

08 FEBRUARY 2021, MONDAY



DENR

NEWS ALERTS

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



This DENR 'dream' is now achievable thanks to DBP backing

Published February 7, 2021, 2:25 PM

by [Ellson Quismorio](#)

A Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) official believes that the agency's dream of establishing 300 sanitary landfills (SLF)—a key tool in its all-out battle against garbage—is now an achievable one.



(MANILA BULLETIN)

This, after the agency, represented by Usec. Benny Antiporda, met virtually with Development Bank of the Philippines (DBP) Lending Program Management Group head Paul Lazaro to discuss their latest collaboration on environmental protection last Friday, February 5.

In the meeting, Antiporda proposed the private-public partnership (PPP) approach to address the lack of SLFs across the country.

"The establishment of 300 SLFs used to be an impossible dream. But with DBP, I know it will not be impossible anymore," said the undersecretary for Solid Waste Management and Local Government Units Concerns.

Lazaro, for his part, said: "We are looking forward to a collaboration with the DENR because ever since DBP is very much involved into the different projects or thrust of the DENR."

Earlier that day, the DENR facilitated the creation of the SLF operators' coalition, which intends to expedite collaboration with the DENR and to identify strategic areas where they can operate.

"Now that the country's solid waste management service providers are already organized as a coalition, they can strengthen their partnership for a better solid waste management in the country," Antiporda said.

The DENR, he said, can link the local government unit to the bank for the purchase of the land for the SLF site, and to the private sector who will construct the facility.

Source: <https://mb.com.ph/2021/02/07/this-denr-dream-is-now-achievable-thanks-to-dbp-backing/>



DBP expresses interest in financing landfills

February 7, 2021 | 7:14 pm



THE Development Bank of the Philippines (DBP) has expressed interest in lending to support sanitary landfill projects at local government level, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) said in a statement over the weekend.

The DENR said the DBP will serve as its “partner” in addressing the garbage disposal problem, in the wake of a Friday virtual meeting between the DENR and DBP officials.

During the meeting, DENR Undersecretary for Solid Waste Management and Local Government Units Concerns Benny D. Antiporda proposed a private-public partnership (PPP) approach in the building of sanitary landfills (SLFs) nationwide.

The Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000 defines a sanitary landfill as a waste disposal site in which significant environmental impacts are controlled.

“The establishment of 300 SLFs used to be an impossible dream. But with DBP, I know it will not be impossible,” Antiporda was quoted as saying.

DBP Lending Program Management Group Head Paul D. Lazaro said that the DBP is open to considering a PPP arrangement since it has the capacity to “finance the local government and private sectors.”

“We are looking forward to a collaboration with the DENR because... DBP is very much involved in the different projects of the DENR,” he said in a statement.

DBP Program Development and Management Department Head Rustico Noli D. Cruz said the bank could provide financing solutions to SLF operators through its Green Financing Program (GFP).

Cruz was quoted as saying that the GFP was the bank’s umbrella program for climate change-related and environmental projects, including solid and hazardous waste management.

Separately, the DENR announced the establishment of the Coalition on Solid Waste Management Providers, which was created to accelerate partnerships with the department and identify areas where SLFs can be built.

“Now that the country’s solid waste management service providers are organized as a coalition, they can strengthen their partnership for a better solid waste management in the country,” Mr. Antiporda said.



Nine members have been elected to the executive committee of the coalition, according to the DENR.

Last month, DENR Secretary Roy A. Cimatu ordered Mr. Antiporda and all regional offices to close all open dumpsites in their respective areas by the end of March.

The 2000 solid waste law defines an open dumpsite as one in which solid waste is thrown without planning and consideration for environmental and health standards. They are illegal to establish or operate. — **Angelica Y. Yang**



DENR shuts down LGU-run open dumpsite in Pampanga

February 7, 2021 | 7:25 pm



DENR

THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) said that it shut down a four-hectare open dumpsite managed by the municipal government of Sta. Ana, Pampanga.

In a statement issued over the weekend, the DENR said its Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) in Region 3, along with the Philippine National Police-Maritime Group and Sta. Ana Municipal Police Station, issued the cease-and-desist order against the dumpsite in Barangay San Nicolas, Sta. Ana.

The Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000 defines open dumpsites as those into which solid waste is deposited without planning and consideration for environmental and health standards. They are illegal to establish or operate.

The EMB also directed the Sta. Ana municipal Environment & Natural Resources Office to submit a safe closure and rehabilitation plan in a week's time.

The open dumpsite in Sta. Ana, according to DENR Undersecretary for Solid Waste Management and Local Government Units Concerns Benny D. Antiporda, was on land classified for farming.

“You can see *napakaganda po ng ating kabukiran* then *lalagyan mo ng basurahan sa gitna, malalason po ang tubig sa ilalim ng lupang ito kung kaya’t kailangang ma-safe closure and rehab ito* (The beauty of the fields is spoiled by the dumping of garbage, which also risks poisoning the groundwater. That is why the site needs to be closed for safety reasons and rehabilitated),” Mr. Antiporda was quoted as saying in the statement.

Last month, Environment Secretary Roy A. Cimatu ordered Mr. Antiporda and the department's regional offices to close all dumpsites by the end of March. — **Angelica Y. Yang**



Santa Ana dumpsite closed



PAMPANGA. Personnel from DENR and PNP Maritime Group inspecting an open dumpsite in Santa Ana town, which was later closed down for violations of environmental laws. (DENR photo)

[IAN OCAMPO FLORA](#)

February 07, 2021

OPERATIVES of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has closed an open dumpsite in Barangay San Nicolas in the City of San Fernando operated by the municipal government of Sta. Ana.

The dumpsite is allegedly disguised as a recycling facility.

Personnel of the DENR-Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) in Central Luzon, along with the Philippine National Police-Maritime Group conducted the operation with a cease and desist order against the alleged open dumpsite.

DENR Undersecretary for Solid Waste Management and Local Government Units Concerns Benny D. Antiporda led the closure of the alleged open dumpsite.

“We are again in this situation that they use the term materials recovery facility (MRF), but in reality, it is an open dumpsite, which the law prohibits,” he said.

The DENR said the operation of the open dumpsite is a violation of Section 37 of Republic Act (RA) 9003 or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000.

Under RA No. 9003, no open dumps should be established and operated by any person or even local governments.

DENR records show that in 2018, the DENR issued a Notice of Violation to the Municipal Government of Santa Ana regarding its supposed materials recovery facility, which was “being operated like an open dumpsite.”

A recent inspection on January 12 showed that the open dumpsite is located beside the MRF and occupies around 3,500 square meters, according to the DENR.

The local government of Santa Ana earlier said the alleged open dumpsite is a Transfer Station.

Aside from the cease and desist order, the EMB also directed the Municipal Government of Santa Ana to provide a safe closure and rehabilitation plan within seven days.

Source: <https://www.sunstar.com.ph/article/1885181/Pampanga/Local-News/Santa-Ana-dumpsite-closed>



DENR NAGHAIN NG CEASE & DESIST ORDER SA OPEN DUMPSITE NG PAMPANGA LGU



February 8, 2021 @ 12:30 AM 6 hours ago

NOONG nakaraang Biyernes (Pebrero 5), ipinahinto ni Undersecretary for Solid Waste Management and Local Government Units Concerns Benny D. Antiporda ang operasyon ng apat na ektaryang open dumpsite na pinatatakbo ng municipal government ng Santa Ana, Pampanga.

Alinsunod sa utos ni Department of Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Roy A. Cimatu na maipasara ang lahat ng open dumpsite sa bansa sa katapusan ng Marso, personal na pumunta si Antiporda sa Barangay San Nicolas, Sta. Ana, Pampanga upang makita ang tahasang paglabag kung saan binanggit niya na nagpapanggap lamang na recycling facility ang open dumpsite.

“We are again in this situation that they use the term material recovery facility but in reality, it is an open dumpsite, which the law prohibits,” sabi ni Antiporda.

