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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



Rehab ng Manila Bay tatapusin - Malacañang

By [Malou Escudero](#) (Pilipino Star Ngayon)
- October 2, 2020 - 12:00am



“Iyong budget po kasi diyan, hindi lang siya budget actually for the rich nourishment, it’s actually for the entire program of government in rehabilitating Manila Bay. And as I said, itong pro-ject na ito was proposed two years ago, included in last year’s budget and only being implemented,” paliwanag ni Presidential Spokesperson Roque.
Edd Gumban

MANILA, Philippines — Tiniyak kahapon ng Malacañang na tuloy ang rehabilitasyon sa Manila Bay kahit pa nabatikos ang nagastos sa paglalagay ng dolomite sands upang magmukhang pu-ting buhangin.

Ayon kay Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque, kailangang tapusin ang nasimulang proyekto at hindi maaa-ring gamitin ang pondo sa COVID-19 response.

Ginawa ni Roque ang pahayag matapos matanong tungkol sa sinabi ng mga eksperto mula sa University of the Philippines Marine Science Institute na mahal ang Manila Rehabilitation Project na hindi naman tutugon sa problema ng Manila Bay.

May mga nagsasabi na dapat ginamit na lamang sa COVID-19 response ang pondo kaysa ipinambili ng dolomite sands.

Ayon kay Roque, ang pondo ay para sa rehabilitasyon na ipinanukala dalawang taon na ang nakakaraan.

“Iyong budget po kasi diyan, hindi lang siya budget actually for the rich nourishment, it’s actually for the entire program of government in rehabilitating Manila Bay. And as I said, itong pro-ject na ito was proposed two years ago, included in last year’s budget and only being implemented,” paliwanag ni Roque.



Tests show dolomite safe



Published 2 hours ago
on October 3, 2020 04:20 AM
By [Francis Wakefield](#)



Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Undersecretary Benny Antiporda yesterday said he is hopeful the results of the analyses, which showed there are no hazardous chemicals in the dolomite sand that was piled on Manila Bay, will finally silence their critics who object to the Manila Bay nourishment project.

Antiporda made the remark after the Environmental Management Bureau and Mines and Geosciences Bureau released the results of the analyses conducted on the dolomite sand samples to determine whether they contain heavy metals that are harmful to human health and marine life.

The tests determined the presence of iron, nickel, lead, and mercury, grain size analysis, x-ray diffraction analysis, and pH and specific metals analysis using the toxicity characteristic leaching procedure.

“The result speaks for itself,” Antiporda told Daily Tribune in a phone interview.

“On my part, I don’t want to play it up, it’s finished. On our part, we will just bring out the truth,” he said. “Maybe this result will end all the allegations when it comes to being a health risk.”

Antiporda also expressed optimism the DENR can finish the project by the end of the year, following delays caused by groups who intended to derail the its completion.

He added the DENR’s legal department is still studying what it will do to critics who spread lies and baseless accusations in their attempt to thwart the project.

The official reiterated the beach nourishment project is a significant component of the Manila Bay rehabilitation program, which dates back to 2008 when the Supreme Court (SC) issued a writ of continuing mandamus directing the DENR and other government agencies to clean up, rehabilitate and preserve the historic bay known globally for its spectacular sunset.



Tests show dolomite safe

More than a decade since the landmark ruling was handed down by the SC, it was only under the administration of President Rodrigo Duterte that the government finally set in motion an honest-to-goodness endeavor to bring Manila Bay back to its former glory.

Since January 2019, Antiporda said the DENR, along with other concerned agencies which comprise the Manila Bay Task Force, has been conducting regular massive cleanups along the bay and its tributaries, preparing to install three more sewage treatment plants within Metro Manila after setting up the first one on Roxas Boulevard, and closely monitoring compliance by commercial and residential establishments with the country's clean water law and other pertinent rules and regulations.

The government has also started relocating informal settlers living along the coast of the bay since they are known to be largely contributing to pollution in the area, he added.



Whatever it takes

Government claims initial victory with P1.7 billion spent out of P47 billion 7-year outlay to win 'Battle for Manila Bay'

By [Jonathan L. Mayuga](#)

October 3, 2020



Excavators fill the 500-meter stretch of the famed baywalk on Manila Bay with white sand as part of the bay's rehabilitation efforts.

THE Duterte administration has allotted a whopping P47-billion budget for the rehabilitation of Manila Bay that may include as well the desilting of clogged esteros and clean-up of heavily polluted river tributaries and creeks connected to the historic bay once known for its pristine waters and spectacular sunsets.

The ambitious seven-year project, dubbed the "Battle for Manila Bay," was launched on January 27, 2019, and has so far spent an initial P1.7 billion to bankroll the initial clean-up activities since it was unveiled in an event participated by more than 5,000 project supporters.



Garbage litter Manila Bay near the Manila Yacht Club, even as rehabilitation continues on a part of the coast to give the area a "white-sand" beach look. The project has drawn criticism, with concerns over possible health hazards that the crushed dolomite might cause, and the use of millions in public funds on a beautification project as the country faces a pandemic.



Whatever it takes

Several host projects were implemented since then by the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) for the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), lead agency of the Manila Bay Task Force, documents obtained by the BusinessMirror showed.

For the implementation of the P1.7 billion worth of projects by the DENR-DPWH Manila Bay Rehabilitation Program, a memorandum of agreement was signed between DENR Secretary Roy A. Cimatu and DPWH Secretary Mark Villar last year. The projects include various clean-up activities and engineering interventions in Manila Bay and priority esteros in Metro Manila.

Budget and funding source

MEANWHILE, the current P47-billion seven-year rehabilitation program at the behest of the Manila Bay Rehabilitation Program is firmly anchored on the 2008 Supreme Court continuing mandamus ordering 13 government agencies to rehabilitate Manila Bay.

In September last year, the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) announced the release of P2.1 billion, sourced from the P13-billion contingency fund of the national government last year. The release of the fund was approved by President Duterte on September 13, 2019, through the issuance of seven Special Allotment Release Orders.

The P2.1-billion budget is on top of the P80-million budget allocation for the operational plan for the Manila Bay Coastal Management Strategy also last year.

The funding for the projects, such as the controversial P389-million beach “nourishment” project, which has an original project cost of P400 million, was downloaded to the DENR which, in turn, transferred most of the funds to the DPWH, the project’s implementer.

MAC Builders, one of DPWH’s biggest contractors, and its joint venture partners got the lion’s share in the DENR-DPWH undertaking, documents accessible from the DPWH’s official website revealed.

Focus: Manila Baywalk

MOST of the DPWH-DENR joint undertakings are so far concentrated in the National Capital Region, where water is found to be most polluted and the garbage problem at its worst.

There are two major components of the project. The first component is the Manila Bay clean-up, while the second component is the so-called application of technologies.

The beach nourishment project is listed under the Manila Bay Clean-up Activity. It was awarded to MAC Builders and DragonHart Construction Enterprise Inc. joint venture undertaking after having been declared as “bidder with the single calculated and responsive bid” last December 27, 2019.



Whatever it takes

Another component under the activity is the purchase and installation of containment devices and silt curtains with a budget allocation of P50 million, practically to address turbidity problems. For this, a contract worth P47,543,853.48 was awarded on January 2 this year to MAC Builders/DragonHart Construction Enterprises Inc. tandem, the same joint venture that won the beach nourishment project.

In the Manila Baywalk alone, another project component involves the dredging and disposal of solid waste, or sludge, using ocean-based methodologies, including the construction and extension of three drainage outfalls. It has an original project cost allocation of P510 million.

The project was included in the DPWH's updated annual procurement plan for 2020 but with a procurement cost of P491,872,711.55. The contract was secured by MAC Builders and MSB Vitug Construction joint venture. It was awarded by the DPWH on December 27, 2019.

Under the second component described as application of technologies is the purchase and installation of a 2,500-meter trash boom which has a P100-million allocation. This was included in President Duterte's 2020 mid-year report as having been completed, or accomplished.

The project was awarded to Agafer Construction and Trading and J.D. Panlaqui Construction and Trading joint venture at a contract cost of P96,505,714.

Priority estero projects

Completing the list of projects for application of technologies is the clearing, grubbing, desilting, removal and hauling of submerged garbage from priority esteros. It has an allocation of P640 million. The clearing of priority esteros of illegal structures and removing of garbage and other debris on the river beds aims to ensure the smooth flow of water and prevent flooding in low-lying areas in Metro Manila during heavy downpours.

The project is subdivided into several small projects. Some companies have already been issued notices of award and to proceed for small segments in priority esteros at project costs ranging between P4 million and P46 million.

As of September 2020, a total of 20 priority estero projects were completed while 19 are still ongoing.

Among those completed is a 900-meter section of the Estero de Tripa de Galina, a water body leading out to Manila Bay, with a contract cost of P46.5 million.

Parallel activities

The initiative for priority esteros by the DENR-DPWH duplicates public-private partnership initiatives of the DENR and various stakeholders under the ongoing Adopt-an-Estero/Water Body Program.



Whatever it takes

With the launching of the Battle for Manila Bay, the Adopt-an-Estero/Water Body Program is described as “a direct response to the continuing mandamus by the Supreme Court for agencies led by the DENR to clean up Manila Bay, particularly through esteros and waterways that empty into it,” the DENR’s Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) official website stated.

Since the Adopt-an-Estero/Water Body Program was launched in 2010, a total of 569 companies and groups have become DENR partners and 346 water bodies have been adopted and cleared of solid waste nationwide, the DENR-EMB reported.

Speaking during a webinar and online forum dubbed “People’s Environmental Impact Assessment: Dolomite Dumping in Manila Bay” on September 16, DENR-EMB Director William Cunado said the DENR-DPWH priority estero project is on top of the “Adopt-an-Estero/Water Body” program activities, which were implemented at no cost to the government as expenses are all shouldered by the DENR’s project partners.

“That [Adopt-an-Estero/Water Body] is a joint effort of the DENR with some companies who are volunteering their resources for some esteros to be adopted. We encourage our partners to adopt an estero to improve certain portions of the river. That is not only in Manila but throughout the country, especially in highly urbanized areas,” he explained.

To further boost ongoing river and estero cleanups, in November last year, DENR Secretary Roy A. Cimatu has announced the hiring of 2,000 estero rangers to help local government units maintain the water bodies free of garbage.

At least 203 creeks and waterways traversing the 711 barangays will be serviced by the estero rangers, according to the DENR chief.

Good intention, bad timing

THE controversial P389-million beach nourishment project awarded to MAC Builders and DragonHart Construction Enterprises Inc. in December 2019 drew both admiration and flak from various quarters.

Of the P389 million, only P28 million was actually spent for crushed dolomite. The rest was used for engineering interventions to keep the sand intact.

