

08 July 2023 Saturday



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DENR issues water conservation guidelines for gov't offices

By JEL SANTOS

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources' (DENR) Water Resources Management Office (WRMO) has issued guidelines for the implementation of water conservation measures by all government offices.

This is in line with Malacañang's Memorandum Circular (MC) No. 22 which orders all government departments and instrumentalities to strictly implement water conservation measures as part of efforts to prevent a water crisis amid the looming El Niño phenomenon. The circular was signed on ▶ 3

DENR issues water conservation guidelines for gov't offices 1◀

June 7 by Executive Secretary Lucas Bersamin.

In WRMO's Bulletin No. 1, it alerted all government personnel about MC 22 and the water conservation program for public offices and reminded everyone of the "impending El Niño and potential drought conditions this year."

The bulletin established water conservation requirements for all government offices to follow through their building managers.

As such, it noted that all agencies must have separate water meters and for them to regularly check if the meters are functioning properly.

"They may contact their water service provider if a sub-meter needs

to be installed," it said.

"Harvested rainwater, if possible, should be used instead of potable water to clean premises or water plants."

In addition, it reminded building administrators to check for leaks and faulty fixtures, especially in toilets, and to be observant of floors and walls that may be constantly wet or covered with molds due to moisture.

The WRMO also advised shutting off the main building valves from 7 p.m., or as soon as staff members had left the workplace entirely, until 6 a.m. a day later.

The bulletin also provided a chart comparing per capita consumption vs total monthly consumption based on

the number of frontline agency visitors and workers.

"As a guide, each employee must not consume more than 50 liters of water per day in office buildings (also consider the number of visitors for frontline agencies) and not more than 180 liters per day in households/condominiums and 24/7 offices. Multiply these per capita consumption guides and compare with your total monthly consumption (1,000 liters = 1 cubic meter)," it stated.

Earlier, President Marcos directed the WRMO to monitor the progress of all departments toward conserving water through the analysis of their monthly water bills, in a bid to reduce their consumption by 10 percent.

In April, Marcos created WRMO by virtue of Executive Order No. 22. Its main mandate is to ensure availability and sustainable management of water resources in the country.



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NWRB to cut MWSS, NIA water allocation if Angat Dam level falls below 180 meters 1◀

180 meters.

This is a notable reduction from the current 50 cms water allocation for MWSS and 28.5 cms for NIA as the country prepares for the negative impacts of El Niño, which are expected to be felt toward the final quarter of 2023 up to the first quarter of 2024.

As of 6 a.m. Friday, the water level at Angat Dam was at 180.45 meters.

The NWRB emphasized the importance of water conservation measures during this "critical period."

"It is crucial for residents, businesses, and institutions to remain vigilant and actively participate in efforts to conserve water resources," the NWRB said. "Implementing water-saving practices such as rainwater harvesting, reducing consumption, fixing leaks promptly, and optimizing irrigation systems can significantly contribute to mitigating the impacts of the El Niño," it added. (Nicole Magmanlac)

NWRB to cut MWSS, NIA water allocations if Angat Dam level falls below 180 meters

The National Water Resources Board (NWRB) said on Friday, July 7, that it will reduce the water allocations for the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) and National Irrigation Administration (NIA) this month if the minimum water level at Angat Dam continues to drop.

In a statement, the NWRB said that the water allocation for MWSS will be lessened to 48 cubic meters per second (cms) while the irrigation allocation for NIA will be 20 cms until the end of July if the water level at Angat Dam falls below its minimum operating level of ▶ **5**



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UNREPLENISHED WITH RAIN, MAGAT DAM DRYING UP

THE water at the Magat Dam reservoir is approaching the level where it will be too shallow to generate power, the National Irrigation Administration-Magat River Integrated Irrigation System (NIA-Mariis) reported.

Because little or no rain has fallen for days in the provinces of Nueva Vizcaya and Ifugao, the level has dropped by 7.5 meters since June 1, the NIA-Mariis said.

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■ DRYING FROM A1

UNREPLENISHED WITH RAIN, MAGAT DAM

The level was at 172.84 meters on June 1, plunging to 165.34 m on July 7.

The level has to be at least 160 m for the dam's hydroelectric plant to continue operation, the agency said.

In July 1991, the four-decade-old dam recorded an all-time low of 149 meters amid a prolonged drought.

One of the country's biggest dams, Magat is used primarily for irrigating about 85,000 hectares of agricultural lands, flood control and power generation.

Located along the Isabela-Ifugao border, Magat is the second-biggest electricity provider among hydro dams in Luzon, contributing at least 380 megawatts to the Luzon grid.

Construction of the dam was authorized by then-president Ferdinand Marcos Sr. through Presidential Decree 693 on May 7, 1975.

Work on the dam started in 1978 and was completed in 1983.

NIA-Mariis, which oversees Magat's irrigation component, resorts to irrigation on a rotational basis whenever the dam's water reserves dwindle.

SN Aboitiz Power, which owns and operates the Magat power plant, has to operate at a reduced capacity because of dropping water reserves.

In March 2010, the dam stopped generating power, affecting the entire Luzon grid, when its water level fell to 152.7 meters.

The NIA-Mariis said it has started implementing measures to mitigate the effects of below-normal rainfall caused by El Niño.

On Friday, the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) said the water levels in other dams have dropped below normal.

Angat Dam dipped to 180.45 m, slightly down from its lowest normal level of 180 m, Pagasa said. The normal level is 210 m.

Angat supplies 90 percent of the water supply for Metro Manila.

The level at San Roque Dam dropped to 237.05 m from the normal 280 m as of 6 a.m. on Friday, Pagasa said.

Pagasa had said Metro Manila and 24 provinces could experience



BELOW NORMAL The water level in this photo of the Angat Dam in Norzagaray, Bulacan, taken on Friday, July 7, 2023, is slightly below the normal level at 180.45 meters, the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration said. The normal water level for Angat is between 180 meters and 210 meters. The onset of the El Niño phenomenon, marked by drought caused by extreme heat, is threatening to dry up the major source of water supply in Metro Manila. PHOTO BY ISMAEL DE JUAN

drought conditions in January next year at the height of El Niño.

The Pantabangan Dam is also below normal level at 179.60 m.

The Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) announced on Friday a nine-hour water interruption on Wednesday for close to 600,000 households in Maynilad's concession zone.

Patrick James Dizon, head of the MWSS Angat/Ipo Operations Management Division, said the water level at Angat is expected to fall below 180 m.

"However, we are projecting that there will be no interruption tomorrow, except for the regular maintenance activities," Dizon said.

There are 591,000 households that will be affected, which, Dizon said, is lower than the projected 1.5 million houses to be affected by last April.

The length of interruption — from 7 p.m. to 4 a.m. — is shorter than the 14 to 16 hours interruption in April, he said.

On Thursday, the National Water Resources Board (NWRB) said it will reduce the water allocation to concessionaires in Metro Manila as well as for irrigation once the water level at Angat falls below 180 m.

The NWRB said the allocation will be brought down from 50 cubic meters per second (cms) to 48 cms.

The allocation for irrigation will be

cut from 28.5 cms to 20 cms.

The Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System said they will appeal the NWRB's decision.

"We will request for a meeting (with the NWRB) and appeal to them to not reduce the water allocation for Metro Manila households," Dizon said.

The Department of Energy (DoE) said it had mapped out contingencies to augment power supply demand, as production from their hydroelectric plants are expected to slow down because of the dwindling water supply and the continued effect of the El Niño phenomenon.

Energy Undersecretary Rowena Guevarra said at a briefing that the department had already fired up the Ilijan Power Plant in Batangas and was expected to boost the power supply, especially in Luzon.

The Ilijan plant runs on liquefied natural gas.

Guevarra said other additional backup for power include generators and even the power grids in the Visayas and Mindanao.

"We have the generators, which utilize diesel. This will help avoid any power outages," she said in Filipino.

