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## **TASK FORCE MT. PRINCESS EMPRESS OIL SPILL INCIDENT**

### **SITUATIONAL REPORT NO. 13**

15 March 2023

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*Sources: Philippine Coast Guard, Office of Civil Defense, DENR EMB (incl. MIMAROPA and Region VI), DENR BMB, PENROs and CENROs*

#### **I. SITUATIONAL OVERVIEW**

On 28 February 2023, at approximately 04:16 AM, MT Princess Empress was reportedly half submerged in the vicinity waters of Balingawan Point, Naujan, Oriental Mindoro with 20 crews onboard and 800,000 liters of Industrial Fuel Oil. The vessel came from Bataan and was on its way to Iloilo when it encountered engine trouble due to overheating. At approximately 04:20 AM, all 20 crew members were rescued and brought to Subic Bay, Zambales.

On 01 March 2023, MT Princess Empress had completely submerged.

On 03 March 2023, a State of Calamity was declared in Pola, Oriental Mindoro.

On 04 March 2023, the Municipalities of Naujan, Pola, Bongabong, and Roxas in Oriental Mindoro as well as the Municipality of Caluya in Antique were reported to be affected.

On 06 March 2023, oil slicks were reported to have reached Agutaya, Palawan. Further, the location of MT Princess Empress has been determined and will be verified further, as relayed by DENR Secretary to Oriental Mindoro Governor Bonz Dolor via phone call. Also, State of Calamity was declared in Caluya, Antique as well as the entire province of Oriental Mindoro.

On 10 March 2023, there were sightings of effects in Taytay, Palawan.

Presently, a total of nine (9) municipalities in Oriental Mindoro, two (2) municipalities in Palawan, and one (1) municipality in Antique were reported to be affected.

REGION	PROVINCES	MUNICIPALITIES	REMARKS
MIMAROPA	Oriental Mindoro	1. Naujan 2. Pola 3. Pinamalayan 4. Gloria 5. Bansud 6. Bongabong 7. Roxas 8. Mansalay 9. Bulalacao	Whole province declared under State of Calamity
	Palawan	1. Agutaya 2. Taytay	
Region VI	Antique	1. Caluya	Caluya declared under State of Calamity

Table 1: Affected Areas due to the Oil Spill

## II. EFFECTS TO ENVIRONMENT

### Rapid Assessment

From 06 to 10 March 2023, several interagency Rapid Assessment Teams composed of experts from the DENR Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB), Ecosystems Research and Development Bureau (ERDB), Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office (PENRO), Community Environment and Natural Resources Office (CENRO) of Socorro and Roxas, as well as the the provincial and local government units were deployed in around 58 barangays in the affected municipalities in Region 4B. Methodologies employed were aerial survey, ocular survey, shoreline walk, photo-documentation, and interviews.

Based on the assessment, the following environmental impacts were observed:

- Spot observation for oil impacts on 58 Barangays: 8 Barangays observed with oil spill impact.
- Total habitat affected: ~10 hectares of mangrove area (Brgy. Calima, Pola)
- Potential impact area (coral, seagrass and mangroves) within Rapid Assessment Sites.

Habitat	Area (ha)
<b>NAMRIA CRM MAP 2020</b>	
Corals	2,251.95
Seagrass	1,040.66
Mangroves	1,604.23

Table 2: Potential Impact Area, based on Rapid Assessment

- 25 Barangays have recorded nesting incidence of marine turtles

Similarly, Region 6 also deployed its interagency Rapid Assessment Teams composed of personnel from DENR RO, PENRO Antique and CENRO Culasi. A total of four (4) barangays were visited.

Based on the assessment, the following environmental impacts were observed:

Spot Observation on 4 Barangays with 13 observation sites covering 51.60 kilometers:  
**3 Barangays observed with oil spill impact** (Brgy. Semirara and Brgy. Tinogboc Semirara Island, Sitio Liwagao, Brgy. Sibolo, Liwagao Island)

The total habitat affected covers the following:

- 42.901 Hectares (ha) of Mangrove Area (Semirara Island)
  - 35.457 ha Mangrove Area and 5.444 ha DENR Plantation Sites
- 245.592 Hectares of Seagrass Beds (Semirara Island)
- 40 Hectares Seagrass Beds (Liwagao Island)

The total area assessed is as follows:

Semirara Island	NAMRIA CRM Data (ha)	DENR Plantation (ha)	Total (ha)
Mangrove	395.697	152.800	548.497

Habitat	Liwagao Island	Semirara Island	Total (ha)
Seagrass Beds	40	1,956.538	1,996.538

The results of the rapid assessment put forward the following areas of environmental and community concerns based on the effects of the oil spill:

- Oiled coast and mangroves
- Need for proper oil disposal
- Affected/compromised health of nearby community members
- Affected assets of fisherfolks
- Affected/hampered livelihood by fisherfolks, tourism operators, fish vendors, and other community members

### Water Quality Monitoring

The EMB conducted monitoring for Ambient Water Quality for the parameter oil and grease. The monitoring began as early as 01 March 2023 for the Municipality of Naujan in Region 4B; and on 05 March 2023 for Semirara Island in Region 6. A total of 48 water sampling stations are being monitored.

