to-energy recourse. The Clean Air Act imposes high restrictive standards for incineration, basically the primary waste-to-energy technology.

Another law that could douse talks about waste-to-energy fuel is the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act that mandates the use of landfills for waste disposal. The Renewable Energy Act contradicts the axiom of the former. One law mandates only landfills for waste disposal while the other is pushing the Department of Energy to prescribe policies and programs promoting and enhancing development of biomass waste-to-energy facilities.

A group in the European Union that does not warm up to the idea of the technology. Waste comprises of discarded materials like plastic, paper and glass. Over 90 percent of the same materials that end up in incineration plants and landfills could be recycled or composted. Environment advocates say the burning of these valuable materials to generate electricity discourages efforts to preserve resources and creates incentives to produce more waste.

Landfills have limited capacities. Studies have shown that a large volume of plastics that now clog the world's oceans come from the Philippines, which is ranked one of the biggest contributors to plastic pollution in the seas. The nation, sooner than later, we will run out of space to dump its wastes.

Environment advocates contend that waste as a source is not an effective fuel. Incinerators waste large amounts of recyclable materials just to produce only small amounts of energy. Recycling and composting, meanwhile, can save up to five times the amount of energy produced by burning waste.

Zero Waste Europe (ZWE), the European network of communities and organizations working towards the elimination of waste in the region, cited that the amount of energy wasted in the US by not recycling aluminum and steel cans, paper, printed materials, glass and plastic, is equal to the annual output of 15 medium-sized power plants.

The group is also critical of incinerator companies often marketing waste-to-energy as a source of renewable energy. Unlike wind, solar or wave energy, it says waste does not come from infinite natural processes—it is obtained from finite resources, like minerals, fossil fuels and forests, that are cut down at an unsustainable rate. Subsidies to support incineration could be better invested into environmentally friendly, energy saving practices like recycling and composting, it added.

Waste-to-energy also does not come cheap. Such facilities would require higher tipping fees that are charged against waste generators, including local governments.

It will not take a rocket scientist to figure out that the ultimate bearer of the additional costs from waste-to-energy production will be the consumer—without adequate government support in the form of funding and incentives, as experienced by countries with successful waste-to-energy systems like Singapore and Japan.

The ZWE cited many cases of municipalities that have ended up in debt because of incinerators, while others are trapped in long-term contracts that force them to deliver a minimum quantity of waste for 20 to 30 years to repay the investment cost. The group added that waste-to-energy plants offer relatively few jobs when compared to recycling. The livelihood of millions of waste workers worldwide depends on recycling. The ZWE cited studies showing that the sector creates 10 to 20 times more jobs than incineration. With a national rate of less than 33 percent, the US recycling industries currently provide over 800,000 jobs.

In developing countries like the Philippines, the ZWE says building incinerators will take jobs away from informal waste workers, including waste pickers, recyclers and haulers, adding that investment in recycling, reuse and composting can enable informal workers to transition to these green jobs.

E-mail: rayenano@yahoo.com or extrastory2000@gmail.com



TITLE:

PAGE

DATE

Coming years 'critical' to slash plastic pollution

PARIS: The world must halve single-use plastics and slash throwaway consumption to stem the tide of environmental pollution, according to a UN report on Tuesday that

warns the next few years are critical. Concern is growing about the impacts of plastics, with microplastic fragments found from the deepest oceans trenches to the top of Mount Everest.

In humans, they have been detected in blood, breast milk and placentas.

The report by the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP)

comes two weeks before negotiators from nearly 200 countries meet in Paris for a new round of negotiations aimed at reaching a legal agreement next year to end plastic pollution.

It lays out a three-pronged plan based on reuse, recycling and diversifying the materials used — to help slash plastic pollution 80 percent by 2040 overall and cut single-use plastic production by half.

The report cited research estimating plastic could emit 19 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions by 2040.

That would essentially prevent the world from meeting its Paris Agreement commitment to limit the rise in the planet's average surface temperature to 1.5 degrees Celsius above the pre-industrial level.

"The way we produce, use and dispose of plastics is polluting ecosystems, creating risks for human health and destabilizing the climate," said Inger Andersen, UNEP executive director.

She said the roadmap laid out in the report "dramatically reduces these risks, through adopting a circular approach that keeps plastics out of ecosystems, out of our bodies and in the economy".

In 2020, approximately 238 million metric tonnes (mmt) of waste from short-lived plastics — such as packaging that ends up in municipal waste — was generated worldwide.

Roughly half of that was mismanaged, mostly dumped in the environment or burned.

Without significant changes, UNEP expects annual plastic waste to reach 408 mmt by 2040, including 380 mmt of new fossil-fuel-based plastics. That would mean some 227 mmt of plastics would end up in the environment.

The report estimates that with a range of "systems change" solutions, that pollution figure could be reduced to 41 mmt.

But the report says there is no time to waste.

— was identified as the most effective measure, and would cut plastic pollution up to 30 percent by 2040 with the introduction of things like refillable water bottles, packaging take-back schemes and "reverse vending machines."

