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**DENR**

# **NEWS ALERTS**

**STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE**



# Cimatu hails DENR frontliners for meeting COVID-19 challenge

Published December 31, 2020, 2:45 PM

by [Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz](#)

Secretary Roy Cimatu has paid tribute to the frontliners of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) for continuously serving the public despite the threats of COVID-19.



Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu, chief coronavirus disease (COVID-19) response implementor in the Viayas (NTF AGAINST COVID-19 / MANILA BULLETIN)

As in any other organization, Cimatu said COVID-19 has changed the way people work at the DENR with work-from-home and skeleton workforce becoming the new norms.

“My heartfelt appreciation goes to our frontliners who painstakingly continued to physically report for work under tremendous stress and danger despite knowing that they are exposing themselves to the threats of the pandemic,” Cimatu said in his year-end message to the DENR community.

The DENR chief reported that 50 DENR employees, part of the skeleton workforce, across the country have been infected with COVID-19.

Despite the health threats posed by COVID-19 and other hazards at work, Cimatu said the DENR workers still proved they could “measure up to the challenges, if not exceed them.”

Cimatu said he knew how it feels to be a frontliner having been assigned by President Rodrigo Duterte to oversee government efforts to contain the COVID-19 infections in Cebu City last June.

“I was at the front seat of saving human lives and I realized that my mission to arrest the spread of COVID infection in Cebu was no different from the task our people at the DENR are faced with, especially our frontliners,” he said.

While he was glad that the DENR recorded zero casualty from COVID-19, Cimatu lamented the deaths of two forest protection officers in the line of duty.

He hailed the slain DENR workers as “heroic examples of those who had responded to and exceeded the challenges posed by the pandemic.”

So far, the DENR Central Office in Quezon City had been put on two complete lockdowns on June 25 and from July 9 to 22 immediately after confirmation of infection among 11 of its skeleton workforce.

Source: <https://mb.com.ph/2020/12/31/cimatu-hails-dnr-frontliners-for-meeting-covid-19-challenge/>



# DENR meets with sanitary landfill operators nationwide

By DENR Published on December 31, 2020

QUEZON CITY, Dec. 31 -- For the first time in the history of solid waste management in the country, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources initiated a meeting with the sanitary landfill operators nationwide in its effort to continuously find doable ways in solving our solid waste management issue in the country. The consultation took place in a blend of face-to-face and virtual platform.



Photo from DENR Official FB page.

Undersecretary for Solid Waste Management and Local Government Units Concerns and Alternate to the Chairman of the National Solid Waste Management Commission Benny D. Antiporda spearheaded the meeting as he urged these operators to put at the heart of their business the responsibility of taking care of the environment by providing their services to our LGUs and the people with passion.



## DENR eyes 300 landfills by 2022

By [Eireene Jairee Gomez](#)

January 1, 2021

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) looks to build an additional 300 sanitary landfills (SLFs) by next year to further improve the country's solid waste management.

“Ambitious as it may seem to be as a target, but we shall aim to establish 300 SLFs by the end of 2022,” Benny Antiporda, Environment undersecretary for Solid Waste Management and Local Government Units (LGUs) Concerns, said during his department's recent hybrid consultation meeting with 21 SLF operators.

The meeting aimed to foster closer collaboration among SLF operators, LGUs and the DENR through the National Solid Waste Management Commission, where former newsman Antiporda sits as the alternate of DENR chief Roy Cimatu.

The additional landfills will be built through public-private partnership, Antiporda said.

According to him, a SLF remained the primary long-term method of solid waste disposal allowed under Republic Act 9003, or the “Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000.”

During the meeting, Antiporda called on the operators to explore the viability of offering their facilities to LGUs with illegal dumpsites in anticipation of a DENR campaign to shut them down starting this month.

He urged SLF operators to “set aside whatever differences they have and close ranks as an association or coalition.”

“This is the first time operators will unite and have a voice when engaging the DENR and the public sector in discussions geared toward resolving challenges faced by the solid waste management sector,” he added.



## Nilad shrub returns to Manila's rivers

Cimatu said the greening of coastal areas as part of the Manila Bay rehabilitation program will see the revival of the nilad plant

Published 4 hours ago on January 1, 2021 02:30 AM

By [Pat C. Santos](#) @tribunephil\_pat



The nilad shrub, after which the City of Manila was named, will soon become a familiar sight in the city after the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) opened a nursery in Baseco, Tondo, to raise seedlings of the plant and mangrove.

In his speech at the nursery's opening last Tuesday, DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu said the greening of coastal areas as part of the Manila Bay rehabilitation program will see the revival of the nilad plant, which vanished due to overpopulation and the public's disregard for the environment.

Cimatu said the development of Manila into the country's major center of trade saw its waterways being encroached by modern vessels, affecting the nilad's growth.

The propagation of the nilad is important to the greening campaign since plants cleanse the air of pollution, he explained. Clean air strengthens a person's immune system, making one resilient against diseases.

The DENR chief said the agency searched for available stock of the nilad, which they found in the rivers of Quezon Province's forest.

Cimatu gave assurances that within a month's time, nilad saplings, as well as those of mangroves, at the Baseco nursery will be available for planting.

Manila's Department of Public Services (DPS) chief Kenneth Amurao said it has been the goal of Mayor Isko Moreno Domagosoto to clean the city's waterways, from canals, esteros and rivers. The city also has estero rangers, Baseco DPS water warriors and Manila bay cleaners tasked for the job.

On the other hand, Manila Vice Mayor Honey Lacuna, who graced the nursery's opening, praised the harmonious relationship between the city's executive branch and legislative body where she presides for the success of cleanup efforts.

She vowed to work together in full support of the cleaning of the environment, which she pledges to return to good condition.



# Manila Bay rehab continues despite pandemic

Our work continues despite the limitations in mobilizing people, especially for our cleanup, monitoring and enforcement activities

Published 4 hours ago on January 1, 2021 02:30 AM

By [Francis Wakefield](#)

Efforts to clean up Manila Bay and other water systems in Metro Manila gained much headway despite the onslaught of the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) pandemic in 2020, Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Roy Cimatu said in a report.

Cimatu said in the Baywalk area, site of the controversial white sand project using crushed dolomite sourced from a mine in Cebu, fecal coliform is now down to 2,211,833 most probable number per 100 milliliters (MPN/100ml), compared to 5,666,213 MPN/100ml in 2019.

On the other hand, a significant decrease in fecal coliform was also recorded in Estero de San Antonio Abad, going down to 19,066,767 MPN/100ml from 43,881,048 MPN/100ml, while at Baseco Beach down to 341,225 MPN/100ml from 1,700,000 MPN/100ml in 2019.

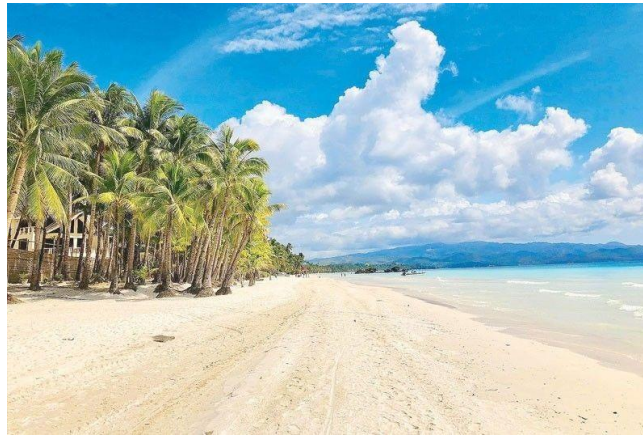
Cimatu said dredging and desilting operations were also conducted in the Baywalk area in collaboration with the Department of Public Works and Highways under Secretary Mark Villar.

He said through this initiative, a total of 210,549 cubic meters of silt and submerged garbage were dredged.

On the other hand, a total of 551,768.72 cubic meters of dredged material was collected from a number of esteros, creeks and rivers, which are included in the eight priority river systems, namely San Juan River, Pasig River, Tullahan-Tinajeros River, Navotas-Malabon River, Parañaque River, Las Piñas-Zapote River, Taguig-Pateros River and Marikina River.

Cimatu said an average 60 metric tons of garbage were collected daily for a total of 24,471.30 metric tons from 2019, as regular cleanup activities were conducted in creeks, esteros and river systems.

“Our work continues despite the limitations in mobilizing people, especially for our cleanup, monitoring and enforcement activities,” Cimatu, who chairs the Manila Bay Task Force in charge of restoring the historic water body, said.



Boracay inter-agency rehabilitation management group general manager Natividad Bernardino also cited compliance of hotels and other commercial establishments on the island resort.