REGION	NO. OF WATER SAMPLING STATIONS BEING MONITORED
MIMAROPA	38
Region VI	10
TOTAL	40

Table 3: Total Water Sampling Stations being Monitored

Latest results of the monitoring and assessment reveal exceedances in the Water Quality Guideline Values for oil and grease in the identified areas.

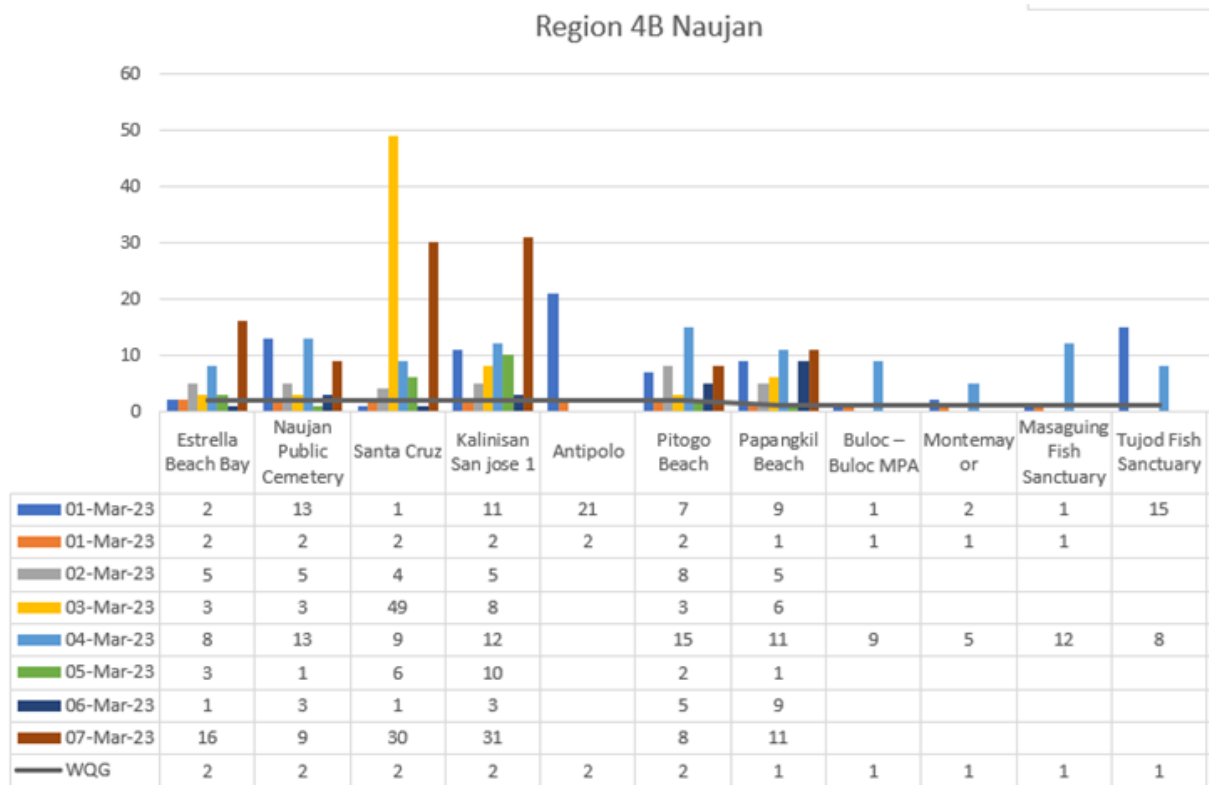


Figure 1: Water Assessment Results in Region 4B

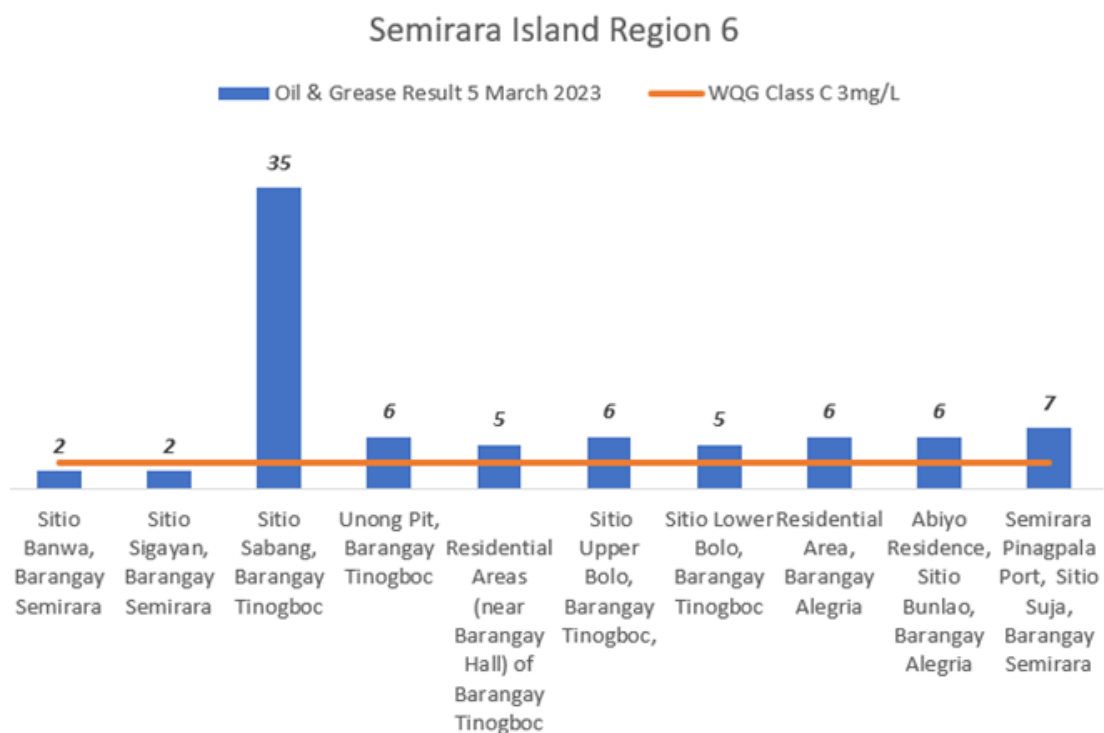


Figure 2: Water Assessment Results in Region VI

## Air Quality Monitoring

As regards air quality monitoring, the EMB through its regional offices undertake two (2) times a week of sampling for PM10, SO2 and NO2; and daily sampling for H2s and VOC. Weekly results shall be reported by DENR-EMB

EMB Region 4B Sampling Plan								
Station Number	Station name	Sampling Team	Sampling Equipment	Parameters	Frequency of Sampling	Averaging time of sampling	Philippine Standards	Estimated Time of Analysis
1	Brgy Misong, Pola, Oriental Mindoro	EMB 4B Personnel, CRL Environmental Corp, and Optimal Laboratories, Inc	Tri – gas Sampler , H2S sampler , PM 10 , Photoionization Detector (PID)	NO2, SO2, VOC, H2S, PM10	Two times a week (indicative) for PM10, SO2 and NO2.  Daily for H2S and VOC	PM10, NO2 and SO2: 1 hour H2S: 30 mins	PM10: 200 ug/Ncm NO2: 260 ug/Ncm SO2: 340 ug/Ncm H2S: 0.07 ppm	4 days
2	Brgy. Calima, Pola, Oriental Mindoro		Tri – gas Sampler , H2S sampler , PM 10, Photoionization Detector (PID)	NO2, SO2, VOC, H2S , PM10				4 days
3	Polacay Beach		Tri – gas Sampler , H2S sampler , PM 10, Photoionization Detector (PID)	NO2, SO2, VOC, H2S, PM10				4 days