Critics said the dumping of crushed dolomite, implemented in the middle of a global pandemic, is a waste of money. They said such a huge amount could have been spent on other more meaningful projects, like mangrove reforestation, to boost the natural protection of communities along Manila Bay.

They said the artificial white sand may soon be swept away by the strong current and waves in the event of a strong typhoon that triggers storm surges.

Various quarters also raised the wisdom of the project, notwithstanding its “good intentions” as they put forward environmental and health concerns. They also lamented the fact that no environmental impact study, or scientific research, was conducted before implementing the project.



Whatever it takes

Lastly, the fact that the project was implemented without the conduct of public consultations was criticized, considering that it is an environmentally critical project and done in an environmentally critical area.

'Above board'

THE DENR, which was at the receiving end of the criticisms for pushing the beach nourishment project's implementation, defended it as safe to human health and the environment and above board.

DENR Undersecretary for Local Government Units and Solid Waste Management Concerns Benny Antiporda also rejected insinuations of corruption in the Manila Bay cleanup efforts and laughed off alleged overpricing in the purchase of the crushed dolomite from Alcoy, Cebu, which was used to create the Boracay-like beach portion in Manila Baywalk area.

"The project is above board and there's no corruption here. Since 2008, it is only under the Duterte administration that positive results came out of government efforts in Manila Bay," Antiporda told the BusinessMirror in a telephone interview.

Accomplishments of past administrations, he said, pale in comparison to what the Duterte administration had accomplished in such a short period, not to mention the on-and-off community quarantines put in place since March.

Before the DENR started carrying out the P1.7-billion portion of the Duterte administration's ambitious "Battle for Manila Bay" the past year, other agencies covered by the SC's 2008 mandamus had also spent billions for projects related to the High Court's orders to keep the bay clean.

The DPWH spent a whopping total of P5.6 billion from 2009 to 2016 for numerous dredging/desilting projects for creeks and esteros; work on the Manila Bay seawall; riprapping and the retaining wall; and slope protection of esteros and creeks.

The Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) spent roughly P170 million from 2008 to 2015 as its support for LGUs that ring the bay and were made liable by the mandamus for the cleanup.

The DENR itself, in the years between the issuance of the mandamus and the Duterte presidency, also spent P1.384 billion, with the largest disbursement in 2014 at P160 million.

Destabilization issue?

Antiporda said criticisms against the project, particularly the dumping of crushed dolomite, were done in "bad faith" and in various fora by groups critical of the Duterte administration.



Whatever it takes

This, he said, apparently aims to undermine the government's accomplishments in rehabilitating Manila Bay.

"These NGOs behind the attacks should be investigated because we suspect that it is part of a destabilization effort against the current administration," he said in an earlier interview.

On September 21, President Duterte lauded Cimatu for the accomplishment done so far in the rehabilitation of Manila Bay, which includes converting a portion of the Manila Baywalk into a Boracay-like beach. The rehabilitation effort also saw then infamous Baseco Beach being freed from filthy garbage. It is now frequented by residents who want to commune with nature and now has an ecological path walk made of bamboo at a mangrove reforestation project in the area.

To be sure, pursuing the SC's mandate to clean up the bay will take years and billions in resources. The "white sand" brouhaha aside, it's the ultimate restoration of the bay that will dictate whether this war will be won or not.



Pondo ng Manila Bay ‘white sand’ project ‘di pwedeng ilaan sa COVID-19 -Malakanyang



October 2, 2020 @ 6:27 PM 11 hours ago

Manila, Philippines – Hindi maaring ilaan ng pamahalaan ang P389 milyong pondo na nakalaan para sa Manila Bay “white sand” project para sa pagtugon sa coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).

Ayon kay Presidential spokesperson Harry Roque, nasimulan na ang Manila Bay white sand project kaya kinakailangan nang tapusin ito sa kabila ng kritisismo mula sa University of the Philippines Marine Science Institute.

Sinabi kasi ng nasabing unibersidad na “expensive project” ang rehabilitasyon ng Manila Bay kung saan hindi naman daw mareresolba ang environmental problems dito (Manila Bay) kahit pa binigyan ng kapangyarihan si Pangulong Rodrigo Roa Duterte sa ilalim ng Bayanihan 2.

Giit ni Sec. Roque na tanging ang mga pondo para sa mga proyektong hindi pa naiimplementa ang maaaring i-divert sa COVID-19 response.

“Nasimulan na po iyan eh, so kinakailangan tapusin na po iyan,” ayon kay Sec. Roque.

Binigyang diin ng kalihim, bahagi lamang ang white sand project sa buong programa ng pamahalaan para sa rehabilitasyon ng Manila Bay na ipinanukala noong nakalipas na dalawang taon at nabigyan ng pondo sa 2019 national budget.

“Iyong budget po kasi diyan, hindi lang siya budget actually for the beach nourishment, it’s actually for the entire program of government in rehabilitating Manila Bay. And as I said, itong project na ito was proposed two years ago, included in last year’s budget and only being implemented,” dagdag na pahayag nito. **Kris Jose**



Tatapusin ang rehabilitasyon ng Manila Bay — Malacañang

[Malou Escudero](#) (Pang-masa) - October 2, 2020 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — Tuloy ang rehabilitasyon sa Manila Bay kahit pa nabatikos ang nagastos sa paglalagay ng dolomite sands upang magmukhang puting buhangin.

Ito ang tiniyak kahapon ni Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque, at kailangang tapusin ang nasimulang proyekto at hindi maaaring gamitin ang pondo sa COVID-19 response.

“Nasimulan na po iyan eh, so kinakailangan tapusin na po iyan. Ang mga nari-realigned ay iyong mga hindi nagsisimulang mga proyekto,” ani Roque.

Ginawa ni Roque ang pahayag matapos matanong tungkol sa sinabi ng mga eksperto mula sa University of the Philippines Marine Science Institute na mahal ang Manila Rehabilitation Project na hindi naman tutugon sa problema ng Manila Bay.

May mga nagsasabi na dapat ginamit na lamang sa COVID-19 response ang pondo kaysa sa ipinambili ng dolomite sands.

“Iyong budget po kasi diyan, hindi lang siya budget actually for the rich nourishment, it’s actually for the entire program of government in rehabilitating Manila Bay. And as I said, itong project na ito was proposed two years ago, included in last year’s budget and only being implemented,” paliwanag ni Roque.

Pansamantalang isinara sa publiko ang bahagi ng Manila Bay na nilagyan ng dolomite sands matapos dagsain ng mga mamamayan na karamihan ay hindi sumunod sa social distancing.



UP savants warn against dolomite use

posted October 03, 2020 at 12:50 am

by [Rio N. Araja](#)

Marine scientists from the University of the Philippines have warned that dumping dolomite sand at Manila Bay would not solve the environmental woes in the area.

“There are no short-cuts to a cleaner environment. The use of crushed Dolomite sand will not help solve the environmental problems in Manila Bay,” the UP Marine Science Institute said in statement, adding that dolomite sand grains may pose possible health risks and could be easily eroded when there are storms.

“At most, it is a beautification effort that is costly and temporary. The task of cleaning and restoring Manila Bay may be daunting but it needs to be done for future generations of Filipinos to benefit from its many uses,” it added.

MSI added that erosion threat and poor water quality are the two major problems Manila Bay is currently facing.

“Beach nourishment projects are not one-shot deals, especially for continuously eroding shorelines... Hence, continuously replacing the sand will be expensive and will not contribute to improving water quality in the Bay,” the institute added.

The institute warned the finer particles of dolomite could be “problematic” due to prolonged dust inhalation that could cause chronic health effects such as discomfort in the chest, shortness of breath and coughing.



DENR-NCR negates ease of doing business and anti-red tape laws



By [Al S. Vitangcol 3rd](#)

October 3, 2020

ONE of the more important aspects of Republic Act (RA) 11032, or the “Ease of Doing Business and Efficient Government Service Delivery Act of 2018,” is the standardization of the processing time for government transactions. Under this law, government agencies are required to process simple transactions within three working days and complex transactions in seven working days and highly technical transactions in 20 working days.

The law also limits to a maximum of three the number of signatories for applications for licenses, clearances, permits, certifications and authorizations. Likewise, RA 11032 is supposed to speed up the “approval” and issuance of business and licensing permits to local businesses.

Section 17 of the same law provides for the creation of the Anti-Red Tape Authority (ARTA), which was mandated to administer and implement the said law and its implementing rules and regulations, and to monitor and ensure compliance with the national policy on anti-red tape and ease of doing business in the country.

Nevertheless, a local government unit (LGU) in southern Metro Manila, in cahoots with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources-National Capital Region (DENR-NCR) are negating the national government’s efforts to do away with red tape and ease the way of doing business.

Absurd business permit requirements

It’s already October, the last quarter of the year 2020. Yet, up to this time a sizable number of the business establishments in this southern metropolitan LGU are holding on to a “provisional” or temporary business permit only. These businesses are required to secure a wastewater discharge permit, or WWDP, from the DENR-NCR, though all of them are subscribers of Maynilad Water Services Inc.

Well, to “ease” the process, the initial application can be done online. Nevertheless, a huge number of documents — all subject to human intervention and thus corruption — is still required.

The first document needed is a “duly accomplished and notarized application form,” which is a usual documentary requirement in almost all types of applications. Nothing new here.

An “engineer’s report” prepared and signed by a professional mechanical engineer (PME)/chemical engineer (ChE) and pollution control officer (PCO) duly endorsed by the “managing head” is a requirement that is alarming and disturbing.



DENR-NCR negates ease of doing business and anti-red tape laws

The engineer's report has to discuss the "nature of the project or business to include description of processes including the production capacity (quantity or volume) and generic name of the product."

The "nature and characteristics of wastewater (physical and chemical composition) and total daily volume of discharge of raw wastewater," the "treatment process and estimated treatment efficiency" and "total daily volume of water consumption and final discharge of final treated wastewater or effluent" should appear in the engineer's report.

But wait, there's more. The "information on flow measurement equipment and procedure" used in measuring the water volumes, which are purely academic in nature, is a must, too. The "name of receiving body of water and its official classification" forms part of the report. For land discharges, the name ought to be that of the "nearest receiving body of water."

The engineer's report must have a "pollution prevention" program or an "environmental management system plan." A "statement of the cost incurred in the installation and maintenance of the wastewater treatment facility" and "quality and quantity of abstracted water" needs be in the report too. This is becoming more and more like a graduate thesis on sanitary engineering.

A third requirement is the "vicinity map identifying the street address, location of the plant premises." The "plans and specifications of the proposed wastewater treatment facility (WTF)" and "line layout" constitutes the third requirement. Are these government officials telling us that each and every business establishment should be obliged to construct a WTF? Wow, I can say harshly WTF!

