

06 JANUARY 2021, WEDNESDAY



DENR

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



DENR to give out shredder-composter machines to 178 Manila Bay LGUs in 2021

By DENR Published on January 5, 2021



Industrial-grade shredder-composter machines

QUEZON CITY, Jan. 5 -- The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) is targeting in 2021 to provide each of the 178 local government units (LGUs) within the Manila Bay region with industrial-grade shredder-composter machines to help them comply with Republic Act 9003, or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000.

DENR Undersecretary for Solid Waste Management and LGUs Concerns Benny D. Antiporda disclosed this during the turnover of the first batch of shredder-composter equipment to Pampanga LGUs—San Fernando City and the towns of Apalit, Candaba, Guagua and Magalang.

The Manila Bay region is comprised of the National Capital Region and eight provinces from Regions III and IV-A, namely, Bataan, Bulacan, Pampanga, Nueva Ecija, Tarlac, Laguna, Rizal and Cavite.

During the recent turnover ceremony held at the DENR Central Office in Quezon City, Antiporda said the agency will continue to provide LGUs the necessary support to ensure their compliance with RA 9003.

"Sad to say, compliance is slow particularly where LGUs lack the means for full and prompt compliance," Antiporda lamented.

"This is where the DENR steps in, in line with its mandate to provide technical assistance and other capability-building assistance to LGUs," he added.

A shredder-composter set includes a brand new composter that can process one ton of compost material within 24 hours, and a brand new shredder with the capacity to process two tons of organic waste per day.



The event was keynoted by Senator Cynthia A. Villar, chair of the Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources. It was highlighted by the signing of the project's Memorandum of Agreement between the DENR and the LGUs represented by their respective local executives.

Citing statistics from the National Solid Waste Management Commission, Antiporda said around 52 percent of the municipal wastes in the country is biodegradable.

Providing LGUs with the equipment, he said, will not only reduce the amount of waste that end up in sanitary landfills but will also transform the diverted wastes into assets as organic fertilizer, which is valuable to agriculture and horticulture.

"Transportation na lang po ang gagastusin nila dito," Antiporda added, referring to the cost for the farmers availing of the organic fertilizers from the equipment.

Antiporda disclosed that the provision of the equipment will also help increase the collection of recyclable materials, which account for some 28 percent of the country's municipal wastes.

The difficulty in recovering recyclable materials has been largely blamed to contamination by biodegradable materials like food wastes. (DENR)



300 sanitary landfills to be set up in PH by 2022

Tuesday, January 5, 2021 Cory Martinez12

AROUND 300 sanitary landfills (SLFs) are being targeted to be established nationwide by 2022 to further improve the country's management of solid waste.

Benny Antiporda, Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Undersecretary for Solid Waste Management and Local Government Units (LGUs) Concerns, said that these SLFs will be established through a public-private partnership.

Antiporda made the disclosure during a recent hybrid consultation meeting with SLF operators, which combined face-to-face and teleconferencing.

"Ambitious as it may seem to be as a target, but we shall aim to establish 300 SLFs by the end of 2022," Antiporda said.

Antiporda explained that SLF remains the primary long-term method of solid waste disposal allowed under Republic Act 9003 or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000.

The consultation was the second of a series of meetings, which Antiporda said was the first time in the history of the DENR that the SLF operators were gathered together to ensure their commitment to helping LGUs and the national government address the challenges of solid waste management.

A total of 21 SLF operators were present during the meeting, either personal or via Zoom. The meeting was aimed at closer collaboration among SLF operators, LGUs and the DENR, through the National Solid Waste Management Commission, where Antiporda sits as alternate of Environment Secretary and NSWMC Chair Roy A. Cimatu.

Among those in attendance were representatives from Phileco, Tamagan SLF of Lepanto Consolidated Company, WasteCon Inc., Urdaneta Solid Waste Management, Cagayan Economic Zone Sanitary Landfill, Metro Clark Waste Management Corporation, Mega Pacific Landfill Resource Services Corp., and IPM Holdings.

Also present were representatives from Integrated Solid Waste Management Inc., Greenleap Sanitary Landfill/New Sanitary Landfill, SB Hain Enterprise/Severino B. Hain, Pilotage Trading and Construction Inc., TAYSAN SLF, Gen Tech SLF, JORMS Trading Corporation, Coral Bay Nickel Corporation, Iwa Besu Solid Waste Processing Facility project/Iwa Besu Corp., Eco's Sanitary Landfill and Waste Management Corp., San Rafael Moreno SLF, ARN Central Waste Management Inc., and Asian Energy Systems Inc.

There are currently 189 SLFs in operation servicing 399 LGUs across the country.

However, Antiporda lamented that the number of SLFs remains small 20 years after RA 9003 took effect.

During the consultation meeting, Antiporda called on the SLF operators to look into the viability of offering their facilities to LGUs with illegal dumpsites in anticipation of an aggressive campaign by the DENR to close these down starting January 2021.

The first meeting was held on Dec. 17, 2020 with seven SLF operators present, namely: International Solid Waste Integrated Management Specialist Inc., Iwa Besu Corp., IPM Holdings, Wastecon Inc., Phil Ecology Systems Corp., S.B. Hain Enterprises and General Services Inc., and Urdaneta Solid Waste Management.



In that meeting, Antiporda urged SLF operators to *“set aside whatever differences they have and close ranks as an association or coalition.”*

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



Illegal drainage found near Manila Bay

January 5, 2021



The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) is now identifying those responsible for the illegal drainage system discovered near Manila Bay.

The inspection of the department unearthed that several establishments are directly disposing dirty water into the bay. This has a heavy impact on the rehabilitation of Manila Bay.

They have already been issued a warning of possible business closure and were given two days to fix their drainage system. The city government is also prepared to impose sanctions on the establishments.

“Kung ano man po ang (whatever the) findings ng (of) DENR, we will take note of it and we will cooperate with the national government with regards to implementation ng ating (of our) preservation ng ating (of our) environment,” Manila PIO Chief Julius Leonen stated. – *Report from Louisa Erisp*



Fishermen's group slams 'failed' Manila Bay rehabilitation

Published January 5, 2021, 7:27 PM

by [Raymund Antonio](#)

An alliance of small fisherfolk on Tuesday lamented that they barely felt the effects of the rehabilitation of Manila Bay led by the Department of Natural Resources and Environment (DENR) on their livelihood.

Pamalakaya chair Fernando Hicap brushed aside DENR's efforts by citing the continued "ecological degradation" of Manila Bay.

"Fish catch suffer from interminable decline, an indication of an ever-polluted marine resources," he said in a statement.

The fisherfolk group cited the average fish catch of between two to five kilos per fisherman in Manila Bay.

It has been two years since the national government kicked off its P47-billion rehabilitation program in January, 2019.

This was in compliance with the 2008 Supreme Court mandamus that requires all concerned agencies to "clean-up, rehabilitate, and preserve" Manila Bay.

As part of the rehabilitation program, the DENR made an artificial beat at the baywalk using synthetic white sand made from crushed dolomite.

"Ecological disturbances continue to occur across Manila Bay, such as decline of fish catch, loss of endemic fish species and proliferation of alien species regarded as pests," Hicap, a former Anakpawis Partylist representative, said.

"Thus, we raise the question on the effectivity of the government's ongoing rehabilitation drive that costs billions of public funds," he added.

Pamalakaya also scored the DENR for giving "go signal" to reclamation projects that would cause massive destruction of Manila Bay's resources, including the displacement of fishing and coastal communities.

"Reclamation defeats the purpose of rehabilitation, as it destroys the essential resources that keep Manila Bay's abundant marine biodiversity and ecosystem," he said.

Source: <https://mb.com.ph/2021/01/05/fishermens-group-slams-failed-manila-bay-rehabilitation/>



No improvement in Manila Bay daily fish catch despite rehab, fisherfolk group says

By Jonathan L. Mayuga

January 6, 2021



In this file photo: Workers rehabilitate the Manila Bay "white sand" beach made of dolomite after Typhoon Ulysses flooded parts of Metro Manila and Northern and Central Luzon last week.

Two years after the launch of "Battle for Manila Bay," an ambitious program to rehabilitate Manila Bay, the fish catch of small fisherfolk who depend on the waters' bounty for food and livelihood has not improved.

This was stressed by the Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (Pamalakaya), saying fisherfolk across Manila Bay barely felt the effects of the rehabilitation.

The group said that average fish catch in most of Manila Bay's municipal fishing grounds remains at 2 to 5 kilos per fishing trip.

"Fish catch suffer from interminable decline, an indication of an ever-polluted marine resources. The DENR has failed to address the primary causes of Manila Bay's ecological degradation. Instead, the head agency of the rehabilitation program resorts to a superficial solution such as dumping of synthetic white sands, or the dolomite," Fernando Hicap, Pamalakaya national chairman said in a news statement.

In January 2019, the DENR which was tasked by President Duterte to lead the Manila Bay Inter-Agency Task Force launched the P47-billion Battle for Manila Bay.

The rehabilitation was anchored on the 2008 Supreme Court continuing mandamus to "cleanup, rehabilitate, and preserve Manila Bay, and restore and maintain its waters to SB level [Class B sea waters per Water Classification Tables under DENR Administrative Order 34 1990], to make them fit for swimming, skin-diving, and other forms of contact recreation."

"Ecological disturbances continue to occur across Manila Bay, such as the decline of fish catch, loss of endemic fish species, and proliferation of alien species regarded as pests. Thus, we raise the question of the effectiveness of the government's ongoing rehabilitation drive that costs billions of public funds," Hicap, former Anakpawis Party-list said.

The group scored the DENR for giving the "go signal" to reclamation projects that would cause massive destruction of Manila Bay's resources such as mangroves, sea grasses, and aquaculture, and moreover, would entail displacement of fishing and coastal communities.