**LEANDER C. DOMINGO,
CLAIRE BERNADETTE
MONDARES AND
FRANCIS EARL CUETO**



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Water service gaps expected next week

The Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System said households must brace themselves for water service interruptions as the water level in Angat Dam continues to drop. On Saturday it was at an operating minimum of 180 meters, some 20 meters above the critical level of 160. Service interruptions expected by next Wednesday may last up to nine hours mostly within the concession area of Maynilad. —STORY BY MEG J. ADONIS **A2**

ANGAT DAM RESERVES CONTINUE TO DROP

MWSS: EXPECT WATER SERVICE GAPS STARTING NEXT WEEK

By Meg Adonis
@megINQ

The Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) said on Friday that households must brace themselves for water service interruptions by next week as the water level in Angat Dam continues to drop amid the El Niño phenomenon.

MWSS division manager Patrick Dizon said the dam's water level was expected to reach the 180-meter operating minimum on Saturday.

Data from the website of the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration showed that water elevation at the dam was at 180.45 meters on Friday morning, some 20 meters above the critical level of 160 meters.

Water from Angat, estimat-

ed at 4,000 million liters per day, flows to the La Mesa and Ipo Dams to help provide water to Metro Manila and nearby provinces through water concessionaires Maynilad Water Services Inc. and Manila Water Co. Inc.

When the water level dips below 180 meters, supply priority is given to Metro Manila households rather than other uses, such as irrigation and power generation, to ensure minimal service interruptions.

According to Dizon, water service interruptions are expected by next Wednesday and may last up to nine hours mostly within the concession area of Maynilad.

"But if there is heavy rainfall, this may be delayed to Friday, July 14," he told reporters.

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9-hr. water break looms in Maynilad areas

MORE than half a million customers of Maynilad should prepare for a possible nine-hour service interruption next week as the government anticipates Angat Dam's water level to fall below its minimum operating level of 180 meters.

"The elevation of Angat will reach 180 meters (Saturday). However, we are projecting that there will be no interruption tomorrow, except for the regular maintenance activities," MWSS Angat/Ipo

Operations Management Division head Patrick James Dizon said in a message to GMA News.

"For Maynilad, the expected interruption will be on Wednesday (July 12), the earliest, but if there are rains, the start of interruption could be by Friday (July 14)...

The number of hours of interruption - 7 p.m. to 4 a.m. (nine hours)... that is lesser than the 14 to 16 hours interruption in April 2023," Dizon said.

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9-hr....

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The water interruptions will affect at least 591,000 households, or over a third of the 1.5 million affected households in April, Dizon said.

"Manila Water will not be affected by the reduction of allocation," he added.

Angat Dam supplies over 90% of Metro Manila's potable water requirements.

Its falling water level - at 180.45 meters yesterday - will trigger a reduction in the water allocation for the concessionaires of the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System.

The National Water Resources Board

on Thursday said it will further reduce the water allocation for MWSS to 48 cubic meters per second (cms) from 50 cms should the water level at Angat Dam fall below 180 meters.

Maynilad said it will hold a press briefing on Monday to disclose specific details on the impact of the lower water allocation.

Meanwhile, the newly created Water Resources Management Office under the Department of Environment and Natural Resources has released the guidelines for water conservation measures to be observed by all government offices pursuant to Memorandum Circular No. 22 issued by Malacañang in June. **Rio N. Araja** (See full story online at manilastandard.net)



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UNICEF-WHO REPORT

ACCESS TO POTABLE WATER, SANITATION STILL UNSURE FOR MANY IN PH

By Abby Boiser
@AbbyBoiserINQ

A report by the United Nations Children's Fund (Unicef) and the World Health Organization (WHO) on the global water supply showed that some 42 percent of the country's population still lack a reliable access to potable water.

In its situationer on the Philippines, the report also noted that 4 out of 10 Filipinos, or 37 percent of the population, had no access to sanitation facilities, while 10 percent had shared bathrooms among communities and 3 percent defecated out in the open.

It also found that 18 percent of the population did not observe basic hygiene, while 9 percent of the rural population and 4 percent of Filipinos in urban areas had no soap and water.

In contrast to the country's figures, access to safe drinking

The report also noted that women and girls worldwide are more likely to bear the burden of inequalities in terms of access to clean water, sanitation and hygiene facilities

water among global households rose from 69 percent in 2021 to 73 percent in 2022; good sanitation, from 49 percent to 57 percent; and basic hygiene, from 67 percent to 75 percent.

Inequalities

Yet despite those gains, about 2.2 billion around the world still lack potable water in their homes, while 3.4 billion had no access to sanitation facilities.

Around 2 billion have no

soap and water in their homes to clean themselves.

"Achieving universal coverage by 2030 will require a six-fold increase in current rates of progress for safely managed drinking water, a fivefold increase for safely managed sanitation and a threefold increase for basic hygiene services," the UN report said.

The report also noted that women and girls worldwide are more likely to bear the bur-

den of inequalities in terms of access to clean water, sanitation and hygiene facilities.

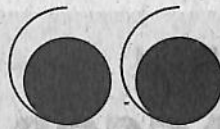
It found that women and girls are the ones who make longer journeys to fetch water, losing time in education, work and leisure.

This, in turn, exposes them to physical injury and other risks.

Women age 15 and older collect water in 7 out of 10 such households, while men and boys only fetch water in 3 out of 10 homes.

The report also showed that more than 500 million worldwide share sanitation facilities with other households—which compromises women and girls' rights to privacy, dignity and safety.

In 51 countries, women and adolescent girls in the poorest households are most likely to be deprived of access to a private place to wash and change, the report said. INQ





Is Japan being reckless in its unilateral decision to dump contaminated wastewater into the sea?

ON July 3, 2023, Japan's Chief Cabinet Secretary Matsuno Hirokazu reiterated that there would be no change to the government's plan to start releasing nuclear-contaminated water into the sea by the summer. Such a statement clearly indicates that the dumping of 1.3 million tons of contaminated nuclear wastewater from the destroyed Fukushima nuclear power plant into the sea, which can fill up around 500 Olympic-sized swimming pools, will push through despite domestic and international opposition. But what's more interesting is that the Japanese government's decision has the backing of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). But is this the correct and just thing to do for the IAEA and the Japanese government?

In a report released on July 4, the IAEA said it has concluded after a two-year assessment that the plan is "consistent with relevant international safety standards" and that while societal, political and environmental concerns have been raised, the discharged water "will have negligible radiological impact on people and the environment."

Opposition and resistance

The Pacific Rim countries like China, South Korea (Republic of Korea), the Philippines and the Pacific Island countries oppose the release of nuclear wastewater into the Pacific and have demanded that Japan stop its plan. Even the Fukushima Prefectural Federation of Fisheries Cooperative Associations has unanimously adopted a resolution expressing opposition to the plan of the Japanese government.

Pacific Islands Forum Secretary-General Henry Puna issued a statement on June 26, 2023, saying that Japan's plan to dump radioactive wastes in the Pacific Ocean is not merely a nuclear safety issue. It is



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rather an ocean, fisheries and health issue with the future of our children and future generations at stake. This issue has significant trans-boundary and trans-generational impacts, and can potentially set a precedent for the deliberate, unilateral dumping of nuclear waste into our oceans. New approaches are needed. The way forward should involve comprehensive international consultation not only through the IAEA platform but through other relevant platforms, such as the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (Unclos) and the 1972 Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter (the London Convention).

On the other hand, the Chinese foreign ministry spokesman, Mao Ning, at a July 4, 2023 press conference, said that the Japanese government's push to go ahead with the ocean discharge plan has raised widespread concerns and worries from the international community. She said that a Global Times survey conducted in 11 countries — including China, South Korea, Japan, the Philippines and New Zealand — indicated that of the 11,000 respondents, nearly 90 percent showed worries, fear and anger toward the plan, and more than 90 percent of them support their countries in taking measures to intervene in Japan's ocean discharge plan.

In the same press conference, Mao Ning reiterated that China was again urging Japan to have a responsible attitude for the whole of humanity and our future generations and stop pushing through with the discharge plan to fully explore and evaluate

the alternatives to ocean discharge to ensure that the nuclear-contaminated water is handled in a scientific, safe and transparent manner; and to agree to rigorous international oversight.

Reckless plan

Nevertheless, despite domestic and international resistance, it seems the Japanese government will stubbornly push through with its unilateral decision to discharge nuke wastewater into the sea.