4	Casiligan River		Tri – gas Sampler , H2S sampler , PM 10, Photoionization Detector (PID)	NO2, SO2, VOC, H2S , PM10				4 days
5	Nuajan, Oriental Mindoro		PM 10 sampler	PM10				1 Hour and 24 Hours 24 Hours: 150 ug/Ncm

Table 4: EMB Region 4B Sampling Plan, as of 11 March 2023

EMB Region 6 Sampling Plan								
Station Number	Station name	Sampling Team	Sampling Equipment	Parameters	Frequency of Sampling	Averaging time of sampling	Philippine Standards	Estimated Time of Analysis
1	Highly affected Area Sitio Sabang, Barangay Tinogboc (Beach Area and Residential Area)- 2 stations	EMB R6 Personnel	Tri – gas Sampler , H2S sampler , PM 10 , Photoionization Detector (PID)	VOC, H2S, PM10	Two times a week (indicative) for PM10  Daily for H2S and VOC	PM10 and VOCs: 1 hour H2S: 30 mins	PM10: 200 ug/Ncm NO2: 260 ug/Ncm SO2: 340 ug/Ncm H2S: 0.07 ppm	4 days
2	No Traces of Oil Area Sitio Bunlao, Barangay Alegria (Beach and Residential)-2 stations		Tri – gas Sampler , H2S sampler , PM 10, Photoionization Detector (PID)	VOC, H2S , PM10				4 days
3	Mine Site Area (for confirmatory) Sitio Suja, Barangay Semirara		Tri – gas Sampler , H2S sampler , PM 10, Photoionization Detector (PID)	VOC, H2S, PM10				4 days

Table 5: EMB Region 6 Sampling Plan, as of 11 March 2023

## Waste Management

Under the supervision of the EMB, oil waste and oil-contaminated materials are being collected beginning 07 March 2023 with the help of the local officials and residents. As of 11 March 2023, a total of 78.5 drums (approx. 16,344 liters) filled from the oil collected from the Municipality of Pola, and a total 3,100 liters oil collected in Semirara Island are reported by the DENR-EMB.