Image credits: [Bernard Testa](#)

Source: <https://businessmirror.com.ph/2021/01/06/no-improvement-in-manila-bay-daily-fish-catch-despite-rehab-fisherfolk-group-says/>



DENR palpak sa Manila Bay rehab

By Abante News Online — Last updated Jan 5, 2021

NEWS



36 0

Bigo ang rehabilitation ng Manila Bay na inilunsad ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) dalawang taon nang nakalilipas.

Ayon sa Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (Pamalakaya) hindi nito naramdaman ang rehabilitation ng Manila Bay dahil nasa dalawa hanggang limang kilong isda lamang ang nahuhuli ng mga mangingisda sa lugar at sinisisi nila ang kaunting huli sa polusyon sa karagatan.

Sa halip na linisin at buhayin ang karagatan, ang DENR pa ang pumapatay dito lalo na nang tambakan nito ng dolomite ang Manila Bay.

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“Fish catch suffer from interminable decline, an indication of an ever-polluted marine resources. The DENR has failed to address the primary causes of Manila Bay’s ecological degradation. Instead, the head agency of the rehabilitation program resorts to a superficial solution such as dumping of synthetic white sands or the dolomite,” sabi ni Pamalakaya chair Fernando Hicap.

Paalala ng Pamalakaya, P49 bilyon ang inilaan para sa Manila Bay rehabilitation program at ang layuning ay maging ligtas ito para sa swimming at iba pang recreation.

Binatikos ng Pamalakaya ang DENR dahil sa pinayagan nito ang reclamation projects na nakasisira sa mga bakawan sa lugar na ikawawala ng kabuhayan ng mga mangingisda. (Eileen Mencias)

Source: <https://www.abante.com.ph/denr-palpak-sa-manila-bay-rehab/>



P62-M AGARWOOD NASABAT NG BOC DAVAO

January 4, 2021 jake



Dahil sa pinalakas na koordinasyon sa pagitan ng Bureau of Customs (BOC)-Port of Davao, Davao International Airport (DIA), BOC – Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA), PNP Aviation Security Group at Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Region XI ay nasabat ang anim (6) na boxes ng Agarwood na may halagang 62 milyong pisong noong nakaraang Disyembre 24, 2020.

Ito ay isang uri ng kahoy na kasama sa National List of Threatened Philippine Plants per DENR Administrative Order No. 2007-01.

Ang packages ay idineklara na naglalaman ng “woodcrafts” na patungo sana sa Vietnam via NAIA.

Subalit, matapos ang x-ray scanning at physical inspection, ay naging positibo para sa misdeclaration bilang 73 kilograms ng Agarwood chips na nakatakda sanang ipuslit sa Pilipinas para dalhin sa ibang bansa na walang kaukulang mga dokumento.

Ang Agarwood ay isang mamamahaling kahoy na sangkap ng paggawa ng pabango at iba pang mamahaling produkto.

Ang nasabat na packages ay isinailalim sa seizure and forfeiture proceedings para sa Section 117 (Regulated Shipments), Section 1400 (Misdeclaration) and Section 1113 (Property Subject to Seizure and Forfeiture), lahat ng Republic Act No. 10863 (CMTA) na may kaugnayan sa Section 27 (i) [Illegal Transport] of Republic Act No. 9147 (Wild Life Act), at i-tinurn over sa Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

Kaugnay nito, ang Port ay patuloy sa kanilang pagmo-monitor sa katulad na klase ng shipments sa pamumuno ni BOC Davao’s District Collector, Atty. Erastus Sandino Austria.

Ito ay sa pamamagitan din ng mas pinalakas na koordinasyon sa BOC-NAIA, sa pamumuno naman ni District Collector, Carmelita Talusan at ang Port’s partner enforcement agencies, lahat para tiyakin na ang hangganan mahusay na protektahan mula sa maaaring illegal exports ng endangered trees.


Ito rin ay nakalinya sa direktiba ni Customs Commissioner Rey Leonardo B. Guerrero na wakasan ang smuggling sa bansa. (Joel O. Amongo)

Source: http://saksingayon.com/inside-aduana/p62-m-agarwood-nasabat-ng-boc-davao/?utm_source=ReviveOldPost&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=ReviveOldPost&fbclid=IwAR1vIV5EJm4idREPP8yszlH4hei5SKoKQStOJHPFUQxUmprqVYBpjpww00



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SC junks petition to stop SMC's new airport project in Bulacan

Published January 5, 2021, 5:36 PM

by [Rey Panaligan](#)

The Supreme Court (SC) on Tuesday, January 5, dismissed a Writ of Kalikasan petition which pleaded to stop San Miguel Corp. (SMC) from constructing the New Manila International Airport, known as the Aerocity Airport Project, on a 2,500-hectare foreshore area in Bulacan town, Bulacan province.



(MANILA BULLETIN)

The denial of the petition filed by fisherfolk and several multi-sector groups was confirmed by Chief Justice Diosdado M. Peralta in a text message. No details were disclosed, except that the petition was “not sufficient in form and substance.”

A Writ of Kalikasan is a legal remedy for the protection of one's right to “a balanced and healthful ecology in accord with the rhythm and harmony of nature,” under Section 16, Article II of the Constitution.

In their petition, the groups told the SC that site of the new airport has been classified by the National Mapping and Resource Information Authority (NAMRIA) as forestland and permanent forestland.

They claimed the project would violate many environmental laws, adversely affect the migratory bird population, and increase risks to climate change impacts that would devastate the marine habitat.

They also claimed that the Airport Project Area and the Airport City Area cover forest and permanent forest land that are not alienable and disposable, thus, there is a violation of Republic Act 4701 or An Act Declaring a Portion of the Foreshore Fronting Manila Bay Along the Province of Bulacan as Bulacan Fishing Reservation.

At the same time, they alleged that portions of the areas covering the project are classified as public forest and fishery reserves and, thus, inalienable.

The airport project, they said, violates RA 7160 or the Local Government Code which mandates public consultation and local government ordinance on projects that impact on the environment and aggravate climate change.

The petitioners were represented by Teodoro Bacon and Rodel Alvarez, together with Oceana through its Vice President, Atty. Gloria Estenzo Ramos, and Archbishop Roger Martinez of the Archdiocese of San Jose del Monte. They were joined by the Aniban ng mga Mangagawa sa Agrikultura led by its chairperson Renato de la Cruz.



Oceana is an international advocacy organization dedicated to protecting the world's oceans.

Named respondents were Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Roy Cimatu, Environmental Management Bureau Region III Regional Director Wilson Trajeco, Department of Transportation Secretary Arthur Tugade, San Miguel Aerocity President/CEO Ramon S. Ang, and Silvertides President/CEO Hercules V. Galicia.

SMC's Aerocity, with its subsidiary-contractor Silvertides Holdings, also envisioned the construction and development of a 12,000-hectare township that features a residential zone, government center, seaport, and an industrial zone.

The petitioners claimed that the projects also violate the provisions of RA 8550 or the Philippine Fisheries Code of 1998; RA 9275 or the Clean Water Act; RA 9729 or the Climate Change Act; RA 10654 or An Act to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing, Amending RA No. 8550 or The Philippine Fisheries Code of 1998; Presidential Decree 705, also known as the Revised Forestry Code of the Philippines; Presidential Decree 1586 or the Philippine Environmental Impact Statement Law; and several other administrative issuances, memoranda and circular pertaining to environmental protection.



This 2019 file photo shows Barangay Taliptip in Bulakan, Bulacan
[Philstar.com/Efigenio Toledo IV, file](http://Philstar.com/Efigenio>Toledo%20IV,file)

SC junks Taliptip fishers, groups writ of kalikasan plea vs Bulacan airport project

(Philstar.com) - January 5, 2021 - 5:56pm

MANILA, Philippines — The Supreme Court junked the plea of Bulacan fishermen and civil society groups to compel the government to protect marine ecosystems in Manila Bay threatened by the construction of a sprawling airport city complex in the province.

Petitioner Oceana Philippines, through its vice president, Gloria Estenzo -Ramos, said they will hold off its comment as they wait for the copy of the SC's order. But petitioner and environmental lawyer Ramos stressed: "The advocacy continues."

Chief Justice Diosdado Peralta confirmed that the SC was unanimous in dismissing the petition for writ of kalikasan for being "not sufficient in form and substance."

No other detail on the voting was given. The SC has also yet to release a copy of the decision.

Former residents of Barangay Taliptip in Bulakan town, Oceana Philippines and two other petitioners ran to the SC to ask for the issuance of a writ of kalikasan against the San Miguel airport project in Bulacan.

A writ of kalikasan is a legal remedy for persons or organizations whose right to a balanced and healthful ecology is violated or threatened.

Spanning 2,500 hectares, the P738-billion New Manila International Airport and its adjacent airport city will be built over Barangays Taliptip and Bambang in Bulacan town, covering the mangrove and mudflat ecosystems, the petitioners said.

They urged the SC to stop the reclamation of Manila Bay, and save fish and crustaceans species, endangered migratory birds, mangroves and marine ecosystems in the area.

"The petition is to stop the further destruction of fishing grounds and marine habitats such as mangroves and wetlands in Manila Bay and for our government agencies, respondent agencies and project proponents to protect our environment and our people's environmental rights," Estenzo-Ramos earlier said.



The petitioners also said that the conversion of Bulakan wates into an airport will have lead to a decline in aquaculture production and fish catch, and have adverse effect on bird population, marine habitat and increased risks of climate impact.

Part of the petition read: “The long lasting effect of reclaiming the entire area on the ecosystem services is that these ecosystem services won’t be there anymore. No more fishing, aquaculture and no more mangroves to protect the coastline. So the area will be subjected to greater natural hazard such as storm surges.”