This unilateral and damaging decision by the Japanese government is reckless, devoid of legitimacy as far as the international community is concerned, and is a downright disregard of adherence and compliance with relevant international laws on the protection of the marine environment and people's health.

Let's suppose this nuke wastewater ocean dumping plan is not averted. In that case, the entire humanity is at risk of nuclear contamination and pollution, which obviously threatens the very survival and existence of all living species, including humans. Thus, the world is seriously in trouble with the uncertainty of the adverse impacts, risks and safety of the marine environment and people's health.

It should be noted that the bodies of water in Asia are very much connected, and pollutants originating from the Fukushima nuclear plant wastewater will no doubt reach nearby areas, adversely affecting local marine and coastal environments, fishing industries of coastal states, and people's health and well-being.

In this regard, if Japan is indeed a responsible and conscientious member of the international community, as part of its international accountability, it should think twice before proceeding with this plan and prudently consult with the countries directly affected by such a decision. The Japanese government, as an act of courtesy, should

at least conduct comprehensive and sufficient consultations with countries in the Pacific Rim and Pacific Island countries to discuss further the issue, possible alternative solutions and its adverse impacts on both the marine resources and ecosystems, and people's health. The Japanese government should reconsider and further study its plan and look for the best possible alternative options for how this nuclear wastewater can be properly and safely disposed of without sacrificing, endangering and threatening humanity and all species with nuclear pollution catastrophe.

Conclusion

Indeed, for the Japanese government to use the sea/ocean as a dumping ground for its nuclear-contaminated wastewater when our oceans and seas are already stressed and struggling from pollution is undoubtedly a misguided and reckless decision that deserves condemnation and criticism. Lest we forget, the oceans and seas are the largest ecosystem, and the Earth's essential life support system. Suppose humanity and all living species are to sustain life on earth now and in the future. In that case, protecting and preserving our marine ecology is a must instead of turning it into a dumpsite for nuclear-contaminated wastewater. On this note, Pacific Rim countries and the whole world must speak against and oppose it, for this is a critical environmental issue that might cause enormous marine pollution in the Pacific Ocean and beyond.

Anna Rosario Malindog-Uy is a PhD economics candidate at the Institute of South-South Cooperation and Development in China's Peking University. She is analyst, director and vice president for external affairs of the Asian Century Philippines Strategic Studies Institute (ACPSSI), a Manila-based think tank.



FOR THE THIRD TIME

Earth sets unofficial heat record

WASHINGTON (AP) - Earth's average temperature set a new unofficial record high on Thursday, the third such milestone in a week that already rated as the hottest on record.

The planetary average hit 17.23 degrees Celsius, surpassing the 17.18-degree mark set Tuesday and equaled Wednesday, according to data from the University of Maine's Climate Reanalyzer, a tool that uses satellite data and computer simulations to measure the world's condition.

That average includes places that are sweltering under dangerous heat - like Jingxing, China, which checked in at almost 43.3 degrees Celsius - and the merely unusually warm, like Antarctica, where temperatures across much of the continent were as much as 4.5 degrees Celsius above normal this week.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric

Administration (NOAA) on Thursday issued a note of caution about the Maine tool's findings, saying it could not confirm data that results in part from computer modeling.

"Although NOAA cannot validate the methodology or conclusion of the University of Maine analysis, we recognize that we are in a warm period due to climate change," NOAA said.

Still, the Maine data has been widely regarded as another troubling sign of climate change around the globe. Some climate scientists said this week they weren't surprised to see the unofficial records.

Robert Watson, a scientist and former chairman of the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, said governments and the private sector "are not truly committed to address climate change." Nor are citizens, he said.

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Partnerships for watershed protection and water security

By Melandrew T. Velasco

COINCIDING with the celebration of Philippine Environment Month last June, the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System led by MWSS administrator Leonor Cleofas and the Million Trees Foundation, Inc. (MTFI) recognized partners in the Annual Million Trees Challenge (AMTC) project.

It was an auspicious event as the AMTC awards and pledging session for 2023 was also held on June 27, 2023, two days after Arbor Day.

As President and Executive Director of MTFI, I am happy to note that once more like in previous years the commitments of AMTC project partners breached the one million trees target.

The goal is to plant 10 million more trees until 2030.

To date, 6.8 million trees have been planted in the seven critical watershed beneficiaries of AMTC.

Closed forest cover in the watersheds increased by 5,734 hectares in 2020.

It has been seven years when MWSS, under Administrator Gen. Reynaldo V. Velasco (ret) initiated the AMTC to rehabilitate the watersheds of Angat-Ipo, Kaliwa, La Mesa, Laguna Lake, Umiray, Upper Marikina, and Manila Bay that were critical to the water supply for Metro Manila and adjoining provinces of Rizal, Bulacan, and parts of Cavite. It is a step toward achieving water security in MWSS coverage areas.

MTFI is the non-government organization

partner of MWSS to ensure the sustainability of the AMTC.

Together with more than 30 participating organizations, the objective of rehabilitating the watersheds is achievable.

And involvement of the private sector is important in this endeavor.

In her address before the Financial Inclusion for Women, Water and Climate Resilience Forum organized by the Financial Executives of the Philippines (FINEX), DENR Secretary Antonia Loyzaga underscored water security can be achieved if government and all other stakeholders will work together.

"There is no substitute at this moment for coherence, convergence and synergy in water governance," Loyzaga said.

"With your partnership, I know, these are all possible and water security can be reached and achieved for the Philippines," she told forum participants.

Recognizing the contribution of AMTC project partners, MWSS and MTFI conferred on them Kampeon ng Tubig Kanluran Awards, Million Trees Achievers, and AMTC Champion of Trees Awards.

Plaques of Appreciation and Special Awards were also handed out.

Recipients of the Kampeon ng Tubig Kanluran Awards were SMC President Ramon S. Ang, Maynilad President Ramoncito S. Fernandez, Manila Water President Jocot de Dios, Santa Clara International Chairman Nicandro Linao, and Manila Water Foundation Executive Director Reginald Andal for their significant roles as institutional partners of the

"We at the MTFI hope more partnerships will be forged for water security"

Million Trees Foundation, Inc. and the Million Trees Nursery and Eco Learning Center in support of AMTC;

DENR NCR Regional Executive Director Jacqueline Caangan for being an institutional partner of the Million Trees Foundation, Inc. for the supply of tree saplings and other collaborative efforts in support of AMTC; Gen. Nakar Mayor Elizeo Ruzol for his significant role in the implementation of the Kaliwa Dam Project to include reforestation in said area; and DENR Region 4A Executive Director Nilo B. Tamoria for his significant role as Top Performer with close to 90,000 trees planted for AMTC CY 2022.

Five were recognized as Million Trees Achievers: San Miguel Corporation for having planted more than five million trees in eight provinces under its 747 SMC Global Power Greening Program; Maynilad for achieving its one-millionth tree planted in December 2022 under its Plant for Life project; Manila Water for having planted 1,382,114 million from

1997 to 2022;

DENR 4-A for having planted 1,860,095 from 2017 to 2022; and, DENR Region 3 for having planted 2,063,515 from 2017 to 2022.

The AMTC Champion of Trees Award was presented to agencies that planted at least 25,000 trees or more for 2022.

Garnering the awards were MWSS Regulatory Office, CSBS Consortium, Laguna Lake Development Authority, General Nakar LGU, DENR NCR, Prime Water, MWSS Corporate Office, Maynilad, Manila Water, DENR Region 3, and DENR Region 4A.

Participants and stakeholders who have actively participated and supported the implementation of the AMTC 2022 among them: Newport World Resorts, SGS Philippines Inc., MCVO Talent Outsourcing Services;

The Raya School—Fairview, Selma Shipping Philippines Inc., Rotary District 3830 DG Mildred Vitangcol, Rotary District 3800 DG Arturo Tanyag, Netflix Philippines, New World Hotel Makati, Nestle Philippine Inc.;

Philippine Bamboo Development Industry Council Executive Director Rene E. Madarang, National Federation of Woman's Club and Ligao Woman's Club President Linda Gonzales, Rotary Club of Manila Claro M. Recto Rotary President Jennifer Chuacoco; National Council of Women of The Philippines President Cecille Dy, JCI Senate Philippines JCI National President Alfie Fernandez, Luzon Clean Water Development Corporation, ABS CBN Foundation, Inc.