Nagalit din si Antiporda nang malamang ang Municipal Environment and Natural Resources Officer ng Sta. Ana na si Bryan James Garcia, na dating empleyado ng DENR-Region 3, ang gumawa ng report na naging basehan ng notice of violation (NOV) na in-issue sa tanggapan ng Sta. Ana noong 2018. Ang nasabing NOV ay dahil sa operasyon ng dumpsite bagama’t hindi inaksyunan ng nasabing LGU.

“Nagagalit ako kasi nalaman ko na ikaw pa pala ang gumawa ng report tungkol dito n’ung ikaw ay nasa DENR pa. Ano ang ginawa mo upang maiwasto ang mga violation na inisyu noon ngayong ikaw na ang MENRO dito?” ani Antiporda.

Si Garcia ay dating monitoring officer ng DENR-Solid Waste Enforcement Education Program sa ilalim ng Environmental Monitoring Office.

Kasama ng Environmental Management Bureau ng DENR ang Philippine National Police-Maritime Group at Santa Ana Municipal Police Station nang ibigay ang cease and desist order laban sa open dumpsite sa Barangay San Nicolas dahil sa paglabag sa Section 37 ng Republic Act 9003 o ang Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000.

Gayundin, inatasan na rin ang Sta. Ana MENRO na magbigay ng safe closure and rehabilitation plan sa loob ng pitong araw.

Base sa imbestigasyon ng EMB-Region 3, ang open dumpsite ay katabi lang ng MRF na pagmamay-ari at pinatatakbo ng munisipalidad. Subalit lumabas din sa imbestigasyon na ang MRF ay ginagamit din bilang open dumpsite.



“They are not really using the MRF. They just used the name but still make and use this as an open dumpsite,” dagdag pa nito.

Dagdag pa ni Antiporda na ang open dumpsite ay nasa isang bukirin na maaaring magdulot ng pagkasira ng kalikasan at masamang epekto sa kalusugan ng mga residenteng nakatira sa paligid ng dumpsite dahil maaaring pumunta sa ilalim ng lupa ang katas ng mga basura at lasunin ang tubig.

“You can see napakaganda po ng ating kabukiran then lalagyan mo ng basurahan sa gitna, malalason po ang tubig sa ilalim ng lupang ito kung kaya’t kailangang ma-safe closure and rehab ito,” Antiporda emphasized.



ILLEGAL PIPES KONEKTADO SA MANILA BAY TATANGGALIN NG DENR ANTI-POLLUTION TASK FORCE



February 7, 2021 @ 7:14 AM 23 hours ago

SINIMULAN na ng Manila Bay Anti-Pollution Task Force (MBAPTF) ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) ang kumpletong pamamaraan upang mas mapabilis ang isinasagawang rehabilitation at restoration ng coastal at marine ecosystem ng Manila Bay.

“We have to get down to business and jumpstart the task force as we mark the second year of the Battle for Manila Bay,” sabi ni DENR Secretary Roy A. Cimatu.

Noong Pebrero 3 nang simulan ang unang pulong ng task force na pinamumunuan ni DENR Undersecretary for Solid Waste Management and Local Government Units Concerns Benny D. Antiporda.

Ipinaliwanag ni Antiporda ang kahalagahan ng trabaho ng task force na tumutugon sa mga nagawang aksyon ni Cimatu bilang chair ng Manila Bay Task Force (MBTF).

“The issue of pollution is the core of the Battle for Manila Bay. We are here to provide support to the Secretary and the MBTF,” sabi pa nito.

“The main objective is to stop further pollution in the whole of the Manila Bay region. By hook or by crook, we will stop them (polluters). We can defy these environmental issues,” saad ni Antiporda sa mga miyembro ng task force.

Ang MBAPTF ay binubuo ng Manila Bay Coordinating Office (MBCO), River Basin Control Office (RBCO), Pasig River Coordinating and Management Office (PRCMO), National Water Resources Board, Laguna Lake Development Authority at Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) regional offices sa Central Luzon, CALABARZON at National Capital Region.

Inatasan ni Antiporda ang PRCMO na suriin ang riverbanks sa Pasig River para sa illegal drainage pipes at upang matukoy ang pinanggagalingan nito mula sa Laguna de Bay palabas ng Napindan Channel patungo sa Manila Bay.

Ang nag-iisang labasan sa Laguna de Bay ay ang Napindan Channel na konektado sa Manila Bay sa pamamagitan ng Pasig River.

“Not all pipes that you find in the riverbanks or creeks are illegal. Some of those are storm drains,” dagdag pa ni Antiporda.



Inatasan din nito ang EMB na magbigay ng technical assistance sa pamamagitan ng water quality assessment upang matukoy kung ang tubig ay nagmumula sa floodwater o galing sa residential, commercial at industrial establishments.

Samantala, ang MBCO naman, sa tulong na rin ng EMB, ay pinatitingnan at pinamonitor ang water quality sa mga port area sa pakikipagtulungan na rin ng Philippine Ports Authority at Philippine Fisheries Development Authority.

Tutukuyin naman ng RBCO kung saang mga ilog dapat ilagay ang mga trash trap upang maiwasan na marumihan ng basura ang mga waterway.

“I am optimistic that with the help of this task force, we can at least minimize pollution coming from the rivers and creeks,” sabi pa ni Antiporda.

Enero 6, 2021 nang buuin ni Cimatú ang MBAPTF sa pamamagitan na rin ng mandato ng Administrative Order No. 16 na inisyu ng Office of the President para sa rehabilitasyon at restorasyon ng Manila Bay.

Layunin ng pagbuo ng task force na matiyak na sumusunod ang lahat ng government facilities at iba pang establisimyento sa Manila Bay region na magkonekta sa kasalukuyang sewerage system o gumawa ng sarili nilang sewerage plant upang mapigilan ang pagdami ng Manila Bay.

Tungkulin din nito na magkaroon ng “remedial measures” sa pamamagitan ng paggamit ng engineering at technological interventions para sa water quality at mahigpit na pagpapatupad ng Republic Act 9275 o ang Philippine Clean Water Act of 2004.



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PABIBILISIN MANILA BAY REHABILITATIONS

PARA raw po mas mapabilis ang isinasagawang rehabilitation at restoration ng coastal at marine ecosystem ng Manila Bay ay sisimulan na ng Manila Bay Anti-Pollution Task Force (MBAPTF) ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) ang kumpletong pamamaraan.

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ng task force na pinamumunoan ni DENR Undersecretary for Solid Waste Management and Local Government Units Concerns Benny D. Antiporda na kung saan ay ipinaliwanag niya ang kahalagahan ng trabaho ng task force na tumutugon sa mga nagawang aksiyon ni Cimatu bilang chair ng Manila Bay Task Force (MBTF).

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USAID, RMN Partner to Promote Marine Conservation in the Visayan Sea

By US Embassy in the Philippines Published on February 7, 2021



(L-R) Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Region 6 Regional Director and Lead Convenor for Fisheries Management Area 11 Remia Aparri, Acting USAID Environment Office Director Paul Seong, USAID Fish Right Program Chief of Party Nygiel Armada, RMN Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer Erika Sanchez, and RMN Chairman and President Eric Canoy formally launch the USAID-RMN partnership on marine conservation. (US Embassy photo)

Manila, February 2, 2021 – The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and Radio Mindanao Network (RMN) Foundation formalized a media partnership to promote marine conservation in the Philippines. The partnership will target coastal communities that rely on radio as a source of information and entertainment in the Visayan region, the country's seafood capital and home to more than 140,000 small-scale fishers.

USAID, through its Fish Right project, and RMN, will produce and distribute messages on biodiversity conservation and sustainable fisheries management through interviews, radio announcements, and related public affairs programs. RMN will use its broadcast facilities in the cities of Iloilo, Cebu, Bacolod, and Roxas to better reach fishing communities in the Visayas.

"This partnership with RMN will certainly strengthen our conservation efforts. We hope that our joint advocacy on sustainable fisheries management will give voice to the fisherfolk as conservation champions, thereby increasing their influence in directly managing the Visayan Sea," said Acting USAID Environment Office Director Paul Seong.