Photos by Joanne Rae Ramirez

## Task force: Boracay rehab on track

[Louise Maureen Simeon](#) (The Philippine Star) - January 1, 2021 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — The Boracay Inter-Agency Task Force (BIATF) has given assurance that it is on track to meet its target for the full rehabilitation of Boracay by May 2021.

In its yearend report, the BIATF said the number of structures found violating easement rules is now down to 342 from a total of 1,569.

Boracay inter-agency rehabilitation management group general manager Natividad Bernardino also cited compliance of hotels and other commercial establishments on the island resort.

Bernardino said the average coliform level on the main beach is now down to 10 most probable number per 100 milliliters, which is suitable for seawater recreational activities like swimming and skin diving.

The BIATF has also completed the first and second phases of circumferential road improvements covering up to 8.75 kilometers of paved and widened roads.

The relocation of some 113 illegal structures in Wetland 6 had been completed.

The 31 Tumandok families who previously occupied the wetland have been transferred to parcels of land covered by certificates of land ownership award issued by the Department of Agrarian Reform under the comprehensive agrarian reform program.



# Environmentalists call for mining transparency

Published 22 hours ago on December 31, 2020 09:26 AM

By [Rico Osmeña](#)



Last 21 December, the Carmen Pit owned and operated by CCC collapsed.

The Sectoral Transparency Alliance for Natural Resource Governance Cebu (STANCe) has called on national and local governments to look into the collapse of the mining pit operated by Carmen Copper Corporation (CCC) that killed four miners and six others missing.

The incident in Toledo City should be a wake-up call for governments to manage Cebu's natural resources better, said STANCe spokesperson Dr. Glenn Pajares in an exclusive interview with Daily Tribune.

“Government agencies mandated to lead the management of natural resources to update standards of monitoring, intensify efforts in environmental management, provide timely disclosure of information, and expand spaces of extractive industries,” he reiterated.

STANCe suggested for multidisciplinary engagements in the governance of natural resources “so that accountability can be exacted from those who are liable to answer to this disaster.”

The group reminded authorities of the Naga landslide in 2018 that killed more than 70 people noting there was rampant quarrying in the area before the disaster.

Last 21 December, the Carmen Pit owned and operated by CCC collapsed.

Governor Gwendolyn Garcia said the provincial government will not investigate the collapse because it has no expertise and mandate to do so.

“The MGB (Mines and Geosciences Bureau) has undertaken the investigation. We'll wait for their results,” said Garcia.

“We will be helping the families affected, including the workers who were injured due to the incident,” she added.

Meanwhile, the Toledo City government has started relocating at least 400 families or 2,000 individuals in Barangay Biga, where widening cracks near the landslide site heightens risk of another disaster.

Search and retrieval operations for the missing miners are still ongoing.

CCC in its media statement vowed that financial and other means of assistance will be granted to their employees affected by the landslide.

Toledo City is a third-class city located 46 kilometers southwest of Cebu City.

*p: wjg*

Source: <https://tribune.net.ph/index.php/2020/12/31/environmentalists-call-for-mining-transparency/>





# BOC-NAIA condemns 365 kilos of unregistered medicines, hazardous goods

Aileen Cerrudo • December 31, 2020



The Bureau of Customs (BOC) at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA) condemned another 365 kilograms of unregistered medicines and other hazardous goods in Cavite on Tuesday (December 29).

On its Facebook post on Wednesday, the BOC said the seized medicine and cosmetic products are unsafe for human consumption as they did not have the necessary clearance from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

District Collector Carmelita M. Talusan said authorities used thermal decomposer (Pyrolysis) to destroy the enregistered goods to guarantee that no single item will find its way to the market.

The port previously condemned 4.28 tons of unregistered and hazardous goods last December 7. For the year 2020, a total of 373.19 tons of unregistered goods had been destroyed.

The BOC said the move is part of Commissioner Rey Leonardo B. Guerrero's border protection initiatives to protect the public against unsafe goods and trade facilitation directive to zero out overstaying cargoes to decongest ports. **-AAC**



View of Taal Lake in Batangas province, south of Manila, pictured on Nov. 21, 2020.  
Philstar.com/EC Toledo IV

## Saving Taal Lake, preserving the endemic tawilis

[Gaea Katreena Cabico](#) (Philstar.com) - December 31, 2020 - 12:01pm

BATANGAS, Philippines — Rolly Orense, 50, has been fishing in Taal Lake in Batangas province since he was a seven-year-old boy. He is usually up at four in the morning to catch fish, mostly the tiny tawilis.

As he has been a man of the lake for most of his life, Orense knows that December is the start of the lean period for fishermen who catch tawilis (*Sardinella tawilis*). Fishers said that because of the cold weather, tawilis go deeper into the water, beyond the reach of their nets.

But it's a different December, Orense said, as the catch has been abundant. The fisherman from Mataasnahoy town said he was able to catch 30 kilograms of tawilis for two straight days—a level he has not seen during this time in previous years.

“This time last year, our catch was only enough to cover the expense for gasoline. But this month, it seems the harvest was abundant,” Orense said in an interview on December 5.

The lake is always mysterious, he said, but this year, it provides.



A plate of tawilis pictured on Dec. 5, 2020.

Philstar.com/Deejae Dumlaog

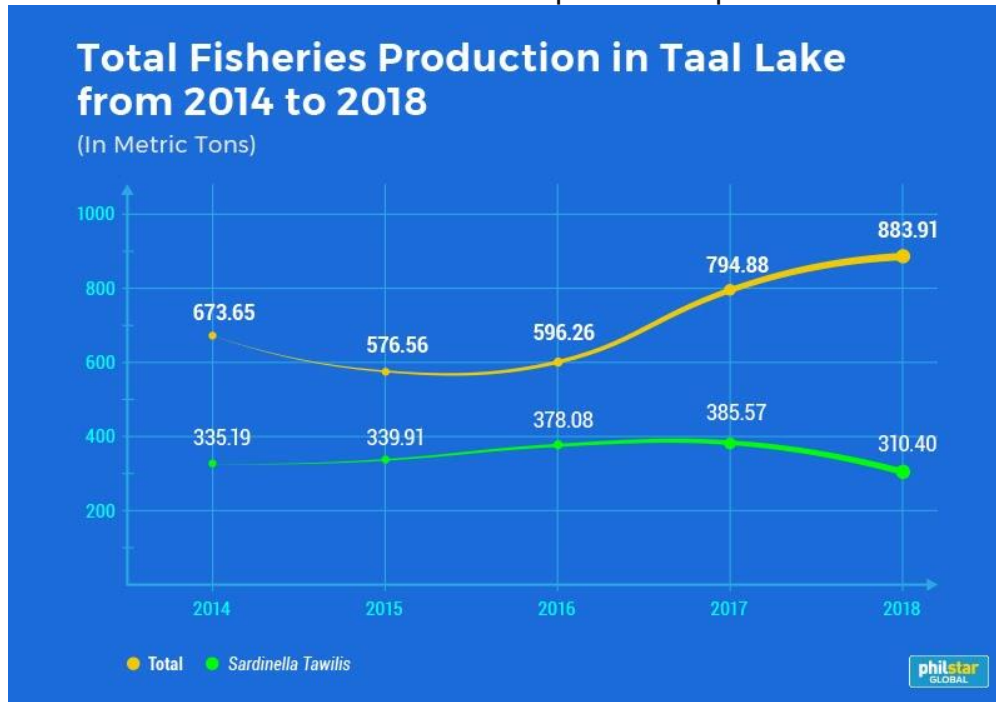
### Endangered sardine

Aside from tawilis, Orense also catches bangus (*Chanos chanos*) and maliputo (*Caranx ignobilis*). But the freshwater sardine is the fisherman's priority.

“Our priority is catching tawilis because it's profitable. Even if your catch is few, you will still be able to sell,” Orense said. The fish can be sold by fishers at P70 (\$1.46) per kilo.



Tawilis is the most dominant fish species caught in the lake, making it a staple food for lakeside towns and cities. Locals and tourists love tawilis deep fried and paired with hot bulalo.



National Fisheries Research and Development Institute

Tawilis is the only freshwater sardine in the world, and it can only be found in Taal Lake, a crater lake formed by the active Taal Volcano.

Limnologist Rey Donne Papa called it the “icon” of freshwater biology and one of the “superstars” of Philippine biodiversity.

“The unique geological [characteristics] of Taal Lake together with its active volcanism have led to the evolution of this species,” Papa, dean of the University of Santo Tomas College of Science, said.

Taal Lake used to be broadly connected to Balayan Bay. But a series of destructive eruptions in the 18th century closed off the lake’s access to the bay, leading it to become entirely freshwater.