### **III. ACTIONS TAKEN**

#### **DENR Task Force**

- DENR issues daily Department Statements / Press Statements to provide regular updates to the public.
- On 01 March 2023, the DENR Secretary, together with Key Officials from the Central Office, Regional Office MIMAROPA, Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Officer (PENRO) and Community Environment and Natural Resources Officer (CENRO) met with Oriental Mindoro Governor Humerlito Dolor and Naujan Municipality Mayor Henry Joel Teves to discuss the protection of marine and biodiversity resources and prevent further impacts.

In the afternoon, the DENR joined the 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Council Meeting of Oriental Mindoro PDRRMC and coordinated with Petron and Shell to deploy equipment including oil spill booms.

The DENR Task Force MT Princess Empress Oil Spill was created with Undersecretary Marilou Erni as the Task Force Commander.

- On 02 March 2023, at approximately 03:00 PM, the DENR Task Force organized a meeting with PCG, the Department of Agriculture-Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (DA-BFAR), the Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction Management Office (PDRRMO), and the Provincial Agriculture Office (PAO) for latest situation updates and to arrange the aerial assessment to be led by the DENR Secretary.

At approximately 04:00 PM, the DENR Secretary gave a video statement on the measures being taken by the Department based on the Strategic Action Plan of the Task Force.

The DENR Task Force has established linkage with the Incident Management Team to be jointly led by the Local Chief Executives, PCG and DENR using Unified Command approach.

The DENR Secretary authorized the mobilization of NAMRIA multibeam survey vessels to determine the exact location of the sunken vessel.

- On 03 March 2023, at approximately 7:00 AM, the Task Force led by the DENR Secretary departed Manila to conduct an aerial inspection of affected coastlines, and dialogue with local officials and the PCG in Naujan, Oriental Mindoro. Present during the dialogue were Naujan Mayor Henry Joel Teves, Provincial Administrator, PDRRMO, BFAR, Municipal Agricultural Officer, DENR Undersecretary MGEN Augusto Dela Pena, DENR Undersecretary Carlos Primo David, DENR Assistant Secretary and concurrent Environmental management Bureau (EMB) Director Gilbert Gonzales, Dr. Fernando Siringan of the University of the Philippines Marine Science Institute (UP-MSI), PENRO, and MENROs.

At approximately 10:00 AM, the DENR Task Force, led by Undersecretary Erni, met with the Office of Civil Defense (OCD) to discuss arrangements as to how the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) can augment the requirements for containment and cleanup.

The DENR Secretary departed Naujan, Oriental Mindoro at 10:15 AM and arrived at Villamor Airbase at approximately 11:00 AM. The DENR Secretary reported to the President at approximately 1:00 PM.

NAMRIA multibeam survey vessel, BRP Hydrographer Ventura, was mobilized to determine the exact location of the sunken vessel.

The DENR Secretary spoke with Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) Secretary Rex Gatchalian at approximately 5:00 PM to coordinate a cash for work system for coastal cleanup.

The DENR Secretary reached out to Semirara at approximately 9:00 PM for coordination on cleanup in Caluya, Antique.

- On 04 March 2023, at approximately 7:30 AM, NAMRIA vessel BRP Hydrographer Ventura departed for Oriental Mindoro.

The DENR Secretary reached out to Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) Secretary Benhur Abalos, Department of Tourism (DOT) Secretary Christina Garcia Frasco, Department of Health (DOH) OIC Undersecretary Maria Rosario Vergeire, Palawan Congressman Jose Alvarez, and Iloilo City Mayor Jerry Trenas for mobilization and health and safety of LGUs involved in coastal cleanup and anticipatory action in Northern Palawan and Guimaras Strait.

The DENR Secretary continued to coordinate with DSWD Secretary Rex Gatchalian and he relayed that the cash for work support is ready in Mindoro.



The DENR Secretary reached out to Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) Secretary Bienvenido Laguesma on possible use of the Tulong Panghanapbuhay para sa Ating Disadvantaged/Displaced Workers (TUPAD) Program funds as recommended by Undersecretary Leones. The DENR received a positive response.

At approximately 5:00 PM, the DENR Task Force led by Undersecretary Erni met with the NDRRMC Task Force led by OCD MIMAROPA Regional Director Eugene Cabrera to discuss updates and progress, as well as resolve collective issues and concerns. There will be a joint mechanism for situation reporting by the DENR, focusing on environmental matters, and the NDRRMC, for the overall report.

- On 05 March 2023, NAMRIA vessel BRP Hydrographer Ventura arrived early morning in Oriental Mindoro and gathered data before it was forced to return to Batangas due to rough seas.

The DENR Task Force led by Undersecretary Erni, together with Undersecretary Leones and other Regional officials, visited the Municipality of Pola, Oriental Mindoro. The team met various agency officials on the ground, including DOH OIC Undersecretary Vergeire following the ceremonial turn over of oxygen concentrators, drugs and medicines and other health emergency supplies and equipment. A dialogue was conducted with members of the local community. Present were the DENR Task Force, Oriental Mindoro Governor Bonz Dolor, DOH OIC Undersecretary Vergeire, and representatives from national agencies.

The BMB team arrived in Calapan, Oriental Mindoro to conduct a rapid assessment of affected coastal and marine habitats. In collaboration with UP MSI and UP Visayas, the team is currently developing strategies for rehabilitation, restoration, and regeneration of the affected ecosystems.