Bantay Kalikasan, and DOHWA-EDCOP were given Plaques of Appreciation.

Meanwhile, Special Awards were given to Rotary Club of Makati Gems MIP Alain Coros, JCI Senate Philippines GreenLink Project Chairperson JCI Sen. Lia Seelin;

Lingayen Mayor Leopoldo N. Bataoil, ECARMA Health Options Corporation President TJ Meneses, Jumpcat Experiment & "Ang Manglalakbay," Brilliant Jerk Production, Marie Antonette De Ocampo of Maynilad, Respect: Noble Queen of the Universe Ltd. Inc., and Visual Artist Janddie Castillo.

Likewise, media entities and practitioners were handed Special Award plaques for supporting the AMTC, Million Trees Foundation and MWSS.

American journalist Jim Robbins, author of the 256-page *The Man Who Planted Trees*, said: "Planting trees may be the single most important ecotechnology that we have to put the broken pieces of our planet back together."

The Man Who Planted Trees is a charming story about the virtues of environmental stewardship and tireless service -- both of which are very important.

We at the MTFI hope more partnerships will be forged for water security.

(The author is president and executive director of the Million Trees Foundation Inc., a non-profit group advocating tree planting and watershed protection. He is also a book writer and publisher of biographical and coffee-table books.)



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400 trees planted in La Mesa Watershed

EASTWEST Ageas planted 400 endemic trees at Quezon City's La Mesa Watershed as part of its commitment to the Filipino community and the environment.

Fifty employees from the company's head office traveled from Bonifacio Global City, Taguig to participate in ABS-CBN's "Plant a Forest" initiative.

"We started this conservation

effort six months ago as a symbol of our company's growth," said Franco Jayme, agency sales head. "It's our modest way of giving back to our community while also protecting the long-term survival of our planet."

This attempt not only represents the company's growth, but it is also firmly linked to long-term planning.

Getting insured is planting

the seed of one's future now so that it can grow into a tree that can provide shelter when storms strike.

"Planting trees today has surely sparked our ESG (environmental, social and governance) efforts. We intend to continue participating in these activities that not only enriches us today but will also benefit us in the future," added Vren Hugo,

organization development lead.

EastWest Ageas intends to expand its ESG support as a form of insurance for the planet's future sustainability.

EastWest Ageas Insurance is a joint venture between Ageas, a global insurer with almost 200 years of experience, and East West Banking Corp., one of the country's leading universal banks.

THE MANILA TIMES



■ Fifty volunteers plant 400 endemic trees for the future.
PHOTO FROM EAST WEST AGEAS



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The great Sierra Madre lockdown

THE island of Luzon is traversed by three mountain ranges. Its geological spine, the Sierra Madre Mountain Range, is a 540-kilometer stretch from Cagayan to Quezon. The Cordillera Mountain Range, measuring 320 kilometers cuts through Nueva Vizcaya, Quirino and Nueva Ecija, and between the two is the Carballo Mountain Range. These three nurture the headwaters of the mighty Cagayan River. The Sierra Madre and Cordillera were so impenetrable, the Spanish empire could barely stake territory with Cross and Sword.

Now a strange and insidious thing is happening in the Sierra Madre, especially in its mountain slopes in the provinces of Rizal and Laguna. Big businessmen from Manila are buying tracts of land there; it is whispered that some operate through dummies, natural or juridical, and acquire land covered by tax declarations which, as any law student will tell you, are not conclusive proof of ownership.

For tax declarations to ripen into ownership, the holder of said tax declarations must be in possession of the land, which in their case is impossible since most of them have only set foot once or twice on the land that they claim and thereafter return to their posh residences in Metro Manila.

The properties that they are acquiring, or they have acquired, are strategically located, and their clear purpose is to



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TERMS

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HOFILEÑA JR.

deprive adjacent landowners of their right-of-way to their own properties. Most of those who are deprived of physical access are proprietors of small pieces of land or subsistence farmers who are forced to sell their properties for a pittance or to abandon this altogether. What is the use of owning land when guards of big businessmen block your right to enter your own property? The forests of Sierra Madre used to be impenetrable, now they are also inaccessible.

The more knowledgeable and well-off landowners file cases in court to enforce right-of-way easements, which were illegally closed, an expensive process which clogs our courts. Others are asking for reversion of the misused lands back to the government under the Regalian Doctrine because they say that forest and public lands should be used for the commonweal and not to foster individual or corporate greed.

As a result, no schools are being built in the interior, land cannot be obtained for recreation, health and evacuation centers. Farmers no longer have the motivation to culti-

vate the soil because of the lack of farm-to-market roads which previous administrations should have built. Connectivity, not isolation, especially in an archipelagic State, is the *sine qua non* for national development.

The Sierra Madre should be opened by the building of roads outlined in cadastral maps made by the government ages ago or delineated by cadastral courts. Oftentimes, these maps show roads now referred to as barangay roads with widths of 20 meters. The opening of these roads would solve the right-of-way issues. The government could also use idle highlands to generate Aeolic energy.

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. takes the energy problem seriously. As a young governor of Ilocos Norte, he knew that the Philippines had to secure its sources of energy in order to sustain economic growth and development. I remember how fascinated he was with wind turbines and alternative sources of energy that are environment-friendly. He used to have miniature wind turbines made as giveaways, attached to keychains and mounted on ashtray and silk-screened on T-shirts.

Ilocos Norte now has wind farms, the first in the Philippines, that are sources of renewable energy. These gigantic windmills facing the West Philippine Sea have become tourist attractions.

Several months ago, President Marcos, together with his son, Ferdinand

Alexander Marcos 3rd, inaugurated a 160-megawatt wind farm, the largest in the country. Wind turbines placed in appropriate places in the Sierra Madre can be built only as high as Meralco posts. But how could we build these sources of energy if unscrupulous individuals close the gates to hundreds of hectares in the interior of the Sierra Madre?

Most of our power needs are still obtained from traditional sources, subject to the fickle laws of supply and demand, and scarcity. We have millions of hungry mouths to feed, that is why agriculture, like wind power, is a priority of President Marcos.

The Sierra Madre has historically been the refuge of insurrectionists, revolutionaries, rebels and freedom fighters. The Hunters ROTC and the Marking's Guerillas, famed guerilla organizations that defied the Japanese during the Second World War, called the Sierra Madre their home. The Hukbalahap leader Luis Taruc used to end his letters with the words "Somewhere in the Sierra Madre."

Soon, the Sierra Madre may fall into the hands of people whose ideals are in direct contrast to those who have previously sought its refuge — and the process may become irreversible if we do not act in haste.

If only stones were known to move and trees to speak, they would voice their protest and stage their escape from the great lockdown at the Sierra Madre.



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Samal port project 'destroyed' corals

DAVAO CITY—A marine biologist raised the alarm over the destruction of corals in the offloading port constructed for the Samal Island-Davao City connector bridge. Dr. John Lacson cited a video showing how the metal frames of the port got embedded into the living corals of the reef. The project was built to offload heavy equipment for the construction of a bridge that will link Davao City and Samal Island. —STORY BY GERMELINA LACORTE **A7**

IN VIOLATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL, FISHERY LAWS

PORT PROJECT ON SAMAL ISLAND 'DESTROYED' CORALS

By **Germelina Lacorte**
@InqNational

DAVAO CITY—A marine biologist has raised the alarm over the destruction of corals in the offloading port constructed for the Samal Island-Davao City connector bridge.

Dr. John Lacson said a video has shown that the metal frames of the ancillary port recently built to offload heavy equipment for the construction of the bridge that will link Davao City and Samal Island actually embedded into the living corals of the reef.

"Although direct construction of the bridge is paused, an ancillary project of [the] DPWH (Department of Public Works and Highways), which is a seaport intended for offloading of heavy equipment, is being built within 25 meters of a reef adjacent to Paradise Reef," he said.

Lacson said the port construction violated the Philippine Fisheries Code which states that it is "unlawful for any person, entity, or corporation to perform activities that damage coral reefs."

Lacson, a marine biologist with a doctorate on biological science in the University of Texas, said he had regularly visited the area to monitor the health of the reefs but when he first checked on the Paradise Reef on June 3, he noticed the metal structures of the newly constructed port.