Tawilis is believed to be one of the marine species that have adapted to desalinated waters.

But in 2018, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), which assesses the conservation status of species worldwide, listed the economically-important tawilis as endangered.

The assessment, made by local scientists, said the harvest of the species has been declining since 1998 due to wanton fishing, illegal use of active fishing gears, proliferation of fish cages and deterioration of water quality in the lake.

According to a study published in 2018, tawilis harvest increased to 1,120 metric tons (MT) in 1998 from 744 MT in 1996. However, the catch suddenly dipped to 674 MT a year later and continued to decline up to 71 MT in 2011, or about 89% reduction in only 12 years.

The story of tawilis is similar to the stories of hundreds of species in the Philippines threatened by increasing human activities. The country is home to two-thirds of the world’s biodiversity. But it is also tagged as a biodiversity hotspot with at least 700 threatened species.

“The declaration highlighted the wrong things that we have been doing because it reached the point that it became endangered,” said Papa, who has been studying the ecosystem of Taal Lake for decades.



## Closed season

Efforts to protect and conserve tawilis started as early as 2009. But its red-listing two years ago served as a wake-up call for the managers of Taal Volcano Protected Landscape (TVPL), local government units, and the fishing and aquaculture industry to step up efforts to save the species and the ecosystem it lives in.

In 2019, the government started enforcing a closed season for tawilis fishing to prevent overfishing and illegal fishing. Catching tawilis is prohibited in the entire Taal Lake in March and April of every year to allow the endemic fish species to reproduce and replenish new stocks.

March and April are the months tawilis is known to spawn, explained Dr. Maria Theresa Mutia, chief of the Freshwater Fisheries Research and Development Center of the National Fisheries Research and Development Institution (NFRDI).

“What’s happening is they’re caught even before they spawn,” said Mutia, whose works serve as the cornerstone for most research about the fish species.

Under the Philippine Fisheries Code of 1998, those found violating the closed season shall be penalized with confiscation of catch and gear and an administrative fine of three times the value of the catch or P20,000 (\$416), whichever is higher.

If the offender fails to pay the fine, community service shall be rendered. That will mean time away from fishing, a sector where many are paid by the day.

While there were still reports of tawilis fishing in certain municipalities, people generally obeyed the closed fishing season.

The TVPL-Protected Area Management Office (PAMO), an agency under the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, said the fisherfolk engaged in capturing tawilis “were gradually coping with the prevailing regulations as manifested [by] the shifting of fishing gears which targeted other species” such as bangus, biya (*Glossogobius giuris*) and maliputo.

Orense said he has observed positive impacts on the fish catch following the two-month seasonal closure.

Effects of the efforts are still anecdotal as of now. The NFRDI and the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources continue to conduct stock assessment to verify the effects of the conservation measures on the production of tawilis.

The NFRDI, the research arm of BFAR, is also monitoring the biology of tawilis to determine the trends in its reproduction, growth and recruitment patterns.

## Locals doubt ‘endangered’ status



A fisherman from Mataasnakhoy town in Batangas holds a plate of tawilis on Dec. 5, 2020.



Some stakeholders of the lake, however, had doubts on the assessment of IUCN.

Rogelio Mendoza, a fisherman from Talisay town, refuses to believe that tawilis is indeed endangered, saying the fish species continues to be abundant in Taal Lake.

“We were surprised when it was announced that tawilis is endangered. [Those who made the study] should come here in the months of May, June and until September and you will see heaps of tawilis,” he said.

For the 69-year-old Mendoza, who was able to send his children to school thanks to fishing, he fears the declaration would mean a loss of livelihood for tawilis fishers.

Daniel Reyes, mayor of Agoncillo town, described the findings of the IUCN as “questionable.”

In its [assessment](#), the IUCN said it is inferred the population of tawilis has declined by at least 50% over the past 10 years, which qualifies it as endangered.

“It fits all the parameters for being declared as endangered: its endemicity to a single locality and even the size of the only lake where it is found. Plus, the threats it has been facing in the past 20, 30 years,” Papa explained.

Mutia said the doubts that some of the stakeholders have on the IUCN assessment are rooted in the misconception that being endangered is equivalent to being extinct.

Despite various regulations, some fishermen still violated the closed season. There are also others who are still using beach seine and motorized push nets, both prohibited fishing gear.

The NFRDI attributed this to lack of access to proper information and the insufficient support of local government to tawilis fishermen.

“Compliance is hard because they’re not aware. One of the most important things that we have to focus on is the awareness campaign for the people, especially for fisherfolk, communities, in the area,” Mutia said.

### **Twin disasters: Taal, COVID-19**

In January, Taal Volcano, one of the country’s most active, suddenly erupted after 42 years. It belched out ash that covered vast swathes of the province and triggered a series of earthquakes.

At the time, people were worried that a bigger explosion would lead to the decimation of the freshwater sardine.

Fortunately, the eruption had “no apparent impact” on the population of tawilis, the NFRDI said. But there were “several unfavorable effects” on fishermen and fishing activities in both capture and aquaculture sectors on the lake.

Ashfall and rocky debris from the volcano’s steam-driven eruption damaged 40% of the 6,000 fish cages along the lake, the Philippine Daily Inquirer reported, disrupting the harvest of bangus and tilapia at the time.

When fishing activities resumed after the alert status of the volcano was lowered, the majority of the catches then were tilapia that had escaped from fish cages.

More than a month after the volcanic eruption, coronavirus cases began to rise, prompting the national government to place the country under lockdown.

Mabel Orense, secretary of a local fishers group, said the strict lockdown hindered the movement of fisheries products. With most people stuck inside their homes, demand also went down.



“Only a few were fishing during the height of the lockdown in March. If they were fishing, it was mainly for subsistence,” she said. Batangas remains one of the provinces under general community quarantine but movement restrictions have since eased gradually.

The restrictions that came with the pandemic also crippled the law enforcement efforts of the protected area managers. The TVPL PAMO said patrolling was limited due to the new work arrangement of personnel, while the monitoring of tawilis sanctuaries was discontinued.

## Saving the lake



View of Taal Lake and Taal Volcano Island pictured on Dec. 5, 2020.

[Philstar.com/EC Toledo](https://philstar.com/EC-Toledo)

Properly managing the 23,366-hectare Taal Lake—the third largest in the country—also plays a critical part in conserving the freshwater sardine.

The lake is part of the Taal Volcano Protected Landscape, a protected area under Proclamation 923 signed by President Fidel Ramos in 1996.

Taal Volcano Island, the 37 tributaries of 13 municipalities and three cities in the provinces of Batangas and Cavite, and a portion of Pansipit River also form part of the Taal Landscape area.

TVPL is managed by the Protected Area Management Board (PAMB), which is composed of heads of government agencies and local chief executives.

The establishment of the protected landscape was meant to protect and conserve the ecological, biological, scientific, educational and recreation features of the area. But being a protected area did not prevent the lake from being beset by pollution from aquaculture facilities and domestic waste.

Aside from measures to conserve tawilis, efforts should also focus on nutrient management strategies to restore water quality of the lake, Papa stressed. Nutrient management is meant to keep levels of phosphates and nitrogen from agricultural and industrial activities from exceeding safety standards.

“If you really show concern for tawilis, you really have to show concern for the lake,” Papa said.

“Most of the things that [resulted in] population decline or the dwindling of its size are related to the quality of the lake, not necessarily just to the consumption or catching of tawilis in the lake itself,” he added.

Noel Recillo, Batangas provincial environment and natural resources officer and the concurrent TVPL Protected Area superintendent, said the agency regularly conducts monitoring of the lake’s quality. The agency is also keeping track of agricultural facilities around the lake such as piggeries, whose waste drains into the lake.

Recillo said that at present, tests suggest that the lake’s water quality has gradually improved.



## The problem with fish cages



Men feed tilapia grown in a fish cage on the middle of Taal Lake on Dec. 5, 2020.  
Philstar.com/Deejae Dumlaog

The multibillion-peso aquaculture sector is the major contributor of pollution in Taal Lake.

According to the [Asian Development Bank](#), tilapia cage farming in the lake started in the 1970s, motivated by the rapid development of fish cage and pen culture in Laguna de Bay, the largest lake in the Philippines.

Orense lamented that their former fishing grounds had been converted into fish cages, cutting down the areas where they could drop their nets to fish.

More than the loss of fishing grounds, the fish cages in the lake have caused habitat destruction, hampered the movement of tawilis, and contributed to the decline of water quality in the lake, scientists said.

“Aquaculture played a role in the decline of water quality in the lake and diminished the conduct of [tawilis’] day-to-day living,” Papa said.