The measure granting a 50-year franchise to San Miguel Aerocity Inc. to construct, develop, establish and maintain a domestic and international airport in Bulacan has lapsed into law on Monday, January 4. — **Kristine Joy Patag with Gaea Katreena Cabico**



SC thumbs down bid for writ of kalikasan vs SMC Aerocity

By Joel R. San Juan

January 6, 2021



Blueprint of San Miguel Corp. Holdings's proposal for the Bulacan Airport

THE Supreme Court has junked the petition seeking the issuance of a writ of kalikasan to enjoin San Miguel Corporation's (SMC) construction of a domestic and international airport in Bulacan known as the Aerocity Airport Project.

The unanimous decision was reached at Tuesday's regular en banc session of the High Tribunal. The SC declared that the petition filed by Oceana and several fisherfolk in Bulacan was "not sufficient in form and substance," thus warranting its immediate dismissal.

Oceana is an international advocacy organization dedicated to protecting the world's oceans. SMC Aerocity, with its subsidiary-contractor Silvertides Holdings, plans to construct the New Manila International Airport on a 2,500-hectare foreshore area of Bulacan, Bulacan—classified by the National Mapping and Resource Information Authority (Namria) as forestland and permanent forest land.

The airport is part of an envisioned 12,000-hectare township that features a residential zone, government center, seaport, and an industrial zone.

However, the petitioners said the project should be enjoined for violating numerous environmental laws. It poses danger to the resident and migratory bird population and would have an impact on climate change and marine habitat, petitioners claimed.

They noted that the Airport Project Area and the Airport City Area cover forest and permanent forest land that are not alienable and disposable, thus, violate Republic Act 4701 or An Act Declaring a Portion of the Foreshore Fronting Manila Bay Along the Province of Bulacan as Bulacan Fishing Reservation and Authorizing the Appropriation of Funds Therefor.

Other laws allegedly violated were R.A. 7160 of the Local Government Code R.A. 8550 or the Philippine Fisheries Code of 1998; R.A. 9275 or the Clean Water Act; R.A. 9729 or the Climate Change Act; R.A. 10654 or An Act to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing, Amending R.A. No. 8550 or The Philippine Fisheries Code of 1998; Presidential Decree 705, also known as the Revised Forestry Code of the Philippines; Presidential Decree 1586 (Violation of the Philippine Environmental Impact Statement Law), and several other administrative issuances, memoranda and circular pertaining to environmental protection.

Named respondents were Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Roy Cimatu, Environmental Management Bureau Region III regional director Wilson Trajeco, Transportation Secretary Art Tugade, San Miguel Aerocity President/CEO Ramon S. Ang, and Silvertides President/CEO Hercules V. Galicia.

Image credits: [D.O.T.R. Photo](#)

Source: <https://businessmirror.com.ph/2021/01/06/sc-thumbs-down-bid-for-writ-of-kalikasan-vs-smc-aerocity/>



Law allowing President to rush permits during national calamities approved

By Samuel Medenilla

January 6, 2021



File photo shows a car submerged in chest-deep floodwaters in San Mateo, Rizal during heavy rains from Typhoon Ulysses. (NONIE REYES)

Even if the Bayanihan to Recover as One Act (Bayanihan 2) expires, President Duterte can now cut government red tape during calamities.

This, after Duterte finally signed Republic Act (RA) 115171, or the Act Authorizing the President to Expedite the Processing and Issuance of National and Local Permits, Licenses, and Certifications during Times of National Emergency.

During an emergency, the President will be allowed to accelerate and streamline regulatory processes; suspend or waive requirements; and prescribe permanent reforms and regulatory processes.

However, such powers can only be exercised by the President as long as they are consistent with existing laws and regulations.

Government officials and employees, who fail to comply with the provisions of RA 115171 can face suspension, or even dismissal from the service.

The legislation will apply to 33 government agencies as well as local government units (LGU).

Among the agencies, which will be covered by RA 115171 are the Department of Finance, Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR), Bureau of Customs, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, National Water Resources Board, Environment Management Bureau, Land Management Bureau, Department of Justice, Land Registration Authority and the Bureau of Immigration.

Also included in the list are Department of Transportation, Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board, Land Transportation Office, Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines, Philippine Ports Authority, Maritime Industry Authority, Department of Social Welfare and Development, National Commission on Indigenous Peoples, Department of the Interior and Local Government, Bureau of Fire Protection, Department of Health, Philippine Health Insurance Corp. and Food and Drug Administration.

The remaining government agencies covered by the new law are the Department of Information and Communications Technology, National Telecommunication Commission, Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, Department of Energy, Energy Regulatory Commission, Department of Labor and Employment, Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development, Home Development Mutual Fund, Human Settlements Adjudication Commission, Social Security System, and the Government Service Insurance System.

RA 115161 was signed into law on Dec. 23, 2020, but was only released to the media on Tuesday.

Source: <https://businessmirror.com.ph/2021/01/06/law-allowing-president-to-rush-permits-during-national-calamities-approved/>



Climate change commission adopts nature-based solutions

Published January 5, 2021, 2:51 PM

by [Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz](#)

The Climate Change Commission (CCC) has welcomed the findings of the London-based Earth Security Group's report, which emphasized nature-based solutions in the fight against climate change.



(Photo By Zaldy Comanda / FILE PHOTO / MANILA BULLETIN)

The report titled, "Financing the Earth's Assets: The Case for Mangroves as a Nature-based Climate Solution" reveals that regeneration of mangrove forests around the world could result in an \$11.8 billion return by 2040 if carbon markets reflected the true value of nature.

Issued by Earth Security in December 2020, the report makes a strong investment case for tapping the potential of mangroves in the fight against climate change.

As a carbon asset, mangrove forests have the potential to unlock 380 million tCO₂ (total carbon dioxide content) of sequestration by 2040.

Five key markets that were identified for mangroves are nature-based investment funds, blue bonds (a subset of the green and climate bonds market), insurance, carbon market investors, and philanthropy.

Long valued as a natural defense on the coastline, mangroves help communities reduce the impacts of climate change, specifically in slowing down global heating, shielding communities against extreme weather conditions, halting the extinction of biodiversity, and supporting local economies.

The report identified 40 locations across the world to form the "Mangroves 40 Cities Network," including Puerto Princesa City, Palawan.

The network is expected to support the regeneration of mangrove forests through different projects within the locations chosen for their proximity to existing mangroves.

Siargao Islands in Surigao Del Norte was also recognized in the report as an example of best practices in local mangrove regeneration, with key insights from the municipality of Del Carmen.

Earth Security also proposed the development of a Municipal Mangrove Bond Fund to finance nature-based adaptation and provide the opportunity to pool different levels of investment risks across developed and emerging markets, creating a product that is viable in global fixed income markets.



The CCC expressed its support to the call for collaboration among cities and towns worldwide that are home to mangrove forests, to enable a financing and regulatory environment that will ensure the advancement of programs and policies that aim to build climate and disaster resilience in local communities.

As countries continue the difficult work to recover from the economic setbacks caused by COVID-19 pandemic, both human and natural systems must be strengthened to lessen the environmental, humanitarian, and economic impacts of climate change, CCC said.



Borongan couples plant trees before tying the knot

By Marita Moaje [January 5, 2021, 8:36 pm](#)



BORONGAN COUPLE. Jay-Ar Tavera and his wife, Creightania Coles, plant mangroves before getting married last December. The local government of Borongan in Eastern Samar now requires couples applying for a marriage license to plant mangroves before they are issued one. (Photo courtesy of Borongan City Information Office)

MANILA – Couples in Borongan City, Eastern Samar who wish to get married are now required to plant mangrove trees before they are issued a marriage license and given a wedding schedule by the mayor.

Surprisingly, despite the additional requirement on top of the usual documentation needed to be submitted to be able to get married, many couples support the initiative.

Jay-Ar Tavera and his wife, Creightania Coles, planted 10 mangrove trees before getting married last December 23.

“We were happy when we learned about this project. This initiative is really good. We are believers that we should take care of our environment,” Jay-Ar said.

He and Creightania prepared arduously to make sure that the wedding would happen as planned.

However, being environment lovers, the two did not find the new policy as a burden.

Instead, they saw the directive as “leaving a green legacy.”

“We may not see it now because the plants are still small, but I’m pretty sure five to 10 years from now we would see the effect of what the project has done,” Tavera said.

Meanwhile, another couple who got married on the same date, Estephine Joy Ecle and her partner Jaime Basilga Jr., enjoyed the activity and found it worthwhile.

“We enjoyed planting trees and it is also a form of bonding before we get married,” Estephine Joy said.

The two couples, who were the first to participate in the new initiative, tied the knot before Mayor Jose Ivan Dayan Agda.

Even netizens expressed support for the program.

“Love the idea of planting trees. It will help to protect the environment and the coastal area of Samar. But also the newlyweds can share their stories with their children,” Kle de Voute said in her post.

Netizens said the result of the initiative may not be seen and felt immediately but noted that future generations would surely benefit from it.



“Pag-usbong ng pag-ibig, pag-usbong ng puno (love grows, and so do trees),” Maribel Contado said.

Agda said in an interview with the Philippine News Agency (PNA) that he is so far satisfied with the outcome of the “additional requirement” for the marriage license.

He said he noticed that many are getting married amid the pandemic and the onslaught of typhoons last year, and so he thought about making the couples plant trees.

Agda said the local government provides the seedlings and the area where the mangroves would be planted.

“Ang role lang nila is magtanim, tapos maggawa ng bakod and then put their name tag sa bakod. Ang city government na ang bahalang magpalaki (Their role is to plant and put up a fence where they would attach their name tag. The city government will take care of the plants),” he said.

Agda added that because the couple would put their names on trees and the date they planted them, it would be a legacy that they could share with their children.

The project, he said, is like hitting “three” birds with one stone, as it would do the environment a lot of good, protect the town from future calamities, and create environmental awareness among the people.

Another advantage is that the city government would be able to save on labor costs, with the couples planting instead of hired people.