Five days later, he decided to have a closer look and saw that the metal frames of the new structure were actually embedded on the corals.

Public Works Secretary Manuel Bonoan, reached by phone on Friday, told the In-



DAMAGED REEF The ancillary port constructed to unload heavy equipment for the construction of the Samal Island-Davao City connector bridge, as shown in this photo taken on June 8, is embedded on a living coral reef, according to marine biologist John Lacson. —PHOTO BY MARINE BIOLOGIST JOHN LACSON

quirer he would look into the concern.

"We just have to investigate. *Tingnan namin* (Let us see)," he said.

He said he was made to understand that "the construction of the Samal bridge project is being closely monitored by a team composed of [officials of the] DPWH, the local government and other stakeholders every step of the way."

He added: "We just have to find out if this has gone through their scrutiny," he said.

Petition

This developed as the lawyers of the Lucas-Rodriguez family, who owned the Paradise Island Park and Beach Resort and its adjacent Costa Marina resort on the island, petitioned the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR)

to suspend or cancel the environment compliance certificate (ECC) of the bridge project because of the violations.

In a June 8 letter to Gilbert Gonzales, director of DENR's Environmental Management Bureau (EMB), the lawyers cited the construction of the port as among the violations. The port was not one of the activities identified in the project's Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) report, the basis of the ECC issuance, they noted.

"[The construction of the port] was not listed in the pre-construction process nor was it included in the environment management plan," the letter signed by lawyer Ramon Edison Batacan of the Batacan Montejo Vicencio and Valdez Law Firm read.

The law firm also cited the destruction of the corals,

a violation of Section 96 of the Revised Philippine Fisheries Code: "Coral reefs have been damaged as a result of the construction and as the illegal construction continues in haste, there will be more damage. The activity being outside the identified and allowable [activities] under the EIA, its impacts including severe environmental risks and potential for pollution were not properly assessed. Due to the omissions, there are no mitigating measures in place."

No action

The law firm said their petition was also sent to concerned agencies and officials, among them the Office of the Ombudsman in Mindanao, the Environment Ombudsman Program of the Ombudsman's office in Diliman, Quezon City, to Environment Secretary Maria Antonia Yulo-Loyza and Secretary Bonoan, but had not been acted until now.

But Bonoan said it was the first time for him to hear about the lawyers' petition to the DENR.

Lacson, on the other hand, said he had notified former DENR-Davao Regional Director Bagani Fidel Evasco about the destruction of the corals and the latter had asked him for its exact geographic location so that his office could act on the complaint. Evasco, however, had been replaced by lawyer Mercedes Dumagan, who is currently on leave.

Maria Antonette Andolana, head executive assistant to the DENR-Davao director, said by phone on Friday they would look into the complaint. **INQ**



Mindoro sands to be used in Manila Bay

BACO, Oriental Mindoro: The sands that would be removed from the dredging activities in the rivers of this town will be used in the reclamation projects in Manila Bay, the mayor of this town said.

In a press conference before his State of the Municipality Address on Tuesday, July 4, Baco Mayor Allan Roldan said that an applicant for the massive river restoration and dredging project of the provincial government of Oriental Mindoro has sought an audience with him and the heads of the barangay covered by the project.

"This Bird's Nest went to me and they are the only one of the many applicants that wants to dredge our rivers. And I asked them where would the sands be brought and I was told that it would be used in one of their projects in Manila Bay," Roldan said during the press conference.

This, however, is contrary to statements from the provincial government, which announced that the sands taken from the dredging project will be used in the infrastructure projects of the provincial government.

"As far as I am concerned, Bird's Nest told me that they would use the sand in the Manila Bay reclamation, and I even went there and saw for myself the said project. I do not know if the governor has his own agreement with other companies that says that the sands would not

be brought outside the province," Roldan said.

Roldan said that the company's representative made it clear that as stipulated in every dredging project with local government units, a certain percentage of the sales of the sands is allotted to the provincial government, municipal or city government and the barangay.

The dredging and restoration projects involve 12 major river systems in the province.

In his State of the Province Address on Wednesday, July 5, Oriental Mindoro Gov. Humerito Dolor clarified that the sharing of income would come from the quarry tax that the companies would pay to the provincial government.

"The sharing would be 30 percent for the provincial government, 30 percent to the municipal or city government and 40 percent would go to the barangay (villages)," Dolor said.

The governor, however, did not mention if the sands would be brought outside the province as claimed by Bird's Nest and cited by Roldan.

The governor also assured his constituents that the river restoration project is not a form of mining and that it is a product of a Department Administrative Order of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in partnership with the Department of Public Works and Highways.

IRE JOE LAURENTE



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BALDING MOUNTAIN In this photo taken in April this year, a part of Homonhon has become an open pit and barren due to mining operations on the island. —PHOTO COURTESY OF THE SAVE HOMONHON MOVEMENT

Mining firms in Homonhon told to pay realty taxes

Eastern Samar Gov. Ben Evardone says 4 companies extracting chromite from the island must settle fees for land they acquired, other properties developed to support their operations

By **Joey Gabieta**
@joeygabietainQ

TACLOBAN CITY—The provincial government of Eastern Samar is asking payment from four mining companies on Homonhon Island off Guiuan town for unpaid real property taxes amounting to P133 million.

Eastern Samar Gov. Ben Evardone said four companies—Cambayas Mining Corp., Techiron Resources Inc., Emir Mineral Resources Corp., and Mt. Sinai Mining Exploration and Development Corp.—were given demand letters for their failure to pay real property tax.

Failure to settle their obligations to the local government, he said, would result in the seizure of

their properties and equipment.

Based on the data from the Eastern Samar provincial government, Cambayas Mining Corp. has a tax liability of P96.57 million from 2012 to 2016, while Techiron Resources Inc. has a tax obligation of P22.56 million from 2017 to 2022.

Emir Mineral Resources Corp. also has yet to pay P12.14 million in taxes from 2017 to 2022, while Mt. Sinai Mining Exploration and Development Corp. had an unpaid tax obligation of P2.58 million in 2013.

Evardone said these mining firms have been extracting chromite on Homonhon Island and should be subject to real property taxation under the Local Government Code of 1991,

the manual on real property appraisal and assessment operations, and Provincial Ordinance No. 09-09 series of 2009.

Different obligation

The provincial government said that the amount of chromite extracted by the four companies from Homonhon was based on the ore transport permit (OTP) issued to them by the Mines and Geosciences Bureau. OTP is a document that specifies the origin and destination as well as the quantity of unprocessed mineral ores or minerals needed for their transport.

Cambayas Mining Corp. was granted mining permits by the government in 2009; Techiron Resources Inc. in 2015; and Emir

Mineral Resources Corp. and Mt. Sinai Mining Exploration and Development Corp. in 2010.

On top of complying with all the mining laws, especially on environmental and social protection, the governor said the mining firms should also pay taxes correctly to the local government.

"These taxes on extracted minerals are different from taxes on machineries and equipment being used by mining companies. The province is still in the process of determining the assessed value of their tax liabilities on their machineries and equipment," Evardone said in an interview on Monday.

If these companies won't comply with the demand letter,

Evardone said the local government would be forced to levy or seize their properties as provided by law.

The Inquirer tried to get the statement of Emir Mineral Resources Corp. but was told that they won't answer questions for now. The three other mining firms have yet to respond to the issue.

Historic significance

The four mining companies have been operating on Homonhon Island, a significant historic land for the Philippines, as it was where the expedition of Portuguese explorer Ferdinand Magellan landed on March 16, 1521.

The arrival of Magellan and the Spanish soldiers led

to the Christianization of the Philippines.

The 20-kilometer-long island, which is prominent for its vast deposits of nickel and chromite, has been grappling with open-pit mining since the 1990s.

The Diocese of Borongan has been spearheading campaigns to preserve and protect the island's remaining biodiversity.

According to Bishop Crispin Varquez, these mining operations posed immediate and negative effects on the communities and the natural environment.