Competition as well as predation by bangus and tilapia are also likely.

Under the Fisheries Code, only 10% of the water surface area of lakes and rivers may be allotted for aquaculture purposes. In the case of Taal Lake, the carrying capacity should be only 2,336 hectares.

PAMO-TVPL said around 6,000 fish cages are operating on the lake, with 14,000 and 50,000 pieces stocking density for bangus and tilapia, respectively. Recillo, the protected area superintendent, said the fish cages are still within the lake’s carrying capacity.

The NFRDI will conduct its own research and development project on the carrying capacity of Taal Lake for aquaculture production in 2021 to provide a policy recommendation on the number of cages that can be allowed to achieve sustainable production.

To reduce the pollution caused by sinking and slow-sinking feeds, the research institute is also recommending the use of extruded floating feeds in aquaculture facilities. It said the extruded floating feeds have “comparative advantage” in terms of volume of harvest, feed cost, profitability, market value and organic loading in the lake.

### Reserve areas and fisherfolk initiatives

PAMB, the policymaking body of TVPL, adopted a resolution establishing Tawilis Reserve Areas in the lake vicinities of the towns of Balete, Mataasnakahoy, Cuenca and San Nicolas in Batangas.

Source: <https://www.philstar.com/nation/2021/01/01/2067455/task-force-boracay-rehab-track>



Fishing activities targeting tawilis are not allowed in these areas, which cover a total of 1,106.58 hectares.

In hopes to delist the species from the IUCN “red list,” the NFRDI and BFAR are conducting experimental breeding trials of tawilis.

To address the threats of invasive species, the NFRDI will help in the formulation of a policy recommendation to control and mitigate the proliferation of invasive species in the country’s inland waters.

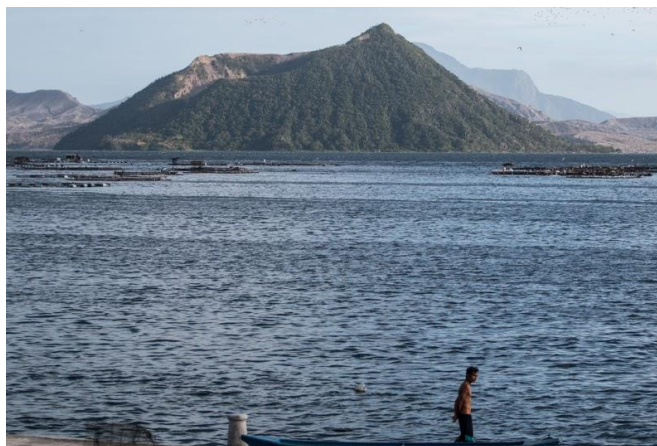
Small-scale fisherfolk are also doing their part to ensure the sustainability of tawilis.

Starting next year, the Kilusan ng mga Maliliit na Mangingisda sa Lawa ng Taal, a federation of small fishermen operating in the lake, will now manage the tawilis catch of fishers.

Mabel Orense, secretary of the KMMLT, explained the federation will buy the fishers’ catch and sell them to suppliers and vendors. This is to ensure the fish that will be sold were caught using gill nets, not illegal fishing gear.

She added that those found violating the closed fishing season will be ineligible to receive benefits from the federation.

### Rehabilitation as last resort



Taal Lake in Batangas province pictured on Nov. 21, 2020.  
Philstar.com/EC Toledo

If the water quality of Taal Lake continues to deteriorate, the managers of TVPL may consider rehabilitating Taal Lake on the same scale as the restoration of Boracay Island and Manila Bay, both victims of man-made environmental degradation.

The drastic measure, however, will be the “last resort.”

A task force called “Sagip Lawa” (Save the Lake) was recently established, Mayor Reyes said. Its main objectives are cleaning the lake and dismantling abandoned and illegal fish cages.

“For as long as we save Taal Lake, we will conserve not only tawilis but also all of the fisheries resources in the lake,” Jasmin Andaya, assistant protected area superintendent, said.

Papa pointed out that conservation measures and restoration efforts must be implemented properly to better manage the status of tawilis. Doing that will help ensure that tawilis will be available for a longer period of time and fisherfolk like Orense and Reyes will have a source of livelihood.

“It’s not a question of not consuming or catching it. It’s managing the stocks properly so that it will be enjoyed well into the future by future generations,” he said.





It is possible that tawilis may be removed from IUCN's "red list" in 10 years, Mutia said. But that can only happen if the decades-old problem of unsustainable fishing is resolved.

The policymaking board is currently revising its TVPL management plan, in which they will incorporate measures to address the problems of overfishing, pollution and proliferation of invasive species.

For now, aside from conservation measures currently in place, the NFRDI is also focusing on its information dissemination campaign targeting fisherfolk to attain high compliance to initiatives by the government.

"I tell them (fisherfolk) that you are the resource managers. You are responsible for the resources in your community so if the resources disappear, you will lose your source of livelihood," Mutia said.

***Reporting for this story was made possible through support from Internews' Earth Journalism Network.***



# Hold on to hope for COVID-19 cure, protection of environment and human rights –Pabillo

Published December 31, 2020, 7:05 PM

by [Charissa Luci-Atienza](#)

As the pandemic-affected Filipino nation welcomes 2021, Manila Archdiocese's Apostolic Administrator Bishop Broderick Pabillo has asked all Filipinos, especially the Catholic faithful to hold on to hope for a "transparent and equitable cure" to the COVID-19, for a "no-nonsense response to the climate emergency", and "for respect to human rights and human life for everyone."



(JANSEN ROMERO / MANILA BULLETIN)

He said aside from the pandemic crisis, everyone should equally give due attention to the preservation and protection of environment, and of human rights and human life.

"Let our attention not only be focused on the coronavirus and its various strains. The climate emergency is still upon us. The new lifestyle that the new situation calls us to reject unbridled commercialism and the throw away culture. It should be more caring for the earth," Pabillo said in his New Year's message.

"Human right should also not be set aside. There cannot be a better future if human rights and human life are not respected and valued," he added.

The Catholic Church leader even took a swipe at the supposed non-transparent use of COVID-19 vaccines by some Cabinet offices and presidential guards.

"There are glimmers of hope for 2021 in the horizon. Everybody is speaking of the vaccine and how it can be effectively delivered to all, first and foremost, to the frontrunners and the vulnerable. Unfortunately, the news of government people already getting the vaccine surreptitiously and without undergoing the transparent process does not abode of a good beginning," he said.

Source: <https://mb.com.ph/2020/12/31/hold-on-to-hope-for-covid-19-cure-protection-of-environment-and-human-rights-pabillo/>



# Plantitos and plantitas alert: How you can avoid plant poaching in indoor gardening

By [Jeline Malasig](#) - December 31, 2020 - 2:55 PM



Lego Botanical Collection's flower bouquet and bonsai tree. (Lego/Released)

There are many trends that took Filipinos by storm as they spent much of their time in their houses due to the coronavirus pandemic. One of these is indoor gardening.

Terms such as “plantito/plantita” and “halamom” became the norm as a means to describe people who took interest in taking care of plants, especially during quarantine when the activity appeared to have increased among housebound Filipinos.

Among those who have taken the liberty to spruce up their homes while lockdowns were in place [include](#) actresses **Kathryn Bernardo**, **Bea Alonzo**, **Gabbi Garcia**, artist-socialite **Heart Evangelista** and television host **Pauleen Luna**.

Psychologist **Renz Argao** said taking care of plants is a means of engaging in positive activities that benefit our well-being to cope with the prevailing COVID-19 pandemic.

“Taking care of plants is also a way to practice mindfulness and can be a positive distraction from your stressors. It is also a good mental and physical exercise,” he said in an interview with [ABS-CBN News](#).

Argao added that while the activity may have the same benefits as other coping mechanisms, taking care of plants can improve one’s physical and mental well-being.

“[The] benefit is similar to other positive or adaptive coping. You can get the same effects from practicing other forms of mindfulness, breathing exercises, or engaging in other activities that you enjoy or like, such as baking or cooking or engaging in sports,” he said.

“Plants also improve the quality of air which can help physical and mental well-being,” Argao added.

The popularity of indoor gardening among Filipinos has prompted the **Department of Environment and Natural Resources** to issue a warning against purchasing exotic plants from poachers last September.



An official from DENR's Biodiversity Management Bureau has reported the rise of traders scouring plants from mountains, forests and protected parks due to the demand in the cities, where majority of "plantitos" and "plantitas" appeared to live.

"While we appreciate the growing interest of the people in maintaining plants in their homes and we understand the need of some to earn, let us be reminded (of respecting) the natural habitat of these plants," **Rhenan Diwas**, Assistance City Environment and Parks Management Officer in Baguio, [said](#) before.