While governments have to incentivize the shift and retailers will need to make it easier to return packaging, consumers will also have to "forego convenience of disposable and get used to products looking less shiny."

Better recycling could cut pollution by a fifth, the report found, thanks to policies including the removal of fossil fuel subsidies and the enforcement of design rules to make items easier to treat.

An additional 17 percent cut would come from replacing plastics with alternatives, like paper or other compostable materials.

The remainder of the pollution cuts would be in better disposal of non-recyclable plastics, which UNEP said, would need stronger design and safety standards, as well as rules making manufacturers responsible for products that shed microplastics for example.

The report estimates that while there would be significant costs to implementing such sweeping changes, these would be dwarfed by the economic benefits, including from reducing the impacts of pollution on health, climate, air pollution, marine ecosystem degradation.

But some campaigners said the report was not ambitious enough in so far as it assumes plastic use will continue at significant levels.



STRATEGIC
COMMUNICATION
AND
INITIATIVES
SERVICE

Trusted Since 1858

The Manila Times

A4
PAGE

UPPER
LOWER

PAGE 1
STORY

BANNER
STORY

EDITORIAL

CARTOON

05-18-23

TITLE:

Coming years . . .

PAGE

2/2

DATE

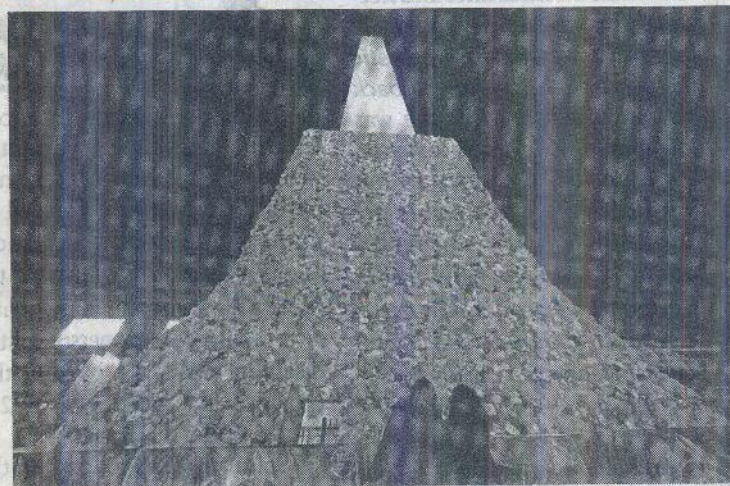
"The next three to five years present a critical window for action to set the world on the path towards implementing the systems change scenario by 2040," it warned.

No longer 'disposable'

Reuse — as opposed to recycling

"They have tried to change a pipe, change the valves or whatever, but they are not trying to actually turn off the tap," said Hirotaka Koike, of Greenpeace.

"They are not talking about reduction of the production." But he welcomed the report warnings against plastics falsely presented as "degradable, compostable," as well as the support for the removal of fossil fuel subsidies, which makes it cheaper to make new plastic than to recycle. **AFP**



PLASTIC OBELISK Women look at the Obelisk covered with plastic bags as part of an artistic intervention on the eve of World Recycling Day in Buenos Aires on May 16, 2023. **AFP PHOTO**



STRATEGIC
COMMUNICATION
AND
INITIATIVES
SERVICE

Founded Since 1858

The Manila Times

bs
PAGE

UPPER
LOWER

PAGE 1
STORY

BANNER
STORY

EDITORIAL

CARTOON

05-18-23

TITLE:

PAGE

DATE

UP agri, environment school rises in Davao

ELEVATING local agriculture through education, Damosa Land breaks ground for the University of the Philippines Professional School for Agriculture and the Environment (UP PSAE) in its premier integrated township Agriya in Panabo City, Davao del Norte.

The homegrown developer of sustainable real estate in the South, together with Anflo Management and Investment Corp. (Anflocor), and UP held a groundbreaking ceremony last April 21, 2023, for the first campus of UP PSAE.

The companies also signed the deed of donation declaring the turnover of the 31,800-square-meter property to the UP PSAE, which is set to be home to 14 graduate and post-graduate agriculture-focused programs that include Agribusiness Management, Agroforestry and Animal Science, among others.

As an advocate for the agricul-

tural heritage of Southern Philippines, Damosa Land said it takes pride in this project as it continues to uplift and spur growth for the local agri-sector.

The upcoming UP PSAE campus, set to finish construction by October 2024, can accommodate up to 200 students of agriculture who share the same vision of elevating the agri-business competencies of communities in Mindanao.

Today, we are not only groundbreaking for the establishment of this building, but also we're paving the way for the advancement of agricultural education here in Mindanao. Instead of sending our best and brightest students to different parts of the country and the world to study this field, we can now provide opportunities for them here in Mindanao — the food basket of the Philippines," Damosa Land CEO Ricardo "Cary"

Lagdameo was quoted as saying in a media release.

UP Los Baños Chancellor Jose Camacho Jr., who was also present during the groundbreaking event said, "Right at the very start, our vision is to make UP graduate education more accessible — especially here in Mindanao. We aim to contribute to human resource development of not just the universities but also the public and private institutions like the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources."