"We are appreciative of this partnership with USAID because RMN is founded on the vision of a radio station benefiting local communities. This partnership makes that happen. It's important for us to really be present on the ground where we are needed the most," added RMN Executive Vice President Erika Marie Canoy-Sanchez.

RMN is one of the largest radio networks in the Philippines, with 65 stations and multiple digital platforms nationwide. During a small forum to formalize the agreement, Chairman of the NGOs for Fisheries Reform Marlon Palomo said, "We are very thankful for this opportunity, especially because this pandemic has made it difficult for us to reach some of our partner communities. Through radio, we will not only be able to reach more fisherfolk, but also relay the issues confronted by the fisheries sector in the Visayan Sea and other areas."



USAID's Fish Right project is a five-year partnership between the U.S. and Philippine governments to address threats to biodiversity, improve governance of marine areas, and increase fish health and numbers in South Negros, the Calamianes Island Group, and the Visayan Sea. The increase in fish will benefit more than two million people living in these fishing communities. The Fish Right program is being implemented by the University of Rhode Island in partnership with local universities and non-government organizations. (PR)



PH and US agree to protect the environment

Published February 7, 2021, 5:57 PM

by [Johannes Chua](#)

If two countries join hands and walk toward a common goal, then no amount of challenge can hinder them from taking the right steps. This is what transpired when the US government, through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) signed an agreement with the Philippine National Economic Development Authority (NEDA). The agreement is a new, five-year bilateral assistance valued at more than P7.25 billion (\$150 million) to protect the Philippine environment.

“Through this agreement, the US and the Philippines deepen their commitment to protect the environment by promoting the sustainable use of natural resources, expanding access to renewable energy, and reducing risks from natural disasters,” according to an online announcement by the US Embassy.

In partnership with national, provincial, and local governments, USAID will “implement projects to increase access to clean energy and water; improve natural resource management; and protect the Philippines’ landscapes, wildlife, and fisheries. These projects support the Philippines’ and the US’ shared goal of preserving the Philippines’ world-renowned natural treasures while improving the lives of Filipinos and ensuring sustainable jobs.”

“This new agreement with NEDA, which includes partnerships with the Departments of Natural Resources, Energy, and Agriculture—Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, marks a new era in our longstanding support to the Philippines. We will work together to address many environmental challenges. Together, we will strengthen government and community efforts in responding to environmental challenges to achieve our shared vision for safer and more resilient Filipino communities,” said USAID Philippines Mission Director Lawrence Hardy II in the statement.



The new USAID-NEDA agreement helps protect the Philippines’ world-renowned natural treasures while improving the lives of Filipinos who promote sustainable natural resource management, expanding access to renewable energy, and helping communities reduce the effects of natural disasters.

“Our assistance will help protect the forests, fisheries, and water and energy resources for millions of Filipinos, increase livelihoods, and promote nature as an engine of sustainable growth.”

This bilateral agreement is one of four new, five-year USAID-Government of Philippines Development Assistance Agreements launching in 2020 and 2021, with an anticipated total value of P32.7 billion (\$675 million) over the next five years.

Other new agreements include those with the Department of Health, the Department of Finance, and the Department of Education. Over the past 20 years, USAID has provided over P216 billion (\$4.5 billion) to advance the country’s development goals.

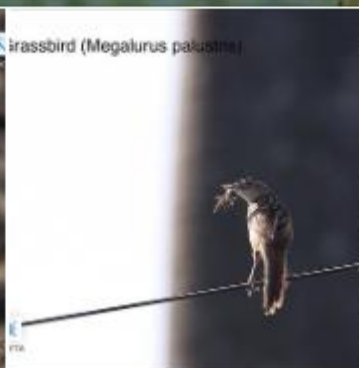
Source: <https://mb.com.ph/2021/02/07/ph-and-us-agree-to-protect-the-environment/>



INQUIRER.net 16h · 🌐

LOOK: Different species of birds thrive on the lush trees and shrubs of the University of the Philippines-Diliman, Quezon City, as seen from photos taken on Sunday, February 7.

The 473-hectare campus, one of the last green spaces in Quezon City, hosts wetlands, grasslands, and mini forests, making it one of the few areas in the metropolis that ideal for biodiversity. More than 100 species of birds can be found there. 📷:Niño Jesus Orbeta/Philippine Daily Inquirer



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Ecology enforcers

posted February 07, 2021 at 10:15 pm



Some agency personnel underwent training to become environmental enforcers. They studied the provision of the Anti-Littering Law which aims to reduce waste in public places, roads and also for maintaining cleanliness. Once they pass the test, they will be deposed and deployed to enforce the Anti-Littering Law including the apprehension of reprimands and reckless waste disposal.



Save Pampanga trees

ANGELES CITY, Pampanga – Environmental groups are raising funds to save 259 trees from being cut along the Fil-Am Friendship Circumferential Road here.

The trees will be cut by the Department of Public Works and Highways to give way to a road-widening project. A temporary environmental protection order (TEPO) issued by the Regional Trial Court Branch 59 on 6 February 2020 halted the plan.

But the TEPO was recently dissolved and the motion of the groups for a permanent injunction denied.

The TEPO remains valid within 15 days after receipt of the court order, handed down 2 February.

JONAS REYES



Fossil fuel-free

posted February 07, 2021 at 10:22 pm

by [Norman Cruz](#)



Climate and Environmental advocates from Asian People's Movement on Debt and Development hold up protest placards during a demonstration rally held near the Filipino-Chinese friendship arch in Binondo Manila, on 07 February 2021. APMDD coordinator Lidy Nacpil calls on China to take decisive steps and pave the way for a fossil fuel-free Asia, together with the governments of Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and the rest of the Asian region.



CBCP-NASSA concern over possible effects of Palawan Division to biodiversity and IP communities

Published February 7, 2021, 5:46 PM

by [Leslie Ann Aquino](#)

The social action arm of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) has expressed concern over the possible effects of the division of Palawan into three separate provinces to its biodiversity and indigenous peoples' communities.



(Photo by MOHAMMED ABED / AFP)

In a statement dated February 5, San Carlos Bishop Gerardo Alminaza, vice chair of the CBCP-National Secretariat for Social Action, Justice and Peace, said they are one with the call of the civil society organizations, the local Catholic Churches in Taytay and Puerto Princesa, and the people of Palawan to “re-examine the scientific, cultural and moral foundations of the law, above all economic and political gains of the proponents and their business allies – so that what happened at least 20 years ago when we opened up Palawan forests to extractive industries, will not happen again in the globally-significant island ecosystem.”

The Commission on Elections (Comelec) is set to conduct a plebiscite on March 13, 2021 for the ratification of Republic Act No. 11259, which divides Palawan into Palawan del Norte, Palawan Oriental, and Palawan del Sur.

Father Rey Aquanta, apostolic administrator of the Apostolic Vicariate of Taytay, believes the separation will only be putting Palaweños, especially the indigenous communities in a losing end, “as the law was mostly due to personal and vested political interests, and not to pave the way for genuine human development.”

“Spending millions of pesos for the election is not cost-efficient when the province still needs to provide for the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) vaccines and other basic social services for its constituents.”

For his part, Fr. Antonio E. Labiao, Nassa/Caritas Philippines executive secretary, said while they question the true intent of the law, they respect the political process.

However, he urged the government, especially the Inter Agency Task Force, Comelec, the police and the military, the present political leaders in Palawan, to “make all necessary measures possible so voters are able to exercise their constitutional right to suffrage despite the limitations brought about by COVID-19 pandemic.”

“We urge the government to ensure integrity, fairness, transparency, utmost observance of health protocols in the conduct of the plebiscite, and that electoral violations will be avoided,” Labiao said.



Bishop Socrates Mesiona of the Apostolic Vicariate of Palawan also called for a “fair presentation of the issues concerning the plebiscite from the media and the government, so the public will be able to have informed and principled decision on the matter.”

Known as the last ecological frontier of the Philippines, Palawan is a first-class province having stable annual revenues from tourism, rich marine, and forest resources, and mineral reserves.