"Allow them to multiply in the forest rather than constricted in a pot. Let them grow and bloom in public places for everyone to appreciate. We should learn from this pandemic: it is dangerous to encroach on the habitat of wildlife," he added.

To avoid further incidents of plant poaching, some people can opt for easier yet still creative means of decorating their homes through **LEGO's** decorative Botanical Collection.

The popular Danish toy production company on Thursday revealed a new range of mindful models for the green-fingered which includes a flower bouquet and bonsai tree, all made from colorful lego blocks.

The bouquet, which comes in a 756-piece set, can brighten homes while the bonsai tree can be purchased by those who are looking forward to being more zen in the upcoming year.



Lego flower bouquet (Lego/Released)

Older builders can customize their blooms by adjusting the flower stems to tailor the arrangement for any vase.

"A combination of snapdragons, roses, poppies, asters, daisies, and different grasses can be arranged in the bouquet in a number of ways to suit the mood of the builder and the design of the room," LEGO said in a release.

Meanwhile, the bonsai tree can be shaped with the traditional green leaves or pink cherry blossoms, prevalent in Japan.



Lego bonsai tree (Lego/Released)



Lego bonsai tree (Lego/Released)

“When you’re ready for a change or when the season starts to turn, it’s easy to swap the coloured crowns to create a totally new look,” the toy production firm said.

Both sets of the botanical collection will be available from January 4, 2021 across its official stores and major retailers in the country.

“As adults look for new ways to switch off and relax, we’re delighted to be able to help them seek solace from their busy everyday lives as they immerse themselves in creating these beautiful botanical builds,” LEGO Group design lead **Jamie Berard** explained.

“The customisable elements and mindful building experience will hopefully help them express their personality as their creativity blossoms,” he added.

Source: <https://interaksyon.philstar.com/hobbies-interests/2020/12/31/182925/plantitos-and-plantitas-alert-how-you-can-avoid-plant-poaching-in-indoor-gardening/>



# Palace hopes for 2021 as 'year of healing'

By Azer Parrocha December 31, 2020, 12:28 pm



Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque. (File photo)

MANILA – Malacañang is optimistic that a vaccine for coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) will become available in the Philippines by the first quarter of 2021, hoping that it will be a “year of healing”.

In his New Year’s Day message released on Thursday, Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque said the government has identified geographical and sectoral priorities for vaccination.

“Negotiations and discussions with vaccine manufacturers are ongoing and tripartite agreements with the government, the private sector, and allied governments are now rolling,” he said.

Citing the Philippine National Vaccine Roadmap, he said the earliest rollout of a vaccine is expected in the first quarter of next year.

“We are indeed on track and this gives us a sense of optimism. We hope to see an end to the pandemic and continue the pursuit for a stronger and healthier Philippines,” he said.

He added that these goals would be realized if the government and citizens would work together to achieve this goal.

“Let us, therefore, make the Year 2021 as a year of healing, recovery, and bouncing back. Together and united, we will heal and recover as one,” he said.

Meanwhile, Roque also emphasized the need to welcome the new year with renewed hope, courage, and inspiration as the country bids farewell to 2020 bringing valuable lessons and memories.

“The challenges we faced as a nation in 2020 were daunting but because of the resilient Filipino spirit, we fought and carried on,” he added.

Currently, the government is in Phase 3 of the National Action Plan (NAP) against Covid-19 which is focused on managing health risks, prevention and containment, strict adherence to minimum public health standards, and the establishment and initial rollout of the Covid-19 Vaccine Roadmap.

Several pharmaceutical companies are being eyed by the government for the procurement of Covid-19 vaccines – Pfizer Inc., Moderna, AstraZeneca, Johnson & Johnson, Novavax Inc, Sinovac, and Sputnik V.

## Moving forward

In a separate statement, Presidential Communications Operations Office (PCOO) Secretary Martin Andanar acknowledged how the pandemic, as well as calamities, tested Filipinos’ resilience.



“Aside from the Covid-19 pandemic that has affected the entire world, the Philippines has endured calamities and natural disasters that have truly challenged our resilience, our grit, and our bravery as a nation,” he said.

However, he urged the public to see the silver lining amid challenges encountered this year.

“As we reflect on the past year, may we recognize all that we have achieved and accomplished despite the difficult circumstances that we have encountered. May we learn from the lessons brought by these challenges and apply our learning moving forward,” he added.

Andanar is cognizant that the following year will still bring adjustments and some degree of uncertainty brought by the new normal but enjoined the public to stay united amid adversity.

“Although our collective fight is far from over, may we remain firmly united and unyielding in meeting head-on any difficulty that this year holds,” he said.

He also asked the public to remain committed to following all the health protocols and minimum health standards prescribed by our government in celebrating the coming new year.

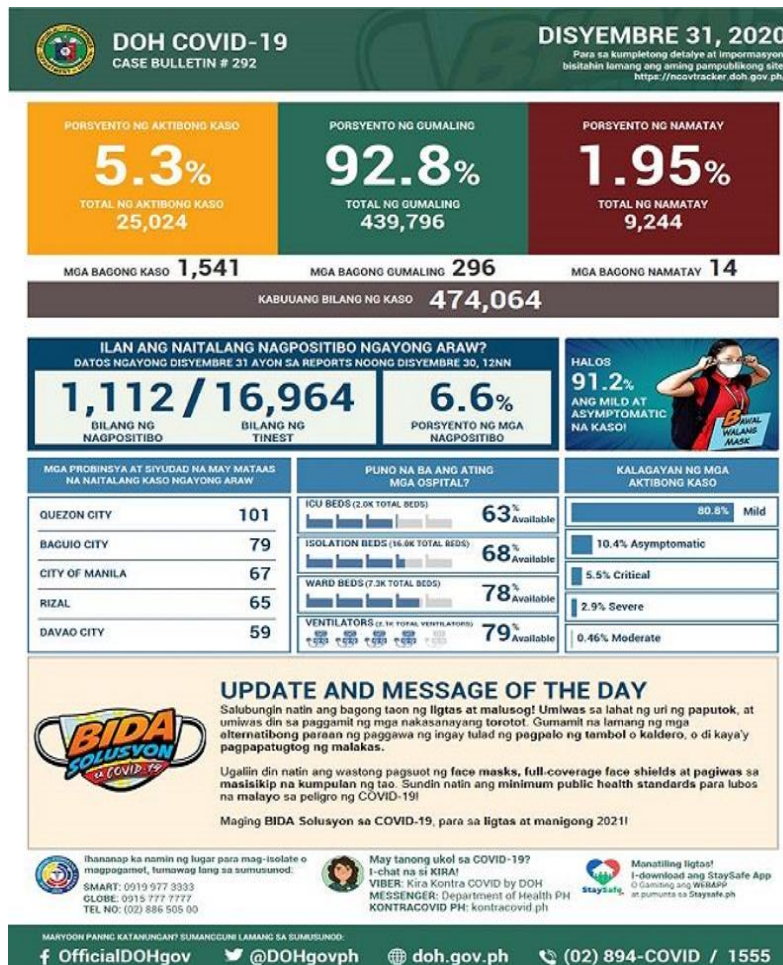
Currently, Metro Manila, the provinces of Batangas, Isabela, Lanao del Sur, Davao del Norte, and the cities of Santiago, Iloilo, Tacloban, Iligan, and Davao are under general community quarantine (GCQ) until the end of January while the rest of the country is under the least stringent modified general community quarantine (MGCQ).

New Year’s Day is a regular holiday under Proclamation 986. (PNA)



# BREAKING: Bilang ng mga tinamaan ng COVID-19 sa bansa umabot na sa 474,064 – DOH

By Mary Rose Cabrales December 31, 2020 - 04:30 PM



Tumaas pa ang bilang ng mga tinamaan ng coronavirus disease o COVID-19 sa bansa.

Ayon sa huling datos ng Department of Health (DOH), 1,541 ang bagong naitalang kaso ngayong araw ng Huwebes (December 31) kaya umabot na sa 474,064 ang kabuuang bilang ng tinamaan ng virus sa bansa.

296 naman ang bagong naitalang gumaling o naka-recover na sa COVID-19 sa bansa kaya umabot na ito sa 439,796.

Ang bilang naman ng nasawi ay nadagdagan ng 14 kaya umabot na ito sa 9,244.

Narito naman ang ilang mga probinsya at siyudad na may mataas na naitalang kaso ngayong araw:

- Quezon City – 101
- Baguio City – 79
- Manila – 67
- Rizal 65
- Davao City – 59

Paalala naman ng DOH ngayong ipinagdiriwang natin ang Pasko ay dapat limitahan lamang sa immediate family members ang mga pagtitipon, masusustansyang pagkain din ang ihain at laging tandaan ang pagsusuot ng face mask at face shield sa paglabas at iwasan din ang pakikihalubilo sa maraming tao.