An innovator for green communities, Damosa Land said it has been ramping up its efforts to fully integrate the Agriya township and promote sustainable and eco-friendly developments within Panabo City and the rest of Davao. Deeply rooted in its agricultural heritage, Agriya boasts of residential, commercial and tourism

segments that showcase Davao's abundant flora and fauna — highlighting its rich biodiversity, generous banana produce and nature-centric environments.

Beyond enriching its Agriya township, Damosa Land said it can provide an avenue for local agriculture talent to be trained in Davao, the major agri-business center in the country, instead of seeking educational opportunities elsewhere.

"By tapping educational opportunities for empowering homegrown agriculture talent, we can take our commitment beyond and better address the challenges of the industry with the incoming generation. Together with the UP community and UP PSAE, we are optimistic that this partnership will allow us to train our agri experts who can then contribute and hone a competent agri sector," Lagdameo stated. **TMT**



■ The University of the Philippines Professional School for Agriculture and the Environment will be built on a 31,800-sqm property in the Agriya township in Panabo City, Davao del Norte, with the first building donated by the Anflo Group through the Don Antonio O. Floirendo Sr. Foundation. CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

■ University of the Philippines President Angelo Jimenez leads the lowering of the time capsule with (from left) UP PSAE Director Maria Catalina de Luna, Principal Architect for Far East Associates Daniel Lim, UPLB Graduate School Dean Jomar Rabajante, UPLB Vice Chancellor for Planning and Development Fernando Paras, Anflo Group Board Member Anthony Sasin, Kensington Ventures Vice President Jose Manuel Floirendo Lagdameo, Anflo Resort and Development Corp. and Don Antonio O. Floirendo Foundation Managing Director Maricris Floirendo Brias, Anflo Group Vice Chairman Ricardo Floirendo, Real Estate and Construction Group President Ricardo Floirendo Lagdameo, and UPLB Chancellor Jose Camacho Jr.





UN: Next five years set to be hottest period ever

GENEVA, Switzerland: It is near-certain that 2023 to 2027 will be the warmest five-year period ever recorded, the United Nations warned on Wednesday, as greenhouse gases and El Niño combine to send temperatures soaring.

Global temperatures are soon set to exceed the more ambitious target set out in the Paris climate accords, with a two-thirds chance that one of the next five years would do so, the UN's World Meteorological Organization (WMO) said.

The hottest eight years ever recorded were between 2015 and 2022, but temperatures are forecast to rise further as climate change accelerates.

"There is a 98-percent likelihood that at least one of the next five years, and the five-year period as a whole, will be the warmest on record," the WMO said.

The 2015 Paris Agreement saw countries agree to cap global warming at "well below" 2 degrees Celsius above average levels measured between 1850 and 1900 — and 1.5 C if possible.

The global mean temperature in 2022 was 1.15 C above the 1850-

1900 average.

The WMO said there was a 66 percent chance that annual global surface temperatures would exceed 1.5 C above pre-industrial levels for at least one of the years 2023 to 2027, with a range of 1.1 C to 1.8 C forecasted for each of those five years.

While this does not mean that the world would permanently exceed the Paris benchmark, the "WMO is sounding the alarm that we will breach the 1.5 C level on a temporary basis with increasing frequency," said Secretary-General Petteri Taalas.

"A warming El Niño is expected to develop in the coming months and this will combine with human-induced climate change to push global temperatures into uncharted territory," Taalas said.

"This will have far-reaching repercussions for health, food security, water management and the envi-

ronment. We need to be prepared," he added.

El Niño is the large-scale warming of surface temperatures in the central and eastern equatorial Pacific Ocean. The weather phenomenon normally occurs every two to seven years.

Conditions oscillate between El Niño and its opposite, La Niña, with neutral conditions in between.

The WMO said earlier this month that the chances of El Niño developing were 60 percent by the end of July and 80 percent by the end of September.

Typically, El Niño increases global temperatures in the year after it develops, which, in this cycle, would be 2024.

Despite the cooling influence of La Niña conditions over much of the past three years, the warmest eight years on record have all been from 2015 onwards, with 2016 being the hottest.

Heat gets trapped in the atmosphere by so-called greenhouse gases, which are at a record high.

The three major greenhouse gases are carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide.

Global land and sea mean near-surface temperatures have increased since the 1960s.

The chances of temperatures temporarily exceeding 1.5 C above the 1850-1990 average have risen steadily since 2015, a year when they were considered close to zero.

The United Kingdom's Met Office national weather service is the WMO's lead center on yearly to 10-yearly climate predictions.

While there is a 66 percent chance that one year between 2023 and 2027 will exceed the 1.5 C threshold, there is now a 32 percent chance that the entire five-year mean would do so, the Met Office said.

"Global mean temperatures are predicted to continue increasing, moving us away further and further away from the climate we are used to," said Met Office expert scientist Leon Hermanson.

Temperatures this year are likely to be higher than the 1991-2020 average in almost all regions except for Alaska, South Africa, South Asia and parts of Australia, the WMO said.

Parts of the South Pacific Ocean are likely to be cooler than average. **AFP**