No segregation, no collection, no election

By [Jerry Tundag](#)(The Freeman) - February 8, 2021 - 12:00am

Where I am at present, in the beautiful coastal town of Carigara in Leyte, the municipal government has embarked on a "no segregation, no collection" garbage disposal initiative pursuant to a 20-year-old law called the "Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000" or Republic Act 9003. The law went into effect January 26, 2001 upon signing by then president Gloria Macapagal Arroyo.

According to a study called "Plastic Waste Inputs From Land Into The Oceans" published in the journal Science and cited by the EcoWaste Coalition, the Philippines ranks third behind China and Indonesia as the world's top polluter, generating a scary and disturbing 2.7 million metric tons of plastic waste alone each year.

It is therefore foolish, immoral, even criminal, for anyone to oppose any initiative meant to avert the seemingly inexorable drowning and suffocation of the world under tons of mostly-plastic rubbish. Late as it is, and puny though it may be in face of such a gargantuan challenge, it is infinitely better than just kicking the can down the road as a problem for future generations to solve.

Segregation is not only good but necessary because it helps in defining trash and directing the flow of its disposal --where the hazardous and toxic should go for safe elimination, where the reusable and recyclable can be recovered and put to good use again, and where the residuals (non-hazardous, non-usable, non-recyclable and commercially valueless) can be manageably disposed. No collection is the punitive side of the equation.

But as good as the initiative is, it is far from perfect. It is, for one, being haphazardly implemented and without regard for the consequences. Kitchen waste, for example, is being deemed a responsibility of households and no longer being collected by the municipal LGU, apparently ignoring the fact that many, if not most, households do not have spaces to convert into compost pits. Even the barangays do not have such ready capability.

So while segregation is easy to comply with for those civic-minded enough to comply with what is good for the community and larger society, there is a real problem with kitchen waste that is unpardonable if left to households alone to solve or deal with. There is a reason why citizens pay taxes and elect officials --so that government extends public services to them and officials can think of better ways for such services to be done.

It is unconscionable and criminally negligent for government and its officials to just cavalierly dismiss real concerns such as kitchen waste as the responsibility of households to deal with. It is just like saying "bahala na kayo sa buhay ninyo." That is not the way governments deal with their public. Those who think kitchen waste is too trivial as to leave to citizens the responsibility of disposal are making a very big mistake.



Right now there is a growing stench from uncollected garbage in the streets, mostly festering kitchen waste that has nowhere to go and nothing to do but attract germs and become a health hazard much bigger than the original problem sought to be solved. Then there is the practical reality of a people made angry at government at a crucial time such as a year before elections. To "no segregation, no collection" might be added "no election."



Recovery tally nears 500K as PH logs over 11K new survivors

By Ma. Teresa Montemayor [February 7, 2021, 5:22 pm](#)



MANILA – Additional 11,388 patients have recovered from the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19), pushing the country's overall tally of recovered cases to 499,798 on Sunday.

In its 4 p.m. case bulletin, the Department of Health (DOH) said the figures represent 93 percent of those who tested positive for the virus nationwide.

The agency also reported 1,790 new confirmed cases and 70 new deaths.

These figures brought the overall tally of active cases to 26,333 and death toll to 11,179.

The DOH said about 87.9 percent of the active cases are mild, 5.6 percent are asymptomatic, 2.9 percent are severe, 0.67 percent are moderate, and 3 percent are in critical condition.

"One duplicate was removed from the total case count. Moreover, 55 cases that were previously tagged as recovered were reclassified as deaths after final validation," it added.

DOH data on Feb. 6 showed that 1,343 or 5.1 percent of 26,109 who were tested turned out positive for Covid-19.

Currently, there are 21,400 beds dedicated to patients with Covid-19.

Available are 62 percent of 1,900 intensive care unit beds, 66 percent of 13,500 isolation beds, and 77 percent of 6,000 ward beds.

About 79 percent of 2,000 ventilators are available for Covid-19 patients' use. (PNA)



Vaccine czar says gov't to inoculate 70M by yearend

February 7, 2021 | 6:30 pm



PHILIPPINE STAR/MICHAEL VARCAS

THE PHILIPPINES can vaccinate as many as 70 million citizens against the coronavirus by year-end, according to the country's vaccine czar.

The country will get about 10 million doses of vaccines under a global initiative for equal access this quarter, including 117,000 doses of Pfizer, Inc.'s vaccine that might arrive this month, Carlito A. Galvez, Jr. told ABS-CBN News TeleRadyo on Sunday.

The government seeks to inoculate 70 to 80 million Filipino adults to achieve herd immunity, he said.

The vaccine doesn't need to be given to all Filipinos based on herd immunity, when a large portion of the population becomes immune to the disease, making its spread unlikely. "Under a best case scenario when we have enough supply and our negotiations for supply succeed, we will have vaccinated 50 million to 70 million by December," Mr. Galvez said in Filipino.

In case of supply shortage, the vaccination target might have to be delayed until the middle of next year, he added.

The country has signed term sheets with five drug makers covering more than 108 million doses of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) vaccines, Mr. Galvez said.

The presidential palace last week said the government would try to order 178 million doses of coronavirus vaccines so it can inoculate more than 90 million Filipinos this year.

The government is in talks for more than 100 million doses with various drug makers worth \$1.2 billion and about 40 million doses under the COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access facility of the World Health Organization (WHO) worth \$84 million, Finance Secretary Carlos G. Dominguez III said last week.

The Department of Health (DoH) reported 1,790 cases on Sunday, bringing the total to 537,310. The death toll rose by 70 to 11,179, while recoveries increased by 11,388 to 499,798, it said in a bulletin.

There were 26,333 active cases, 87.9% of which were mild, 5.6% did not show symptoms, 3% were critical, 2.9% were severe and 0.67% were moderate.



DoH said one duplicate had been removed from the tally, while 55 recovered cases were reclassified as deaths. Eight laboratories failed to submit their data on Feb. 6.

About 7.6 million Filipinos have been tested for the coronavirus as of Feb. 5, according to DoH's tracker website.

The coronavirus has sickened about 106.4 million and killed more than 2.3 million people worldwide, according to the Worldometers website, citing various sources including data from the World Health Organization.

About 78 million people have recovered, it said.

DoH on Friday said eight more people had tested positive for a more contagious coronavirus strain, bringing the total in the Philippines to 25.

Three of the eight new cases were from Bontoc, Mountain Province in the country's north. The Health department said case investigation, contact and back tracing were under way.

DoH earlier traced the more than 800 coronavirus deaths in the past two weeks to "data harmonization" with the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA).

Health Undersecretary Maria Rosario S. Vergeire said three-quarters of the deaths were from March to October 2020. DoH said 864 coronavirus deaths were reported from Jan. 23 to Feb. 4. — **Vann Marlo M.**



Speaker Lord Allan Velasco – who along with Deputy Minority Leader Stella Quimbo filed House Bill 8628 (Bayanihan to Arise As One Act), also known as Bayanihan 3 – said this measure is needed to lift the country from recession.

STAR/Boy Santos, file

Speaker pushes P420 billion Bayanihan 3 for COVID-19 recovery

[Delon Porcalla](#) (The Philippine Star) - February 8, 2021 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — The super majority coalition and the minority bloc in the House of Representatives have joined forces for the passage of a bill providing a P420-billion fund that will help stimulate the country's economic recovery from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Speaker Lord Allan Velasco – who along with Deputy Minority Leader Stella Quimbo filed House Bill 8628 (Bayanihan to Arise As One Act), also known as Bayanihan 3 – said this measure is needed to lift the country from recession.

“Given that actual economic output in 2020 was far below what was assumed for budget purposes, and further losses may still be incurred as the COVID-19 pandemic is expected to prevail well into the current fiscal year, an additional economic stimulus package is needed to help the government meet its recovery targets for the year,” he said.

According to Velasco, 115 House members from major political parties and power blocs have already expressed their willingness to support the bill, and have also signified their intent to co-author HB 8628.