Source: <https://radyo.inquirer.net/282088/breaking-bilang-ng-mga-tinamaan-ng-covid-19-sa-bansa-umabot-na-sa-474064-doh>





# ₱838-B allotted for COVID-19 response, vaccines under 2021 budget – DBM

By [Melissa Luz Lopez, CNN Philippines](#)

Published Dec 31, 2020 2:56:22 PM



(FILE PHOTO)

Metro Manila (CNN Philippines, December 31) — The government has earmarked ₱838 billion for various COVID-19 response measures in 2021, ranging from medical equipment, test kits, and vaccines, the Budget Department said Thursday.

Republic Act No. 11518 or the [new General Appropriations Act](#) sets aside nearly one-fifth of its ₱4.5-trillion size on coronavirus-related interventions, according to Budget Secretary Wendel Avisado.

The Department of Health is getting ₱210.2 billion, only the fourth biggest allotment when classified per agency or sector. However, Avisado said there are more funds lodged under other agencies.

"Hindi lang po Department of Health ang may budget for COVID-19. Lahat po ng ahensya at departamento ng pamahalaan ay meron silang sariling programa na patungkol dito sa pandemya," the Budget chief said.

[Translation: It's not just the Department of Health receiving a budget for COVID-19. All government agencies and departments have their own pandemic-related programs.]

The government has spent ₱500.7 billion on COVID-19 interventions as of December 19, 2020, [according to the DBM](#). The amounts were drawn from reallocated funds and savings generated under the 2019 and 2020 budgets, freed up by virtue of the two Bayanihan stimulus packages passed by Congress.

Bulk of the funds were released as cash aid to the country's poorest families, as well as thousands of workers displaced by COVID-19 lockdowns and other quarantine measures.

For 2021, part of the coronavirus fund is a [₱72.5-billion allotment for coronavirus vaccines](#), although only ₱2.5 billion of which is funded by available cash. The rest can only be accessed once a vaccine is ready for purchase in the country, to be sourced through loans.

The Food and Drug Administration has yet to approve any of the foreign-made COVID-19 vaccines, although authorities in the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases target to secure [China's Sinovac doses by March 2021](#).

Meanwhile, Presidential Security Group chief Jesus Durante admitted to administering unregistered vaccines on some staff members weeks ago, [citing national security to protect President Rodrigo Duterte from the virus](#).

Source: <https://cnnphilippines.com/news/2020/12/31/838-billion-allotted-COVID-19-response-2021-budget.html>



# PRRD's Veto Message on the FY 2021 GAA highlights the efficient use of public funds

By DBM Published on December 31, 2020

QUEZON CITY, Dec. 31 -- President Rodrigo Roa Duterte signed and approved the Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 General Appropriations Act (GAA) on December 28, 2020 which included his Veto Message on specific items and provisions to the said GAA. This is to ensure the judicious implementation of the FY 2021 budget which is crafted to help the country reset, rebound, and recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

## *FY 2021 GAA Provisions subject to Direct Veto*

In the President's Veto Message, provisions which do not relate to particular appropriations, of which would effectively amend the Constitution, or any existing laws were subjected to direct veto. Specifically, the President directly vetoed any provision which allows agencies to use their income without separate legal bases since these provisions will reduce the sources of financing for next year's budget as well as increase the appropriations of agencies beyond the approved expenditure levels.

Moreover, the President directly vetoed any provision on the use of savings by an agency or department without his approval since the Constitution limits such power to the President with respect to the Executive department.

The President also directly vetoed any provision which exempts from, and defers, respectively, the application of the cash budgeting system to programs, projects and activities in line with its adoption beginning FY 2019 pursuant to Executive Order No. 91, s. 2019.

## *FY 2021 GAA Provisions subject to Conditional Implementation*

After thorough evaluation, the President also subjected the implementation of several provisions under the FY 2021 GAA to specific conditions. This is to ensure efficient use of public funds and avoid funding duplication in the use of infrastructure-related expenses, the implementation of financial assistance to local government units (LGUs), the implementation of rice subsidy, and the prompt release and utilization of the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Fund, among many others.

Moreover, the following provisions will be under the observance of applicable laws, policies, rules and regulations: (1) procurement-related provisions; (2) grant of allowances and benefits; (3) utilization of the Quick Response Fund; (4) identification of program beneficiaries; (5) construction of evacuation centers; (6) resettlement of project-affected persons; (7) augmentation of capital outlays for hospitals under the Department of Health; (8) implementation of service contracting; (9) funding for foreign-assisted projects; (10) unprogrammed appropriations; (11) implementation of the national identification system; (12) funding for participation in international competition; (13) national internal revenue taxes and import duties; (14) proceeds from exploration, development and exploitation of energy resources; and (15) review of national government subsidies to LGUs.



To promote proper and transparent management and expenditure of public funds, the President also placed Congress of the Philippines, Special Provision No. 6 on "Availability of Appropriations and Cash Allocations", as the President pushed for the fiscal responsibility, as shared with Congress, in the use and disbursement of funds for its specified purpose and within the validity of the appropriations as authorized in RA No. 11518.

#### *FY 2021 GAA New Provisions*

Meanwhile, in line with the President's mandate to implement the GAA, new budgetary items introduced by Congress in the FY 2021 GAA will be subject to the following: (1) National Government's cash programming; (2) observance of prudent and responsible fiscal management; (3) applicable budget execution rules and regulations; and (4) approval by the President based on the programmed priorities of the government. This includes requiring the submission to the DBM of revised agency performance targets, among other supporting documents, as may be applicable, given the effect of these new provisions on the respective outputs and outcomes of agencies concerned.

Finally, the President clarified his standpoint on how provisions will be interpreted and implemented to ensure uniform understanding and application of these provisions. Thus, general observations were included for provisions on: (1) organizational structure of the Congress and other constitutional offices; (2) enrollment of foreign students to State Universities and Colleges; (3) submission of the list and plan of Basic Education Facilities; and (4) use of the Quick Response Fund.

The national government remains steadfast in helping the country bounce back from the adverse effects of the COVID-19 pandemic through the efficient use of the PhP4.506 trillion national budget for FY 2021. As the country's heftiest stimulus package for the economy, the FY 2021 GAA will continue the current efforts of the government in addressing the impact of the pandemic as well as serve as the country's blueprint for economic recovery.

For further details, the President's Veto Message on the FY 2021 GAA is uploaded on the DBM website which can be accessed through this link: <https://www.dbm.gov.ph/index.php/budget-documents/2021/president-s-veto-message-on-fy-2021-general-appropriations-act-gaa> (DBM)



# What has 2020 taught us?

[ROSES AND THORNS](#) - [Pia Roces Morato](#) (The Philippine Star) - January 1, 2021 - 12:00am

As the year came to an end, I find myself pondering about the biggest lesson the past year has taught me. It has been very difficult for all of us in different ways. It was indeed a season of losing. Or was it really? Perhaps many might say it has been, but I still think that maybe, and just maybe, we can look at the silver lining. We lost the normal and entered into a new normal. We lost family but learned who our real friends are. We've lost jobs but gained new opportunities and, most of all, we have found better purpose.

Our busy lives have left us with routine -- the daily grind. We have been used to going about our business, same old, same old, and now, we have put on a new armor as we confront so many things new. We are not used to "new" and it is not surprising. It is certainly hard. It's the kind of new that has left us thinking and overthinking, yet it has pushed us to be mindful of the most basic and the most important, instead of the most urgent.

Our focus has switched to what has to be in place and most of which has either been neglected or unrealized. People are developing a better understanding of wholeness – on what is good for all. We are learning to give more and to share. To trade better and to appreciate our own. In other words, we have hit the Re-start button and we are finding out what needs to stay and what needs to go. It takes a lot of courage to realize all these things but it takes even more courage to move things forward. Our priorities have changed and the basic matters more than ever. The simplest of things have been the greatest influencers and surely, a better future depends fully on these.

On the other hand, the "new" things continue to help us survive. Technology most of all is connecting us and adapting to such means will greatly multiply the basics. Indeed, life is a mix of roses and thorns and from the pain and the ugly, we grow beauty. This is my biggest lesson. It has been my biggest lesson with or without a pandemic – beauty from ashes as they say... trusting that our sorrows have purpose.

From my family to yours, I wish everyone a blessed new year. The pandemic is not over, but we have grown stronger together. Let us heal as one.