More than 100 mangrove plants have been planted along Borongan Bay and Agda said so far, nobody has complained. (PNA)



Globe sets up over 100 e-waste collection points nationwide

By **BMP**Plus

January 5, 2021



As part of its environmental protection advocacy, Globe has set up over 100 collection points nationwide for electronic waste (e-waste) to encourage everyone to practice proper disposal of electronic or battery-operated devices and IT accessories and peripherals which are no longer working or wanted.

For individuals who want to join the cause, they may go to any participating Globe Stores nationwide such as SM North Edsa, Trinoma, UP Town Katipunan, Gateway Mall, SM East Ortigas, Ayala 30th, SM Southmall, Glorietta, Greenbelt 4, Ayala Manila Bay, SM Mall of Asia, SM Sucat, Robinsons Place Manila, SM San Lazaro, Market Market, and SM Aura. The complete list of drop off points may be viewed at <https://www.globe.com.ph/about-us/sustainability/environment/e-waste-zero-bins.html>. For organizations interested in supporting the advocacy or for one-time hauling of bulky e-waste, a request for free door-to-door pickup can be made by emailing bridgecom@globe.com.ph.

Accepted e-waste are computer sets (LCDs, monitors, CPUs, keyboards), IT accessories (mouse, earphones, speakers, etc), printers and fax machines, old TV monitors, mobile phones,

home appliances (washing machine, iron, oven, refrigerator, etc), cable wires (except fiber optic), car electronics, circuit boards, CDs and DVDs, and batteries (except for Lead-acid car batteries).

“We are always looking for ways to promote the benefits of responsible e-waste recycling. We plan to expand the collection points to more Globe Stores and partner organizations and establishments in the coming months to make it easier for the public to participate in this advocacy,” said Yoly Crisanto, Globe Chief Sustainability Officer and SVP for Corporate Communications.

Globally, it is estimated that more than 50 million metric tons of e-waste is produced per year and its continued importation and the increased local generation in the Philippines has become a cause for concern. Roughly 80% of these e-waste end up in landfill which makes the informal community and adjacent environment susceptible to toxic hazards.

According to a recent study made by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and EcoWaste Coalition, only 28 out of the 135 registered TSD facilities in the Philippines process e-waste. While the informal sector benefits from these items, their methods of dismantling and recycling are against approved government standards and thereby, pose health risks.

Thus, Globe continues to positively influence consumer behavior, through its E-waste Zero program which advocates to extend the life of existing electronic gadgets and responsibly recycle those that are end of life.



The program, formerly known as Project 1 Phone, was launched in 2014 to provide a platform for businesses, organizations, and the general public to donate their old, out-of-use electronic and electrical devices. Raw materials from these e-wastes are then recycled, thereby conserving natural resources, preventing air and water pollution caused by hazardous waste disposal, and avoiding the production of new materials which contribute to energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions.

In 2019 alone, the Globe E-waste Zero program has managed to collect over 343,000 kg of e-waste, bringing the total collection to more than 1.2 million kg. Globe has also worked with more than 52 corporations and organizations nationwide such as Unionbank of the Philippines, Huawei Philippines, Aboitiz Equity Ventures, Google, BPI, Honda, DLSU – College of St. Benilde, University of Nueva Caceres, and the entire Ayala Group of Companies, among others.

Collected e-waste are delivered by Globe to its partner Treatment, Storage, and Disposal (TSD) facilities — Total Environment Solutions – Asset Material Management Philippines (TES-AMM) and Maritrans Recycler, Inc. E-waste is segregated to recover plastic materials, electronic components, and precious metals in the Philippines, with the final recycling process being done in TES-AMM's facility in Singapore. Proceeds from e-waste processing will be used to provide communication needs of public school teachers and students in collaboration with the Department of Education.

Globe puts into action its commitment to reduce its carbon footprint by actively supporting the Race To Zero global campaign spearheaded by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and COP26 Presidency and backed by the **GSMA**, the global mobile industry body. This activity is part of the GSMA's bid to lower greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions to net zero no later than 2050 through the collective efforts of all mobile network operators around the world. Moreover, Globe joins over 9,600 companies demonstrating commitment to environmental transparency by disclosing through **CDP**, a global non-profit organization that runs the world's leading environmental disclosure platform.

As a purpose-driven company, Globe remains committed to the 10 UN Global Compact principles and contributes to 10 UN Sustainable Development Goals such as UNSDG No. 12 which is about achieving economic growth and sustainable development by urgently reducing ecological footprint. It is also about decoupling economic growth from environmental degradation, increasing resource efficiency and promoting sustainable lifestyles by changing the way goods and resources are produced and consumed.

To know more about Globe's sustainability initiatives, visit <https://www.globe.com.ph/about-us/sustainability.html>



Minding our mines

[THE CORNER ORACLE](#) - [Andrew J. Masigan](#) (The Philippine Star) - January 6, 2021 - 12:00am

Economic think tanks around the world are in agreement that the Philippines will post one of the highest economic contractions in 2020 followed by a slow recovery in 2021. Japanese investment bank Nomura was one of the last to publish its forecast. According to the Tokyo-based financial giant, the Philippine economy will likely contract by 9.8 percent this year followed by a 6.8 percent growth in 2021, lower than government's projection of 7.5 percent growth. At this rate, the economy will only approximate 2019 levels by the second half of 2022.

Sadly, government's heavy-handed anti-COVID response destroyed many parts of the economy and it is in worse shape than we are made to believe. Despite the prospects of the vaccine reaching our shores soon, consumer demand is still below 50 percent of its 2019 levels. Infrastructure spending has yet to come up to speed following a 33 percent slump in the third quarter. Manufacturing output is down and so are exports. All these have resulted to soaring poverty rates.

As far as foreign investments are concerned, the Philippines is no longer a contender in attracting foreign capital, given our inhospitable conditions and the uncertainty in our tax regime (which will persist until the CREATE bill is passed).

Economists predict a K-shaped or W-shaped recovery. Whatever shape it is, we can expect our climb back to pre-COVID levels to be slow and tough. Government's vague vaccine procurement strategy is of no help. Neither is its benign economic stimulus package.

Rather than be a victim of our own circumstances, there are options that government can do to fire-up the economy and put her back on the fast track. One of these options is to re-energize the mining industry.

Fortunately, the Philippines is endowed with the third largest cache of metallic and non-metallic minerals in the world.

According to the last resource audit, the Philippines sits on 7 billion metric tons of metallic resources and 50 billion metric tons of non-metallic resources. Our gold deposits are the third largest in the world at an estimated 101.6 million metric tons. Our copper reserves are the fourth largest at 4.1 billion tons. We have the fifth largest stockpile of nickel while our iron ore resources are at 298 million metric tons.

For non-metallic minerals, our limestone reserves are at 19.5 billion tons and our marble hoard is at 14.5 billion tons. The Philippines leads the world in chromite too. All things told, our mineral resources are worth well over a trillion US dollars at today's prices.

Despite such massive resources, the contribution of the mining industry to the economy is minuscule. It comprises only one-sixth of one percent of GDP. Its contribution to tax collection is less than 1.5 percent. Its contribution to exports is six percent and contribution to employment is only half of one percent.

In contrast, mining comprises six percent of Indonesia's GDP and seven percent of Malaysia's.

Politics have impeded the development of the mining industry in the country. For years, politicians have evaded dealing with the issue in a sensible manner due to its sheer unpopularity. In this sense, it is like population control or nuclear energy – both necessary for national development but stigmatized by misinformation.



Three laws have hindered the development of the mining industry in the country. The first is EO 79 of 2012 which imposed a moratorium on the issuance of new mining permits until a new tax structure is established. The second is the total ban on open pit mining imposed by the DENR in 2017. The third is the deluge of suspensions of mining permits, whether operational or under development, during the time of former DENR Sec. Gina Lopez.

As for EO 79, excise taxes have already doubled from 2 percent of market value to 4 percent. In addition, mining companies are made to pay a 5 percent reservation royalty a 1 percent indigenous people's royalty and VAT. All these are on top of a 30 percent corporate income tax. In addition, mining companies are required to appropriate 1.5 percent of their annual operating cost for social development and management programs. Despite the doubling of taxes, the moratorium is still upheld today.

On open-pit mining, the Mining Industry Coordinating Council (MICC) has already made a recommendation to lift the ban given the stringent safety and sustainability protocols that have been imposed. The ban is still upheld without any reason from Malacañang.

Although open pit mining has been stigmatized by local environmental groups, it is actually an accepted global practice in extracting ores that sit near the surface. It is used when the mine is structurally unsuitable for tunneling. The US has over 1,800 open pit mines in operation, all of which are proven safe and cost-effective. There are only two open pit mines in the Philippines and both have been declared safe and environmentally sound.

As for the mining companies closed by the DENR, it is only fair that those that have rectified their deficiencies and those which are in compliance with government's stiff environmental standards be allowed to resume operations. Companies that haven't started operations yet, but were caught by the ban, should also be allowed to operate provided they comply with government's guidelines. In particular, the mines in Tampakan, KingKing and Silangan, all in Mindanao, should be activated given their potential to generate some \$8 billion in exports earnings. This will go a long way towards filling our budget gap.

Based on DENR estimates, opening up the mining industry can unlock 781,750 jobs that will benefit 1.4 million families. Best of all, it will generate a whopping P83.73 billion in additional revenues for government. This is more than enough to fire-up the economy and put her back in the fast pace of growth.

Mind you, as of today, only two percent of the country's terrain is being explored for minerals. So to say that we are abusing our natural resources is a misnomer.

Certain countries have prospered and became first-world economies on the back of responsible mining. Canada and Australia are among them. It proves that economic progress and sustainability can co-exist.

It would be a disservice to our people not to tap our God-given resources when we need it most. It is like denying food to our starving countrymen when we have a nutritious buffet waiting to be consumed. The potentials of the mining industry can be unlocked in as quickly as three months. All it takes is a presidential go signal. It is that simple. Let's hope the President looks beyond politics and opens up the mining industry if only to save our battered economy.