Velasco acknowledged that the two previous laws – Bayanihan 1 and 2 – are “not sufficient for the genuine economic recovery of the country” even if they somehow increased the government's initial capacity to respond to the demands of the health crisis.

Citing recent data from the Philippine Statistics Authority, the Marinduque congressman noted that the Philippine economy contracted by 9.5 percent overall in 2020, the worst performance in the nation's post-war history.

This contraction is significantly deeper than the predicted contraction of 4.5 to 6.6 percent, which became the basis of the Development Budget Coordination Committee for the 2021 National Expenditure Program.



Pandemic to raise number of poor in Philippines

[Czeriza Valencia](#) (The Philippine Star) - February 8, 2021 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — As the government responds to the immediate impact of the pandemic, it should also begin to address the long-term impact on chronic poverty and school drop-out, according to state-run think tank Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS).

Poverty simulations suggested that the COVID-19 pandemic would increase the number of poor in the country.

“While the government provides social safety nets and emergency assistance programs to affected families, these are only temporary,” PIDS researchers said in the new discussion paper titled “Mitigating the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on poverty.”

With current incomes continuing to be below pre-pandemic levels, poverty incidence is expected to spike between 15.5 and 17.5 percent this year.

The PIDS said this pertains to the proportion of Filipinos living below the poverty threshold of P10,727 monthly for a family of five in 2018, the minimum income needed to satisfy basic food and non-food needs.

Under these conditions, families that used to live on incomes above this threshold can become part of the chronic poor.

These so-called new poor, in turn, may cope with diminished incomes by withdrawing their children from school,

“This would have longer-term implications on the welfare of the household. Therefore, it is important to ensure that the recovery process for the economy is inclusive,” said the paper.

“Other measures such as wage subsidies or low-interest loans are needed to enable those who lost their jobs or closed their businesses to bounce back from the crisis as the new poor can become part of the chronic poor,” it said.

With a prolonged lockdown and limitations in the health sector, non-COVID health concerns may add to the burden of those who already lost their jobs.

PIDS said a universal health insurance with greater health benefits to include testing and vaccination would enable households to cope with future health-related public emergencies.

“Being one of the building blocks of a health system, having stronger health financing is a step toward greater healthcare access, leading to an improved health status and financial protection, which is particularly important in the face of hazards,” said the paper.

The think tank said current assistance programs in place are sufficient, but the targeting of beneficiaries need to be improved.

It recommended creating interoperable databases across all government departments and agencies to help target potential beneficiaries more accurately.



The government may consolidate all existing databases of government agencies that provide support programs.

Another suggestion is to expand, modify, or improve current assistance programs with established implementation processes rather than create new programs that will need new mechanisms for implementation.



We urgently need to boost our economy

[AS A MATTER OF FACT](#) - [Sara Soliven De Guzman](#) (The Philippine Star) - February 8, 2021 - 12:00am

Mayday!

President Duterte sounded the alarm button last week by informing the whole nation that our economy is in “bad shape,” that we are “sinking deeper and deeper” and that we are losing P2 billion per day.

Reuters reported that “Philippine bank lending fell for the first time in more than 14 years in December, reflecting weak consumer and business activity, with the trend expected to persist as coronavirus restrictions remain in place in many parts of the country. Production loans, comprising 87.4 percent of the combined loan portfolio of universal and commercial banks, fell 0.4 percent in December from a year earlier, while consumer loans rose at a much slower pace of 4.4 percent compared with November’s 7.1 percent. The Philippine economy contracted 9.5 percent in 2020, the biggest slump on record.”

Ibon Foundation reported: “According to the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), inflation continued to increase to 4.2 percent in January 2021. This is 0.7 percentage point higher compared to inflation in December 2020 and 1.3 compared to the previous year. The January inflation rate is the fastest recorded in 11 months. Prices reportedly increased the most in food and non-alcoholic beverages to 6.2 percent from 4.8 percent in January, with fruits and fish registering the highest increases at 9 percent and 3.7 percent, respectively.”

On Feb. 4, the Department of Finance issued this statement: “Year-on-year, the Philippine economy contracted by 8.3 percent in the final quarter of 2020, bringing the full-year growth to minus 9.5 percent. Unintended economic consequences of the quarantines, the Taal Volcano eruption in the first quarter and the African Swine Flu (ASF) caused the country to back-pedal from an otherwise robust growth trajectory. The eruption of Taal Volcano in the otherwise idyllic tourist spot in Southern Tagalog disrupted economic activities in the immediate areas, the economic powerhouses of Regions IV-A, Central Luzon and NCR, home to 58 percent of the country’s output. The ASF and the series of natural calamities in the final quarter particularly hit agricultural production. The health issues caused by the COVID-19 epidemic likewise continue to pose challenges to economic activities. To sustain growth, the country has to maintain and enhance its capacity, medical or otherwise, to manage the health risks posed by the virus. Such capacity could tilt the odds in what is apparently a life-versus-livelihood dilemma and make it more of a life-and-livelihood dual outcome, but probably at a lesser scale than before under a ‘new normal’ should there still be uncertainties about and risks posed by the virus.”

Bottomline is that our economy is suffering. This is the sad reality. But with the right perspective, planning and efficient implementation of guidelines – there is hope. How does an economy grow? We need to increase our “growth of productivity” – agricultural products, industrial/ factory products, government and private constructions, medical/ pharmaceutical industry, telecommunications, food and beverages, etc. With the increased growth in production we will simultaneously need “growth in the size of our workforce.” The problem is that we are a country that relies heavily on importing goods. Why not start producing our own goods now and limit importation?

We need to support our farmfolk, fishermen and industrial workforce. Let’s start taking the move to “Buy Philippine products” more seriously because this has a tremendous effect on our economy. Stop importing vegetables, rice, fish (that actually may be even coming from our West Philippine Sea). Stop importing face masks and face shields and other COVID related apparel. Instead of giving money away, why not start teaching the people to work for their keep. The government must support business entities that will supply the goods we need and give jobs to the unemployed. Think Philippines!



The National Economic and Development Authority or NEDA must come up with a guide for our local industries. Stop justifying yourselves and making blind excuses for your ambitious growth targets. Action speaks louder than words.

* * *

The problem we face is that our public servants are not working harmoniously. It is very evident that their energies are scattered and worse, all mixed up. How can we get out of the abyss if we don't work together?

Another glaring feature of this administration during this pandemic is that instead of calming us and making our lives feel safer, we seem to be antagonized with unnecessary actions and pronouncements that have been made. Take for example this "Child Car Seat Law." Why highlight it now when minors are not even allowed to go out? Susmariosep!

The Child Car Seat Law being implemented now has been thrown to us at such a wrong time. This will be another added expense for Juan dela Cruz who just lost his job. And in a country that has tremendous traffic jams, a car seat is the least of our priorities. Ours is a country where babies are held by their mothers or yayas inside a car. In countries with car seat laws, most often it is only the driver and the baby in the car, cruising along an autoban or an interstate highway.

I have nothing against car seats, but I have something against the timing of the implementation of the law. Why now? Why now when minors are not even allowed by the IATF to leave their homes and when every child is stuck at home and not even allowed to go to school?

Even the former senator JV Ejercito, the principal sponsor of the Child Safety in Motor Vehicles Act, has said that authorities should "hold in abeyance" the implementation of the law during the pandemic. Anyway, the children have to be home. There is no school. Supposedly they are not traveling so it becomes moot and academic.

Land Transportation Office (LTO) deputy director for Law Enforcement Roberto Valera said that they will not apprehend motorists who will violate the mandatory child car seat law within six months. They will prioritize first the educating of drivers and parents by distributing flyers regarding the requirements of the law. On the other hand, the DOTr has also said that they will postpone the full enforcement of the law during the pandemic as it finalized enforcement protocols for the law. Why not study your announcements before you make them instead of withdrawing them after the public has already reacted to them in a frenzy. You are just creating more chaos and panic.

May I suggest that government get its act together on our COVID-19 issues and concerns before implementing new laws that are unreasonable during this time?