# UN aid to typhoon-hit Pinoys pour even during holiday season

December 31, 2020, 2:18 pm



Super Typhoon Rolly aftermath in Albay in November (File photo)

MANILA – In four municipalities of Albay province, where tens of thousands have lost their homes during the onslaught of Super Typhoon Rolly, 1,030 families who celebrated Christmas in evacuation centers received building materials, tools, and cash to help put a roof over their heads in time for the New Year.

The United Nations (UN) Migration Agency, International Organization for Migration (IOM), and the non-government organization Catholic Relief Services have been distributing shelter repair kits to households in 17 barangays in the towns of Tiwi, Malinao, Malilipot, and Tabaco throughout December.

The kit, intended for the emergency repair of damaged houses to make them livable, consists of corrugated galvanized iron for roofing, coco lumber for posts and framing, nails, hammer, saw, and shelter-grade tarpaulin.

The IOM also distributed cash assistance in the 17 barangays.

Five-month pregnant Rosewinda Callejo, a resident of Tagoytoy, Malinao, received the cash assistance and a shelter repair kit on December 15.

"Happiness is all I am feeling right now because I have received assistance from you. Thank you so much. Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year," Callejo said.

"End-of-the-year holidays are very important for the Filipino people. It is the time when families come together. This is why the United Nations and its humanitarian partners proudly continue to deliver humanitarian assistance to the very last day of this difficult year. We are not merely rebuilding homes of people most affected by the two typhoons but also bringing them hope and dignity," UN Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator for the Philippines, Gustavo Gonzalez, said in a news release issued on Thursday.

The IOM's emergency shelter assistance is part of the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) support of USD3.1 million (PHP150 million) awarded to the Philippines by UN Undersecretary General and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Mark Lowcock.

The CERF funding will allow the Unicef, IOM, and UN World Food Program to provide life-saving assistance in water supplies, sanitation services, hygiene, emergency shelter, and food to address time-critical needs, particularly of the poorest single-headed households, the elderly, and people with disabilities in the hardest-hit areas of Albay and Catanduanes.

The CERF funding is one of the projects of the Humanitarian Needs and Priorities Plan (HNP) that was launched by the UN and humanitarian partners in the Philippines in November to come to the aid of nearly 280,000 people affected by "Rolly" and Typhoon Ulysses.



The HNP calls for USD52.6 million from resource partners to provide assistance in terms of food, access to clean water-sanitation-hygiene (WASH) facilities, emergency shelter and livelihood, health, and early recovery.

Some 80 humanitarian partners in the country, including the UN, NGOs, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, and the private sector, which comprise the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) in the Philippines, have been working throughout November and December to implement the HNP.

The HCT has so far received USD12.9 million, or just 25 percent of the support called for in the HNP.

Yet, in just two months since “Rolly”, the HCT has deployed wide-ranging assistance in the National Capital Region (NCR), as well as the Cagayan Valley, Central Luzon, Calabarzon, and Bicol regions.

Cash assistance has been distributed to some 3,125 families.

Emergency shelter support, including 13,599 shelter-grade tarps, 2,600 roofing materials, and 7,700 tool kits, has benefitted families beyond the four municipalities in Albay.

Some 57,210 individuals have received hygiene kits and more than 52,000 people have been given water kits.

Back-to-school kits and food for children suffering from acute malnutrition have also been distributed.

At the same time, the HCT continues to support the management of evacuation centers, benefitting 32,421 persons, half of whom are children.

It has called for more support from resource partners to ensure that more typhoon-affected Filipinos are reached and that no one is left behind.

To date, at least 30,000 people remain displaced from “Rolly” and “Ulysses”, staying in 181 evacuation centers across the five regions.

Four evacuation centers remain open in Albay.

More than 8,600 schools, which were either damaged or destroyed, will require support in cleanup and repairs.

Damaged self-learning modules will need to be reprinted and redistributed, while educational supplies will have to be distributed to support the education continuity of 101,800 teachers and 2.8 million K-12 learners from affected schools across the country.

Some 19,047 vulnerable and underserved households need food assistance while 15,525 farming and fishing households have yet to receive support.

Initial assessment put agricultural damage at more than USD22million, mostly to crops, such as rice and corn, severely affecting about 20,000 farmers.

About 96 percent of rice farms in Camarines Sur are already non-recoverable and will need support for replanting.

Meeting the daily food needs of people still displaced is a challenge, especially in hard-to-reach villages that have been isolated from any support.

“As the Philippines is one of the countries most affected by natural disasters and climate change on the planet, we have both a moral imperative on the humanitarian side and a clear economic case to support the government of the Philippines in adapting and strengthening its capacity to respond to weather-related shocks. If we do not address this issue more holistically, we are merely building sandcastles after each typhoon,” Gonzalez said.

The HNP was launched on November 9 by the HCT to address the needs of 260,000 of the most vulnerable people in provinces most affected by “Rolly”.



On November 27, the HCT released a revised HNP, further extending support to areas severely affected by “Ulysses” in northern Luzon.

The revised HNP brings together collective humanitarian activities from November 2020 to April 2021 with a new total funding request of USD52.6 million (PHP2.5 billion).

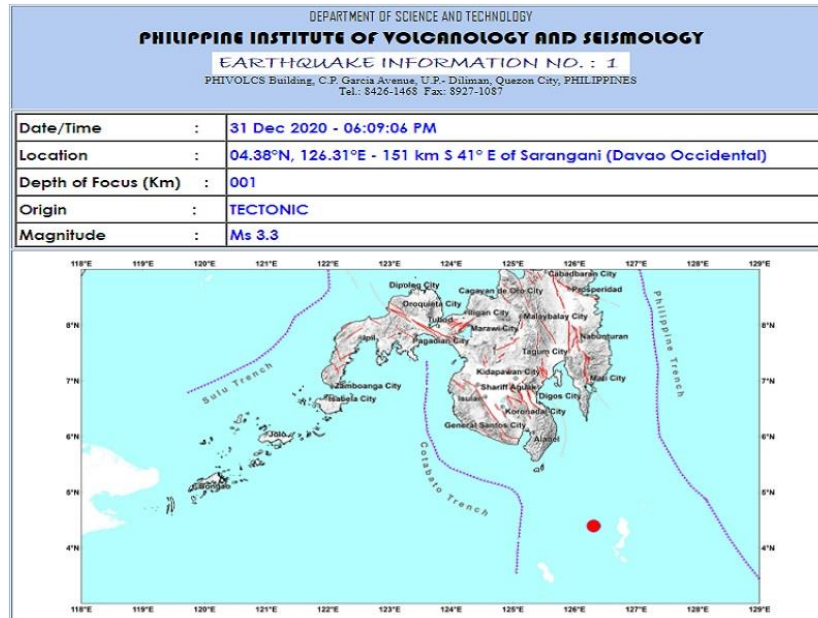
The call for resources will directly assist 278,100 affected people in terms of food, access to WASH facilities, emergency shelter and livelihood, health, and early recovery.

Following a review of overall needs, 18,100 most-vulnerable people who were severely affected by “Ulysses” in Cagayan were added to the original target of 260,000 people in Albay and Catanduanes. (PR)



# Sarangani, Davao Occidental niyanig ng magnitude 3.3 na lindol

By Mary Rose Cabrales December 31, 2020 - 06:30 PM



Niyanig ng magnitude 3.3 na lindol ang lalawigan ng Davao Occidental.

Ayon sa Phivolcs, naitala ang pagyanig sa 151 kilometers southeast ng bayan ng Sarangani, alas-6:09 hapon ng Huwebes (December 31).

May lalim na 1 kilometer at tectonic ang origin ng pagyanig.

Wala namang naitalang pagkasira ng mga ari-arian, intensities at aftershocks bunsod ng pagyanig.

Nauna nang naitala ang sumusunod na pagyanig sa lugar:

- Magnitude 3.1, 1:39AM
- Magnitude 3.3, 5:03AM
- Magnitude 3.3, 6:35AM
- Magnitude 3.4, 7:03AM
- Magnitude 3.7, 12:45PM .





# Connected waste systems: Towards better waste management in cities?

[AFP Relaxnews](#) / 12:19 PM December 31, 2020



Smart waste systems allow cities to optimize waste collection and save money. Image: LightFieldStudios / iStock.com

Connected garbage bins don't just collect our trash. They can also gather and send data to optimize city waste collection, to adapt garbage collection routes and to save money.

As of the spring of 2021, the city of Prague will trial a new waste collection pilot project. The Czech capital is already a European pioneer in terms of waste management; the city set up an underground smart bin system back in 2018. The city now wants to make waste treatment even more efficient.