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Source: <https://www.philstar.com/opinion/2021/01/06/2068432/minding-our-mines>



Zero waste an imperative

[ECOWASTE COALITION](#)

January 05, 2021

I CAN'T blame my colleagues from the environmental movement for adopting the tagline: Zero Waste Is Possible, in our campaigns. It is our way of politically-correcting, at best couching, the law. And we have been having successes, no matter how small, in transforming local governments in their misappreciation of the mandate.

In essence, Zero Waste means recycling, composting, re-use and minimization of waste. And this is exactly the framework of Republic Act 9003 or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000 -- the imperative. But after two decades, we are witnessing before us a new imperative. Many local governments, for running out of space to dump waste, are being lured into incineration-disguised Waste to Energy proposals by business enterprises. Tucked in this proposal is a move by Congress to amend both the RA 9003 and RA 8749, or the Clean Air Act, to allow waste incineration. And this space would be limited to discuss in full details, with scientifically-verified proofs, the health, economic, environmental and climate hazards of such proposals.

It is enough for now to say that Waste to Energy facilities have been hastening the de-energization of the earth, which quicken global warming. This is because there is a larger amount of energy required to produce, transport and sell new consumer goods that later on will become waste, which can only generate a miniscule fraction of energy when burned. That its projected economic benefit through the re-captured energy is far too small to afford the always-escalating costs for tipping fees for hauling waste, operations to re-segregate the waste, maintenance and strict anti-pollution measures. That many counties in the United States that host such facilities have been encountering fiscal difficulties, reason why on October 12, 2011, Harrisburg, the capital of Pennsylvania filed for bankruptcy.

"Harrisburg was doomed by a single project: a waste-to-energy incinerator that left the city with an annual budget of \$55 million and some \$280 million in debt. That's a debt load of \$6,000 for each of the 49,500 men, women, and children in town, an amount so staggering it was impossible for the city to sustain it," said the published report.

In the Philippines, it may have been providential and a real blessing in disguise that in 2013 the City of San Fernando in Pampanga had to rescind its contract with a local company, Spectrum Blue Steel, to build such a facility. This is because the company, since 2008, was only able to put up the frame of the building and the boundary of the facility, and never delivered on the rest of its promises, which include a share in tipping fees, as well as income from the energy that will be generated.

Bent on solving its garbage woes, the city sought the help of one of our colleagues, the Mother Earth Foundation, to educate and train the constituency on Zero Waste.

Since the start of the training program in 2011 until 2018, the waste diversion rate, a mandate of RA 9003 that provides for waste minimization that mandates the graduated reduction of waste that go into controlled dumps, was 80.69%. This means that the City of San Fernando faithfully complied with the imperative: 50-60% of the waste is compostable, while 20-30% is recyclable, and the rest, around 10-15% is residual hazardous waste. It was also able to reduce its budget for waste management to P111.00 per capita, compared to other cities in the country that spend P500-1,000.00 per capita for not complying with the imperative.

The program resulted in more jobs and incremental income for the constituencies, and various international and local exemplary awards for the city. And this is where our network's tagline is rooted that Zero Waste is possible, albeit imperative.

Our consumerist economy has been leading us to an extremely wasteful way of life. We must all be reminded that the resources of the earth are finite and we have been consuming them without regard and with impunity.



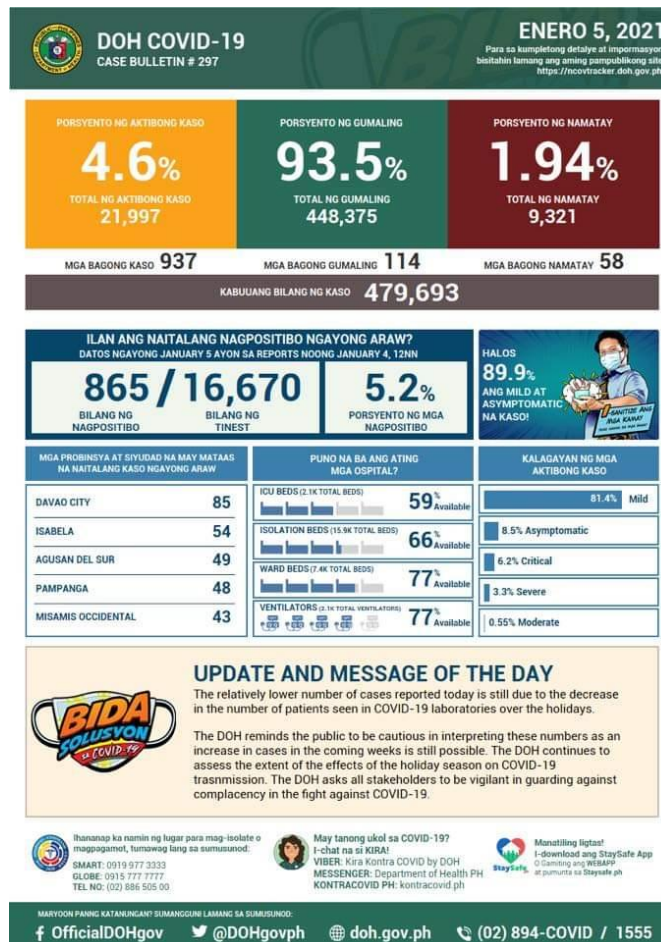
We often share a thought to our constituencies and say: "when all the rivers and seas have been poisoned by chemicals, when all sources of fresh water have either run dry or poisoned, when all trees have been fallen, and when all the soil has become barren and unable so sustain growth, we cannot eat and drink our money, neither can we be nourished by our foolish intelligence."

(This piece was written by Rene Pineda, former board member of the EcoWaste Coalition and current president of the Consumer Rights for Safe Food and the Partnership for Clean Air.)



BREAKING: Mga nagpositibo sa COVID-19 sa Pilipinas, halos 480,000 na

By Angellic Jordan January 05, 2021 - 04:13 PM



Hindi muli lalagpas sa 1,000 ang panibagong kaso ng Coronavirus Disease o COVID-19 sa Pilipinas.

Sa huling datos ng Department of Health (DOH) bandang araw ng Martes (January 5), umabot na sa 479,693 ang confirmed cases ng nakakahawang sakit sa bansa.

Sa nasabing bilang, 21,997 o 4.6 porsyento ang aktibong kaso.

Sinabi ng kagawaran na 937 ang bagong napaulat na kaso ng COVID-19 sa bansa.

81.4 porsyento sa active COVID-19 cases ang mild; 8.5 porsyento ang asymptomatic; 0.55 porsyento ang moderate; 3.3 porsyento ang severe habang 6.2 porsyento ang nasa kritikal na kondisyon.

Nasa 58 naman ang napaulat na nasawi.

Dahil dito, umakyat na sa 9,321 o 1.94 porsyento ang COVID-19 related deaths sa bansa.

Ayon pa sa DOH, 114 naman ang gumaling pa sa COVID-19.

Dahil dito, umakyat na sa 448,375 o 93.5 porsyento ang total recoveries ng COVID-19 sa Pilipinas.

Source: <https://radyo.inquirer.net/282283/breaking-mga-nagpositibo-sa-covid-19-sa-pilipinas-halos-480000-na>



New COVID-19 variant may have reached Philippines — DOH

By [Caecent No-ot Magsumbol](#)(The Freeman) - January 6, 2021 - 12:00am



Dr. Mary Jean Loreche, DOH-7 spokesperson and chief pathologist.
Screen grab from DOH presser

CEBU, Philippines — A local health official has warned the new strain of COVID-19 may have already reached the country.

Dr. Mary Jean Loreche, Department of Health- Central Visayas chief pathologist and COVID-19 spokesperson, said the health department is not discounting the possibility that the new coronavirus variant may already be here.

“If you look at it that way na September pa lang, it was already there, and there were a lot of travels to and from Singapore, Hongkong, everywhere in the entire world. So there is really a good possibility that it is with us also,” she said in yesterday’s virtual presser.

The new COVID-19 variant known as BC117 was first detected in the United Kingdom in September last year. In November, around a quarter of the reported COVID-19 cases in the country were found to be of the new variant of the SARS-CoV2, the virus that causes COVID-19.

Loreche, however, clarified that medical experts in the country have yet to do a research if the new coronavirus strain has in fact entered the country.

She said conducting genomic sequencing is necessary to help confirm the presence of the new strain of COVID here.

Unfortunately, the said process is still not available in Central Visayas.

“The reason why we cannot confirm its presence here is that we need to do a genomic sequencing for us to know, kung naa gyud na si BC117,” said Loreche.



Moreover, All RT-PCR positive specimens from countries with confirmed UK variant underwent genomic sequencing last Monday at the Philippine Genome Center (PGC). The findings are expected to be released either later this week or early next week.

No positive samples from the 21 countries flagged down by the Philippine government so far here in Cebu.

Should there be any, the samples will be sent to the PGC for the needed genomic sequencing.

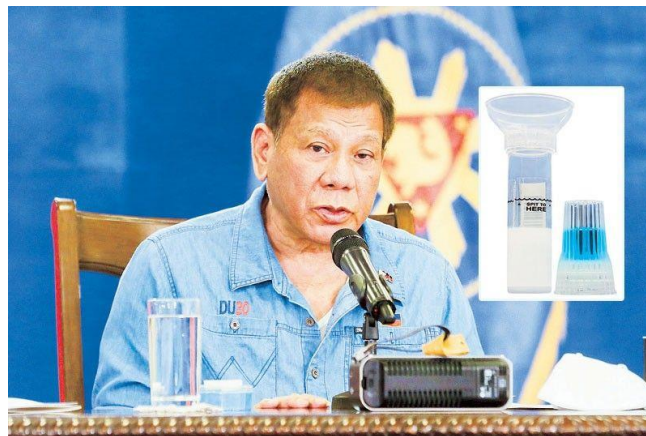
Today, Loreche is set to meet with the different molecular laboratories in Central Visayas to discuss with the necessary processes and protocols in the sample collection including those that will be sent to the PGC.