Magnitude 6.3 quake jolts Davao del Sur

By Ma. Cristina Arayata February 7, 2021, 1:15 pm



STRONG QUAKE. People rush out of mall in Davao City after a strong 6.3 magnitude earthquake hit Davao del Sur on Sunday (Feb. 7, 2021). The Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) said the tectonic quake struck 6 kilometers southeast of Magsaysay around 12:22 p.m. (Photo courtesy DXRP Davao/PCOO)

MANILA – A strong magnitude 6.3 quake jolted Davao del Sur Sunday, the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) reported.

The tectonic quake struck 6 kilometers (Km) southeast of Magsaysay around 12:22 p.m. It had a depth of 15 km.

Phivolcs said Intensity V was felt in Kidapawan City.

The following instrumental intensities were also reported:

Intensity V -- Koronadal City, South Cotabato

Intensity IV -- Alabel and Kiamba, Sarangani; General Santos City, South Cotabato

Intensity II -- Cagayan de Oro and Gingoog, Misamis Oriental

Intensity I -- Cagayan de Oro, Misamis Oriental

Phivolcs said both aftershocks and damages are expected from the earthquake. (PNA)



Study: Pandemic's cleaner air added heat to warming planet



CHINA. In this November 12, 2020 file photo, people take selfies of the Pudong skyline as they stand on the Bund in Shanghai, China. (AP)

February 05, 2021

EARTH spiked a bit of a fever in 2020, partly because of cleaner air from the pandemic lockdown, a new study found.

For a short time, temperatures in some places in the eastern United States, Russia and China were as much as half to two-thirds of a degree (.3 to .37 degrees Celsius) warmer. That's due to less soot and sulfate particles from car exhaust and burning coal, which normally cool the atmosphere temporarily by reflecting the sun's heat, Tuesday's study in the journal *Geophysical Research Letters* reported.

Overall, the planet was about .05 degrees (.03 degrees Celsius) warmer for the year because the air had fewer cooling aerosols, which unlike carbon dioxide is pollution you can see, the study found.

"Cleaning up the air can actually warm the planet because that (soot and sulfate) pollution results in cooling" which climate scientists have long known, said study lead author Andrew Gettelman, an atmospheric scientist at the National Center for Atmospheric Research. His calculations come from comparing 2020 weather to computer models that simulated a 2020 without the pollution reductions from pandemic lockdowns.

This temporary warming effect from fewer particles was stronger in 2020 than the effect of reduced heat-trapping carbon dioxide emissions, Gettelman said. That's because carbon stays in the atmosphere for more than a century with long-term effects, while aerosols remain in the air about a week.

Even without the reduction in cooling aerosols, global temperatures in 2020 already were flirting with breaking yearly heat record because of the burning of coal, oil and natural gas - and the aerosol effect may have been enough to help make this the hottest year in NASA's measuring system, said top NASA climate scientist Gavin Schmidt, who wasn't part of this study but said it confirms other research.

"Clean air warms the planet a tiny bit, but it kills a lot fewer people with air pollution," Gettelman said. (AP)

Source: <https://www.sunstar.com.ph/article/1885042/Network/World/Study-Pandemics-cleaner-air-added-heat-to-warming-planet>



Decarbonizing for a better working world

February 7, 2021 | 7:13 pm

Suits The C-Suite

By Clairma T. Mangangey

(Second of two parts)

In the first part of this article, we discussed the costs and impact of climate change, the mounting pressures for carbon reduction, and the increasing demand of investors and regulators for greater transparency on nonfinancial performance through sustainability reporting.

Climate change and sustainability were among the highlights at the 2021 meeting of the World Economic Forum (WEF), a week-long program at the end of January dedicated to help leaders select innovative solutions to address the pandemic and drive recovery. While climate change was already a dominant theme in the WEF in 2020, this year sees the private sector ready to prioritize a low-carbon future in their evolving business models and strategies.

As part of its commitment to sustainability, Ernst & Young Global (EY), of which SGV is the Philippine member firm, recently announced its ambition to be carbon negative by 2021, and net zero in 2025. Becoming carbon negative will result in the reduction of EY's carbon emissions in line with the 1.5 degrees Celsius Science Based Target (SBT), as well as investing in technologies and nature-based solutions to remove and offset more carbon than EY emits each year. This new ambition builds on the global organization's achievement of carbon neutrality in December 2020.

KEY ELEMENTS OF THE EY CARBON NEGATIVE AMBITION

There are several key components in the EY ambition to not only become carbon negative, but to also reduce total emissions by 40% and achieve net zero in 2025.

— Reducing business travel emissions. Though many EY services require an element of business travel, air travel provides the most significant negative impact on the environment, accounting for approximately 75% of EY's global carbon emissions in FY19. These emissions will be reduced by 35% in 2025 using 2019 baseline data by continuing to use remote working technologies that helped EY teams provide uninterrupted client service during the pandemic.

— Reducing overall office electricity usage. EY will reduce its office carbon emissions from electricity consumption to zero by FY25 and by switching to 100% renewable energy for remaining EY needs. By FY25, EY aims to be a fully accredited member of the RE100, a group of influential organizations committed to 100% renewable power. From 2020, EY's global Scope 3 emissions measurements include employees working from home, reflecting the changes resulting from the pandemic, trends in remote working and the organization's flexible working schedule.

— Structuring electricity supply contracts. Along with agreed Virtual Power Purchase Agreements (VPPAs) with several solar and wind farms, EY aims to introduce more electricity than it consumes into national grids. These arrangements will add more than twice the amount of electricity consumed into multiple national electricity grids from 100% renewable energy. This allows EY to reduce its total electricity costs, offset its own office electricity emissions, and play its role in decarbonizing the electricity generation sector.

— Providing EY teams with tools to calculate and reduce carbon emitted. EY recognizes that executing client-facing projects results in carbon emissions, and many clients want to work towards reducing them. To this end, EY will provide its teams with tools such as the EY Engagement Carbon Calculator to enable them to assess then reduce the amount of carbon emitted when delivering client work.



— Offsetting more carbon than EY emits through nature-based solutions and carbon-reduction technologies. EY launched a collaboration with profit-for-purpose organization South Pole in December 2020, where contributions from EY will contribute to renewable energy projects (including solar, wind and hydro) and help preserve natural environments.

— Requiring 75% of EY suppliers to set science-based targets. EY will set a goal for suppliers to have a Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi) approved carbon-reduction target by FY25. This involves collaborating with all suppliers to help them achieve SBTi accreditation and decarbonize their products and services, exponentially increasing the impact of EY's carbon negative position.

— Sustainable solutions for a carbon negative working world. In addition to increasing investments in solutions, EY will continue carrying out activities in various multi-stakeholder sustainability alliances. Such alliances include working on metrics and reporting with the World Economic Forum International Business Council, collaborating with C-suite Sustainability leaders in the S30 group, membership in the Alliance of CEO Climate Leaders, and work with the UN Global Compact and the World Business Council for Sustainable Development.

As EY undertakes efforts to become more sustainable, it is also developing a new set of global sustainability solutions for clients to assist them in their own sustainability journey while protecting and creating long-term value for all stakeholders. In addition, EY will continue to transform its business amid the COVID-19 pandemic and invest in its people by equipping them with the knowledge and skills necessary to lead climate action at work and at home.

As a member firm of EY Global, SGV & Co. will likewise further strengthen its own carbon reduction efforts and sustainability programs to align with the EY carbon negative ambition. More than merely adopting this initiative, the program falls within SGV's Purpose to nurture transformative leaders capable of reframing the future and helping create long-term value.

The COVID-19 crisis has taught us that providing exceptional client service is still possible despite the challenges it brought. The lessons that we have gained from managing the pandemic will help EY further attain its sustainability ambitions. Many of the practices the EY global firm and SGV have adopted due to COVID-19 will remain relevant to reducing carbon emissions and we will capitalize on these as we define our new normal of doing business.