And finally, the permittee should appoint their own PCO, who must be duly accredited by DENR, too. Business owners are now obligated to hire an additional employee to comply with the "own pollution control officer" rule.

Establishments are Maynilad subscribers

What makes this case one for the books is that all business establishments in this LGU are Maynilad subscribers. Why require these establishments to have separate wastewater treatment facilities? Is it not Maynilad that is responsible for wastewater treatment?

A year ago, the Supreme Court rendered a decision on the consolidated cases of *Maynilad v. Secretary of the DENR et. al.* (GR 202987), *Manila Water v. Secretary of the DENR et. al.* (GR 206823), and *Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) v. Pollution Adjudication Board et. al.* (GR 207969).

The high court affirmed that the "connection of the existing sewage line found in all subdivisions, condominiums, commercial centers, hotels, sports and recreational facilities, hospitals, market places, public buildings, industrial complex and other similar establishments including households to available sewerage system" is the sole responsibility of "the agencies vested to provide water supply and sewerage facilities and/or concessionaires in Metro Manila."



DENR-NCR negates ease of doing business and anti-red tape laws

The court confirmed that the entities vested to provide the WTF are the MWSS and its concessionaires — Maynilad and Manila Water Inc. In the instance of this southern city, the water and sewerage concessionaire is Maynilad. Thus, the party responsible to design, build and operate the WTF is Maynilad and no one else.

The ARTA should look into this aspect and criminally charge those DENR-NCR and LGU officials responsible for the predicament of the business owners in this jurisdiction.



Kasama rin sa ginanap na MOA signing ang paglagda sa updated usufruct agreement sa pagitan ng DENR at Manila Water para sa pagsasaayos at pag-upgrade ng East Avenue Sewage Treatment Plant sa lungsod ng Quezon. Saklaw sa pag-upgrade ang retrofitting ng pasilidad alinsunod sa DENR AO 2016-08 na pasado sa itinakdang pamantayan para sa biological nutrient removal sa treated effluent, pati na rin ang pagpapalawak ng sewerage network nito.

STAR/Edd Gumban, file

Manila Water pinagtibay ang 'adopt-an-estero' program

[Angie dela Cruz](#) (Pang-masa) - October 3, 2020 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — Upang maisakatuparan ang clean-up o paglilinis ng San Juan River at ng mga estero at tributaries nito ay pinangunahan ng Manila Water ang Adopt-an-Estero Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) Ceremonial Signing sa pakikipagtulungan ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) kasama ang iba't ibang lokal na pamahalaan (LGUs) na kinabibilangan ng mga lungsod ng Quezon, San Juan at Mandaluyong.

Layon din ng programa na mapagtibay ang bawat pangako ng mga partner-agencies upang masolusyunan ang problema sa kapaligiran lalung-lalo ang paglilinis ng mga ilog at iba pang dinadaluyan ng tubig.

Kasama rin sa ginanap na MOA signing ang paglagda sa updated usufruct agreement sa pagitan ng DENR at Manila Water para sa pagsasaayos at pag-upgrade ng East Avenue Sewage Treatment Plant sa lungsod ng Quezon. Saklaw sa pag-upgrade ang retrofitting ng pasilidad alinsunod sa DENR AO 2016-08 na pasado sa itinakdang pamantayan para sa biological nutrient removal sa treated effluent, pati na rin ang pagpapalawak ng sewerage network nito.

Matatandaan noong Enero 2020, ibinahagi ni DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu na isa sa layunin ng kagawaran ay linisin ang San Juan River na siya namang tinugunan ng Manila Water sa pamamagitan ng pagtataguyod ng programang Adopt-an-Estero na may kaakibat na mga technical at social solutions upang malinis ang mga estero at mga daluyan ng tubig.



NWRB binawasan suplay ng MWSS, NIA

By Abante News Online — Last updated Oct 2, 2020

NEWS



Photo courtesy of untweb.com

Walang ibinigay na dahilan ang NWRB kung bakit nito babawasan ang alokasyon ng tubig ng MWSS at ng NIA bagamat binanggit ng ahensya na umaasa itong dadami ang tubig sa mga dam dahil sa parating na La Niña na magdadala ng ulan sa bansa mula ngayong buwan hanggang 2021.

Babawasan na ng National Water Resources Board (NWRB) ang alokasyon ng tubig ng Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) ng dalawang cubic meter per second (CMS) habang 5 CMS naman sa National Irrigation Administration (NIA) ngayong Oktubre.

Ayon sa NWRB, 44 cubic meters per second (CMS) na lamang ang alokasyon ng MWSS ngayong buwan at 25 CMS naman sa NIA.

Sabi ng NWRB, hindi dapat mararamdaman ng mga consumer ng MWSS at ng mga magsasaka ang pagbawas sa alokasyon ng tubig dahil mapupunan naman ito ng ibang mapagkukuhanan ng tubig. (Eileen Mencias)



Water rationing likely as Angat dam posts below normal level

By Ma. Cristina Arayata and Lilybeth Ison October 2, 2020, 8:13 pm



(PNA file photo of Angat Dam)

MANILA – Residents of Metro Manila may likely experience water rationing until the coming months, as the Angat Dam's current water level is below normal, and the projected rainfall is not enough to normalize it until December, said Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) administrator Vicente Malano on Friday.

In an interview with the Philippine News Agency, Malano said that of the three main sources of water supply in Metro Manila -- Angat, Ipo, and La Mesa dams -- only Angat is currently below normal level.

"The problem is that the main source of water for La Mesa is Angat. Based on current data, the projected rainfall is not enough to normalize the water level in Angat even until December. (This) requires reduction of water allocation. Our climate and hydromet divisions are closely coordinating with the NWRB (National Water Resources Board)," he said.

The current allocation, he said, is 46 cubic meters per second (cms).

"It (allocation) can be reduced if people would conserve water. It is also a way to force people to conserve water," he added.

Malano, however, clarified, that he sees water is too essential this time in Metro Manila, considering several ongoing constructions.

He added that he does not see water shortage to the point that residents would not have the water, but reducing allocation is essential.

"We (PAGASA) could only suggest. The NWRB has the final say regarding the allocation," he pointed out.

La Mesa dam as of 6 a.m. Friday is at 79.10 meters at its rule curve level, while Angat Dam is at 178.37 meters above mean sea level (AMSL).

"The 178.37 m. is below 8.7 m. from rule curve (today), but still at full operational level," Malano said, adding that a rule curve changes every day.



Water rationing likely as Angat dam posts below normal level

A rule curve divides the storage volume of a reservoir in zones where different strategies for demand-supply will be applied.

Malano said there is no "normal water level" for La Mesa since its water comes from Angat. Angat Dam's normal water level, on the other hand, is 212 m. during dry season, and 210 m. during wet season.

Based on PAGASA's rainfall forecast, the Angat reservoir will be at:

- * 187 m. AMSL by the end of October 2020 (with forecast rainfall of 386 mm.)
- * 190 m. AMSL by the end of November 2020 (with forecast rainfall of 294 mm.)
- * 188 m. AMSL by the end of December 2020 (with forecast rainfall of 129 mm.)

"Angat's water level will improve by reducing allocation to MWSS (Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System)," Malano said.

"What the public should look at is the (status) of Angat, since this is the water source of La Mesa," he said.

Malano also clarified that even if PAGASA has just announced the onset of La Niña, the amount of projected rainfall for dams is not enough as La Niña would mostly affect the eastern section of Luzon, Mimaropa, and Visayas and Mindanao.

The NWRB on Friday announced it is reducing the water allocation to the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) and National Irrigation Administration (NIA) for the month of October.

MWSS receives 44 cubic meters per second (cms) while NIA receives 25 cms.

Despite the reduction of 2 cms to MWSS, it said Metro Manila water consumers will experience minimal to no significant effect in the water distribution.

Water supply is reinforced by local rainfall received in Ipo and La Mesa dams, the activated deep wells, and the concessionaires' water treatment plants in Putatan and Cardona, it added.

Irrigation of farmlands in Bulacan and Pampanga will also be sustained even with the decreased allocation of 5 cms to NIA due to the contribution of local flows, rainfall received in Bustos Dam and effective irrigation management.

Even though a significant amount of rainfall is expected in the coming months due to La Niña, water must be effectively managed in both supply and demand sides to ensure water sustainability.

The government seeks the public's cooperation in the responsible use of water especially as we still face the threat of coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19).

Aside from water conservation, Malano also advises the public to maximize rainwater harvesting during the dry season. (PNA)



ALOKASYON NG TUBIG SA MWSS AT NIA, BINAWASAN NGAYONG OKTUBRE



October 3, 2020 @ 12:22 AM 5 hours ago

ANG National Water Resources Board (NWRB), sa pakikipagtulungan ng iba pang mga ahensya ng gobyerno tulad ng Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS), National Irrigation Administration (NIA), Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) at National Power Corporation (NPC) ay masusing binabantayan ang sitwasyon sa Angat dam at ang magiging epekto nito sa suplay ng tubig para sa Metro Manila at irigasyon.

Base sa pinakahuling ulat, binawasan ng NWRB ang paglalaan ng tubig sa MWSS at NIA para sa buwan ng Oktubre.

Ang MWSS ay tumatanggap ng 44 metro kubiko bawat segundo (CMS) habang ang NIA ay tumatanggap ng 25 CMS.

Sa kabila ng pagbawas ng 2 CMS sa MWSS, ang mga water consumer sa Metro Manila ay makararanas ng minimal o bahagya lamang kaya hindi natin mararamdaman dahil walang makabuluhang epekto sa pamamahagi ng tubig.

Ang suplay ng tubig ay pinatitibay ng lokal na pag-ulan na natatanggap sa Ipo at La Mesa dams, sa mga pinagagana na deepwell, at ang concessionaires' water treatment plant sa Putatan at Cardona.

Mapananatili pa rin ang irigasyon ng mga bukirin sa Bulacan at Pampanga kahit na binawasan ng NWRB ang paglalaan ng 5 CMS sa NIA dahil may natatanggap na kontribusyon mula sa mga lokal na daloy, ang pag-ulan sa Bustos dam at mabisang pamamahala ng irigasyon.

Ang kasalukuyang antas ng tubig sa Angat dam noong ika-1 ng Oktubre, ika 8:00 ng umaga ay nasa 178.08 metro, mas mababa ng 1.92 metro base sa antas ng operating operating water (MOWL) na 180 metro.

Ang antas na tubig sa Angat Dam ay inaasahang tataas sa darating na quarter o sa huling apat na buwan ng taon dahil sa forecast ng PAGASA's na may inaasahang La Niña.