At approximately 4:00 PM, the DENR Secretary met the DENR Task Force via video teleconferencing to discuss situation updates and reiterate priorities for the Department. The contents of the National Oil Spill Contingency Plan (NOSCOP) 2019 was also discussed by the Task Force, in which the leadership role of the PCG in the overall incident management for oil spill was recognized.

- On 06 March 2023, Undersecretary Erni met with DENR MIMAROPA Regional Executive Director Lormelyn Claudio to finalize arrangements for the cash for work system and undertake preparations for the meeting with Governor Dolor.

At approximately 9:30 AM, Secretary Loyzaga and other members of the DENR Key Officials met with DSWD Secretary Gatchalian via video teleconferencing to discuss updates on the cash for work system as well as a system of managing donations to be received.

At approximately 12:30 PM, Secretary Loyzaga informed Governor Dolor that BRP Hydrographer Ventura has determined the location of the vessel and will require further verification.

The BMB Assessment Teams were deployed in the Municipality of Pola to assess the Biodiversity and Social Impact of the oil spill as well as to conduct aerial surveys to measure its impact area. A total of nine (9) Barangays were targeted to be assessed including: Misong, Tagumpay, Puting Cacao, Tiguihan, Bayanan, Zone 1, Zone II, Batuhan, and Calima.

- On 07 March 2023, at approximately 08:30 AM, the DENR Secretary, along with other Key Officials, visited Oriental Mindoro via Presidential Bell 412 aircraft. The Secretary met with Governor Dolor at Pola to discuss next steps following the confirmation of the vessel's location. Among the priorities are the conduct of assessment to determine the appropriate filing of charges. Further, Governor Dolor manifested that the implementation of cash for work should be coursed through the Provincial Government to ensure accountability and avoid duplication of efforts.

At approximately 04:00 PM, the DENR Task Force convened for situation reporting. The meeting was presided over by Undersecretary Leones wherein it was agreed that teams are expected to provide timely updates on the results of water and air sampling and testing. Further, there should be careful and swift handling of disposal of oil wastes.

The BMB deployed three (3) teams to thirteen (13) barangays in the Municipality of Pinamlayan and Bansud, Oriental Mindoro.

- On 08 March 2023, the DENR Secretary reported updates to the President in connection with the oil spill. The updates highlighted the tanker's location, the actions taken by the DENR, process flow for the cash for work program, summary of donations monitored, and ways forward.

Further, three (3) teams from the BMB targeted to visit the Municipalities of Bongabong and Roxas with seven (7) and six (6) barangays, respectively. Also, BFAR's toxicity tests on fish are ongoing.

In addition, the Oriental Mindoro Coastal Resources Monitoring Team composed of BMB, PENRO Oriental Mindoro, CENRO Roxas, CENRO

Socorro, and the Provincial Agriculturist's Office, assessed the degree of oiling in affected areas.

- On 09 March 2023, the Task Force led by Undersecretary Erni met to discuss updates. Among the meeting highlights were the determination of needs per Region as well as the clarification on the cash for work program. The standardization of reporting of waste collection as part of cleanup operations was also highlighted. There was also a discussion on proper management and observance of protocols for mangrove cleanup.

The BMB Rapid Assessment Teams were deployed to visit the municipalities of Mansalay, Bulalacao, and Gloria, with eight (8), three (3), and four (4) barangays, respectively.

- On 10 March 2023, the DENR Task Force was convened by the DENR Secretary to discuss latest situation updates, particularly on water and air quality assessment, the status of the cash for work program, current needs,, and impact assessment.

During the meeting, the Regions MIMAROPA and VI presented their respective accomplishments as well as the summary of cleanup operations to the Secretary.

The Secretary instructed the Task Force to arrange preparations for the briefing for foreign donors and organizations who have offered assistance. The preparations will include the quantifying of specific needs as well as the composition of briefing teams.

Following the assessments, the BMB teams are set to conduct the exit conference at the Office of the PENRO in Calapan, Oriental Mindoro to consolidate observations and the ways forward.

- On 11 March 2023, at approximately 8:00 AM, the DENR led by the Secretary, together with other key officials and UP MSI, joined the coordination meeting with the PCG, to discuss updates on strategic actions as well as determination of needs for briefing to partners and donors.

During the meeting, UP MSI highlighted the projections for the incident. Accordingly, NOAA images confirmed continuous seepage (15-20 days based on basic assumptions). Due to prevailing winds, oil will continue to be dispersed to East Palawan. Further, slicks are not seen on surface due to dispersion, emulsion because of strong winds and waves.

The DENR-EMB presented the consolidated updates on water testing, air testing, waste management and cash for work.

The BMB also presented the summary of rapid assessment undertaken in around 58 barangays.