Environmental groups and priests earlier appealed to authorities to stop the mining operations on Homonhon Island. The requests, however, fell on deaf ears. **INA**



FIRST PERSON

ALEX MAGNO

Hottest

Welcome to a hotter world. Last month was declared the hottest June on record – perhaps the hottest in several thousand years. According to the European Union's Copernicus Climate Change Service, last June's average temperature was hotter by a "substantial margin" over the previous record set June 2019.



This is not a fluke. The same EU agency tells us the nine hottest Junes on record all happened over the past nine years.

This is not the peak. The hotter temperatures are due to climate change attributable to human activity. Climate change continues to worsen since all the world's efforts have not slowed the emission of greenhouse gasses. Sooner than we expect, the world's climate will exceed the threshold scientists believe will cause chaos in our ecosystem.

All the climate change conferences held every year have accomplished nothing to reverse this global trend. Despite earlier commitments, the industrial countries responsible for the bulk of emissions causing climate change have failed to put together the \$100-billion annual financing assistance to help all countries reduce their carbon footprint.

In a word, there has been much talk and no resolute action.

We all seem to be hoping against the evidence that technology – the shift to renewable energy sources, electric vehicles and the development of carbon capturing devices – will save us. But the trends pushing climate change overshadow whatever new technologies can deliver in the foreseeable future.

We know what happens when climate warms beyond 1.5 degrees centigrade over pre-industrial levels. The polar ice caps will melt, raising sea levels. Glaciers will evaporate, threatening our fresh water sources. Extreme weather events will become even more severe.

We will hit the limit in as soon as four years. Ahead of it, we now see dramatic reductions of the ice caps, rapid ocean warming, severe flooding and murderous droughts/wildfires everywhere.

Any effective global action to reverse – or at least retard – global warming will be costly. For many developing countries, the cost of reducing our carbon footprint is simply beyond reach. For many industrial societies, the ones emitting the most greenhouse gasses, the cost is politically intolerable.

We all seem to be sitting idly while the calamity approaches, paralyzed by our present politics. It is easier to wage wars against each other, adding to the ecological destruction, than war against climate change. The latter effort requires a change in lifestyles no one appears prepared to undertake.

We have seen enough examples from human history about how slight weather changes brought down civilizations. The great Khmer empire that built the amazing Angkor Wat is believed to have been ended by the changing course of a river. The great centers of Mayan civilization in Central America were believed ended by prolonged drought.

In our time, climate change is a vastly more profound threat to the entire human race. It threatens the viability of the only planet we know we could inhabit. There is no Planet B.

Drought

This year, climate change for us will be magnified by the El Niño phenomenon characterized by the warming of the Pacific Ocean. The threat to us is no longer theoretical. It is imminent.

This week, the water level at the vital Angat Dam hit minimum operating level. As the rains usual this time of the year have not come, the authorities will have to make a decision over the next few days over the reduction of water volumes to be released from the reservoir. That decision will mean water rationing for the NCR and reduced irrigation for the surrounding agricultural areas.

It is bad enough that even with ample fresh water supplies, the NCR is already one of the least habitable urban areas in the world. It will be worse when water is rationed. The full brunt of the El Niño phenomenon will hit us about January next year. The next few months will be characterized by mounting misery for all of us trapped in this island with meager water impounding infrastructure.

It took us too long to put together the financing package and work through the opposition to begin work on the Kaliwa River dam. Now that we need its supplemental water supply desperately, the dam remains half-built.

The only lesson we could draw from the Kaliwa River experience is to begin putting together the financing for the Kanan River project. We have no other option.

A few years ago, plans were being drawn to build water impounding infra in several areas. No major accomplishment relating to this has been reported. This will prove to be a major failure in governance.

Several provinces have now been identified as critical for lack of rainfall. That will have tremendous implications for our food supply. Many farms are now experiencing drought conditions.

Even our fishermen are feeling the impact of warming. We could experience declining fish supplies because the seas around us are becoming incapable of supporting marine life.

Add to all these the impact of ocean pollution, for which the Philippines is a major culprit. Our rivers are dead and our seas are dying while we debate about the appropriate slogan for our tourism campaign.

Since we are so fond of naming "czars" to lead this or that effort, it should be about time to name a "warming czar" to oversee efforts to deal with the dry conditions forthcoming over the next months. This overlord will be charged with managing the distribution of what remains in our reservoirs and lead in building new water impoundment facilities.

★



Editorial

Action needed now to forestall heat disaster

THIS past week presented the world with some unusually alarming news about the state of the climate. Forecasters from a number of monitoring agencies announced that last month had the hottest average temperature of any month of June on record, dating back to the mid-19th century. Then on three consecutive days, Monday, July 3, through Wednesday, July 5, record highs for the global average daily temperature were broken. Monday was the first time since measurements began (in 1979) that the world's daily average temperature exceeded 17 degrees Celsius; Tuesday was slightly warmer; and Wednesday was warmer still.

Then on Thursday, the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) warned that a large part of the country, including Metro Manila and two dozen other provinces, will experience drought conditions beginning in January 2024 due to the El Niño climate phenomenon. The El Niño, which has already begun, is the cyclical warming of waters in the Eastern Pacific, which generally results in drier weather here in the Philippines for a period that may range from several months to a year or more.

El Niño has been blamed for aggravating the current hot-house conditions around the world, but the fundamental cause is the rapidly warming climate due to greenhouse gas emissions, which have driven average global temperatures up by 1.2 degrees Celsius since the start of the Industrial Revolution in the mid-19th century. El Niño is a natural cycle that causes significant weather changes around the world every few years, but its effects are being amplified by the consequences of human activity. In fact, some scientists have suggested that human-induced global warming is actually making the El Niño worse. So far this year, and with the certainty that the worst is yet to come, China, India, and large parts of North America and Africa have already experienced severe, prolonged heat waves, resulting in water shortages, considerable damage to agriculture and hundreds of deaths.

Here in the Philippines, we have not yet this year experienced a heat wave according to the meteorological definition, although most people would probably agree that the weather of late has been unbearably hot. We are also not yet experiencing drought conditions, although that seems imminent. Pagasa's January forecast may in fact be too optimistic, as several of the reservoirs that supply drinking and irrigation water to Metro Manila and Central Luzon are already very near to their minimum operating levels.

To its credit, the government has for the past several months acknowledged the onset of the El Niño, and directed concerned agencies and local government units to prepare steps to address its anticipated effects, mainly the likelihood of water shortages in most areas of the country. But with climate scientists frankly admitting that they have been taken by surprise by the severity and the speed with which heat effects have developed, there is a concern that our government's approach may be disastrously inadequate.

Put simply, the perspective needs to change from regarding the expected El Niño effects as a potential calamity at some point in the future, to regarding the current state of the climate as a calamity that is already under way. After all, we do not wait to evacuate people in the path of a destructive typhoon until it has already made landfall in their community; neither should we wait for the probable drought and heat wave to occur before reacting to them. Instead of planning for water conservation measures to be implemented if or when shortages make them necessary, for example, the measures should be put in place immediately. In that way, they could be less drastic and disruptive. Likewise, measures should be implemented to help protect people against the heat, particularly in poorer areas where air-conditioning, houses with proper ventilation, or even electric fans are often luxuries.

Finally, the government should encourage and support the development of innovative solutions to these problems, many of which are created by small startups or adapted from ideas in other countries. Indian entrepreneurs, for example, have invented several low-cost systems to provide passive cooling to dwellings in congested slum areas.

Inconvenience and discomfort from the El Niño and extreme climate effects this year are inevitable. But with a bit of foresight, these can be kept from becoming an unmanageable disaster.



The role of media in climate education

BY LUDWIG FEDERIGAN

A FEW days ago, *The Manila Times* ran a headline on "40 areas at risk from alarming climate crisis." Seldom do we see major broadsheets banner a climate-related story as its headline.

A number of occasions in the past, when there were significant climate-related "happenings," people would normally ask: "Where is the media?"

Unknown to many, at the global level, across the full year of 2022, media attention on climate change increased by 38 percent from 2020 among the sources tracked by Media and Climate Change Observatory. Since 2004, the 2022 coverage was up from all other years besides 2021, making 2022 the year with the second-highest amount of coverage of climate change or global warming overall.

Media and Climate Change Observatory, a multi-university collaboration led by the University of Colorado in Boulder, monitors 130 sources across newspapers, radio and television in 59 countries in seven different regions around the world, including the Philippines.