ALOKASYON NG TUBIG SA MWSS AT NIA, BINAWASAN NGAYONG OKTUBRE

Ayon sa weather bureau, karamihan sa mga bahagi ng bansa, kabilang ang gitnang Luzon, ay makatatanggap ng higit sa normal na ulan dahil sa nabanggit La Niña phenomenon na magsisimula ngayong buwan ng Oktubre hanggang sa maagang bahagi ng taong 2021.

Kahit na may inaasahang makabuluhang lakas ng pag-ulan sa mga darating na buwan, ang tubig ay dapat na mabisang pinamamahalaan sa parehong panig ng supply at demand upang matiyak ang pagpapanatili ng tubig.

Ang gobyerno ay humihingi ng kooperasyon ng publiko na maging responsableng sa paggamit ng tubig lalo na habang nakaharap pa rin tayo sa banta ng COVID-19.



Angat water allocation cut for NCR won't have direct impact on supply — Maynilad, Manila Water

Published October 2, 2020 11:21am

The reduction of water allocation for Metro Manila from Angat Dam will not have a significant impact on the water supply being distributed by concessionaires Maynilad and Manila Water.

The National Water Resources Board (NWRB) further [reduced the allocation for the national capital to 44 cubic meters per second \(cms\) from 46 cms](#) as the water level at Angat Dam dropped to 177.94 meters, below its minimum operating level of 180 meters.

“Bagamat may napabalita na nagbawas, naging 44 cms na lang ‘yung ibibigay na supply sa atin wala naman itong magiging direktang epekto sa supply sa Metro Manila,” Maynilad spokesperson Zmel Grabillo said in an interview on GMA News’ “Unang Balita” on Friday.

Grabillo explained that local rains usually occur very October, which will fill the Ipo Dam.

“Karaniwan po na kapag sumasapit ang Oktubre ay talaga pong binabawasan ang aloksayon para gagamitin sa Metro Manila. Ang nangyayari kasi meron tayong local rains kapag October at napupuno nito ang Ipo Dam na siya rin pong direktang nagbibigay o nagsu-supply ng tubig papunta dito sa Metro Manila,” he said.



Wildlife conservationist mulls building man-made caves for fruit bats in Samal Island

Published October 2, 2020, 12:37 PM

by [Antonio Colina IV](#)

DAVAO CITY – A wildlife conservation advocate is planning to build man-made caves to provide additional shelters for the growing population of fruit bats at the overcrowded Monfort Bat Cave in Barangay Tambo, Babak, Island Garden City of Samal, which is home to the largest single colony of Geoffroy's Rousette Fruit Bats in the world, according to the Guinness Book of World Records.



The Monfort Bat Cave is located in Barangay Tambo, Babak, Island Garden City of Samal. (Antonio L. Colina IV / MANILA BULLETIN)

In an interview, Norma Monfort, founder and president of Monfort Bat Cave and Conservation Foundation, estimated that the population of bats surged to over 2.5 million recently from the 1.8 million recorded in 2006.

Monfort said the congestion was causing stress on bats, as many of them could no longer rest on the cave's packed walls during daytime.

She said the bats, roosting near the cave's five entrances, were vulnerable to predators such as crows, while those that rest near the ground were vulnerable to lizards, snakes, rats, stray dogs and cats.

The construction of the man-made bat caves, the first outside the United States, will be funded through a grant from the Rotary International, she said.

"I've been dreaming about it but there is no money. And, finally through rotary, I submitted this global grant and it's approved, and just waiting for the funds. We're going to build it in Samal," she said.

She said that the construction was supposed to take place this year, but it had to be postponed because of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.



Wildlife conservationist mulls building man-made caves for fruit bats in Samal Island

She said the man-caves would simulate conditions inside the existing bat cave, and would be fitted with a technology for the collection of guano without causing the animals any disturbance.

Monfort said she would prohibit the collection of guano inside the cave to avoid stressing the bats resting during daytime.

“The collection of the guano—we will do it—and I can have a livelihood project, so that the community can benefit from packaging of this guano or any other thing,” she said.

Monfort said the artificial caves are planned to rise at the back of her mango orchard away from the existing bat cave within her family’s 21-hectare estate.

She said the construction would be done in the evening to avoid causing disturbances.

The bat droppings, or guano, are expensive potent fertilizers.

According to Bat Conservation International, the guano in caves “support whole ecosystems of unique organisms, including bacteria useful in detoxifying wastes, improving detergents, and producing alcohol and antibiotics.”

Monfort also asked for donations of container vans, which could also be converted into man-made caves.



Hedcor's anti-plastic drive gains ground



By [Leander C. Domingo, TMT](#)

October 3, 2020

A renewable energy company is celebrating its second year of banning single-use plastics with its #NoToSingleUsePlastics campaign.



This undated photo shows children around a weighing scale during Aboitiz Power Corp.'s Eco-Market Day event. Part of Hedcor's #NoToSingleUsePlastics campaign are an information and education drive on proper waste segregation and an eco-market, where households in the company's partner communities segregate, recycle and dispose their waste properly. The households get to earn extra income from selling their recyclable waste. PHOTO FROM HEDCOR

Two years ago, Hedcor, one of Aboitiz Power Corp.'s (AboitizPower) Cleanergy companies, started the campaign that promotes the decreased use of single-use plastics within company premises and events.

Cranep Udan, Hedcor sustainability officer, said the company initially kept its environmental campaign simple and focused by centering on the ban of polyethylene terephthalate (PET) bottles through the #NoPETSAllowed campaign.

"The use of single-use plastic, specifically PET bottles, poses a danger to our health and the environment," she added.

Based on studies, Udan said the Philippines was generating about 45.2 million pieces of PET bottles a day.

"[I]n one way or another, we were once contributing to that number [and] this is why we decided to focus on this first," she added.

Hedcor gave away tumblers to ensure that bottles were eliminated in its premises and company activities. This way, the company helped its team members embrace the campaign.

"With the campaign's success and team members' conscious commitment to avoiding PET bottles, Hedcor decided to expand the campaign by discouraging the use of all single-use plastics within the company's premises," Udan said.



Hedcor's anti-plastic drive gains ground

Udan also said that, from #NoPETsAllowed to #NoToSingleUsePlastics, Hedcor discouraged the use of single-use plastics, such as styrofoam, juice packs, straws, plastic cups and cutlery (forks, knives and spoons), and plastic food keepers in all company activities, celebrations and events, including meetings and tree-planting.

Hedcor's sustainability team has since spearheaded activities in support of the advocacy, according to her.

"We promote the use of katcha (cloth) bags instead of plastic bags and introduced substitutes to single-use packaging, and implement segregation and recycling within company premises," Udan said.

As a pioneering pillar of AboitizPower's Cleanergy brand, the company is on a constant journey to look for ways to minimize its impact on the environment, she added.

"If we do not minimize the use of single-use plastics, we will not have enough space to contain wastes, and when coupled with improper disposal, it can lead to health problems." Hedcor's campaign on minimizing the use of plastic has been extended to the company's partner communities.

Udan said the company held information and education campaigns on proper waste segregation and organize eco-market days to encourage households to segregate, recycle and dispose their waste properly. In return, residents get to earn extra income from selling their recyclable wastes.

"The group has collected 2.1 million kilograms of waste [from] all of the eco-market days Hedcor has organized across the country since it began [its] waste segregation and eco-market campaign in 2010," she said.

Hedcor is the run-of-river hydropower arm of AboitizPower that generates 280 megawatts of clean energy through its 22 hydropower facilities across the country. AboitizPower is the holding company for the Aboitiz Group's investments in power generation, distribution and retail electricity services.

Sixty-five percent of AboitizPower's new capacities will be sourced from renewables, resulting in an almost 50-50 clean energy and thermal capacity mix by 2029.



Teachers plant fruit trees for school children in AgSur town

BUTUAN CITY, Oct. 2 (PIA) - While teachers prepare for the opening of classes come October, they also spend time in planting fruit trees in their respective schools in the municipality of Rosario, Agusan del Sur.

The Datu Lipus Makapandong National High School is one of the public schools in the municipality that plants fruit trees in the vacant lot of the school's backyard, with the help of the Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) and different government agencies.

“We have intensified our environmental protection activities such as tree planting and clean-up drive in our barangay,” said Alberto Picot, Jr., SK chair, Brgy. Poblacion, Rosario, Agusan del Sur.

School principal German Talagon said the students will surely benefit from the planted fruit-bearing trees during harvest time.

“We won't miss out our environmental duty. This will greatly benefit the youths by the time these trees will bear fruits,” Talagon bared.

The faculty club of the said school was also thankful to other participating agencies that gave their time and contribution for the success of the tree planting activity and for continuously supporting the initiatives of the teachers.

The local government of Rosario supports backyard gardening and tree planting activities in the barangays, especially that people's livelihood has been affected since the start of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. (JPG/PIA-Agusan del Sur)



Boracay reopening peaceful—PNP

Published October 2, 2020, 11:10 AM

by [Tara Yap](#)

BORACAY ISLAND—The Philippine National Police (PNP) considered Thursday's reopening of this popular beach destination generally peaceful as domestic tourists were allowed to visit after more than six months of travel restrictions caused by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.



The PNP Maritime Group is one of the police units currently deployed in Boracay Island, the country's most popular beach destination that reopened to domestic tourists since October 1. (Tara Yap/Manila Bulletin)

“There was no major crime incident recorded,” said Brig. Gen. Rene Pamuspusan, Western Visayas regional director of Police Regional Office (PRO-6).

“The situation has been very manageable,” added Lt. Col. Jonathan Pablito, chief of police in Malay, the town in Aklan province which has jurisdiction over the island.

Pamuspusan attributed the zero crime incidence on October 1 here to several restrictions, including the prohibition of night clubs and bars to operate. There was no liquor ban in place.

There were also 400 cops deployed to keep the peace and order. These were composed of personnel from Malay Police Station, the Second Aklan Mobile Force, the Philippine National Police (PNP) Maritime Group, and the PNP Explosive Ordnance Disposal and Canine Group (EOD/K9 Group).

The police were also backed by 100 beach guards deployed by the Malay local government, under Mayor Frolibar Bautista, to enforce local ordinances including the minimum health standard of wearing face masks and physical distancing.

There were also units of the Philippine Army, Philippine Coast Guard (PCG), the Malay Municipal Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council, and Red Cross Boracay.

35 turista bumisita sa unang araw ng pagbubukas ng Boracay – DOT



October 2, 2020 @ 12:33 PM 17 hours ago

Boracay, Philippines – Naitala ang 35 turista na bumisita sa unang araw ng muling pagbubukas nito sa publiko sa gitna ng pandemya.

“There were 35 tourists who came to Boracay using air, sea and land [travel]. Seven were from Manila, while the rest are from provinces near Aklan,” ayon kay Tourism Secretary Bernadette Romulo-Puyat sa isang panayam ng ANC.

Siniguro naman ni Puyat na handa ang isla kung mayroon mang uminda ng sintomas ng sakit.