- On 12 March 2023, the DENR Task Force continued to monitor the implementation of cleanup operations and cash for work programs as well as the monitoring of donations.
- On 13 March 2023, the DENR Secretary convened the Task Force Key Officials composed of Undersecretaries and Assistant Secretaries to consolidate all updates and come up with a unified report.
- On 14 March 2023, the Task Force led by the Secretary, together with NAMRIA and UP MSI (via Zoom) participated in the Senate Hearing for the Senate Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Climate Change at approximately 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM. During the hearing, the DENR highlighted the context to situate the Department's role in the oil spill response, the updates from NAMRIA on the ship's location, operational updates from the EMB and BMB, the needs and ways ahead.
- On 15 March 2023, at approximately 9:00 AM, Undersecretary Erni and key officials attended the NDRRMC Meeting in connection with the oil spill. During the meeting, Undersecretary Ariel Nepomuceno, Executive Director of NDRRMC and Administrator of OCD, assumed responsibility that the Council's mechanisms will be fully utilized to orchestrate the efforts of the different agencies.

At approximately 4:00 PM, the Task Force met with the UP MSI and PCG for a coordination meeting to discuss reporting process flows on the status of the oil spill and the projections. Further, the need to expedite implementation of cash for work was highlighted.

#### **DENR MIMAROPA, EMB MIMAROPA, PENRO and CENROs**

- On 01 March 2023, preliminary investigation and water sampling commenced in collaboration with PCG, BFAR and the local government units.

At approximately 8:00 PM, Assistant Secretary Gilbert Gonzales together with DENR Regional Officials met with PCG and BFAR to discuss updates. PCG was requested for assistance in terms of boats and other logistical provisions.

- On 02 March 2023, water samples were collected along the coast of Tablas Strait, Naujan, Oriental Mindoro.

At approximately 9:00 AM, PENRO commenced cleanup operations in areas with spotted oil spill from the shoreline covering the barangays of Calima, Buhay na Tubig and Bacawan, Pola, Oriental Mindoro.

At 10:00 PM, the Regional Environmental Laboratory of EMB MIMAROPA Region released the Result of Analysis based on the water samples collected from the established sampling stations in Naujan, Oriental Mindoro and ground zero (oil spillage area) on 01 March 2023.

The water samples collected from ground zero and seven (7) sampling stations namely: Estrella, San Jose 1, San Jose Proper, Pitugo Beach, Papangkil Beach, Montemayor Proper, and Tujod Fish Sanctuary, show that the water quality greatly exceeded the parameters for Oil and Grease as required under DENR Administrative Order No. 2016-08.

- On 03 March 2023, EMB MIMAROPA continued to conduct water sampling within the province of Marinduque.
- On 04 March 2023, coordination was made with the UP MSI to develop trajectory models to forecast the track and transport of the slick.

Several coordination visits were also made with DSWD Secretary Gatchalian, Governor Dolor, Pinamalayan Mayor Baldos, Bongabong Mayor Malaluan and other key officials. Improvised spill booms using nets and coconut shingles were initiated to help Brgy. Misong in the Municipality of Pola.

Coordination has also been made with Coron, Palawan, in which it was found that the area was not affected by the oil spill as of the moment.

Air sampling was made using Tri-Gas Sampler at Brgy. Misong in Pola. The results shall be released within 2-3 days upon receipt of the samples at Optimal Laboratory, Lipa, Batangas.

- On 05 March 2023, DENR and EMB MIMAROPA, together with the PENRO and CENROs, facilitated proper hazardous waste management disposal at Brgy. Misong, Pola, Oriental Mindoro. Coordination has also been undertaken with accredited Treatment, Storage and Disposal (TSD) facilities.
- On 06 March 2023, UP MSI released its updated Trajectory Model for the oil spill for March 07 to 12.

Usec Leones, together with EMB Region VI met with DOLE MIMAROPA for the profiling of possible volunteers for the cash for work program.

RED Claudio also met with Governor Dolor to discuss the updates for the cash for work as well as the clarification on the leadership role of the PCG as provided for in the NOSCOP.

In the afternoon, the teams from the DENR and EMB MIMAROPA facilitated the disposal of collected oil wastes.

- On 07 March 2023, the results of the ambient air sampling were released. The parameters for Nitrogen Dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) and Sulfur Dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>) met the National Ambient Air Quality Standards for Source Specific Air Pollutants from Industrial Sources/Operations under Republic Act 8749 otherwise known as The Philippine Clean Air Act.

Further, the list of households to join the cash for work program has been submitted to the Provincial Government of Oriental Mindoro.

Based on the results of analysis from the samples taken from the following sampling stations from March 1 to 6, the presence of oil and grease in waterbodies of Oriental Mindoro has exceeded the Water Quality Guidelines (WQG) under DENR Administrative Order No. 2016 – 08.

EMB Regional Director Joe Amil Salino also inspected the 120-meter spill booms installed by the PCG and Pola MDRRMO at Casimawawa River.

At approximately 10:40 PM, DENR and EMB Regional Offices met with the PCG to clarify the next steps for the cash for work program. The agreed ways forward include the identification of cleanup sites, securing of the list of individuals and fisherfolks to be involved and the provision of resource requirements.

- On 08 March 2023, Engr. Rochelle Padirayon, Chief, Toxic Chemicals and Hazardous Waste Monitoring Section, led the coordination meeting with PDRRMO Chief Vincent Gahol, Pola MDRRMO, PCG and PNP personnel on the establishment of collection points for hazardous materials collected during the cleanup.