The role of media in climate change

The media plays a critical role in shaping public perceptions and attitudes toward climate change. It can help raise awareness about the issue, educate the public and

promote actions to address climate change.

The media can address climate change by reporting on climate-related issues and events, such as extreme weather events, climate policy developments and scientific research on climate change. This can help to increase public understanding of the issue and encourage public engagement.

The media can promote climate-friendly behaviors and policies by highlighting examples of successful climate action, such as renewable energy projects, sustainable agriculture and eco-friendly products. It can inspire individuals and businesses to adopt more sustainable practices.

The media can help to hold governments and corporations accountable for their climate-related actions. By investigating and reporting instances of environmental degradation, climate denialism and greenwashing, the media can help expose the negative impact of unsustainable practices and promote responsible behavior. It has the power to ignite a spark, awaken minds and inspire action.

By engaging the media in climate education, we can harness its immense potential to shape public

opinion, raise awareness and drive meaningful change toward a sustainable future.

However, the role of media in climate action is not just about reporting the news; it's about using its influence to amplify the urgency of the climate crisis. Through compelling storytelling, accurate reporting and highlighting the voices of experts and communities affected by climate change, it can galvanize public support for climate action.

Radio and TV brands remain the most popular media overall, in the Philippines, according to the Digital News Report 2023 published by the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism of the University of Oxford.

Social media for climate action

Just like the traditional media, social media plays a significant role in both climate education and climate action.

In the Philippines, according to the Digital News Report 2023, the top social media and messaging platforms are Facebook (84 percent), YouTube (80 percent), Facebook Messenger (68 percent), TikTok (42 percent), Instagram (38 percent) and Twitter (27 percent).

Social media platforms provide a powerful medium to raise awareness about climate change and educate a large audience. Users can share articles, videos, infographics and other content related to

climate science, sustainability practices and environmental issues. This helps disseminate information quickly and reach people who may not have been exposed to such topics otherwise.

Social media platforms have become effective tools for mobilizing individuals and communities around climate action. Hashtags, campaigns and online movements can be created to rally support, promote sustainable behaviors and encourage people to take action. Social media allows users to connect with like-minded individuals, join groups and participate in discussions, fostering a sense of community and collective action.

Social media provides a platform for marginalized voices and grassroots environmental organizations to be heard. People from different backgrounds and regions can share their experiences, stories and concerns about climate change, bringing attention to the diverse impacts it has on communities worldwide. This helps elevate the importance of inclusive and equitable climate solutions.

Social media platforms allow for the rapid dissemination of real-time updates on climate-related events, such as extreme weather events, environmental emergencies or policy changes. This helps keep people informed and encourages them to respond and support relief efforts.

Social media enables individuals and organizations to engage in advocacy efforts and influence

policymakers. Platforms like Twitter and Facebook provide a direct line of communication between citizens, activists and government officials. Hashtag campaigns, petitions and online activism can raise awareness, shape public opinion and pressure policymakers to take meaningful action on climate change.

Social media facilitates the sharing of ideas and encourages innovation. Platforms like YouTube and Instagram allow content creators to showcase sustainable practices, do-it-yourself projects and innovative solutions to climate challenges. Crowdsourcing initiatives can leverage social media to gather ideas, solutions and funding for climate-related projects.

Social media influences individual behavior by showcasing sustainable lifestyles, eco-friendly products and responsible consumption practices. Influencers, environmental organizations and brands leverage social media to promote sustainable choices, inspiring people to adopt greener habits in their daily lives.

Vigilance and accountability

Admittedly, while social media has many positive aspects, it also has limitations. Misinformation, echo chambers and short attention spans can hinder effective climate communication. Therefore, it is crucial to critically evaluate infor-


mation, promote reliable sources, and encourage meaningful engagement and dialogue to maximize the positive impact of social media in climate education and action.

It is clearly significant that strong partnerships between scientists, activists, policymakers and media professionals must be forged to ensure accurate and accessible climate education. By working together, we can harness the power of the media to educate, inspire and mobilize individuals and communities toward sustainable practices and a collective commitment to tackle climate change.

Engaging both mainstream and social media for climate education and climate action is not just an option; it is an imperative. It is our responsibility to equip the public with the knowledge and understanding necessary to make informed decisions and take meaningful action to protect our planet. Together, let us harness these potentials as a force for change and pave the way toward a sustainable and resilient future.

Ludwig O. Federigan is the executive director of the Young Environmental Forum and a non-resident fellow of Stratbase ADR-Institute. He completed his climate change and development course at the University of East Anglia (United Kingdom) and an executive program on sustainability leadership at Yale University (USA). You can email him at ludwig.federigan@gmail.com





Republic of the Philippines
Department of Environment and Natural Resources
NATIONAL WATER RESOURCES BOARD
8th Floor, NIA Bldg., EDSA, Quezon City, Philippines 1100

PRIMEWATER INFRASTRUCTURE CORP.,
Applicant. Case No. 23-3646

NOTICE OF HEARING

This is an application for Certificate of Public Convenience to operate and maintain a waterworks system within Camitos Residences Subdivision, Barangay Mercedes Avenue, San Miguel, Pasig City, Metro Manila, with the following proposed rates:

PROPOSED TARIFF

Residential and Institutional

Pipe Size	0-5 m3 (min)	6-10 m3	11-20 m3	21-30 m3	31-40 m3	Over 40 m3
1/2"	P 439.50	88.80	97.80	101.40	105.00	108.60
3/4"	P 703.00	142.10	156.40	162.20	168.00	173.70
1"	P 1,405.50	284.10	312.90	324.40	336.00	347.50

Residential and Commercial

Pipe Size	0-5 m3 (min)	6-10 m3	11-20 m3	21-30 m3	31-40 m3	Over 40m3
1/2"	P 439.50	88.80	97.80	101.40	105.00	108.60
3/4"	P 703.00	142.10	156.40	162.20	168.00	173.70
1"	P 1,405.50	284.10	312.90	324.40	336.00	347.50

Commercial and Industrial

Pipe Size	0-15 m3 (min.)	16-30 m3	31-500 m3	501-1000 m3	Over 1000 m3
1/2"	P 2,728.50	200.50	217.30	243.40	243.40
3/4"	P 4,368.50	320.80	347.80	385.50	389.50
1"	P 8,733.00	641.70	695.50	776.90	776.90

This application will be initially heard by the Board on 24 July 2023. The hearing will start at 9:00 o'clock in the morning at the NWRB-WUD Conference Room, 8th Floor, NIA Building, EDSA, Quezon City, at which time applicant shall present its evidence.


At least fifteen (15) days prior to the scheduled hearing, applicant shall publish this notice once in a newspaper of general circulation in Metro Manila and serve by personal delivery or registered mail a copy of the (i) application and its attachments, and (ii) this notice, to all affected parties appearing on page 2 hereof.

Parties opposed to the granting of the application must file their written opposition supported by documentary evidence on or before the above scheduled date of hearing, furnishing a copy of the same to the applicant.

Failure on the part of any person affected to file its opposition on time and to appear at the hearing will be construed as a waiver of their right to be heard. The Board will proceed to hear and decide the application based on the evidence submitted.

Likewise, failure by the applicant to appear at the hearing shall amount to lack of interest on its part and the instant application shall be dismissed accordingly.

Witness the Honorable Executive Director of the National Water Resources Board this 14th day of June 2023.

By Authority of the Board:

Dr. SEVILLO D. DAVID, Jr., CESO III
Executive Director

Affected Parties:

The Secretary
Sangguniang Panlungsod
Pasig City, Metro Manila

The Barangay Chairman
Barangay Mercedes Ave., San Miguel
Pasig City, Metro Manila

The Homeowners Assn. President
Camitos Residences Subdivision
Barangay Mercedes Ave., San Miguel
Pasig City, Metro Manila

The Administrator
Metropolitan Waterworks & Sewerage System
MWSS Compound, Kalipunan Road
Baitara, Quezon City

MT - July 8, 2023



PRIMEWATER INFRASTRUCTURE CORP.,
Applicant.