“We have isolation facilities in place,” ani Puyat.

Ayon pa sa tourism secretary na nakipag-usap na ito sa mga hotel at airlines na payagan ang rebooking at refund kung sakaling hindi matuloy ang turista dahil sa posibleng pagkakaroon ng sintomas.

“We already talked to the hotels and airlines for refund or rebooking. Baka natatakot iyong mga pasahero na baka hindi nila ma-refund o ma-rebook, so they would lie about their symptoms. The hotels and airlines will allow refund and rebook naman,” aniya.

Nauna nang sinabi ni Puyat na ang mas mura at mas mabilis na antigen test ang susi para sa mas maraming turista na hindi nakokompromiso ang kaligtasan.

Matatandaang sinabi ng World Health Organization (WHO) na dapat mayroong 80 porsyento ng sensitivity ang antigen sa 97 porsyento nitong specificity.

“We are really hoping for the antigen testing [to work] because it is cheaper and in 15 minutes, may result na. But this is still on pilot test in Baguio City kasi so far, antigen is accurate if you are COVID-19 positive. But if you are negative, hindi niya nade-detect,” dagdag pa nito.

Sa kasalukuyan, naglalaro sa P3,500 hanggang P7,000 ang RT-PCR test na makukuha ang resulta ng hindi bababa sa 48 oras. **RNT/ELM**



No Boracay visit for ‘busy’ Duterte for now — Palace

By: [Darryl John Esguerra](#) - Reporter / [@DJEsguerraINQ](#)
[INQUIRER.net](#) / 11:24 AM October 02, 2020



SERENITY With tourists coming in trickles amid travel restrictions, Boracay’s white beach has become a picture of serenity. —CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

MANILA, Philippines — President Rodrigo Duterte will not be visiting the recently-reopened Boracay Island for now because of his busy schedule, Malacañang said Friday.

“Well, it’s abnormal times but I’m sure he would like to visit Boracay as well. But right now, he’s actually very busy in Malago (Malacañang clubhouse) nowadays. So I don’t think a visit to Boracay in the near future could happen,” presidential spokesperson Harry Roque said in an interview over CNN Philippines’ The Source.

“But let’s not discount it because it’s important to encourage people to assist our tourism industry,” he added.

Boracay is off to a pale reopening on Thursday, having only welcomed 35 tourists after months of closure due to the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic.

Tourism Secretary Bernadette Romulo-Puyat said the reopening of Boracay, the Philippines’ top beach destination, to an expanded market signaled the safe and gradual revival of the country’s tourism industry amid the pandemic.

Tourists who want to visit Boracay are required to have a negative RT-PCR test result not earlier than 48 hours before they travel. This rule, however, exempts Aklan residents.

‘Palace briefing in Bora’

Meanwhile, Roque said he will hold his regular Palace press briefing from Boracay on Monday to help attract more tourists.

“We will be conducting our press briefing on Monday from Boracay and of course this is our little contribution to reopening the tourism industry particularly in Boracay,” he said.

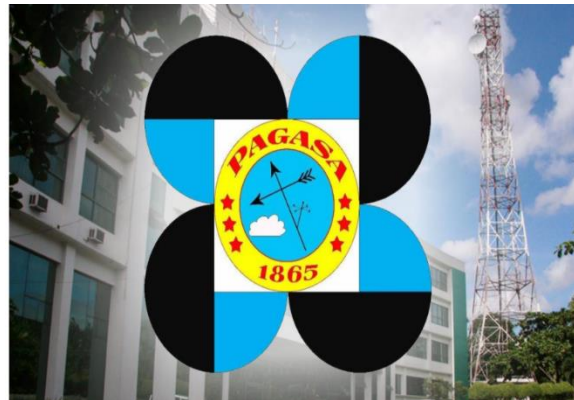
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Pagasa: La Niña papasok na

By Abante Tonite — Last updated Oct 3, 2020

NEWS



Inihayag ng Philippine Atmospheric Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) ang inaasahang pagpasok na ng La Niña sa bansa bago magtapos ang Oktubre o hanggang sa unang linggo ng Nobyembre.

Kasunod nito ay nagbabala ang ahensya na asahan ang madalas na paguulan na maaaring magdala ng pagbaha. Ayon kay Pagasa Administrator Dr. Vicente Malano na mayroon nang 75 percent ng La Niña Phenomenon at tataas pa ito sa susunod na buwan.

Ang La Niña ay isang weather pattern na nagdadala ng above-normal rainfall conditions at pagdami ng pagpasok ng tropical cyclone. Paliwanag pa ni Malano, maraming bahagi ng bansa, partikular sa silangang bahagi, ang makararanas ng higit sa normal na pag-ulan.

Pinaghahanda ng Pagasa ang mga local government unit sa epekto ng La Niña. Posibleng maapektuhan umano nito ang sektor ng agrikultura. (Tina Mendoza)



More rains 'til Q1 2021 due to La Niña: PAGASA

By Ma. Cristina Arayata October 2, 2020, 7:58 pm



MANILA – More rains are expected until the first quarter of 2021 as the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) officially declared on Friday the onset of La Niña.

Weak to moderate La Niña will likely persist from October to March, PAGASA officials said in a virtual presser. They emphasized the need to prepare.

Department of Science and Technology (DOST) Undersecretary Renato Solidum, Jr. underscored that while rains could be beneficial to the dams, it could also create havoc when the public does not prepare for it.

While rain showers could add water to the reservoir, this would also result in more water in areas that are prone to flooding and landslides, he emphasized.

"We should have an effective and efficient response. Prepare. Have the mitigation measures," Solidum said.

For his part, DOST Secretary Fortunato de la Peña said the local government units and front-liners must also be prepared. Aside from La Niña, PAGASA is also expecting five to eight tropical cyclones to enter or develop in the Philippine Area of Responsibility during the said period.

These tropical cyclones may further enhance the northeast monsoon and could trigger floods, flash floods, and rain-induced landslides over susceptible areas, particularly in the eastern sections of the country which normally receive a greater amount of rainfall at this time of the year, according to the weather bureau.

PAGASA climate monitoring chief Analiza Solis said the bureau is expecting two or three tropical cyclones in October, one or two in November, December, and January, and zero to one in February and March.

Solis, meanwhile, noted that La Niña has various effects and impacts.

In agriculture, she said this may cause extensive damage to growing crops due to flooding, which is likely in low-lying agricultural lands.

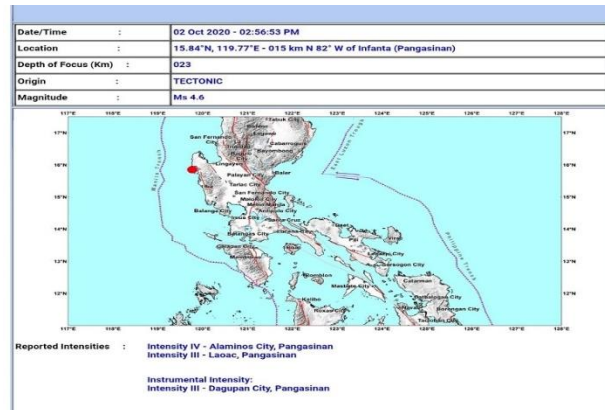
Too much rain may also cause river flooding and dam spillage, added Solis.

La Niña also affects health and the environment, as there is a prevalence of waterborne diseases, aside from possible landslides and coastal erosion.



Infanta, Pangasinan niyanig ng magnitude 4.6 na lindol

By Ulat ng Bandera at Radyo Inquirer October 02, 2020 - 04:58 PM



Niyanig ng magnitude 4.6 na lindol ang lalawigan ng Pangasinan.

Ayon sa Phivolcs, naitala ang pagpaynig sa 15 kilometers northwest ng bayan ng Infanta, alas-2:56 ng hapon ng Biyernes (October 2).

May lalim na 23 kilometers at tectonic ang origin ng pagyanig.

Naitala ang Intensity IV sa Alaminos City, Pangasinan at Intensity III naman sa Laoac, Pangasinan.

Hindi naman inaasahang magdudulot ito ng pinsala at aftershocks.

Read more: <https://bandera.inquirer.net/266136/infanta-pangasinan-niyanig-ng-magnitude-4-6-na-lindol#ixzz6ZkLccjVb>

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Walk the talk on renewable energy, Duterte urged

By [CBCP News](#)

- October 2, 2020 - 12:29 PM



Government plans call for 100 percent electrification of the country by 2022. (The STAR/File photo)

The Catholic Church's social action arm has challenged President Rodrigo Duterte to show sincerity about his administration's push for renewable energy sources in the country.

The Caritas Philippines believes that Duterte should walk the talk when it comes to energy types the government is backing.

Duterte, during his 5th State of the Nation Address last July, called on government agencies to fast-track the development of renewable energy and reduce the country's dependence on "dirty, deadly, and costly" energy sources such as coal.

However, he continues to approve and support new coal-fired power plants, Bishop Jose Collin Bagaforo of Kidapawan, National Director of Caritas Philippines, said.

"The Philippines is largely dependent on coal - the cheapest fuel option that also contributes the most to greenhouse gas emissions," he said.



Walk the talk on renewable energy, Duterte urged

The prelate particularly noted the establishment of three more coal-fired power plants in Quezon province by SMC Global Power Holdings and Atimonan One Energy (A1E).

Coal operation, he said, is the country's "unfortunate contribution" to the non-stop destruction of the environment and health risks to communities.

According to Caritas, there are 27 fully operational coal-fired power plants, which results in having 52 percent share in gross power generation, as of December 2018.

The Caritas also urged the government to honor the international agreements to foster greater care to our common home, "especially in building clearer clean energy pathways, and to declare climate emergency".

They also called upon all private energy players, especially those in the fossil fuel industry, to start the transition to clean energy solutions.



Climate change, uncertainties in agri sector hike cost of producing local crops

By: [Karl R. Ocampo](#) - Reporter / [@kocampoINO](#)
[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 03:00 PM October 02, 2020



Logo of the Philippine Statistics Authority. PSA Facebook

MANILA, Philippines — The worsening climate change and the agriculture sector's inability to weather these uncertainties led to an increase in the cost of producing the country's major fruits, nuts, legumes, and fish variants.

In a report prepared by the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), it showed that the production costs for local crops and fish have grown between 2017 and 2019 against data collated between 2016 and 2018 – an alarming trend that resulted in much lower incomes for Filipino farmers and fisherfolk.

The latest estimated cost for producing mango, for example, amounted to P23.37 a kilo, which leaves a farmer a net gain of Po.69 for every peso that he or she invested. Compared to previous years, however, farmers gained Po.86 with a lower production cost of P22.43 a kilo.