At approximately 1:35 PM, EMB MIMAROPA led a briefing attended by the Philippine Army, PDRRMO, Pola MDRRMO in preparation for the hauling of hazardous wastes.

In the evening, the Chief, Provincial Environmental Management Unit (PEMU) Oriental Mindoro, received on behalf of EMB MIMAROPA various donations from First Gen Corporation. The donations included PPEs, materials for cleanup and other supplies.

- On 09 March 2023, a multi-sectoral meeting was led by Pola Mayor Cruz to tackle issues and concerns, including legal matters. Another inter-agency meeting was also held at the Incident Command Post (ICP) to discuss the coastal clean-up activities. There was also a meeting with the LGU and DSWD to discuss the next steps for the cash for work program.
- On 10 March 2023, the Regional Office participated in the simultaneous coastal cleanup activities in Pola. The teams provided technical assistance on the proper collection, storage and disposal of hazardous wastes collected during the cleanup. A total of 70 personnel for cash for work and 25 personnel from the harbour were deployed at Brgys. Misong, Tagumpay, Calima and Buhay na Tubig.
- On 11 March 2023, interagency water sampling team was deployed in Taytay, Palawan. Afterwards, coordination meeting was conducted with the barangay officials of Brgy. Casian, Taytay, Palawan and law enforcement authorities. In addition, a meeting with the LGUs of Roxas, Palawan, PCG, and Banwa Private Island Resort was undertaken to discuss measures to contain and mitigate the oil spill in case it reaches the area.
- On 12 March 2023, the Region reported a total of 9,100 liters with 8,190 kilograms of oil waste collected as a result of the cleanup operations.
- On 13 March 2023, the Region reported about the conduct of water quality sampling on certain locations at Brgy. Casian, Taytay, Palawan. The office is currently waiting for the release of the results.
- On 14 March 2023, the Task Force led by the Secretary, together with NAMRIA and UP MSI (via Zoom) participated in the Senate Hearing for the Senate Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Climate Change at approximately 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM. During the hearing, the DENR highlighted the context to situate the Department's role in the oil spill response, the updates from NAMRIA on the ship's location, operational updates from the EMB and BMB, the needs and ways ahead.
- On 15 March 2023, OPEMU – Oriental Mindoro assisted by PCG collected two (2) drums of hazardous waste at Brgy. Zone 1, Pola, Oriental Mindoro. The teams also conducted continuous water quality sampling at various locations in Oriental Mindoro and monitored the storage sites for hazardous wastes.

Water quality sampling was also conducted in the following areas:

1. Burangcaan Point, Magsaysay, Occidental Mindoro
2. Alibog Beach, Magsaysay, Occidental Mindoro
3. Garza Island, Magsaysay, Occidental Mindoro
4. Pawikan, Ilin Island, San Jose, Occidental Mindoro
5. Grace Island, Ambulong, Occidental Mindoro

## **DENR REGION VI, EMB REGION VI, PENRO and CENROs**

- On 03 March 2023, initial coordination was made with the Local Government of Caluya, Antique for updates and the Semimara Mining and Power Corporation (SMPC) for possible assistance.
- On 04 March 2023, EMB Region commenced planning for the conduct of inspection and water sampling. The installation of provisional spill booms made of locally available materials was also conducted.

EMB Region VI also attended the meeting with OCD Region VI and concerned agencies to discuss situation updates.

In response to the request for assistance, SMPC has provided 50 drums, 100 sacks, and fabricated rakes and spades for the cleanup to the Barangay Tinugboc Oil Spill Response Team.

- On 05 March 2023, based on water sampling, Brgys. Semirara and Tinogbog were found to be highly affected with the oil spillage. The Sampling Team also identified sites for Brgy. Algeria for possible contamination and comparison.

At approximately 11:31 AM, initial sampling was conducted on Station 1: Sitio Banwa, Brgy. Semirara. Based on observations, patches of oil sheens were seen on rock surfaces. Presence of oil traces was also seen on dried seagrass lining the shoreline. Oil is observed to be washed through wave action. No hauling of oil contaminated debris has been observed

EMB Region VI also participated in the PDRRMC Meeting of Antique. The Council has been updated about the monitoring teams deployed by EMB in Semirara island. Requests for air and sea assets for transport have been made due to rough sea conditions.

- On 06 March 2023, the EMB Monitoring Team completed the sampling and site monitoring activity for the ten (10) identified sites in the island. Sitio Sabang, Brgy. Tinogbog, Semirara Island was observed to be the most affected out of the three barangays in the island. Seen on-site were six (6) units drums (200-



liter capacity) full of collected oil and one (1) unit containing approximately 40 liter (1/5 of the drum) and 27 sacks containing oil contaminated sand.

Cleanup operations also resumed upon availability of PPEs from SMPC.

A meeting between DENR and EMB Region VI was conducted for the deployment of Rapid Assessment Team.

A total of ninety (90) individuals for possible enrollment for the cash for work program were identified by MENRO Caluya for endorsement to DOLE Region VI.