Case No. 23-3636

NOTICE OF HEARING

This is an application for Certificate of Public Convenience to operate and maintain a waterworks system within Abraza Subdivision, Barangay Pinagbuhatan, Pasig City, Metro Manila, with the following proposed rates:

PROPOSED TARIFF

Residential and Institutional:

Pipe Size	0-5 m3 (min)	6-10 m3	11-20 m3	21-30 m3	31-40 m3	Over 40 m3
1/2"	P 388.00	77.20	78.20	80.40	82.70	85.10
3/4"	P 617.50	123.50	125.10	128.60	132.30	136.10
1"	P 1,235.50	247.00	250.20	257.20	264.50	272.20

Residential and Commercial

Pipe Size	0-5 m3 (min)	6-10 m3	11-20 m3	21-30 m3	31-40 m3	Over 40m3
1/2"	P 388.00	77.20	78.20	80.40	82.70	85.10
3/4"	P 617.50	123.50	125.10	128.60	132.30	136.10
1"	P 1,235.50	247.00	250.20	257.20	264.50	272.20

Commercial and Industrial

Pipe Size	0-15 m3 (min.)	16-30 m3	31-500 m3	501-1000 m3	Over 1000 m3
1/2"	P 2,326.50	159.40	170.30	183.30	183.30
3/4"	P 3,723.00	255.00	272.40	283.30	293.30
1"	P 7,446.00	510.00	544.80	586.60	586.60

This application will be initially heard by the Board on 24 July 2023. The hearing will start at 9:00 o'clock in the morning at the NWRB-WUD Conference Room, 8th Floor, NIA Building, EDSA, Quezon City, at which time applicant shall present its evidence.

At least fifteen (15) days prior to the scheduled hearing, applicant shall publish this notice once in a newspaper of general circulation in Metro Manila and serve by personal delivery or registered mail a copy of the (i) application and its attachments, and (ii) this notice, to all affected parties appearing on page 2 hereof.

Parties opposed to the granting of the application must file their written opposition supported by documentary evidence on or before the above scheduled date of hearing, furnishing a copy of the same to the applicant.

Failure on the part of any person affected to file its opposition on time and to appear at the hearing will be construed as a waiver of their right to be heard. The Board will proceed to hear and decide the application based on the evidence submitted.

Likewise, failure by the applicant to appear at the hearing shall amount to lack of interest on its part and the instant application shall be dismissed accordingly.

Witness the Honorable Executive Director of the National Water Resources Board this 14th day of June 2023.

By Authority of the Board:


Dr. SEVILLO D. DAVID, Jr., CESO III
Executive Director

Affected Parties:

The Secretary
Sahguniang Panlungsod
Pasig City, Metro Manila

The Barangay Chairman
Barangay Pinagbuhatan
Pasig City, Metro Manila

The Homeowners Assn. President
Abraza Subdivision
Barangay Pinagbuhatan
Pasig City, Metro Manila

The Administrator
Metropolitan Waterworks & Sewerage System
MWSS Compound, Katipunan Road
Balara, Quezon City

MT - July 8, 2023



PRIMEWATER INFRASTRUCTURE CORP.,
Applicant.

Case No. 23-3635

NOTICE OF HEARING

This is an application for Certificate of Public Convenience to operate and maintain a waterworks system within Camella-Ellisande Subdivision, Barangay Calzada, Taguig City, Metro Manila, with the following proposed rates:

PROPOSED TARIFF

Residential and Institutional

Pipe Size	0-5 m3 (min)	6-10 m3	11-20 m3	21-30 m3	31-40 m3	Over 40 m3
1/2"	P 241.00	49.20	95.70	99.30	101.10	102.90
3/4"	P 385.50	78.60	153.10	158.90	161.80	164.70
1"	P 771.00	157.30	306.20	317.80	323.60	328.40

Residential and Commercial

Pipe Size	0-5 m3 (min)	6-10 m3	11-20 m3	21-30 m3	31-40 m3	Over 40m3
1/2"	P 241.00	49.20	95.70	99.30	101.10	102.90
3/4"	P 385.50	78.60	153.10	158.90	161.80	164.70
1"	P 771.00	157.30	306.20	317.80	323.60	328.40

Commercial and Industrial

Pipe Size	0-15 m3 (min.)	16-30 m3	31-600 m3	601-1000 m3	Over 1000 m3
1/2"	P 1,932.00	198.30	205.90	249.20	249.20
3/4"	P 3,091.50	314.00	329.40	388.70	398.70
1"	P 6,183.00	628.10	658.80	797.30	797.30

This application will be initially heard by the Board on 24 July 2023. This hearing will start at 9:00 o'clock in the morning at the NWRB-WUD Conference Room, 8th Floor, NIA Building, EDSA, Quezon City, at which time applicant shall present its evidence.

At least fifteen (15) days prior to the scheduled hearing, applicant shall publish this notice once in a newspaper of general circulation in Metro Manila and serve by personal delivery or registered mail a copy of the (i) application and its attachments, and (ii) this notice, to all affected parties appearing on page 2 hereof.

Parties opposed to the granting of the application must file their written opposition supported by documentary evidence on or before the above scheduled date of hearing, furnishing a copy of the same to the applicant.

Failure on the part of any person affected to file its opposition on time and to appear at the hearing will be construed as a waiver of their right to be heard. The Board will proceed to hear and decide the application based on the evidence submitted.

Likewise, failure by the applicant to appear at the hearing shall amount to lack of interest on its part and the instant application shall be dismissed accordingly.

Witness the Honorable Executive Director of the National Water Resources Board this 13th day of June 2023.

By Authority of the Board:


Dr. SEVILLO D. DAVID, Jr., CESO III
Executive Director

Affected Parties:

The Secretary
Sangguniang Panlungsod
Taguig City, Metro Manila

The Barangay Chairman
Barangay Calzada
Taguig City, Metro Manila

The Homeowners Assn. President
Camella Ellisande Subdivision
Barangay Calzada
Taguig City, Metro Manila

The Administrator
Metropolitan Waterworks & Sewerage System
MWSS Compound, Katipunan Road
Balara, Quezon City

MT - July 6, 2023



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Republic of the Philippines
Department of Environment and Natural Resources
NATIONAL WATER RESOURCES BOARD
8th Floor NIA Bldg., EDSA, Alabang, Quezon City, Philippines 1100

PRIMEWATER INFRASTRUCTURE CORP.,
Applicant.

Case No. 23-3647

NOTICE OF HEARING

Applicant, an authorized operator of the waterworks system within Grenville Subdivision, Barangay Tuktukan, Taguig City, Metro Manila, applies for the renewal of Certificate of Public Convenience.

Notice is hereby given that this application will be initially heard by the Board on **24 July 2023**, hearing will start at **9:00 o' clock in the morning** at the NWRB-WUD Conference Room, 8th Floor, NIA Building, EDSA, Quezon City at which time applicant shall present its evidence.

At least fifteen (15) days prior to the scheduled hearing, applicant shall publish this notice once in a newspaper of general circulation in **Metro Manila** and send by personal delivery or registered mail a copy of (i) the application and its attachments, and (ii) this notice, to all affected parties appearing in page 2 hereof.

Parties opposed to the granting of the application must file their written opposition supported by documentary evidence on or before the above scheduled date of hearing, furnishing a copy of the same to the applicant.

Failure on the part of any affected party to file its opposition on time and to appear at the hearing will be construed as a waiver of their right to be heard and the Board will proceed to hear and decide the application based on the evidence submitted.

Likewise, failure by the applicant to appear at the hearing shall amount to lack of interest on its part and the instant application shall be dismissed accordingly.

Witness the Honorable Executive Director of the National Water Resources Board this 14th day of June, 2023.

By Authority of the Board:


Dr. SEVILLO D. DAVID, Jr., CESO III
Executive Director

Affected Parties:

The Secretary
Sangguniang Panlungsod
Taguig City, Metro Manila

The Barangay Chairman
Barangay Tuktukan
Taguig City, Metro Manila

The Homeowners Assn. President
Grenville Subdivision
Barangay Tuktukan
Taguig City, Metro Manila

The Administrator
Metropolitan Waterworks & Sewerage System
MWSS Compound, Katipunan Road
Balara, Quezon City

MT - July 8, 2023