Even with the latest development in COVID-19, DOH maintains that following the minimum health standards, including wearing of face mask, social distancing and regular washing of hands remain the "universally effective way to prevent against any mutation, variant or strain."

Health experts have said that viruses naturally mutate.

To date, experts have detected 12,706 mutations of SARS-CoV2. Of these, 398 strains of the novel coronavirus were found to have occurred repeatedly and independently.

— **KQD (FREEMAN)**



the people after holding a meeting with IATF core members in Davao City the other day. Inset shows a saliva collection testing kit for COVID, which the President said should be used for being less invasive while being highly accurate.

STAR/ File

Duterte wants COVID-19 saliva test

[Christina Mendez](#) (The Philippine Star) - January 6, 2021 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — President Duterte is in favor of using saliva tests to detect COVID-19, with the results deemed to be 99 percent reliable compared to the invasive RT-PCR or reverse transcription-polymerase chain reaction test.

Duterte said he feels uncomfortable every time he undergoes swab testing, which involves probing the nasal cavity.

“I couldn’t help cursing every time my nasal cavity is probed because it hurts. I have to open my mouth wide. Gordon said saliva swabbing is 99 percent reliable, so we should use that,” Duterte said during his Talk to the Nation on Monday night.

Duterte was referring to Sen. Richard Gordon’s statement that the Health Technology Assessment Council will recommend to the Department of Health (DOH) the use of saliva tests to detect COVID-19, which is being eyed by the Philippine Red Cross (PRC) as another option to reduce the cost of testing.

Gordon, who heads the PRC, said the same machines used for the RT-PCR testing would also be used without the need for the nasal and pharyngeal swab test kits.

Meanwhile, COVID-19 testing czar Sec. Vince Dizon said the application for the use of saliva tests has been submitted to concerned regulatory agencies.

“There is an ongoing validation, but now that the President mentioned it, there is a need to speed up the validation. I hope the regulatory and validation agencies under the Department of Health will fast-track the guidelines so we can use the saliva test,” Dizon said.

Dizon agrees with Duterte that it is not easy to be subjected to swabbing, which has been a mandatory requirement among Cabinet officials attending meetings with the Chief Executive.

He expressed hope the application to allow the saliva tests for COVID-19 detection would be approved by next week.



Dizon announced yesterday that the guidelines for pooled testing have been released by the DOH.

The DOH guidelines allow the use of pool testing on groups or areas with low incidence of potential COVID-19 infection.

It said specimen pooling strategies are recognized as an “opportunity for greater COVID-19 testing efficiency by reducing turnaround time and saving on supplies.”

The agency provided guidelines based on the pooling protocols set by the Philippine Society of Pathologists Inc. and Research Institute for Tropical Medicine (RITM).

Based on DOH Memorandum 2020-0539 dated Nov. 23, 2020, pool screening has been recognized as a strategy to reduce the cost of screening a large number of individuals for infectious diseases.

The DOH said samples from multiple individuals are combined or “pooled” and tested collectively. Select targeted samples are then tested individually to determine if there is a positive result in the group.

“Strategic testing, along with aggressive contact tracing and isolation, is crucial to an effective COVID-19 response,” the agency said.

Under the memorandum, pool testing will be used for screening and surveillance in “low prevalence population or settings for individuals who are asymptomatic and have no past history of exposure to confirmed patients.”

The procedure should not be used for people who have symptoms, have recovered from the disease and become asymptomatic and those who have been exposed to a positive case in the past 14 days.

Pooled testing will be done by DOH-licensed COVID-19 testing facilities using RT-PCR test machines authorized by the Food and Drug Administration and validated by RITM or RITM-authorized institutions.

The memorandum said pooled testing would only be used for screening population groups such as inbound international travelers, balikbayans, overseas Filipino workers and foreigners and interzonal domestic travelers, including returning residents.

Those eligible for the testing are workers in health facilities, frontline government workers, such as the police, military and quarantine officers.

Also covered are factory workers, market vendors, call center agents, transportation workers and others in workplace settings.

For pricing and reimbursement, the Philippine Health Insurance Corp. will develop the “appropriate payment plan and provide engagement mechanisms for pooled testing.” – **Sheila Crisostomo**

Source: <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2021/01/06/2068510/duterte-wants-covid-19-saliva-test>



1 sa 4 na taga-Metro Manila lamang ang handang magpabakuna

By [Danilo Garcia](#) (Pilipino Star Ngayon) - January 6, 2021 - 12:00am



Sa nais magpabakuna, 29 porsyento sa kanila ay mula sa Class ABC, 24 porsyento ang mula sa Class D at 27% ang nasa Class E.
AFP/Joel Saget

MANILA, Philippines — Isa sa apat na residente ng Metro Manila lamang o 25 porsyento ang handang mabigyan ng COVID-19 vaccine sa oras na umarangkada na ito sa Pilipinas, ayon sa resulta ng pag-aaral ng University of the Philippines-OCTA Research Group.

Sa nais magpabakuna, 29 porsyento sa kanila ay mula sa Class ABC, 24 porsyento ang mula sa Class D at 27% ang nasa Class E.

May 47 porsyento sa mga respondents ang hindi pa makapagdesisyon sa ngayon habang 28 porsyento ang matigas sa pagtangga na hindi talaga sila magpapabakuna.

Ayon sa OCTA group, nasa 600 katao ang isinailalim nila sa pag-aaral na may edad 18 taong gulang pataas nitong Disyembre 9 hanggang 13.

Pangunahing tanong sa mga respondents ay kung handa silang magpabakuna kung may ligtas at epektibong bakuna laban sa COVID-19 ang maging available.

Samantala, nasa 81 porsyento ng mga respondents din ang nagsabi na pasado sa kanila ang ginagawang pagresponde ng pamahalaan sa COVID-19 pandemic.

Source: <https://www.philstar.com/pilipino-star-ngayon/metro/2021/01/06/2068507/1-sa-4-na-tag-a-metro-manila-lamang-ang-handang-magpabakuna/amp/>



In a report, the PSA said headline inflation – the rate of increase in the prices of goods and services typically purchased by consumers – quickened further from 3.3 percent in November, the fastest since it clocked at 3.8 percent in February 2019.

STAR/ File

Inflation highest in nearly 2 years

[Czeriza Valencia](#) (The Philippine Star) - January 6, 2021 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — Prices of basic goods and services went up for the third straight month in December to reach a near two-year high at 3.5 percent, driven by higher cost of food and transportation, the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) said yesterday.

In a report, the PSA said headline inflation – the rate of increase in the prices of goods and services typically purchased by consumers – quickened further from 3.3 percent in November, the fastest since it clocked at 3.8 percent in February 2019.

This brought average inflation in 2020 to 2.6 percent, still falling within the government's target of 2.4 to four percent for the year.

The PSA said the uptick in inflation was noted as food prices remained high in December, fueled by increased demand during the Christmas season and supply bottlenecks caused by the lingering effects of a series of strong typhoons in November.

Growth in the index of food and non-alcoholic beverages, which had a 54 percent share to the headline rate, accelerated to 4.8 percent in December from 4.3 percent in November.

Faster growth was seen in the prices of vegetables, particularly for tomatoes and onions, as well as meat.

Pork prices, for instance are limited by the continued presence of African swine fever (ASF) in some provinces, while spikes in the prices of vegetables indicate that there were spillover effects of typhoons on farm production.

Rice prices registered a 0.1 percent growth in December after 19 months of deflation as prices continued to rise in the National Capital Region (NCR).

Transportation, which had a 19.6 percent share to the headline rate, accelerated to 8.3 percent in December from 7.6 percent in November as fares for tricycles, jeepneys and buses remain high because of pandemic-related limitations.

Prices in restaurants as well as miscellaneous goods and services, which had a 9.2 percent share to the headline rate, also rose in December by 2.5 percent, faster than 2.2 percent in November.

This was driven by meals, personal hygiene products, and barbershop services.

Uptick in inflation was faster in Areas Outside the National Capital Region (AONCR) at 3.7 percent in December from 3.3 percent in November on high prices of food, transportation and restaurants and miscellaneous services.



“I think this was due to the demand as well as the supply issues created by the typhoons,” said PSA head Dennis Mapa. “We are also still seeing rising transport prices particularly in tricycles.”

For instance, in Cagayan Valley which suffered recently from severe flooding, inflation accelerated to 6.6 percent in December coming from an already high rate of 5.2 percent in November.

In contrast, inflation in NCR was slower at 3.2 percent in December from 3.5 percent in November.

Inflation for the country’s poorest households accelerated to 4.3 percent in December from 3.6 percent in November. This brought the 2020 inflation average to 2.9 percent for this income class.

Rising inflation can prompt monetary authorities to limit the easing of monetary policy as the policy rate is already at a record low of two percent, said Michael Ricafort, chief economist at the Rizal Commercial Banking Corp. (RCBC).

“This could limit further cuts in local policy rates for now, in view of negative net interest rates,” he said.

He noted, however, that even if inflation picks up to three percent levels this year—owing to lower inflation base last year— this is still considered benign and as such, a low interest rate environment could still be pursued to prop up the economy.

“The economy needs all the support measures that it could get by way of lower borrowing costs that help stimulate more demand for loans, investments, employment, and other economic activities,” he said.

Ricafort sees the latest spike to be transitory; food prices to ease in the coming weeks once fresh supply comes in and the further easing of limits on public transport can help lower fares.

Acting Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Karl Chua said the recent uptick in prices showed the need to “improve supply chain efficiency to ensure that prices of essential goods and services remain stable.”

Chua emphasized the need to establish processing facilities that will prevent wastage and spoilage of farm harvests, such as the Benguet Agri-Pinoy Trading Center in the Cordillera region where a large part of the country’s supply of vegetables is sourced.

He also underscored the need to set up additional cold storage facilities, warehouses, and post-harvest centers that will further improve supply management in the agriculture sector, especially in times of natural disasters or when there are surplus in harvest.