- On 07 March 2023, preparations were undertaken for the cash for work program for Semimara Island. Further, Regional Executive Director Levino Durna prepared to depart for Semirara Island.

Further, the PCG has arrived in Liwagao Island, Semirara. It was observed that the affected area is approximately a 2.0-kilometer stretch with an approximate 3 inch thickness of emulsified oil buried in the sand. The estimated waste to be collected is about 20 drums.

The Rapid Assessment Team of Region VI commenced preparations. The team included technical staff on mapping and other personnel who previously handled the Guimaras and Iloilo Oil Spill.

- On 08 March 2023, coastal cleanup commenced. Operations at the shorelines of Sitio Liwagao, Brgy. Sibolo, Liwagao Island resulted to the collection of 20 drums of oily wastes. The teams also completed approximately 400 meters of sorbent boom in the island.

Aerial observation using helicopter of the Philippine Air Force was jointly conducted. No sightings of oil spill offshore were observed Southeast of Semirara Island.

- On 09 March 2023, DENR and EMB Region VI reported the summary of the cleanup operations in Sitio Sabang.
- On 10 March 2023, DENR Region VI conducted site assessment and comparison on the status of the shorelines of a) Sitio Liwagao, Brgy. Sibolo, Liwagao Island, b) Sitio Sabang, Brgy. Tinogboc, Semirara island and c) Brgy. Semirara, Semirara Island. The assessment highlighted the need for careful cleaning of mangroves with supervision and monitoring of technical experts.

Further, coastal cleanup was conducted at the shorelines of Sitio Toong, Brgy. Semirara. A total of 49 sacks of wastes were collected. The Region also conducted its regular oil and grease water quality monitoring.

The Region also established sampling sites for ambient water quality monitoring and has closely coordinated with the PCG and LGU to update data

on collected oil and oil contaminated materials. Likewise, the Region calibrated equipment for Ambient Air Quality Assessment for March 14 to 17.

- On 11 March 2023, the Regional Office completed site assessment and comparison on the status of the shorelines of a) Sitio Liwagao, Brgy. Sibolo, Liwagao Island, b) Sitio Sabang, Brgy. Tinogboc, Semirara island and c) Brgy. Semirara, Semirara Island.

Also, coastal cleanup at the shorelines of Sitio Sabang, Brgy. Semirara, Caluya, Antique was conducted. A total of 66 responders were deployed in the area. The responders completed the construction of the Temporary Storage Facility and transferred all collected wastes and debris. They collected five (5) tonner bags and five (5) pail containers of contaminated sand, one (1) tonner bag of contaminated sea grass, 15 pail containers of sludges with sand and 15 sacks of contaminated wood at Sitio Sabang, Brgy. Tinogboc, Caluya, Antique. They also completed building two (2) temporary waste storage for oil spill and relocated 245 oil contaminated waste.

- On 12 March 2023, coastal cleanup was conducted at shorelines of Sitio Liwagao, Brgy. Sibolo, Caluya, Antique. A total of 30-35 drums of oil were collected in 300 meters of shoreline.
- On 13 March 2023, EMB Regional Office coordinated with DSWD on the status of the cash for work program. The daily wage for each volunteer shall be PHP 450.00 per head, targeting one (1) individual each from the 7,617 families. The Office has also coordinated with DOLE on the status of the TUPAD Program.
- On 14 March 2023, coastal cleanup was conducted at the shorelines of Sitio Sabang, Brgy. Semirara, Caluya, Antique. As for the cleanup at Sitio Liwagao, Brgy. Sibolo, a total of 20 drums of oil were collected in 30 meters of shoreline.

The EMB Regional Office coordinated with Harbor Star Shipping, contractor for the cleanup and disposal of oil waste. The Office also coordinated with DOLE on the status of the TUPAD Program. In addition, the EMB Air and Water Quality Monitoring Team was deployed to Semirara Island to conduct the 2nd weekly water sampling, initial air quality sampling and documentation.

- On 15 March 2023, the EMB Regional Office personnel were in Semirara Island to conduct ambient air and water quality sampling, monitor the temporary hazardous waste storage facility and document response activities.

Air sampling has been conducted in three (3) stations and the temporary storage facilities. Analyses detected Zero Concentrations for H<sub>2</sub>S (Hydrogen Sulfide) and CO (Carbon Monoxide) and for Volatile Organic Compounds (Isobutylene, Methane).

As for the coastal cleanup at Sitio Liwagao, Brgy. Sibolo, Caluya, Antique, a total of 15 drums of oily sand were collected in 50 meters of shoreline.

#### **IV. WAYS AHEAD**

1. Sustain coastal water and air monitoring, oil spill recovery and cleanup
2. Introduce contingency measures to abate impacts on marine protected areas, mangroves and other ecosystems
3. Sustain proper collection, transport, and disposal of recovered wastes to TSD facilities
4. Implement arrangements for cash for work in collaboration with DSWD, DOLE and affected LGUs
5. Continue linkage with donors, private organizations, development partners, and other partners for possible support
6. Strengthen evidence basis for possible future action against accountable parties

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