The capital has renewed its partnership with Sensoneo, a global provider of intelligent waste management solutions. The new project will focus on four major areas, in particular, on optimizing garbage collection itineraries. Thanks to the technology developed by Sensoneo, the routes will be simplified to reduce the number of vehicles and make it easier for inexperienced drivers to understand the routes.

In a nutshell, Prague wants to analyze all the data it possessed on waste collection and management, to better its services.

“Innovative technologies, which we will test during the pilot project, follow Prague’s strategy focused on sustainability and a circular economy. I am convinced that this project will contribute to our plan of making Prague an active initiator of green technologies,” said Petr Hlubuček, deputy mayor of Prague for the environment, infrastructure, technical equipment, and safety, to SmartCitiesWorld.

## **A more flexible way to manage refuse**

Smart trash can technology makes it possible to understand residents’ consumption and waste production patterns. Thanks to sensors, smart technologies send valuable information, to notify, for instance, the areas where waste bins get filled up faster. City authorities can then adapt their collecting schedules or set up more garbage containers. Connected garbage bins also allow municipalities to optimize collecting schedules since trucks pick up waste only when the containers are full, and this implies important savings for city authorities.



In France, in the Gironde area, a chatbot called Trizzy helps municipalities in their waste management. “It enables discussion with residents by asking them which waste they want to throw away in order to guide them in their approach, directing them to the right centers or advising them on good practices in sorting and recycling,” explains the Demain la ville blog.

According to the World Bank, the weight of waste produced per day in the world is 0.74 kg per capita. However, this global average hides local discrepancies: waste production in Western countries far exceeds that of developing nations. And daily waste production continues to increase; by 2050, it is expected to reach 3.4 billion tons per day. *NVG*



# Environmental heroes to inspire you in 2021

By CNN Staff

Updated 1559 GMT (2359 HKT) December 31, 2020

Editor's Note: Call to Earth is a CNN initiative in partnership with Rolex. Some of the people featured in this article are [Rolex Awards Laureates](#).

**(CNN)**The new year is a time for resolutions, and few could be more important than choosing to do better by nature.

We all have a part to play but knowing where to start can be the hardest step. Luckily, there are plenty of inspirational people out there waiting to light a fire in all of us.

Over the past year, through its series [Call to Earth](#), CNN has highlighted environmental heroes who are protecting the planet. Here we present a selection of green champions who could inspire you to follow their path.

## Pablo Garcia Borboroglu



Millions of penguins protected thanks to this man 03:04

As founder of the Global Penguin Society, Argentine Pablo Garcia Borboroglu has helped millions of the seabirds throughout the southern hemisphere.

Around half of penguin species are threatened and ocean plastic, pollution, overfishing and climate change are all to blame. Through his work he's educating a new generation in penguin conservation and enlisting countless people to help their local environment in Argentina. Borboroglu also has a hand in improving conservation policy, and has worked with others to protect [13 million](#) hectares of marine and coastal habitat, including the [3.1 million hectare](#) Patagonia Azul Biosphere Reserve.

"When we work in conservation, the goal is to change the behavior of people," he says. "The behavior of wildlife? You cannot (change) that."

## Charlie Burrell and Isabella Tree



The British farm where the animals rule 03:33

In West Sussex, England, Charlie Burrell and Isabella Tree have let their property become overrun -- [and the results are spectacular](#). The 3,500 acre-Knepp Estate was once a traditional farm, but poor agricultural land and a "pretty bleak" financial future forced a change of direction from the couple.



Over the last 20 years they have let their livestock roam free, and nature has flooded back in alongside the pigs and deer. Species that were never previously seen in the area, like the turtle dove and the purple emperor butterfly, have set up in Knepp and thrived. "To see the landscape of your own country, and what you've been missing, suddenly come to life has been this extraordinary revelation," says Burrell.

## Beth Neale



Protecting South Africa's sardine run 02:35

A freediving champion, Beth Neale filmed the sardine run in South Africa in 2020. Taking place between May and July, this migration of [billions of sardines is one of nature's greatest shows](#) and proof that sometimes the best thing we can do is bear witness to the majesty of the natural world -- and in this case, share that wonder with others.

Overfishing not only impacts sardine stocks, it also affects larger fish like sharks that prey on them. Less than 8% of the world's marine areas are protected, and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature is calling for an increase to 30% by 2030.

"Seeing the beauty of the underwater world, people start to understand how connected everything is," Neale says. "When you see something so beautiful, you're going to want to do more to protect it."

## Valerie Akuredusenge



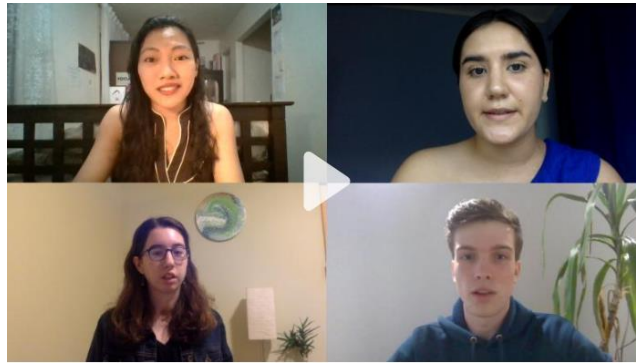
The woman teaching Rwandan children to love nature 03:30

Working in the shadow of Volcanoes National Park, Valerie Akuredusenge has been connecting Rwanda's youth with nature for the past six years through her non-profit Conservation Heritage-Turambe. One of the world's most charismatic species, the mountain gorilla, lives nearby, and Akuredusenge provides opportunities for schoolchildren to visit them in their tightly controlled habitat.

Akuredusenge's program isn't limited to Rwanda's flora and fauna; she also teaches children about animals from around the world. It has spurred on a new generation to dream about becoming conservationists themselves. "I feel so proud," she says.

## The students who held their own COP26

With the coronavirus pandemic preventing COP26 -- the largest climate summit in the world -- from taking place this year, an international coalition of students filled the void. Staging their own mock COP 26 across a two-week online conference, they shared stories of how climate change was impacting their countries, from hurricane evacuations to shifting seasonal changes.



These students are taking our future into their own hands 02:15

At the end of the event, the youths delivered a [statement](#) to world leaders, urging them to get on board with their ideas. The official conference may have been held back by the Covid-19, but "climate change was not postponed," says Kenyan Kevin Mtai.

### Arun Krishnamurthy



The environmentalist cleaning up India's lakes 03:36

Arun Krishnamurthy is [on a mission to restore freshwater lakes and ponds across India](#). He quit a job at Google to found the Environmentalist Foundation of India, and in his thirties now enlists volunteers in their tens of thousands to remove trash choking ecosystems around the country.

Approximately 70% of India's surface water -- rivers, lakes and ponds -- is polluted, according to the Asian Development Research Institute, and reversing humanity's impact (often intensified by climate change) is not a quick process. It takes years of hard work and extensive community engagement, but the results are there to see across the 100 or so lakes the Foundation has worked on in the past 13 years.

These water bodies are sick, he says, and there is a cure: "It is possible for common citizens to come together, work together and get something done."

### Emily Penn



The all-female crew sailing the world to study plastic pollution 03:37

Emily Penn was already a successful sailor when she took up the cause of tackling ocean plastic. Combining her two great passions, she launched a series of voyages shining a spotlight on the impact of plastic pollution in even the remotest corners of the world.



Penn co-founded eXXpedition, and with an all-female crew Penn co-founded eXXpedition, and with an all-female crew [set sail on a multiyear mission through five of the planet's giant ocean gyres](#). These are locations where ocean plastic collects, and the crew's route and onboard tech has allowed it to sift and study water as it goes. The pandemic halted the circumnavigation, but they plan to set sail again as soon as possible.

"Our ocean doesn't know political borders or cultural boundaries," Penn says. "The great news is that there are ... hundreds of solutions, and the reality is we need all of them to be able to change this issue."

## João Campos-Silva



Joao Campos-Silva is on a mission to save a river giant 02:50

The arapaima is a remarkable fish; a river giant of the Amazon that was nonetheless pushed to the brink by overfishing. Working hand in glove with local communities throughout Amazonas state, Brazil, João Campos-Silva helped implement a grassroots program to cultivate and ultimately revive the species.

[Read: How Amazonians saved a 'Terminator' of the fish world](#)

In the past decade numbers have more than quadrupled in lakes with programs in place. At the same time, villages are sustainably harvesting the fish (which can grow to three meters and weigh 200 kilograms) in a way that's increasing their income, allowing investment in education, and boosting gender equality in communities by finding employment for women.

"Here we have a very positive case that clearly shows that we can pull it together by diverse conservation and social needs," says Campos-Silva.



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