Online platforms that directly link buyers to producers will also help address issues on logistics.

“The imminent threat of natural calamities every year highlights the need for long-term solutions such as infrastructure investments that would improve flood control, water management and irrigation systems, reforestation, climate-resilient production and processing facilities, among others,” Chua said.



Renewable Energy bid process on

Five pre-determined areas in the geothermal sector and 17 pre-determined areas in the hydropower sector are up for bidding

Published 3 hours ago on January 6, 2021 02:30 AM

By [Maria Romero](#) @tribunephil_mbr



The Department of Energy (DoE) has formally launched the competitive bidding process for the development of the country's renewable energy (RE) resources.

During the pre-bid conference on Tuesday, Energy Assistant Secretary Robert B. Uy said the third and competitive selection process in the award of RE service contract (OCSP3) will help determine which entities, whether foreign or local, will be granted the authority to develop local resources.

Uy bared that five pre-determined areas in the geothermal sector and 17 pre-determined areas in the hydropower sector are up for bidding.

"We are optimistic in the OCSP3. We hope we will be able to replace the successful conduct of OCSP2. In the previous OCSP, a total of 21 pre-determined areas were offered. This time, 22 pre-determined areas are to be offered," Uy said.

"For us to move forward and achieve our renewable goals, support, and cooperation of everyone are needed. The DoE cannot do this alone. This OCSP3 is one of the many initiatives that would help unlock the country's RE potentials," he added.

Meanwhile, Geothermal Energy Management Division (GEMD) chief Ariel D. Fronda underscored that the last day of submission of bid documents is on 15 February.

Once the documents are completed, the legal, technical, and financial services unit of the DoE will begin the substantial evaluation. The final evaluation should be finished by 2 March. The entity with the best offer will get the renewable energy contract, according to the DoE.

Energy Secretary Alfonso G. Cusi is expected to sign and award the contracts by 14 April.

Following the recent order allowing full foreign ownership in large-scale geothermal projects, Cusi clarified that the OCSP3 will be transparent and competitive.

Large-scale geothermal projects are those with an initial investment cost of about \$50 million capitalizations through Financial and Technical Assistance Agreements (FTAA).

FTAA maybe entered into between foreign contractors and the Philippine government for the large-scale exploration, development, and utilization of natural resources signed by the President.

Amid potential threats to national security, the DoE maintained that opening up of the country's geothermal sector to greater foreign investments will boost the government's efforts to utilize RE.

Source: <https://tribune.net.ph/index.php/2021/01/06/renewable-energy-bid-process-on/>



ITCZ stirs up Region 11 flooding, landslide danger

By Catherine Teves January 5, 2021, 3:07 pm



MANILA – Flash floods and landslides may strike Region 11 (Davao) this week.

"Rain from the intertropical convergence zone (ITCZ) can trigger those hazards there," said Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) hydrologist Rosalie Pagulayan.

She said communities concerned must prepare accordingly as previous rain and runoff may have already saturated soil in Davao, making the area prone to flooding and landslides.

ITCZ rainfall will increase the volume of water that saturated soil is unable to absorb and can even cause water in waterways to rise and overflow so flooding is possible, she noted.

Such rainfall can also dislodge soil in saturated mountain slopes -- setting off landslides, she continued.

In its daily weather forecast on Tuesday, PAGASA said the ITCZ can cause cloudiness with scattered rain showers and thunderstorms over Davao, Caraga, SOCCSKSARGEN and Bangsamoro regions as well as Palawan province.

Such conditions will likely persist until around Friday (Jan. 8) in Davao Region, noted PAGASA forecaster Benison Estareja.

He also said some of the expected thunderstorms may bring moderate to heavy rainfall that can trigger flash floods and landslides.

According to PAGASA, the ITCZ can affect waterways in Region XI particularly Davao Oriental province's Cateel, Dapnan, Baganga Mahan-ub, Manorigao, Caraga, Casaunan, Quinonoan, Bagwan, Mayo, Bitanayan, Sumlog, Tangmoan, Dacongbonwa, Kabasagan, Manay, Maya and Sumlao/Cuabo; Davao del Sur province's Davao, Talomo, Lipadas, Tagulaya Sibulan, Digos and Padada Mainit; Davao Occidental province's Panglan, Malita, Batanan, Lais, Lawan, Latuan, Calian, Lamita, Lawayon, Culama, Caburan Bi, Maubio, Karabana, Tubayo, Kayapung, Malala, Capisolo, Tanoman Bi, Tanoman Smal, Kalbay, Butua, Nuin, Butula, Baki, Malagupo, Balagona and Batulaki;

Also likely to be affected are waterways in Davao de Oro province's Matiao and Hijo as well as Davao del Norte province's Tagum-Libuganon area, Tuganay, Saug and Lasang, PAGASA said.

"Those waterways may overflow due to ITCZ rain," said Pagulayan.

She added the overflowing water will spill into nearby communities and can cause flooding. (PNA)



JICA disburses ¥10-B post-disaster standby loan to the Philippines

Published January 5, 2021 6:17pm

By TED CORDERO, GMA News

The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) on Tuesday disbursed another ¥10 billion, or roughly P4.7 billion, to the Philippines under its Post Disaster Standby Loan 2 (PDSL 2) in support of families affected by the typhoons in the last quarter of 2020.

In a statement, JICA said the disbursement followed the Philippine government's declaration of a state of calamity across the entire island of Luzon due to Typhoons Quinta, Rolly, and Ulysses.

The typhoons caused widespread devastation, destruction, and damage to infrastructure and agriculture, and disrupted lives and economic activities.

“As a friend and trusted partner of the Philippines, JICA stands by Filipinos whose lives were disrupted because of the recent natural disasters. Through the JICA post-disaster assistance, we hope that vulnerable sectors affected will find relief and support to recover their livelihood and income through the spirit of ‘bayanihan’ in these difficult times,” said JICA Philippines chief representative Eigo Azukizawa.

Under Republic Act No. 10121 or the Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act, a declaration of a state of calamity will help hasten rescue, relief, and rehabilitation efforts of the government and the private sector, as well as hasten international humanitarian assistance to the Philippines.

JICA said the ¥10-billion disbursement forms part of the ¥50-billion loan extended to the Philippines on September 15, 2020 to ensure contingency funds are available for the country’s response to the financial demands of post-disaster recovery in case of natural disasters and public health threats.

“As partners for inclusive development, JICA is supporting the Philippines with available financial resources to mitigate the impact of natural disasters and health crisis. We’re making it clear that we’re in this together and that JICA will support development partners who need our assistance,” Azukizawa said.

JICA said an earlier ¥10-billion was disbursed to the Philippines to support response and recovery efforts from the pandemic following the extension of the state of calamity throughout the Philippines due to COVID-19 under Proclamation No. 929 on September 16, 2020.

In addition to PDSL 2, JICA has supported the Philippines with a ¥50-billion COVID-19 Crisis Response Emergency Support Loan signed on July 1, 2020 and released on August 14.

In 2013, JICA also provided PDSL to the Philippines’ recovery from Typhoon Yolanda, helping families recover lost income and rebuild their lives. — **DVM, GMA News**

Source: https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/money/economy/770529/jica-disburses-yen-10-b-post-disaster-standby-loan-to-the-philippines/story/?utm_source=GMANews&utm_medium=Facebook&fbclid=IwAR3f6usGa6BcgmLyrVw6VpiFUsygDOeaHVym34uYL-sIV_f1rlC45HWEuKs



Israeli extracts water from air

Published 2 hours ago on January 6, 2021 03:30 AM

By [Agence France-Presse](#)



ATMOSPHERIC water generators are nothing new, but the scale at which they are being used by Watergen is remarkable.
/ W. COMMONS

PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES (AFP) — The densely populated Gaza Strip has long lacked sufficient drinking water, but a new project helps ease the shortage with a solar-powered process to extract potable water straight from the air.

Unusually, the project operating in the Islamist-run Palestinian enclave, which has been blockaded by Israel since 2007, is the brainchild of a Russian-Israeli billionaire, Michael Mirilashvili.

The company he heads, Watergen, has developed the atmospheric water generators that can produce 5,000 to 6,000 liters (1,300 to more than 1,500 gallons) of drinking water per day, depending on the air's humidity.

Mirilashvili bought Watergen after moving to Israel in 2009, and the company has since exported its machines to more than 80 countries.

Watergen's technology is suited to Gaza because it runs on solar panels, an asset in the enclave where the one power plant, which requires imported fuel, lacks the capacity to meet demand.

Watergen has donated two machines, which cost \$61,000 each, to Gaza.

A third machine was sent to the strip by the Arava Institute for Environmental Research, based on a kibbutz in southern Israel.

One of the machines, a metal cube that roars as it runs, is located at the town hall in Khan Yunis in southern Gaza.

After capturing humidity, the machine condenses it into water and then filters it into instantly drinkable water.

When the air's humidity level is above 65 percent, Watergen's machines can produce about 5,000 litres of drinking water per day, said Khalil of the Palestinian group Damour.

An additional 1,000 liters can be produced when the humidity level exceeds 90 percent.



Israeli firm in Gaza extracts water from air

Tuesday, January 5, 2021 People's Journal 12



The densely-populated Gaza Strip has long lacked sufficient drinking water, but a new project helps ease the shortage with a solar-powered process to extract potable water straight from the air. SAID KHATIB / AFP

GAZA CITY, Palestinian Territories, Jan 5, 2021 (AFP) – The densely populated Gaza Strip has long lacked sufficient drinking water, but a new project helps ease the shortage with a solar-powered process to extract potable water straight from the air.

Unusually, the project operating in the Islamist-run Palestinian enclave, which has been blockaded by Israel since 2007, is the brainchild of a Russian-Israeli billionaire, Michael Mirilashvili.