The same pattern was seen in other crops such as watermelon, cashew and pili nut, cassava, sweet potato, ampalaya, cabbage, carrot, cauliflower, eggplant, habitchuelas, white potato, string beans, tomato, and peanut.

For papaya, the trend is worse. Between 2016 and 2018, the production cost was pegged at P7.50 a kilo while the 2017-2019 level was estimated at P8.34 a kilo. When before, farmers would earn Po.02 for every peso they invested in cultivating the fruit, they are now losing Po.29.

As for milkfish, the production cost decreased to P41.43 a kilo against P42.02, bringing fishers a higher net gain of P1.43 from P1.41. For tilapia, however, production cost increased by P2 per kilo. Net gain remained at Po.61.

The PSA report also gave estimates of local producers' net income per hectare as well as their net returns. All these are tied to their production costs and yield.

Agriculture spokesperson Noel Reyes said they have yet to review the data from PSA, but noted that the degression would be communicated to commodity group leaders.

All told, the report is a glaring proof that farmers and fishers may have fared better in previous years when their incomes are higher and production costs, lower.

For decades, the sector has been stigmatized because of its snail's pace adoption of new technologies and modernization, which considerably held back its growth.



NCIP vows to address issues in IP communities

By Marita Moaje October 2, 2020, 7:24 pm



(Photo from NCIP Facebook page)

MANILA – The National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) has vowed to address various issues among the indigenous people (IP) communities in the country.

As the country celebrates the 2020 Indigenous Peoples Month this October and the 23rd anniversary of the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act or the IPRA law of 1997 on October 29, NCIP Chairperson Allen Capuyan shared his experiences visiting IP communities across the country.

Capuyan, during the opening event for the commemoration of the passage of the IPRA Law on Thursday, said he visited 110 ancestral domains in Mindanao from August to October of this year.

“This is to personally witness the actual situation and hear from them so we know how to address their issues and problems and help in laying out the plans so we could better serve our IP brothers and sisters,” Capuyan said in Filipino.

In his speech, Capuyan said that the issues and data he gathered were directly relayed to him by the IP leaders.

"Ang mga pangkaraniwang isyu sa ating mga katutubong kumunidad ay walang farm to market roads; may kakulangan sa scholarship para sa kabataang katutubo; talamak na bentahan ng lupa sa mga lupaing ninuno; may mga umiiral na ilegal na gawain ng mga IP migrants sa loob ng lupaing ninuno; kulang ang suporta o pondo para sa CADT (Certificate of Ancestral Domain Titles) delineation; pakikialam ng mga pulitiko at makapangyarihang personalidad sa pagpili ng IPMR (Indigenous People Mandatory Representative); pag-issue ng CLOA (Certificate of Land Ownership Award) ng DAR (Department of Agrarian Reform) sa loob ng lupaing ninuno; pagpatay sa ating mga kapatid na katutubo o IP killings; mga pending na aplikasyon ng CADT; pagpasok sa lupaing ninuno ng mga negosyante at mga proyekto na walang FPIC (free prior and informed consent) ; at marami pang iba (Among the issues involving our IP communities is the lack of farm to market roads; lack of scholarship grants for young IP's; the practice of selling ancestral domains; illegal activities by IP migrants inside the ancestral domains; lack of support funding for the CADT delineation; intrusion of politicians and powerful personalities in selecting the IPMR; the issuance of CLOA by DAR inside the ancestral domain; IP killings; pending applications of CADT; the entry of businessmen and projects inside the ancestral domain without the FPIC; among others)," he said.



NCIP vows to address issues in IP communities

Capuyan assured the IP communities that the NCIP will take into consideration all these issues in discussing appropriate plans and realistic programs that will truly address the problems towards the goal of the IP communities.

He added that the agency will further improve the implementation of its mandate to help correct the historical injustices experienced by the IP's.

Capuyan also encouraged all the IP communities in the country to participate in the different activities in line with the IP Month and the IPRA anniversary. *(PNA)*



Philippines enters list of top 20 countries with COVID-19 despite more than 200 days of lockdown

By [Catalina Ricci S. Madarang](#)

-October 2, 2020 - 5:46 PM



A woman gets a free coronavirus disease (COVID-19) swab testing at a gymnasium in Navotas City, Metro Manila, Philippines, August 7, 2020. (Reuters/Eloisa Lopez)

The Philippines entered the list of top 20 countries with the most infections of the novel coronavirus in the world on the same day that Filipinos marked the 200th day in quarantine.

On October 1, the **Johns Hopkins University Coronavirus Resource Center** [reported](#) that the Philippines' caseload was 314,079, thus surpassing Pakistan's figures of 312,806.

The Philippines also has the highest number of individuals with COVID-19 in Southeast Asia after overtaking Indonesia since last [August](#).

The United States, meanwhile, remained the country with the most infections worldwide with more than 7 million cases.



Philippines enters list of top 20 countries with COVID-19 despite more than 200 days of lockdown

In a [tweet](#) on October 2, US President **Donald Trump** and his wife **Melania Trump** have also tested positive for COVID-19.

In John Hopkins' updated list, the top 20 [are](#):

1. 7,278,385 US
2. 6,394,068 India
3. 4,847,092 Brazil
4. 1,179,634 Russia
5. 835,339 Colombia
6. 814,829 Peru
7. 778,607 Spain
8. 765,002 Argentina
9. 748,315 Mexico
10. 676,084 South Africa
11. 616,986 France
12. 464,750 Chile
13. 462,775 United Kingdom
14. 461,044 Iran
15. 367,474 Iraq
16. 364,987 Bangladesh
17. 335,097 Saudi Arabia
18. 320,070 Turkey
19. 317,409 Italy
20. 314,079 Philippines

Of the 314,079 cases, the **Department of Health** [reported](#) that 2,415 were additional infections, therefore bringing the total active cases to 54,294.

There were also 254,223 recoveries and 5,523 deaths.

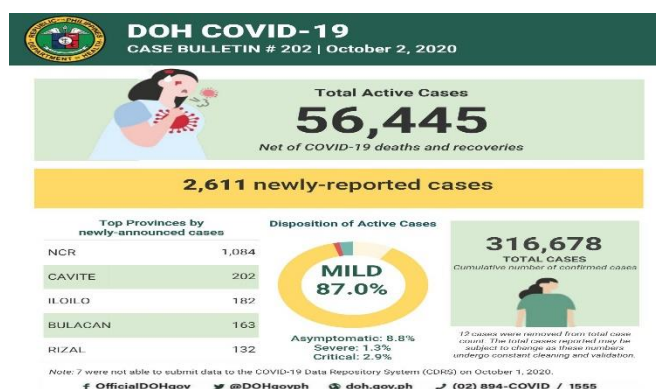
Metro Manila continues to be the epicenter of the outbreak with 164,711 COVID-19 patients, which is followed by the CALABARZON, Central Visayas, Central Luzon and Western Visayas.

The deadly pathogen had also spread across all provinces in the country after Batanes reported its first case last week after almost eight months of being COVID-19-free.

READ: [The Philippines in the top 20 countries with most COVID-19 cases despite being more than 200 days in lockdown](#)

BREAKING: Kaso ng COVID-19 sa Pilipinas, umabot na sa 316,678

By Dona Dominguez-Cargullo October 02, 2020 - 04:15 PM



Mahigit 2,600 pa ang panibagong kaso ng Coronavirus Disease o COVID-19 sa Pilipinas.

Sa huling datos ng Department of Health (DOH) araw ng Biyernes (October 2), umabot na sa 316,678 ang confirmed cases ng COVID-19 sa bansa.

Sa nasabing bilang, 56,445 ang aktibong kaso.

Sinabi ng kagawaran na 2,611 ang bagong napaulat na kaso ng COVID-19 sa bansa.

87 porsyento sa active COVID-19 cases ang mild; 8.8 porsyento ang asymptomatic; 1.3 porsyento ang severe habang 2.9 porsyento ang nasa kritikal na kondisyon.

Nasa 56 ang napaulat na nasawi.

Dahil dito, umakyat na sa 5,616 ang COVID-19 related deaths sa bansa.

Ayon pa sa DOH, 416 naman ang gumaling pa sa bansa.

Dahil dito, umakyat na sa 254,617 ang total recoveries ng COVID-19 sa Pilipinas.

Read more: <https://radyo.inquirer.net/267614/breaking-kaso-ng-covid-19-sa-pilipinas-umabot-na-sa-316678#ixzz6ZkYGqogC>

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Worldwide coronavirus cases cross 34.12M, death toll at 1,014,853

Published October 2, 2020 6:49am

More than 34.12 million people have been reported to be infected by the novel coronavirus globally and 1,014,853 have died, according to a Reuters tally.

Infections have been reported in more than 210 countries and territories since the first cases were identified in China in December 2019.

The Philippines has moved a notch to 20th place, with 314,079 and 5,562 deaths.

The United States has the most number of cases with 7,260,393 and 207,060 deaths followed by India with 6,312,584 and 98,678, in third place is Brazil with 4,810,935 cases and 143,952 deaths. --

Reuters

KARDINAL, SINIBAK SA PERA; 'YUNG IBA, SA PEDOPILIA



October 2, 2020 @ 2:18 PM 15 hours ago

Hindi talaga matigil-tigil ang pagkakaroon ng mga apostol na mas mahal ang pera kaysa ang kanilang Panginoon.

Nagpapatuloy ang pagkakaroon ng Hudus mula noong panahon ni Jesukristo hanggang sa kasalukuyan.

Nasira ang pagka-apostol ni Hudus nang ipagkanulo nito si Jesukristo kina Poncio Pilato at Haring Herodes kapalit ng 30 pilak.

Pero ngayon, ang usapan hindi lang basta 30 pilak kundi milyon-milyong pera.

MANOK NI HUDAS TUMILAOK

Nitong Setyembre 24, tumilaok ang manok ni Hudus at inginuso nito si Italian Cardinal Angelo Becciu na korap.

Number 2 ang ranggo ni Becciu sa Secretariat of State kung tawagin nila sa Vatican City.

Ang Secretariat of State ang pinakamakapangyarihan na departamento sa Vatican City at itinalaga mismo si Becciu ni Pope Francis na manungkulan dito simula noong 2018 makaraang gawin itong Cardinal mismo ng huli.

Isa pa, si Becciu rin umano ang pinuno o prefect ng ahensya sa Vatican City na Congregation of Saints na nagdedesisyon kung maging santo ang isang Katoliko o hindi.

Sa petsang nabanggit, nagre-sign si Becciu at matapos ang anim na araw, tinanggap ni Pope Francis ang pagbibitiw nito, kasabay ng pagtanggap kay Becciu ng mga karapatan nito bilang Cardinal.