As the world moves towards an increasingly decarbonized future, it is our hope that more organizations will take up the challenge and join hands to help address the daunting risks posed by climate change.

This article is for general information only and is not a substitute for professional advice where the facts and circumstances warrant. The views reflected in this article are the views of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of SGV, the global EY organization or its member firms.

Clairma T. Mangangey is the Climate Change and Sustainability Services Leader of SGV & Co.



Anthropocene

February 7, 2021 | 6:11 pm

Introspective

By Emmanuel S. De Dios



Turns out the year 2020 was even more of a turning point than just because of the COVID-19 pandemic. A fact arguably almost as significant was reported in an article published last December^[1] in *Nature*, the redoubtable science periodical: “We find that Earth is exactly at the crossover point; in the year 2020 (plus or minus six years) the anthropogenic mass, which has recently doubled roughly every 20 years, will surpass all global living biomass.”

In plain speak this means that as of last year all the artificial stuff we have churned out and are using, including roads, skyscrapers, malls, churches, public monuments, kitchen appliances, textiles — and, yes, face masks — now weigh more than all living things put together. The authors estimate the overall living biomass (all trees, plants, and animals including humans) weighs 1.1 tera tons (i.e., 1.1 thousand billion tons). That is the milestone number our “stuff” has just surpassed. “On average,” the authors, led by Weizmann Institute’s R. Milo, estimate, “for each person on the globe, anthropogenic mass equal to more than his or her body weight is produced every week.” At this rate, they estimate that human-made artifacts will be three times the living biomass by 2040 and that — as that stuff falls into disuse — the world faces an avalanche of waste in the next two decades. That effect is aside from the destruction of natural habitats from urbanization, pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, industrial agriculture, the overexploitation of marine life, the wild animal trade, etc. — which scientists incidentally suspect bite us back in the form of novel diseases like COVID.

These and other findings only bolster the emerging idea that we now live in a qualitatively new geological epoch — the Anthropocene, in which humans have become the dominant force shaping the planet. If the findings in the *Nature* piece are right, we might half-seriously imagine some distant future when a thick layer of geologic rock will be identifiable not by plant or animal fossils but by an unusual amalgam of crushed concrete aggregates, iron beams, glass, and pure aluminum. Some future geologist, after some digging may find corroborating traces of plastic water bottles and sanitary pads and might then exclaim: “Aha, definitely the Anthropocene!”

The urgent problem of the human impact on the planet is the subject of two significant reports that appeared early this year: the first is the UNDP’s 2021 Human Development Report (HDR) titled *Human development and the Anthropocene*^[2]; the second is *The economics of biodiversity*, a review led by the eminent Cambridge economist Partha Dasgupta and commissioned by no less than the UK Treasury.^[3] (We can only dream our own finance department might do something as enlightened — Finance Secretary Carlos “Sonny” Dominguez chairs the climate change commission but he cheerleads for mining.)

Both reports question whether the current manner that humans relate to nature can be sustained. (Short answer: no.) They provide rich detail and scholarship for the argument and constructive approaches to a solution and are a definite must-read. But there is room here only to highlight a common plea by both, which is for a radical rethinking of how we understand and measure our well-being.



The 2021 HDR demonstrates this by reformulating its own well-known human development index (HDI). To recall: the original HDI is a composite measure of a people’s health and longevity, living standards, and educational or literacy (i.e., the state of being “healthy, wealthy, and wise”). Those achievements, however, come at an inevitable cost to the planet because of the pressure on the environment caused by the production and consumption required to achieve “human development.” If the index is adjusted to account for (a.) the carbon emissions created by a country’s output, and (b.) the material extracted to meet the consumption by its people, the result is the “planetary pressures-adjusted HDI” (PHDI), an HDI that takes into account the human impact on nature. (See the Table.)

Human development index* (HDI) and Planetary pressure-adjusted human development index (PHDI)				
2019 (SELECTED COUNTRIES)				
HDI rank	Country	HDI	PHDI	PHDI Rank
1	Norway	0.957	0.781	16
6	Germany	0.947	0.814	7
8	Australia	0.944	0.794	80
17	United States	0.926	0.718	62
9	Japan	0.919	0.797	17
79	Thailand	0.777	0.716	71
85	China	0.761	0.671	101
107	Indonesia	0.718	0.691	123
107	Philippines	0.718	0.701	83
117	Vietnam	0.704	0.664	110
131	India	0.645	0.626	123
133	Bangladesh	0.632	0.625	124

*HDI AND PHDI ARE VALUES BETWEEN 0 AND 1, WITH 1 REPRESENTING THE BEST SCORE.
SOURCE: UNDP [2021] HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND THE ANTHROPOCENE.

The predictable result is that virtually *all* countries’ HDI must be adjusted downward (e.g., see the third and fourth columns of the table). What is significant, however, is that rich and high-HDI countries are demoted in PHDI rankings while poorer countries tend to rise. The erstwhile top HDI-performer Norway, for example, drops 15 ranks in the PHDI, most likely because its high living standards are based on huge oil and gas exports. The same explains the huge drop for Australia (a drop of 72 ranks), a good part of whose economy is based on mining.

The Philippines actually fares not too badly and actually rises 24 places in PHDI: its economic basis being in services rather than in manufacturing means it has lower carbon emissions; it has fewer extractive industries; and its lower income and consumption also means a lower material footprint. (This is at least one league table where we beat China and Indonesia.) All that notwithstanding, of course, one will still be hard-pressed however to convince present-day Filipinos that they are better off than the average Chinese.

The roughly negative correlation between HDI and PHDI raises the central question whether affluence and human expansion must necessarily be sacrificed to save the planet. Opinions on this diverge widely. But part of the dilemma, according to the Dasgupta Report, is a false one and stems from the wrong-headed way we measure wealth and well-being. The pissing contest among countries today is measured in GDP, but Dasgupta et al. say this is misleading. First, GDP is a flow not a stock, and so says nothing about whether we are living off income in the true (Hicksian) sense and not just running down our assets. (After all, anyone can maintain a high-end lifestyle for a time by slowly pawning off one’s inheritance.)



But second, the assets we value are themselves incomplete. Economists, who secretly know better, have complacently tolerated the shortcomings of GDP conventions inherited from a previous century. National-income accounting to this day includes only physical or produced capital (the artificial “stuff” that ends up in geologic strata) neglecting both human capital and natural capital. One obvious example is how education spending, which forms human capital, is still obtusely classified as consumption instead of investment. More perverse is the wholesale disregard for natural capital and the failure to value the services it contributes to real income (e.g., its provisioning, regulating, and aesthetic-spiritual functions). As a result, the even wanton destruction and degradation of natural assets and their transformation into artificial “stuff” can be justified as unalloyed gains in GDP. In contrast, reforestation, coral reef protection, and similar spending that preserves or expands natural capital are also classified as consumption, not investment. This is because the flow of benefits from natural capital are unpriced, regarded as “free,” and therefore ignored in favor of marketable “stuff.”

While it is technologically possible at any time to turn natural capital into produced capital (e.g., by clear-cutting a forest to build a road, or strip-mining a mountain to extract aluminum for a building), it may not always make true economic sense to do so. A vigorous theoretical debate used to rage regarding how much physical capital (“stuff”) and human capital (“smarts”) might substitute for the loss of the natural environment (“setting”). But given the rapid deterioration in the biosphere in recent times — e.g., the species extinction rate that is 1,000 to 10,000 times what should be expected — that debate has subsided and a consensus now seems to emerge that the point of no return is fast approaching, if it is not already past.

The Dasgupta Report therefore champions the use of “inclusive wealth” to measure welfare. This means valuing and monitoring the level of *all* capital — produced, human, and most crucially natural capital. By so doing, even when converting natural to produced-capital or to human capital, society is at least forced to measure not only what it gains, but also what is lost. Dasgupta et al. make the point that the proper valuation of nature, far from being a mere sentimental choice, is in fact a hard-nosed economic one.