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Palestinian engineer Nadia Tubail (R) checks a solar-powered water generator that extracts potable water straight from the air donated by Watergen, a company owned by a Russian-Israeli businessman, in the town of Khan Yunis in southern Gaza Strip, on November 16, 2020. Watergen, has developed atmospheric water generators that can produce 5,000 to 6,000 litres (1,300 to more than 1,500 gallons) of drinking water per day, depending on the air's humidity. With just a few machines operating in Gaza, Watergen is far from meeting demand for the two million people who live in the crowded coastal enclave wedged between Israel, Egypt and the Mediterranean Sea.

SAID KHATIB / AFP

With just a few machines operating in Gaza, [Watergen](#) is far from meeting demand for the two million people who live in the crowded coastal enclave wedged between Israel, Egypt and the Mediterranean Sea.

“But, it’s a start,” said Fathi Sheikh Khalil, an engineer with the Palestinian civil society group Damour, which operates one of the machines because Israeli firms cannot work in Gaza.

The strip, plagued by severe economic woes and regular power shortages, has also been facing a worsening water crisis for years.

Its overused aquifer has been degraded by saltwater intrusion and contaminated by pollutants, making most available water salty and dangerous to drink and forcing the import of bottled water.

Only three percent of Gaza’s own water meets international standards, according to the United Nations, which had in 2012 predicted that ecological pressures would have made Gaza “unlivable” by now.



Multiple studies have linked rising rates of kidney stones and high incidence of diarrhoea in Gaza to the consumption of sub-standard water.

Several players are working to solve the water shortage, including the European Union, which is supporting a massive seawater desalination plant.

Watergen's offices are located in a glass tower in Tel Aviv, some 80 kilometres (50 miles) north of Gaza.

Mirilashvili bought Watergen after moving to Israel in 2009, and the company has since exported its machines to more than 80 countries.

The company CEO and president has a colourful personal history, including time spent in a Russian prison following a kidnapping conviction in a trial the European Court of Justice later found was flawed.

A religious Jew with a picture of a prominent Orthodox rabbi on his office wall, Mirilashvili told AFP that when he learnt about Gaza's water crisis, he immediately wanted to help.

"Our goal was that everyone on Earth could be supplied with drinkable water... It was immediately clear that we had to help our neighbours first."

Israel tightly controls imports to Gaza and Mirilashvili acknowledged that getting his machines approved "took some time".

Israel's army "liked the idea, but needed to check the equipment," he said.

Watergen's technology is suited to Gaza because it runs on solar panels, an asset in the enclave where the one power plant, which requires imported fuel, lacks the capacity to meet demand.

Mirilashvili lamented that he cannot see his machines at work, as Israelis are forbidden from entering the strip.

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An additional 1,000 litres can be produced when the humidity level exceeds 90 percent.

Some of the water is consumed by city hall employees and some transported to a local hospital for patients with kidney problems, Khalil said.

"One or two machines won't change anything," he told AFP. But "it shows there is a solution".



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Asked about working with a company based in Israel, which has fought three wars with Hamas since 2008, Khalil said: “We accept help from anyone who wants to help us.”

Hamas did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Mirilashvili said he did not believe Gazans see Watergen as a gift from him, an Israeli citizen and observant Jew.

“They understood that this miracle is not from me,” he told AFP.

“This is a present from God. They understood that when God gives you something, you need to accept it.” gl-cgo/bs/fz *Agence France-Presse*



Measures taken to level field

Despite last year's extremely challenging situation, over 20 million market entities were added and remained active, which showed the result of the constantly improving business environment

Published 3 hours ago on January 6, 2021 02:30 AM

By [TDI](#) [@tribunephil](#)



From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

BEIJING (Xinhua) — Chinese Prime Minister Li Keqiang urged greater efforts to remove barriers and provide stronger legal framework for the business sector after obtaining a report on the third-party assessment of the implementation of the regulation on improving the business environment on Monday.

As entrusted by the State Council, the assessment has been conducted in nine provinces.

Results showed the regulation has been well implemented, as evidenced by relatively high business satisfaction for tax and fee cuts and for government service convenience.

The regulation that took effect last year is aimed at strengthening market-oriented and law-based development. Business environment has considerably improved over the past year.

Reform measures to facilitate the start and operation of businesses, such as the one permit for one sector, one license for one enterprise and joint application of permit and business license, have made a notable impact on business owners.

Despite last year's extremely challenging situation, over 20 million market entities were added and remained active, which showed the result of the constantly improving business environment.

Improved environment

"The regulation that took effect last year is aimed at strengthening market-oriented and law-based development. Business environment has considerably improved over the past year. The substantial increase in market entities last year and their ability to weather the difficulties are both attributable to a more just and equitable business environment," Li said.

The assessment has also exposed entrepreneurs' complaints in such areas as tendering and bidding, intermediary services and financing.

Li added that progress in the implementation of the regulation has been uneven between the eastern region and the central, western and northeastern regions, and between provincial capitals and other cities. And the imbalance has been quite significant in some cases.



“According to the evaluation of the execution of the regulation, people’s sense of gain comes mostly from reforms of the government management model, including innovative measures like one permit for one sector and one license for one enterprise.

Experience gained shall be further summarized and promoted,” Li said.

Closing the gaps

“There remain considerable gaps between the eastern region and the central, western and northeastern regions, as well as between provincial capitals and other cities, regarding fostering a more enabling business environment. Departments and localities concerned shall identify weak links and improve their work,” he noted.

The meeting urged greater efforts to reform government functions and further implement regulation and ensure these efforts truly stimulate market activities and bring about equity, justice and efficiency.

The eastern region and provincial capitals are encouraged to implement pilot measures at par with international standards, while central, western and northeastern regions and non-capital cities will be supported in fostering notably better business environments through reform.

Innovative measures such as one permit for one sector, one license for one enterprise and joint application of permit and business license will be applied extensively.

Red tape can be ‘hidden’

Such measures will help nurture more new market entities and facilitate their operation based on market rules, according to the Premier.

“When formulating the 14th Five-Year Plan, gaps between different regions in terms of business environment shall be fully taken into consideration. Reform should be further advanced,” Li said.

Fair competition will be further promoted. Reform will be advanced for the market-oriented tendering and bidding of government projects. Intermediary services will be better regulated.

Efforts will be intensified to investigate and punish “hidden red tape” and possible irregularities in credit issuing that increase the financing cost of businesses.

Making oversight more effective and efficient will be a priority task, to ensure authority is delegated where appropriate and regulation is fully enforced, the meeting noted.



Dozens of nations miss deadline to boost climate ambition

Published January 5, 2021 9:21pm

By AMELIE BOTTOLLIER-DEPOIS, Agence France-Presse

PARIS — More than half the world's nations failed to submit upgraded commitments by year's end to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions, straggling behind the schedule of accelerated climate ambitions set out in the Paris Agreement.

Almost every country on the planet signed up to the 2015 Paris deal, which calls for capping global warming at "well below" two degrees Celsius compared to pre-industrial levels, and 1.5°C if possible.

The first raft of so-called "nationally determined contributions" (NDCs) would—if fulfilled—still see Earth become 3°C hotter, but nations pledged to intensify their emissions cuts, with revised plans due every five years.

As the December 31, 2020, deadline approached, several large emitters said they would achieve net-zero output this century, but many nations allowed the year end to pass without publishing details of their renewed short-term targets.

Most NDC pledges run to 2030, with a few—including that of the United States—ending in 2025.

As of January 1, only around 70 out of nearly 200 nations had filed updated commitments, according to the United Nations, with some countries blaming delays on the COVID-19 pandemic.

Climate advocates are particularly eager to see the latest plans from China, the world's largest emitter.

President Xi Jinping last year outlined new ambitions to achieve carbon neutrality by 2060. But the country has yet to formally submit proposals.

Another notable omission is the world's second largest emitter, the United States, which was yanked out of the Paris Agreement by Donald Trump.

Incoming President-elect Joe Biden has however pledged carbon neutrality by 2050 and a return to Paris commitments.

'Critical test'

The UN has estimated that emissions need to be cut by 7.6 percent a year in the ten years to 2030 if there is to be a hope of limiting heating to 1.5°C.

Earth's surface has already warmed nearly 1.2°C on average, intensifying extreme weather and making it more deadly.



In his new year's message, UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres said building a global coalition for net zero emissions by mid century would be the "central ambition" of the world body in 2021.

"Every government, city, business and individual can play a part in achieving this vision," he said.

According to the most recent appraisal by Climate Action Tracker, the 49 states that had submitted their new proposals by mid-December—which included the then 27-nation European Union—only represented 23.7 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions.

Since that assessment, a further 20 states have filed their plans, including large economies such as South Korea and Argentina.

But revised commitments are not necessarily increased commitments.

According to Climate Action Tracker, Brazil, Japan, Russia, New Zealand, Switzerland and Vietnam have submitted updated plans that are no more ambitious than their initial commitments.

Even among the nations that have improved upon earlier pledges, experts have warned of a paucity of ambition.

The EU bolstered its target to cut greenhouse gas emissions at least 55 percent by 2030—from 40 percent.

But this still will not be sufficient to meet the Paris climate goals, according to CAT.

The NDCs that were submitted on time will come under the scrutiny of the UN Convention on Climate Change, which will assess progress on February 21.

The picture may become clearer only later in the year, at a major UN climate meeting in Glasgow that has been postponed to November.

David Waskow, International Climate Director at the World Resources Institute, said there had been some "important headway" made on climate action in recent weeks, particularly with upgraded 2030 targets from Britain and the EU.

But much more would need to be done in 2021.

"A number of major emitters still need to come forward with greater ambition, especially to follow-through on their net-zero commitments with 2030 targets that match their long-term vision. This year will be a critical test." — **AFP**

Source: <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/scitech/science/770565/dozens-of-nations-miss-deadline-to-boost-climate-ambition/story/>

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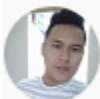
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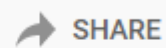
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