PERA SA MAHIHIRAP PINAKIALAMAN

Ang pakikialam sa pera ng Vatican City na inilalaan sa mga mahihirap ang naging pangunahing kasalanan umano ni Becciu na itinalaga ring tagapangasiwa ng mga donasyong dumarating at ipinamimigay nina Pope Francis.



KARDINAL, SINIBAK SA PERA; 'YUNG IBA, SA PEDOPILIA

Nakarating na sa anti-money laundering council na Moneyval ng Europa ang iskandalo at nakatakda nang mag-imbetiga ito.

Malaki umanong halaga ang nawawala sa donasyon at pinaratangan si Cardinal na ipinabulsa ang mga bahagi nito sa kanyang mga kamag-anak.

Pero lumalabas na pinakamalaking halaga ang kanyang kinuha para lang ipambili ng Sloane Avenue properties sa London, England.

Dahil sa gawain ni Becciu, nadamay na nawalan ng trabaho ang ilang empleyado sa Vatican City.

Nauna rito, nagkaroon na rin noong 2017 ng iskandalo sa pera nang gastusin ng pinuno ng ospital sa Vatican City ang pera ng foundation sa pagpapaganda ng apartment ng isang Cardinal.

Ang Vatican bank ay puno rin ng iskam at isa sa naging Pangulo rio ang kinasuhan ng money laundering at paglustay.

IBANG CARDINAL NAGAGALIT

Kung inyong matatandaan, may ibang Cardinal na rin ang pinagsisibak ni Pope Francis dahil sa pera at pedopilia at kasama sa mga sinibak sina Cardinal Keith O'Brien sa Scotland na namatay na at Theodore McCarrick sa United States.

Itong sina O'Brien at Mc Carrick ay parehong mabangis na nagsusulong noon ng paniniwalang kontra bakla at gay marriage o pag-aasawa ng mga bading.

Pero sa huli, natagpuan ang mga ito na minamanyak pala nila ang kanilang mga seminarista, pari at Obispo.

May iba pang Cardinal na sangkot sa pera-pera pa rin kaya nga nasa 5,000 account sa bangko ang pinagsasara ni Pope Francis.

Bilang pagtutuwid sa nakawan sa salapi ng simbahan, pinabuo ni Pope Francis ang Administration of the Patrimony of the Apostolic See (APSA) na ngayo'y pinamumunuan ni Bishop Nunzio Galantino na nagsabing dapat talagang malinaw na nakikita ang mga transaksyong pinansyal ng simbahan at madaling matunton kung nasaan ang mga ito.

Dahil naman sa pagbabagong isinusulong ni Papa Kiko sa Vatican City, aba, may nagagalit na mga Cardinal at kahit ang mga maiingay umano noon laban sa korapsyon at kamanyakan, tameme rin ngayon at hindi nasisiyahan.

Bakit kaya? Hmmm!

Ano naman kaya ang masasabi nina Cardinal Antonio Luis Cardinal Tagle rito?

Nagtatanong lang po, mga Kamahalan

Denmark to cull up to 1 million mink due to risk of coronavirus contagion

Reuters

Posted at Oct 02 2020 09:45 PM



Minks are seen in their cages in a mink farm in Jyllinge near Copenhagen, Denmark. *Fabian Bimmer, Reuters/File Photo*

COPENHAGEN - Denmark will cull around 1 million mink after finding further coronavirus infections among the animals at farms that breed them for their fur, authorities said.

The Nordic country is the world's largest producer of mink and had previously culled animals on farms hit by infections, but outbreaks have persisted.

Fresh cases have been registered at 41 mink farms and another 20 were believed affected, totalling up to 1 million minks, Environment and Food Minister Mogens Jensen said at a press briefing on Thursday evening.

As a precaution, the culling will include farms situated within 8 km (5 miles) of a farm with infected mink.

"My main focus is on ensuring, that the...mink farms do not become an infection risk for people, and therefore the government has decided to cull the mink," Jensen said.

In May, Spain ordered the culling of all 93,000 mink at a farm to prevent human contagion after finding that most of the mink there were infected with the coronavirus.

The Netherlands reported a similar outbreak and undertook a cull after two people were reported to have been infected by mink, though such cases of animal-to-human transmission are believed to be extremely rare.

There have also been occasional cases of zoo animals and house pets coming down with the coronavirus during the global pandemic, with their owners the likely cause of infection.

Read More: [Denmark coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic mink](#)

Can nature heal itself? What the pandemic has shown us

By Caitlin Hu, Natalie Gallón, Hira Humayun, Ingrid Formanek and Zamira Rahim, CNN
Published Oct 2, 2020 11:45:51 PM



Photo courtesy: Shutterstock

(CNN) -- In the dark early days of the coronavirus pandemic, when a death toll of 1 million was still unimaginable, there was one bright spot: nature appeared to be healing. With humans under lockdown, stories circulated about unusual animal sightings, like wild goats taking over a town in Wales -- and then became a joke about the public's thirst for signs of regeneration: New Yorkers claimed the return of Elmo to Times Square as proof of a great earthly rebalancing.

The idea of nature resurging offered relief from worries about the pandemic's human suffering, and hope for the planet: Was nature still capable of healing itself, if just given some alone time?

It's probably not that simple. Scientists could take years to establish the net impact of the great "anthropause," as some have dubbed it, on wildlife and the environment, but there are already signs of fallout. Lockdowns have put tourism, some scientific field research, and surveillance of some protected areas on pause. More poachers have come in their place, conservationists in Asia, Africa and the Americas tell CNN.

"We can't expect that nature just soldiers on," United Nations Environment Program Executive Director Inger Anderson told reporters on Tuesday, in response to a question about how to stem the world's ongoing loss of wildlife since the 1970s. Nearly two-thirds of the world's wildlife was wiped out in the past 50 years, according to a recent WWF report, and a new report by the Royal Botanic Gardens Kew shows that some 40% of plants are threatened by extinction.

With land and seascapes already irrevocably altered, polluted, razed and planted, humans must figure out how to actively steward the health of the environment and live in it sustainably, Anderson said -- precisely the challenge before world leaders at the UN Summit on Biodiversity on Wednesday and at the COP15 global biodiversity conference next year.

In other words, it'll take more than a few months at home to heal the planet.

"There's more wildlife visiting inhabited areas. We've seen the penguins in Cape Town, the kangaroos jumping down the streets in Adelaide and so on. In those contexts it probably has given nature a bit of a break," says Conservation International's executive vice president Sebastian



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Troeng. Less international travel has also interrupted some illegal wildlife trade across borders, he adds, but "that's pretty much as far as any benefits go."

'COVID-19 has been a godsend to poachers'

Fewer people around isn't always a good thing.

In Honduras, hidden cameras have captured a change in traffic across eight conservation parks this year. Monitored by global wild cat conservation group Panthera, the cameras once recorded thousands of tourists, the group's South America Regional Director Esteban Payan says.

"For years, you wouldn't get one single cat there," he says. "Now there's no tourism, no tourists on these trails. And we start seeing margays, we start seeing ocelots, we start seeing pumas." But in some parks, Payan says, the cameras have also started to capture more hunters.

People who illegally hunt wild cats are often retaliating for attacks on cows or livestock, he says. And some are just armed wanderers. "With the lockdowns, many people are just walking in the forest and are walking with a gun -- and they'll see a jaguar and will kill it out of fear," he says.

Panthera and other organizations have working solutions to these problems. One project promotes electric fencing for ranchers to protect livestock from predator cats. But the coronavirus makes acting on them harder.

"We depend on funding," says Payan. The tattered global economy translates into less giving to NGOs from large and small donors alike, he says, which ultimately results in "less patrolling and less vigilance."

A continent away, in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the same problem plagues efforts to stop poachers who kill or capture exotic species to traffic on the black market. Adams Cassinga, head of Conserv Congo, an anti-trafficking organization that works with lawmakers to bring poachers and traffickers to justice, tells CNN that since the pandemic, he's seen fewer park rangers and security officers in protected areas.

His organization has assisted 11 wildlife trafficking busts in Kinshasa over the past five months, he says, more than double the number in the same period last year.

These involved a butcher's list of rare animal carcasses and parts: a half ton of pangolin scales, four great apes, one baboon, 60 kilograms of ivory and several monkeys. Some of the animals rescued alive, like baby chimpanzees, fetch up to \$50,000 on the international black market.

"Covid-19 has been a godsend to poachers," says Cassinga.

Tourism is a central source of funding for wildlife reserves and nature parks around the world. As CNN has previously reported, the presence of eco-tourists keep poachers and loggers at bay, and at well-managed reserves, their money funds rangers, park management and other programs to ensure the health of wildlife. When travel ground to a halt this year, that vital funding dried up.



Can nature heal itself? What the pandemic has shown us

"Covid-19 has had a devastating impact on wildlife tourism, and on the functioning of parks and protected areas around the world," says Andersen, the UNEP executive director. "In many countries we've seen an almost 100% decline in tourism.

"The lesson for us is that if we are to save protected areas, we need to broaden our revenue streams" to go beyond tourism, she says.

Not all organizations interviewed by CNN had the same issues. Nonprofit African Parks, which manages 18 parks across the continent, said it had not observed an overall increase in poaching. Chief marketing officer Andrea Heydlauff chalked that to the fact that the organization does not rely heavily on tourism and did not cut staff during the pandemic.

'I'm not proud of it and even wish I wouldn't have done it'

What motivates a poacher? For some, it's just survival. Several conservation organizations have warned that human poverty is one of the greatest dangers to wildlife this year.

The pandemic may have emboldened established criminals and traffickers, but it has also driven hundreds of millions of jobless people worldwide into a desperate state of poverty, raising the risk of a famine "of biblical proportions," to quote a statement by the UN's David Beasley, executive director of the World Food Program.

Tourism is a central source of income in Guatemala's Maya Biosphere Reserve, a vast swath of tropical forest that encompasses ancient archaeological sites, national parks and wildlife reserves. One man from Cruce Dos Aguadas village there said he turned to poaching to feed his family after tourism work stopped.

He has been hunting the shrinking number of Yucatan brown brocket, a small species of deer considered "vulnerable" by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUNC), as well as "near threatened" ocellated turkeys, feathered in iridescent blue and copper.

"I'm not proud of it and even wish I wouldn't have done it, but what else would I do?" he told CNN. "Before the pandemic, we could rely on tourism or the work in archaeological sites to earn money and buy food with. But now, we have nothing."

Even before the pandemic, people in rural areas around the world supplemented sparse diets by hunting wild animals, or bushmeat. But economic pressure has forced many to hunt more for survival. Experts say it has also led to more illegal logging, harvesting and grazing in protected lands.

In Uganda's Bwindi Impenetrable National Park, an extremely rare silverback mountain gorilla was killed this June, the first such killing the park had seen in nine years. One of just over 1,000 remaining in the world, the gorilla -- known locally as Rafiki -- had run into bushmeat poachers who were likely looking for smaller prey.