Adam Smith in his other great book wrote of how humans were inherently capable of empathy (“sympathy” in the original). Empathy is what allows us today to imagine ourselves in the shoes of our descendants, who in some far future might be confronted by a much-diminished natural environment — perhaps viewing a display of a solitary *balintong* (Palawan pangolin) exhibiting stereotype, pacing back and forth in its enclosure against a projected image of a rainforest visible only through a VR headset. At that point, our descendant removing her goggles may ask, like Oliver Twist, “Please, sir, I want some more.” Then we may well wonder whether we made the right economic choices during our time.

[1] E. Elhacham, L. Ben-Uri, J. Grozovski, Y. Bar-On, and R. Milo [2020] “Global human-made mass exceeds all living biomass”, *Nature*, 588: 442-444. <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41586-020-3010-5>

[2] Available at <http://hdr.undp.org/en/2020-report>.

[3] Available

at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/957291/Dasgupta_Review_-_Full_Report.pdf

Source: <https://www.bworldonline.com/anthropocene/>



Facing green pressure, Indonesia halts deep-sea mining disposal

February 8, 2021 | 12:02 am



REUTERS

JAKARTA — Indonesia will no longer permit mining waste to be disposed in the ocean to allay concerns about the environmental impact of processing nickel used in electric vehicle (EV) batteries, a government official and a corporate mining source said.

The Southeast Asian nation, the world's biggest nickel producer, has not officially banned so-called deep-sea tailings (DST) but by not issuing new permits it could delay planned projects and complicate efforts to dispose of waste.

Proponents of DST say it is cheaper and less harmful to pipe waste into the sea, especially on tropical islands where earthquakes or heavy rain limit storage, but critics says the impact of such marine disposal is poorly understood.

“There is no written regulation yet, but the policy is to not issue permits for deep-sea tailing for any future projects,” Jodi Mahardi, a spokesman for the Maritime and Investment Affairs Coordinating Minister, told Reuters.

Up to now only one nickel mine in Papua New Guinea is using DST, according to global producer association the Nickel Institute.

Indonesia currently uses the disposal method at its second-largest copper mine, run by PT Amman Mineral Nusa Tenggara.

Indonesian nickel projects seeking permission for DST did not receive an outright rejection, but a lengthy wait meant that land tailings eventually become “the only option,” according to a corporate mining source familiar with the matter.

Once the world's biggest exporter of nickel, Indonesia banned ore exports last year amid efforts to develop a full nickel supply chain, starting from extraction, processing into metals and chemicals used in batteries, all the way to building EVs.

At least four high-pressure acid leach (HPAL) plants, which process nickel laterite into chemicals used in batteries, are being constructed in Indonesia led by Chinese investors. Most planned to dispose waste in the sea.

HPAL projects in Morowali, in Sulawesi, have decided to drop DST, said a source familiar with the matter. Meanwhile, an HPAL project in Obi Island is still waiting for the government's decision.



Changing to disposing tailings on land from the ocean would require a major plant rework, said Angela Durrant, a nickel costs researcher at Wood Mackenzie.

“It would cost a fortune to switch from one established form of tailings disposal to another method,” Durrant said. However, she said that most new HPAL projects in Indonesia are unlikely to have set up any disposal systems yet.

Despite obstacles, Indonesia is expecting investment in nickel processing to double from 2020 to \$35 billion by 2033, led by Chinese stainless steel producers and battery makers.

The country also signed a \$9.8-billion EV battery deal with South Korea’s LG Energy Solution in December.

Indonesia has also been wooing Tesla, which has been looking to find reliable sources of nickel globally after warning the current cost of batteries remains a hurdle to growth. Tesla has sent an investment proposal and the government will meet with the company next week, Septian Hario Seto, the deputy head for investment and mining coordination said on Friday.

Maritime and Investment spokesman Jodi said that the Indonesian government was well aware of the need to uphold green standards “otherwise, companies like Tesla would not come here.”

Indonesia has a chequered environmental track record in mining so EV companies could be cautious about directly investing given environmentally-conscious consumers, experts say. “There’s potential in Indonesia but there’s also risk involved if they don’t have the right policies,” said Andrew Miller, product director at EV battery metals consultancy firm, Benchmark Intelligence Minerals. — **Reuters**



General view during a flood in Chamoli, Uttarakhand, India February 7, 2021 in this still image obtained from a video.
ANI/REUTERS TV/via REUTERS

Himalayan glacier breaks in India, around 125 missing in floods

Published February 7, 2021 4:45pm

Updated February 7, 2021 10:35pm

By DEVJYOT GHOSHAL, and MANOJ KUMAR, Reuters

NEW DELHI — Around 125 people were missing in northern India after a Himalayan glacier broke and swept away a small hydroelectric dam on Sunday, with floods forcing the evacuation of villages downstream.

A wall of dust, rock and water hit as an avalanche roared down the Rishiganga valley deep in the mountains of Uttarakhand, a witness said.

"It came very fast, there was no time to alert anyone," Sanjay Singh Rana, who lives on the upper reaches of the river in Raini village, told Reuters by phone. "I felt that even we would be swept away."

Uttarakhand Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat said 125 people were missing but the number could rise. So far, the bodies of seven people had been recovered.

The disaster took place around 500 km (310 miles) north of New Delhi.

Biggest story at this time: Terrifying images of glacier break leading massive flooding in Uttarakhand's Chamoli district. Extensive damage and devastation expected at several villages. Full coverage on [@IndiaToday pic.twitter.com/rzR6ODfJ9y](https://pic.twitter.com/rzR6ODfJ9y)

— Shiv Aroor (@ShivAroor) [February 7, 2021](#)

Uttarakhand is prone to flash floods and landslides and the disaster prompted calls by environment groups for a review of power projects in the ecologically sensitive mountains.

Earlier state chief secretary Om Prakash said 100 to 150 people were feared dead. A large number of the missing were workers at the 13.2 MW Rishiganga Hydroelectric Project which was destroyed by the bursting of the glacier.

Footage shared by locals showed the water washing away parts of the Rishiganga dam and everything else in its path. At least 180 sheep were washed away.

Videos on social media, which Reuters could not immediately verify, showed water surging through a small dam site, washing away construction equipment.



Twelve people who had been trapped in a tunnel had been rescued and efforts were under way to save others caught in another tunnel, the federal home ministry said after a meeting of the National Crisis Committee, comprising top officials.

"India stands with Uttarakhand and the nation prays for everyone's safety there," Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Twitter.

State utility NTPC said the avalanche had damaged a part of its Tapovan Vishnugad hydropower plant that was under construction further down the river. It gave no details but said the situation is being monitored continuously.

Indian military helicopters were flying over the area and soldiers deployed for help with relief and rescue.

The neighboring state of Uttar Pradesh, India's most populous, put its riverside areas on high alert.

'Himalayan tsunami'

It was not immediately clear what had set off the avalanche at a time when it is not the flood season. In June 2013, record monsoon rains in Uttarakhand caused devastating floods that claimed close to 6,000 lives.

That disaster was dubbed the "Himalayan tsunami" because of the torrents of water unleashed in the mountainous area, which sent mud and rocks crashing down, burying homes, sweeping away buildings, roads and bridges.

Uma Bharti, India's former water resources minister and a senior leader of Modi's party, criticized the construction of a power project in the area.

"When I was a minister I had requested that Himalaya is a very sensitive place, so power projects should not be built on Ganga and its main tributaries," she said on Twitter, referring to the main river that flows from the mountains.

Environmental experts called for a halt to big hydroelectric projects in the state.

"This disaster again calls for a serious scrutiny of the hydropower dams building spree in this eco-sensitive region," said Ranjan Panda, a volunteer for the Combat Climate Change Network that works on water, environment and climate change issues.

"The government should no longer ignore warnings from experts and stop building hydropower projects and extensive highway networks in this fragile ecosystem." — **Reuters**

Source: <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/news/world/774949/himalayan-glacier-bursts-in-india-100-150-feared-dead/story/?fbclid=IwAR00Te10jq-0qmIqaMP7H03oTa6GUiQ3d37WVJqQBfv30PcqvdJ3Fg8YD2I>

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