Veterinarian Gladys Kalema-Zikusoka, founder of Uganda-based non-profit Conservation Through Public Health (CTPH) which works in the park, says that without tourism, the share of park revenue dedicated to supporting basic local infrastructure has dried up, and people living in the



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area have no "other options but to turn to illegal activity to meet the basic needs of food and fuel wood for their families," Kalema-Zikusoka said.

"For the most part, communities surrounding Uganda's protected areas, conservancies and important wildlife areas are some of the poorest and most marginalized," she says.

The number of people accused of poaching more than doubled in Uganda in the early months of the pandemic. Uganda's Wildlife Authority (UWA) recorded 531 poaching suspects between February and May of this year, compared to 255 in the same period the year before. UWA executive director Sam Mwandha said poaching has since slowed to "normal" levels.

Heading toward Kunming 2021

Conservationists fear the global push to revive faltering economies will do more damage to the environment. Government stimulus to create jobs and growth could be directed to green initiatives, but early signs are not entirely promising: CNN has previously reported that several wealthy governments are already pouring relief money into polluting fossil fuel industries, and Conservation International has tracked more than 20 rollbacks in environmental protections globally this year.

Rebooting the global economy has to combine "putting food on the table" with directing "resources towards nature-positive actions that will guarantee us a secure future," UNEP's Anderson says. For people living near nature, upticks in poaching suggest a need for more resilient "wildlife economies" with less dependence on tourism, she says.

Anderson also stresses the need to look beyond protected areas to cities and rural areas, where environmental problems abound. "We must look at biodiversity beyond protected areas, because this is where the loss is most severe."

Currently about 15% of global land and 7% of waters are protected, according to the UN's database of protected areas. The goal set a decade ago by global representatives in Aichi, Japan, was 17% for land and 10% for waters by 2020 (still lower than scientists' 30% target for both).

At next year's Convention on Biodiversity in Kunming, China, 196 countries are hoped to set new biodiversity goals for themselves -- and actually achieve them this time.

To build momentum toward that, several countries including Canada, the UK and EU vowed this week to expand protected natural areas, and more than 70 countries signed a 10-point pledge to prioritize the environment in post-pandemic reconstruction. Notably missing from the list of pledge signatories, however, were China, India, the US, and Brazil.

A 'once in a lifetime experiment'

The pandemic offers scientists a dramatic opportunity to drive home the need for such commitments.

Can nature heal itself? What the pandemic has shown us

Though a tragedy, the pandemic is "this once in a lifetime event" to evaluate the effects of our behavior on nature, says Richard Primack, a biologist at Boston University, who is working with scientists globally to compile research about Covid-19's impact on conservation, for the journal *Biological Conservation*. "We going to see these enormous changes in human activity."

A major question, says Primack, is whether the ways in which humans try to protect nature actually work. "Maybe (the data) will tell us that the management we have is not important, if biological systems are really staying the same. Or maybe it's telling us that the management is critical."

One colleague of Primack's sees early evidence to support scaling up protection. David Philipp, an avid angler and conservation biologist at the Fisheries Conservation Foundation, has been studying bass populations in the lakes and rivers of southern Ontario for 30 years. For decades, he says, sport fishing caused a disastrous annual depletion of baby bass, by disrupting father fish as they guarded their nests from predators.

But between 2019 and 2020, the number of surviving baby bass in Philipp's research zone more than tripled, from 124,000 to 414,000, a change that he attributes to a halt on fishing due to pandemic lockdowns and the US-Canada border closure. This year's surviving fry could live as long as 15 years, theoretically rejuvenating the population for years.

His research, which is still under review, could be a decisive piece of Philipp's pitch to the Canadian government for a pilot project that would effectively replicate lockdown's benefits, by blocking off nesting areas in lakes from fishing for a few months each year.

Lockdowns have "given people a glimpse of how quickly things can improve if we take action," Anderson says. Though sightings of flora and fauna thriving during mankind's confinement may not tell the whole story, she hopes they will inspire the public to reconnect with nature and demand more environmental protections in the future.

Primack, the biologist, has wondered whether in some cases, the animals spotted during the pandemic had been visiting urban spaces all along. "People might have been just rushing around too much to notice them before," he says. Only long-term studies will eventually show whether wildlife in some areas really did take advantage of the sudden quiet to explore, or whether we just began to see things differently.



Amazon fires worsening, alarming – report



By [Agence France-Presse](#)

October 3, 2020

PANTANAL: The number of forest fires in Brazil’s Amazon increased sharply starting September this year, figures released on Thursday (Friday in Manila) show, fueling growing criticism of President Jair Bolsonaro’s environmental policies.

The National Institute of Space Research (INPE) said satellite imagery showed an increase of 61 percent in the number of fires in September, compared to the same period last year.

Satellites used by the institute detected 32,017 outbreaks last month in the Amazon, compared to 19,925 in the same month in 2019. In the first nine months of the year, the total number of fires increased by 14 percent over the same period in 2019, the INPE said.

Despite the data from INPE, a world-renowned public body, far-right President Jair Bolsonaro has continued to denounce a campaign of “disinformation” about the Pantanal and the Amazon.

On Wednesday, Bolsonaro — an ally of United States President Donald Trump — lashed out at US Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden for “disastrous and unnecessary” comments on destruction of the rainforest.

Biden said during the first presidential debate that if elected in November, he would raise \$20 billion to help Brazil to “stop tearing down” the Amazon, threatening “significant economic consequences” if it did not.

Later, in a video address to a United Nations biodiversity summit, Bolsonaro said Brazil was “firm in its commitment to sustainable development and preserving our environmental wealth.”

He accused “certain nongovernmental organizations” of perpetrating “environmental crimes” to stain the country’s image.

Most of the Amazon fires consist of agricultural burning on illegally deforested areas, even though the government banned all burning for four months from July.

Further south, in the Pantanal — the world’s largest wetlands — the number of fires has almost tripled to 8,106, making September 2020 the worst month since the INPE began compiling statistics on the fires in 1998.

“Brazil is in flames. From the Amazon to the Pantanal, the environmental heritage of all Brazilians is being reduced to ashes,” Christiane Mazzetti of Greenpeace in a statement.

“The is a consequence of the policy of the Bolsonaro government, which despite the predictions of drought in the Pantanal, has not used the necessary means of fire protection,” she said.

The situation in the Pantanal, straddling Brazil, Paraguay and Bolivia, has been exacerbated by the worst drought in half a century.

How climate targets can help economic recovery

Instead of delaying updates to nationally determined climate targets while Covid-19 continues, governments should consider how these targets could be used to leverage the economic contribution of nature-based solutions.



Puertecillo Beach, Chile. Chile's climate plan links ocean and climate health, while acknowledging the economic value of coastal ecosystems. Image: [Maximiliano Reichenbauer](#), [CC BY-SA 4.0](#)



By [Francisca Tondreau](#)

Oct. 2, 2020

With the world gripped by the Covid-19 pandemic, policymakers have turned their attention to economic stimulus and financial support of households and firms. As a result, many countries have been delaying the preparation and submission of their new emissions-reduction targets under the Paris climate agreement.

These updated targets, known as nationally determined contributions, or NDCs, were originally due earlier this year, ahead of the COP26 climate-change conference in Glasgow, Scotland in November. But that, too, has been postponed.

The switch from summits to stimulus is understandable. But we should not lose sight of the important role that NDCs can play in economic recovery efforts. NDCs are among the best vehicles for governments to articulate their vision of future economic growth and technological transformation, both of which have clear links to job creation.

Moreover, setting the targets provides a golden opportunity for countries to identify shovel-ready projects and activities that can deliver both climate and economic benefits.

Chile is a good example. The government announced an updated climate pledge in April, together with a new climate bill that is currently before the National Congress. The updated NDC links climate action to sustainable development and a just energy transition.

How climate targets can help economic recovery

At its core is a commitment to achieving carbon neutrality by 2050, and it is easy to see how the government's pandemic response can help to achieve this goal by accelerating the necessary transitions in the energy and transportation sectors.

But Chile's new NDC also shows another front where countries' economic recovery plans can receive a significant boost: nature-based solutions. The NDC demonstrates an understanding of the role nature can play in achieving carbon neutrality, as well as in adapting to the effects of climate change and recognising the importance of creating and maintaining natural carbon sinks.

For starters, Chile's climate plan links ocean and climate health, while acknowledging the economic value of coastal ecosystems. We don't need to look far for an example of how healthy marine ecosystems support local economies. In Mexico, in the Gulf of California and the Baja California Peninsula alone, marine ecosystems [generate](#) \$518 million in annual tourism revenues and directly account for at least 3,575 jobs.

Given Chile's extensive coastline, the possibilities are much likely orders of magnitude higher. The NDC does not disappoint in this regard: It includes a commitment to turn 25 per cent of its exclusive economic zone into a protected area. If properly implemented, this pledge would create new economic opportunities for the country.

The [new NDC](#) also significantly strengthens Chile's commitments regarding forests. The government has doubled its target for sustainable forests management and restoration from 100,000 hectares to 200,000 hectares by 2030.

Likewise, it will plant 200,000 hectares of new forests (up from 100,000 hectares), of which at least 100,000 hectares will comprise permanent forest cover and at least 70,000 hectares will be native species. Finally, Chile has said it will cut emissions from deforestation and land degradation by 25 per cent by 2030.

The link to economic growth (albeit understudied and underappreciated) is clear here as well. Pursuing these targets will enable governments to create a variety of jobs, including foresters, botanists, machinery operators, and laborers. And restored landscapes offer additional benefits.

A 2016 [study](#) by the World Resources Institute found that in Latin America, reviving degraded lands would yield \$23 billion in net benefits over a period of 50 years. On average, farmers who restore their land can earn an extra \$1,140 per hectare in net economic value.

Let's be clear: Chile still has some way to go to achieve the targets in its original climate pledge. The government's response to Covid-19 has thus far been a mixed bag, and it has yet to demonstrate any serious commitment to advancing climate action since releasing the plan months ago.

But, at the very least, Chile's NDC gives us a good example of what an NDC can and should be: not a legally binding policy document, but a political signal to ministries, private-sector actors, and development-finance institutions to identify and pursue opportunities to link a government's climate plans to economic recovery.



How climate targets can help economic recovery

Each updated NDC creates greater political momentum and builds the international trust we need to combat climate change. Instead of delaying work on the NDCs while the pandemic continues, governments should consider how these targets could be used to leverage the economic contribution of nature-based solutions.

In short, climate action, as expressed through an NDC, can go hand in hand with economic recovery plans. When nature is protected, it has much to offer in return.

Francisca Tondreau is Country Director for Chile, Paraguay, and Bolivia at The Nature Conservancy.

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